



The Babylon Posture Pt 3: Battling Principalities in Babylon!

March 26, 2023

Holy Text: Jeremiah 29:1-14

Spiritual Captivity and Building in Babylon: Review. So far, we've learned...

1. Of Jeremiah's call: "to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant." (Jer 1:10)
2. Of Jeremiah's message: God's judgment due to Judah's idolatry (2 Kings 21:1-18, 23:26-27; 2 Chronicles 36:11-21)
3. Of our spiritual state: "We live in spiritual Babylon! All around us we find the celebrations of idolatry and pagan worship. There is gross and perverted sexual immorality and the worship of death. There is institutionalized pressure to bow down and worship Nebuchadnezzar's Golden Image (the cultural false ideas, use of certain unbiblical words, and the reception and acceptance the demons of the day)."
4. Of the "cultural music" that commands us to bow down and worship the cultural idols of the day! (Dan 3:4-7)
5. Of the courage needed speak truth, and if necessary, brave the fiery furnace. (Dan 3:16-20)
6. That we are the Church of Jesus Christ, ultimately triumphant! (Matt 16:18; Rev 17:14)
7. That we, nevertheless, through much tribulation, must enter the Kingdom of God. (John 16:33; Acts 14:22)

Indeed...

1. The truth that Jeremiah's words (a true prophet of God) were God's Words reminds us to take the inspired, infallible, inerrant, and sufficient Scriptures most seriously! (v.1-3)
2. God Himself caused His rebellious people to be carried away captive. We should tremble at the thought. (v.4)
3. Despite the just judgment of God, there is still mercy. In the midst of the captivity, our LORD commanded that the captives... (vv.5-6)
 - Build houses. Our dwellings are important. Home is the center of daily life!
 - Dwell in them. The only thing this could mean is to live life!
 - Plant gardens. Cultivate and enjoy the riches of the land!
 - Eat the fruit! Be physically nourished. Don't waste away in Babylon!
 - Take wives. Create new, productive households!
 - Begat sons and daughters. Think generationally. Be fruitful and take dominion in Babylon!
 - Do not diminish; increase in the midst of captivity!
4. Although we want peace, we do not exchange purity for peace. That God uses of pagan nations to chastise His people doesn't mean God approves of paganism. (v.7) God judged Babylon too! (Jeremiah 50-51)
5. Even in spiritual captivity, there will be false prophets. You'll know them because their words will be opposite of God's Words! (V.8-9)
6. Just as God brought Judah's punishment to an end, He can still revive and reform our nation too! He loves His children and thinks kindly towards them. His divine punishment is for His divine purpose. Captivity should produce Contriteness; their hard times would lead to greater humility. Their circumstances would sanctify them. (vv.10-14)
7. So we declared that we must keep building!
 - Build on the Rock of the Word of God! (Matt 7:24-27; 2 Tim 1:13, 3:16-17)
 - Build with Christ as Head! (1 Cor 11:3; Col 1:15-18)

- Build through the joyful preaching of the Gospel! (Mk 16:15; Rom 1:16; Php 1:27)
- Build in love, mercy, and forgiveness! (1 Cor 13; Matt 5:7; Eph 2:4, 4:15-16, 29-32)
- Build with faith! (Prov 3:5-6; Mk 11:22; Heb 10:21-25; Jam 1:5-7)
- Build with joyful singing and consistent household worship! (Deut 6:1-12; Eph 5:17-21; Col 3:12-17)
- Build around the Local Church and the means of Grace (prayer, preaching, fellowship, ordinance, worship, discipline, etc.)! (Acts 2:42-47, 20:7; Heb 10:25)

But there was more happening in Babylon...

After Judah's captivity by in Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, other kings followed, including Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus. In Daniel 9, under the reign of Darius, Daniel prayed one of the most humble prayers in Scripture. Heaven responded...

Daniel 9:20-23 (KJV) *And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God; **21** Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. **22** And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. **23** At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.*

In the very next chapter, under the reign of Cyrus, we read:

Daniel 10:4-15 (KJV) *And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel; **5** Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: **6** His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. **7** And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. **8** Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. **9** Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. **10** And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. **11** And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. **12** Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. **13** But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. **14** Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days. **15** And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb.*

In both these instances in Babylon, we are made aware of the activity of angels and principalities in the kingdoms of men:

1. In Daniel 9, “The man Gabriel” is, based on context, the Gabriel who delivered to Mary the news of her choice as the mother of the the Messiah, and to the shepherds the news of the Messiah’s birth! (Luke 1:19, 26). He is said to stand in the Presence of God. His nearness to God is one reason he is considered an Archangel...or a *prince* or *chief* among angels. (Gabriel is also mentioned in Dan 8:16-26 where he helps Daniel, by command, understand a vision.) Gabriel, apparently, was “caused” to fly swiftly to Daniel. His mission was to give Daniel insight and understanding.
2. In Daniel 10, this “certain man” in verse 6 is definitely a spiritual being (he resembles Christ, Rev 1:13-16), but is likely an angel since he was able to be withstood and needed help (v13). Furthermore, it is unlikely a human prince could have held him up for 21 days. Therefore, “the prince of the kingdom of Persia” likely refers to a principality of some sort...a fallen angel with significant influence over a nation.
3. Michael is said to be “one of the chief princes” (an archangel) and had to assist the angel in question in his battle. (v13) Michael is also known to be the “prince” or angelic protector of Israel since he is called “your prince” in reference to Daniel (also Dan 12:1)
4. This is the same Michael we read about in Rev 12:

***Revelation 12:7-11 (KJV)** And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, **8** And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. **9** And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. **10** And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. **11** And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*

5. What’s our point here?

That from the beginning of recorded history (biblical history) until now the reality of the spiritual war is evident. From the temptation by the serpent in the garden (called the devil and Satan in Rev 12:9), to the “sons of God” (bene ha-'Elohim) coming into the daughters of men in Genesis chapter 6, to the active principalities over whole regions mentioned in Daniel, to the explosion of overt warfare in the gospels (Jesus encountering many unclean spirits/demons), there is no doubt there is an unseen world and an unseen war in which believers are involved!

The Spiritual Warfare Nature of the Bible

1. From Genesis 3, a holy, cosmic war was declared!
2. Remember the rebellion of angels in Gen 6 prior to (and part of the cause of) the Flood?
3. What about the consistent Presence of the Angel of the LORD in the Pentateuch and Judges?
4. Recall the Captain of the Hosts of the LORD in Joshua 5!
5. Or Micaiah’s vision of the throne room of the LORD and the activity of angels in 1 Kings 22?
6. Or the chariots of fire surrounding the prophet Elisha in 2 Kings 6!

7. What about the discussion in Heaven between the LORD and Satan concerning Job? (Job 1-2)
8. Or Zechariah's vision of the angel in Zec 1?
9. Or our LORD's confrontation with Satan in Luke 4?
10. Or the many battles with demons Jesus had throughout the Gospels?
11. Or Paul casting a spirit of divination out of a girl in Acts 16?
12. Or Paul's warnings to the church that Satan tries to transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor 11:4), seeks to take advantage of the church (2 Cor 4:11), and to beware of devilish snares (1 Tim 3:7)?

The Importance of having a Supernatural Worldview

Ephesians 6:10-12 (KJV) *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

In Ephesians, after issuing various commands for the church based on the glorious Gospel of Christ, including unity, holiness, sanctified speaking, walking in love, being filled with the Spirit, and submitting ourselves one to another (wives to husbands, children to parents, and servants to masters), Paul commands the church to engage in the spiritual war in Ephesians 6.

Indeed, *"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."* (2 Cor 4:4)

The war is real!

1 Peter 5:8-9 (KJV) *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

The church must know what she is up against! Paul said, *"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. 21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. 22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?"* (1 Cor 10:20-22)

Praise the Lord that "...the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8) "He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him." (Col 2:15)

1. I simply love the imperative given: "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." If we are commanded to be strong, that means we can be!
2. Given that we don't fight the way the world does ("for the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds," 2 Cor 10:4), the armor is given in spiritual terms.
 - **CRC, we cannot fight the devil with a real sword; you need a spiritual one! (v17). Not an actual helmet, but a confidence in one's salvation (v17)! Not an iron shield but one of iron faith that trusts God regardless of what comes (v16)! Not a soldier's boot, but feet that walk in peace produced by the Gospel (v15). Not the heavy belt**

and breastplates needed in carnal hostilities, but a belief in the Truth and a life lived in righteousness based on Christ's holiness (v14)!

3. The goal of the armor is resistance of and victory over spiritual wickedness in the "evil day." The goal is to be able, by God's grace and for God's glory, to stand firm!
4. So let us understand a bit more of what we are dealing with.
 - First, we are *wrestling*. The image of two people "wrestling" is instructive. This is "hand to hand" combat. This is "in-close" fighting. The goal of wrestling is to completely subdue your opponent until he "taps out."
 - Those of you who have wrestled know how physically demanding and exhausting it is. Those of you who have fought physically also know that "everyone needs a ground game" since many fights end up as wrestling matches. ;)
 - Our wrestling however is not against "flesh and blood." We are engaged in a demanding, ongoing, vicious, and brutal fight against spiritual forces!
5. Look at the words Paul uses. From the King James:

Principalities. *Archē* in Greek. It means "chief (in various applications of order, time, place or rank): - beginning, corner, the first (estate), magistrate, power, principality, principle, rule." The 1828 Webster defines it as, "The territory of a prince." It implies in context, wicked spiritual beings high in rank; think evil "archangels."

Powers. *Exousia* in Greek. ESV translates this "authorities." To me, this is more a description of the beings in view rather than a class of beings. The idea here is that they have real influence. The word means "*privilege*, that is, (subjectively) *force, capacity, competency, freedom*, or (objectively) *mastery*, jurisdiction, liberty, right, strength." The spirit beings, for the time being, have a real impact.

Rulers (of the darkness). *Kosmokratōr* in Greek. A "world ruler" and another name for Satan. Kosmos means "world system." When we studied James 4:4, we defined kosmos as a "'harmonious arrangement or order' of the 'ungodly multitude' that fights against our LORD. It is a satanically inspired system of ideologies, philosophies, governments, and jurisdictions."

We are fighting "Satan and his angels" dear friends (Rev 12:9), as well as "unclean spirits."

- **John 12:31 (KJV)** *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*
- **2 Corinthians 4:3-4 (KJV)** *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*
- **Luke 11:24-26 (KJV)** *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. 25 And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. 26 Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.*

Spiritual wickedness (in high places). *Spiritual* is *pneumatikos* and means the *non-carnal, ethereal* (otherworldly), *supernatural beings in high or heavenly places*. *Wickedness* is the Greek *ponēria*. It means "depraved, full of malice and sinful plotting." (Strong's)

I'm SO glad that, *"the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."* (2 Cor 10:4) We must not fight as the world does!

6. MacDonald writes *"This warfare is not a matter of contending against godless philosophers, crafty priests, Christ-denying cultists, or infidel rulers. The battle is against demonic forces, against battalions of fallen angels, against evil spirits who wield tremendous power. Though we cannot see them, we are constantly surrounded by wicked spirit-beings. While it is true that they cannot indwell a true believer, they can oppress and harass him. The Christian should not be morbidly occupied with the subject of demonism; neither should he live in fear of demons. In the armor of God, he has all he needs to hold his ground against their onslaughts."*
7. Friends, we know Christ has defeated demonic powers. They know it too. But we, the LORD's Church, have been called to take ground. Remember that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church! (Matthew 16:18) That very image means the Church is on the attack; a gate is not an offensive weapon! May we be encouraged in the fight...

James 4:7 (KJV) Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Battling Principalities in Babylon!

Below are Spiritual War Articles we outlined fully in the 2021 message: "A Declaration of War."¹

Warring to Win!

1. Believe and Preach the Gospel (Matt 28:18-20; 1 Cor 12:3)
2. Armor up! (Eph 6:13-18)
3. Walk in Humility (1 Pet 5:5-9)
4. Resist ALL evil (Prov 8:13; Jam 4:7)
5. Practice Spiritual Disciplines!² Spiritual disciples serve the dual purpose of increasing our intimacy with God AND advancing our war against spiritual wickedness.
 - Spend time in prayer and family worship.
 - Read and memorize Scripture
 - Develop a biblical worldview
 - Walk in honesty and integrity
 - Grow in the proper attitude towards sin
 - Repent and forgive quickly
 - Speak kind and loving words
6. Stay connected to what Christ is victoriously building: the Local Church (Matt 16:18)!
7. Be prepared for the "unusual." Demonic activity is real. Although I don't believe that screaming at demons is normative (Jude 1:9), the possibility of confronting real devils in real life exists.

1 Timothy 4:1 (KJV) Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

¹ <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2021/7/a-declaration-of-war>

² Carlton C. McLeod, *A Biblically Healthy Household*, Part IV, 2021.

- Live holy and make fasting a part of your life. Pray for discernment. Be ready.
- Do NOT be like the seven sons of Sceva who had no real relationship with Christ but chose to engage a man possessed with an evil spirit; you'll lose! (Acts 19:13-16)

Do we really think our nation and communities have devolved to the current level of spiritual depravity without influence from spiritual wickedness? The battle is on CRC! Trust Christ and engage!

Amen!