

**Warfare In the Real World with Joshua
We Do Not Recognize the Enemy
Because We Do Not Think He Is Real**

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As we have followed YAHWEH and His revelation to us in the Old Testament, we have picked up on some rather world view changing stuff.

There was not one rebellion in Genesis, but rather three:

1. Genesis 3
2. Genesis 6
3. Genesis 11

YAHWEH created divine beings; we usually refer to them by one of their job titles – angels; but they have many more names. These divine beings were created with free will.

YAHWEH also created man, Adam and Eve. They also had free will.

Both groups rebelled, all of man rebelled but not all the divine beings, and not all at one time. YAHWEH has a Council, currently with non-rebellious divine being members as members.

As per Revelation 4 and 1 Corinthians 6:3, those members will be replaced at a future date with believers, the church after we are glorified.

Some of the divine beings who were placed in charge of the nations in Genesis 11 and Deuteronomy 32 became corrupted and rebelled demanding worship in place of YAHWEH (Matthew 4:9).

YAHWEH has not changed His plans, He is still intent on establishing His dwelling place with His creation. He is intent on bringing about Eden again here on earth; but His way, not man's way (Genesis 11) or fallen divine beings way (Genesis 6).

We see Him in the person of Jesus Christ making the ultimate payment on the cross and then sealing the deal with His resurrection from the dead.

We learned from Jeremiah 32 that these were typically sealed and we see in Revelation that the Lamb who slain is the only one able to take the title deed to the earth and open the seals.

Today's Reality

The spiritual warfare we have looked at so far in the scriptures is not solely a past event. It continues on today. This is not something that ended back in the day, it is a real reality for today.

Hence for all their emphasis on the radical uniqueness, sole eternality and absolute sovereignty of Yahweh, biblical authors generally assume the existence of intermediary spiritual or cosmic beings. These beings, variously termed "gods," "angels," "principalities and powers," "demons," or, in the earliest strata, "Leviathan" or some other cosmic monster, can and do wage war against God, wreak havoc on his creation and bring all manner of ills upon humanity. Whether portraying Yahweh as warring against Rahab and other cosmic monsters of chaos or depicting Jesus as casting out a legion of demons from the possessed Gerasene, the Bible as well as the early postapostolic church assumes that the creation is caught up in the crossfire of an age-old cosmic battle between good and evil. As in other warfare worldviews, the Bible assumes that the course of this warfare greatly affects life on earth. (Boyd 1997, 18)

There is a cosmic war going on. This war has lasted for thousands of years. It continues today, we are going to look at one of many occurrences where it also reflects in the physical world as those who have opted to follow the fallen ones take up their cause to deter what it is YAHWEH is doing here on earth with His people.

Ephesians 6:10–17

Finally, be strong in the Lord, relying on his mighty strength. Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the devil's strategies. For our struggle is not against human opponents, but against rulers, authorities, cosmic powers in the darkness around us, and evil spiritual forces in the heavenly realm. For this reason, take up the whole armor of God so that you may be able to take a stand whenever evil comes. And when you have done everything you could, you will be able to stand firm. Stand firm, therefore, having fastened the belt of truth around your waist, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and being firm-footed in the gospel of peace. In addition to having clothed yourselves with these things, having taken up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to put out all the flaming arrows of the evil one, also take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (ISV)

As believers, we are in a war, we are faithful and loyal to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who Himself was and is fully engaged with the enemy. As in all combat operations, there are times of relative ease which makes us complacent, because there are firefights going on all the time. Don't let down your guard.

The moral issues with which he deals are not simply matters of personal preference, as many within our contemporary and postmodern world contend. On the contrary, they are essential elements in a larger struggle between the forces of good and evil. Throughout this paragraph on spiritual warfare Paul's sustained imagery is drawn from the prophecy of Isaiah, which describes the armour of Yahweh and his Messiah (11:4–5; 59:17; cf. 49:2; 52:7). The Isaianic references depict the Lord of hosts as a warrior dressed for battle as he goes forth to vindicate his people. The 'full armour of God' which the readers are

urged to put on as they engage in a deadly spiritual warfare (v. 11) is Yahweh's own armour, which he and his Messiah have worn and which is now provided for his people as they engage in battle. (O'Brien 1999, 457)

Ephesians 6:18–20

“Pray in the Spirit at all times with every kind of prayer and request. Likewise, be alert with your most diligent efforts and pray for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that, when I begin to speak, the right words will come to me. Then I will boldly make known the secret of the gospel, for whose sake I am an ambassador in chains, desiring to declare the gospel as boldly as I should.” (ISV)

...Paul does not specifically mention prayer as part of the Christian's “armor,” in this context it is most certainly seen as a warfare strategy, just as it was in the teaching of Jesus. Immediately after mentioning “the word of God” as “the sword of the Spirit” Paul adds, “Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication” (6: 18). As if this were not enough, he adds further, “To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.” The injunction to “keep alert” while we pray is yet another clear indication that prayer is here portrayed as something a soldier does. It is, in short, an act of war. (Boyd 1997, 281-282)

As we will see with Joshua, everything we engage in has a spiritual aspect to it. Who are we serving? Do we really think we can assume things are different? Have we forgotten about the gods of today?

I found the implications of that ancient view staggering. It means that every business, corporation, school, denomination, bureaucracy, sports team— indeed, social reality in all its forms— is a combination of both visible and invisible, outer and inner, physical and spiritual. (Wink 1998, Kindle Locations 89-91)

In other words, this cosmic warfare is not a thing of the past, nor is it a war that occurs “in the heavens,” nor is it a war that God fights alone. To the contrary, the thrust of this last group of passages is to proclaim that this war is a present struggle, it occurs in human history, and it very much involves the human race, especially those who know God. The insight is that all who name the name of the Lord are called to identify and resist, in the power of God, the structural forces of evil that work to thwart God's plan for the earth in general and for humanity in particular. When we fight, we do not do so on our own power, but God himself reenacts his primal victory over these destructive forces through us. For the ancient Israelites, there was no bifurcation between what occurs “in heaven” and what occurs “on earth,” and neither should there be with us, if our perspective is to be truly biblical. We might (and must) express and apply this ancient biblical conviction in our own times by identifying and then resisting “the cosmic serpent” in the structural evil that besieges our own culture and the church of God. For example, when we resist the spiritual complacency and empty religiosity that has deeply infected much of Western Christianity at a structural level, we participate in God's cosmic battle with Leviathan. (Boyd 1997, 89-90)

Joshua will reflect real warfare, but there is a spiritual component. Has this been visible in recent history?

The current geopolitical turmoil regarding Jerusalem.

- North Korea
- Stalin
- World War Two
- World War One
- The current culture “wars” here in the US

Deuteronomy 2:18–23

“Today you are to cross the border of Moab at Ar. And when you approach the territory of the people of Ammon, do not harass them or contend with them, for I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the sons of Lot for a possession.” (It is also counted as a land of Rephaim. Rephaim formerly lived there—but the Ammonites call them Zamzummim— a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim; but the LORD destroyed them before the Ammonites, and

they dispossessed them and settled in their place, as he did for the people of Esau, who live in Seir, when he destroyed the Horites before them and they dispossessed them and settled in their place even to this day. As for the Avvim, who lived in villages as far as Gaza, the Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them and settled in their place.) (ESV)

Ouch

The first king to go down would be Sihon, an Amorite.

For an Israelite, all this meant that the native population of Canaan had a supernaturally sinister point of origin. This wouldn't be just a battle for land. It was a battle between Yahweh and the other gods—gods who had raised up competing human bloodlines that were opposed to Yahweh's plan and people. (Heiser 2015, 197)

Before moving to far from this, I want to take a look at some other scriptures which talk about YAHWEH leading His people and notice something in them. Again, remember how brazen the fallen were at God's mountain and the resulting calf problem.

Habakkuk 3:3–5

“God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. The brightness was like the sun; rays came forth from his hand, where his power lay hidden. Before him went pestilence, and plague followed close behind.” (NRSV)

Notice what goes before God and what follows after Him.

- Pestilence = Deber
- Plague = Reseph

These just happen to also be the names of two Canaanite “gods.” God is more than willing to use them knowing them as He does.

Deber

More cogent is the parallelism with →Resheph in Hab 3:14, given the presence of this deity in the Ugaritic texts as a god of destruction (KTU 1.14 I 18–19; 1.82:3; DE MOOR & SPRONK 1984:239). The eschatological hymn in Hab 3 presents Deber and Resheph marching at Yahweh's side as His helpers. This follows the ancient Mesopotamian tradition according to which ‘plague’ and ‘pestilence’ are present in the entourage of the great god Marduk (DE MOOR 1990:134). (Lete 1999, 232)

Resheph

It is the name of one of the most popular West-Semitic gods, venerated in Syria, Palestine and Egypt. (Xella 1999, 701)

From Deuteronomy 32, one of the curses if the people do not remain faithful.

Deuteronomy 32:24

“They will be wasted by famine, and emaciated by plague (Resheph) And a bitter epidemic (Qeteb); And the teeth of beasts I will send against them, With the venom of crawling things of the dust.” (NASB 2020)

Both are names of Canaanite “gods.” What?

Resheph and his pals were subordinate to Yahweh, inferior entities tasked with carrying out His orders whether they wanted to or not. They were not freelancing on their own authority. (Gilbert 2017, Kindle Locations 2055-2056)

By the way, by the time of the Greeks, Resheph has a new name, Apollo.

Is Apollo in the Bible?

Revelation 9:11

“They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name **Apollyon**.” (NASB 2020)

Apollyon is just another name for Apollo, and the historical evidence that Apollo is Resheph is solid. Archaeologists have found two inscriptions on the island of Cyprus that specifically identify Apollo as Resheph. (Gilbert 2017, Kindle Locations 2080-2081)

Yet the textual occurrences of this god are chiefly concentrated in Cyprus. Here we find traces of the ancient Ugaritic tradition of the Archer-God, which merged with the figure of an archaic local Apollo. (Xella 1999, 702)

God has led His people to this point and not only is He judging the gods being followed by the Amorites, who have also decided to engage the services of giants, but He is also using these “gods,” former members of His divine council, to achieve His purpose. Remember, YAHWEH is omniscient – His council is not.

Deuteronomy 2:26–30

““So I sent messengers from the wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace, saying, ‘Let me pass through your land; I will travel only on the road. I will not turn aside to the right or to the left. You will sell me food for money so that I may eat, and give me water for money so that I may drink, only let me pass through on foot, just as the sons of Esau who live in Seir and the Moabites who live in Ar did for me, until I cross over the Jordan into the land that the LORD our God is giving us.’ But Sihon king of Heshbon was not willing for us to pass through his land; for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, in order to hand him over to you, as he is today.” (NASB 2020)

Why Sihon? Well, he is an Amorite and we saw in Genesis 15 that Abraham was told that the iniquity of the Amorite was not quite full yet. But what is it exactly that they were doing that would result in YAHWEH using Israel to judge them?

Amos 2:9–10

“Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, Though his height was like the height of cedars And he was as strong as the oaks; I also destroyed his fruit above and his roots below. And it was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt, And led you in the wilderness for forty years So that you might take possession of the land of the Amorite.” (NASB 2020)

Remember the report of the spies, giants in the land, descendants of the Nephilim. For the people of Israel, this would tie the residents back to the problems seen in Genesis 6 and would show to them that those they were to destroy or displace had aligned with the fallen ones who are in rebellion to YAHWEH.

This wouldn't be just a battle for land. It was a battle between Yahweh and the other gods—gods who had raised up competing human bloodlines that were opposed to Yahweh's plan and people. (Heiser 2015, 197)

Sihon was allied with Og, who lived a bit further north. Notice the general area is one which today we call the Golan Heights. It is also the home of Mt Hermon as well as the Gates of Hell. For the Jew, demon central. As a result, the fact they are fighting against giants is not all that unusual and again brings back to mind the activities in Genesis 6

Deuteronomy 3:1–11

“Then we turned and went up the way to Bashan. And Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. But the LORD said to me, ‘Do not fear him, for I have given him and all his people and his land into your hand. And you shall do to him as you did to Sihon the king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon.’ So the LORD our God gave into our hand Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people, and we struck him down until he had no survivor left. And we took all his cities at that time—there was not a city that we did not take from them—sixty cities, the whole region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. All these were cities fortified with high walls, gates, and bars, besides very many unwalled villages. And we devoted them to destruction, as we did to Sihon the king of Heshbon, devoting to destruction every city, men, women, and children. But all the livestock and the spoil of the cities we took as our plunder. So we took the land at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, from the Valley of the Arnon to Mount Hermon (the Sidonians call Hermon Sirion, while the Amorites call it Senir), all the cities of the tableland and all Gilead and all Bashan, as far as Salecah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. (For only Og the king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaim. Behold, his bed was a bed of iron. Is it not in Rabbah of the Ammonites? Nine cubits was its length, and four cubits its breadth, according to the common cubit.)” (ESV)

By the way – that is 6 x 13 feet. Og was a giant and what the scriptures report to us about him is factual, not fanciful. Jewish tradition though has added a bit to this. This is to show the difference between God’s word, and some fanciful attempts to embellish.

Jewish Tradition

During the battle of Edrei (Num. 21:33) Og sat on the city wall, his legs, which were eighteen ells long, reaching down to the ground; Moses did not know what monster he had before him until God told him that it was Og. Og hurled an entire mountain against the Israelites, but Moses intercepted it (Deut. R. l.c.). According to another legend, Og uprooted a mountain three miles long, intending to destroy all Israel at once by hurling it upon their camp, which was also three miles in length; but while he was carrying it upon his head a swarm of locusts burrowed through it, so that it fell round his neck. When he attempted to throw off this unwieldy necklace long teeth grew from both sides of his mouth and kept the mountain in place. Thereupon Moses, who was himself ten ells tall, took an ax of equal length, jumped upward ten ells, so that he could reach Og’s ankles, and thus killed him (Ber. 54b). Shabbat (151b) and ‘Erubin (48a) also indicate that Og was regarded as an unusually large giant. A legend says that a grave-digger pursued a stag three miles inside of one of Og’s bones without reaching the other end (Niddah 24b). (Singer 1901 - 1906, 388)

So, Og was a giant, but why the specific measurements of his bed? The bed is a duplicate to another one.

The iron bed of Og may be conceived as a battle trophy signaling his utter defeat at the hands of the Israelite warrior god. As a booty, the bed fits the context (Deut 3:1–11), a conquest account that appears to incorporate Neo-Assyrian military motifs. The bed should be considered in light of royal beds seized by invading Assyrian armies. As a war trophy, the size and substance of Og’s bed take on greater import. Its size attests to the stature of Og and supports Deuteronomy’s claim that Og was one of the giant Rephaim. The dimensions of the bed correspond to those of another famous bed, that of Marduk. By setting Og’s bed alongside the bed of a major deity, the author likens Og to a god and bolsters his status as a superhuman warrior. The iron material of Og’s bed further emphasizes the fearsomeness of this enemy defeated by YHWH. (Lindquist 2012)

Its dimensions (9 × 4 cubits) are precisely those of the cultic bed in the ziggurat called Etemenanki—which is the ziggurat most archaeologists identify as the Tower of Babel referred to in the Bible. Ziggurats functioned as temples and divine abodes. The unusually large bed at Etemenanki was housed in “the house of the bed” (bit erši). It was the place where the god Marduk and his divine wife, Zarpanitu, met

annually for ritual lovemaking, the purpose of which was divine blessing upon the land. (Heiser 2015, 198-199)

Multiple sites in the ancient Near East have been tentatively identified as the Tower of Babel. In 1899, Robert Koldewey discovered the remains of the Babylonian ziggurat known as Etemenanki (Sumerian É.TEMEN.AN.KI, meaning “house of the foundation of heaven and earth”), which is often considered the “real” Tower of Babel. Few remains of this ziggurat have been uncovered, since its materials were looted and reused for later buildings. However, two cuneiform texts have allowed scholars to reconstruct the size and shape of the temple-tower (Wiseman, “A Babylonian Architect?” 141–47) (Caiafa 2016)

For the average Jew, this ties back to the events of Genesis 11 as well as the events of Genesis 6. They are already in the place of the serpent, Bashan, later called in the New Testament era, the Gates of Hell. All of the ideas taking place are put together in Joshua.

Joshua 12:2–5

“Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon and ruled from Aroer, which is on the edge of the Valley of the Arnon, both the middle of the valley and half of Gilead, even as far as the brook Jabbok, the border of the sons of Ammon; and the Arabah as far as the Sea of Chinneroth toward the east, and as far as the Sea of the Arabah, that is, the Salt Sea, eastward toward Beth-jeshimoth, and on the south, at the foot of the slopes of Pisgah; and the territory of Og king of Bashan, one of the remnant of Rephaim, who lived at Ashtaroth and at Edrei, and ruled over Mount Hermon, Salecah, and all Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and half of Gilead, as far as the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.” (NASB 2020)

The east side of the Sea of Galilee as well as Mt Hermon (1 Enoch 6 and Genesis 6).

Remember that 1 Enoch makes the case that demons are the disembodied spirits of the Nephilim and Mt Hermon is where the watchers descended and began the rebellion of Genesis 6 which was only resolved by the flood.

Just the name “Hermon” would have caught the attention of Israelite and Jewish readers. In Hebrew it’s pronounced khermon. The noun has the same root as a verb that is of central importance in Deuteronomy 3 and the conquest narratives: kharam, “to devote to destruction.” This is the distinct verb of holy war, the verb of extermination. It has deep theological meaning, a meaning explicitly connected to the giant clans God commanded Joshua and his armies to eradicate. (Heiser 2015, 201)

Mark 5:1–13

“Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.” For He said to him, “Come out of the man, unclean spirit!” Then He asked him, “What is your name?” And he answered, saying, “My name is Legion; for we are many.” Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. So all the demons begged Him, saying, “Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.” And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.” (NKJV)

Jesus intentionally travelled to Bashan, the place of the serpent, demon central. The same area that was known for being the home of Og. By the way, one of the tribes that did not want to be on the west side of the Jordan asked for the area, note what it is called.

Deuteronomy 3:13

“The rest of Gilead and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to the half-tribe of Manasseh, all the region of Argob. (As to all Bashan, it is called the land of Rephaim.” (NASB 2020)

Moses was involved in these actions, but from this point on it was up to Joshua. He was uniquely prepared of God to be in the role of leader and warrior, both physically and spiritually.

Another thing is clearly seen in God’s preparation of Joshua: Joshua was reminded of the interplay between the seen and the unseen worlds. There is no vast chasm between them; the unseen world is right here. The unseen world is always immediately present, not far-off. Above everything and overshadowing everything is the reality of God in His glory. It undoubtedly stood Joshua in good stead many times in the future for him to understand that God was close at hand, that He is the God who exists and who is “here.” (Schaeffer 1982, 155-156)

The central focus in the promised land was to deal with the bloodline of the Nephilim, Israel was to be a tool of God’s judgement.

A term used in relation to it is keherem.

The common English translations of the Hebrew word *herem* (ASV “utterly destroy”; NIV “destroy totally”; CEB “place under the ban”; NET “utterly annihilate”; ESV “devote to destruction”) are misleading because they imply that the word specifies something that happens to the object (that is, it is destroyed). Alternatively, we suggest that the word actually refers to the removal of something from human use. The emphasis is not on the object but on everyone around the object; “no one shall make use of this.” (Walton and Walton 2017, 169-170)

There is a gene pool problem in the promised land that has to be dealt with. When looking at what God is asking of the nation and His intentionally beginning the actions with a direct encounter with a giant, God is attacking the spies who gave the bad report and He is also telegraphing the reason for the actions, to reverse the rebellion of the nations who are following the false fallen ones.

The Nephilim bloodlines had a different pedigree. They were produced by other divine beings. They did not belong to Yahweh, and he therefore had no interest in claiming them. Coexistence was not possible with the spawn of other gods. (Heiser 2015, 203)

As Joshua entered the land with the nation, there were some places that were devoted to destruction, such as Jericho and Ai. There were other places where they were not and many of them left.

As Joshua began his first direct action on Jericho, he had a meeting with the pre-incarnate Christ. Again, this is a physical war, but it is also a war against the fallen ones in the unseen realm.

Joshua 5:13–15

“Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, he raised his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us or for our enemies?” He said, “No; rather I have come now as captain of the army of the LORD.” And Joshua fell on his face to the ground, and bowed down, and said to him, “What has my lord to say to his servant?” And the captain of the LORD’S army said to Joshua, “Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.” (NASB 2020)

We read in the NASB and see the term, the LORD’s host. I used to pass over what that really meant.

סָבַח – sabah - army, war, warfare. (Brown, Driver and Briggs 1977, 838)

This is the commanding general of YHWH’s Army. A spiritual war, yes, as well as a physical one.

Excavators found that Jericho was protected by a brilliant defensive system. At its base, there was a stone retaining wall more than 15 feet high with a defensive extension wall of mudbricks rising still higher. Beyond this, there was the rampart, a steep slope covered with a slick surface of white plaster, where attackers would have been exposed to arrows and sling stones from above. At the top of this rampart was the main city wall, also made of mudbricks. This main city wall was more than 25 feet high and 10 feet thick. (Mahoney and Law 2015, Kindle Locations 3882-3884)

Why such tall walls? Anyplace there were Anakim, no one would be left alive. We will finish up Joshua next week and look at Judges.

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