

EPHESIANS PART VII; WHERE DID PAUL FIND THE POWERS?

Last week we talked about Paul and the Powers. We also allowed Paul to define those powers. The powers, as we saw last week are a common theme in Paul's letters and theology. Paul would have serious issues with anyone who saw the gospel as dealing only with sin and rebellion on a personal level. What I mean by that is Paul would have taken umbrage with anyone who thought the gospel accomplished ONLY getting us from Hell to Heaven. The Gospel solved more than that issue. It was not simply a human rebellion that brought the need for the gospel. There was another rebellion that brought about the human rebellion and both rebellions had to be remedied. Jesus' death and resurrection solved both issues. Therefore, it is incomplete to say that the gospel is concerned only with humanity. Jesus stated that His kingdom was near prior to His death and resurrection. In order for a king to take control from hostile forces, those forces have to be dealt with properly. Therefore, sin among humanity AND the powers behind that rebellion had to be confronted. With Paul, as we saw last week, you can't have one without the other.

We saw that the powers are both earthly and heavenly. Paul goes back and forth as he refers to both groups as being in opposition to God's plan. They are linked, whether the earthly authorities know it or not. Paul's theology on this is more complex than some might think, for he also argues that the powers were created by God and are ordained by God. Does that mean that God is responsible for the evil brought about by the powers? That can't be, due to the character of God. So, what happened? What can we learn from this? What we see, as is obvious with humanity and the way power and authority is often handled by us, is that what God created, and saw was good at the outset can go wrong. We can also see how "good" things, such as power and authority can be used in the wrong, or a wrong way.

We have all heard of the Nobel Peace Prize. These awards were set up and funded by Alfred Nobel. What some may not be aware of is why Nobel used his fortune to endow these prizes. In 1866 Nobel invented dynamite. Being involved in the mining, he invented dynamite to use in the process of digging mines. He was also involved in arms manufacturing, and because of this new invention, was afraid that if it was used in war, it would bring about more suffering and death than man had ever known. To counter this, and possibly to counter his conscience, he established the Nobel Peace Prize in his later life, prior to his death. This illustrates what we see all the time. Most anything, no matter "good" it is, and no matter how much they benefit mankind can be used in a bad way. Things and people can "go wrong." The internet is a good thing, or it can be. But it can also be the purveyor of trash and false information. That also goes for television or the printing press. That is what happened early in the history of mankind. And that is where we have to go in order to find out where Paul got his belief and theology of the

powers. Therefore, as is our habit, whenever we pull on a thread, we start at the beginning and follow that thread through the Bible.

At creation, God brought order out of chaos. He began this by separating the darkness, where life doesn't prosper or flourish, and the light, where things can grow.

Gen. 1:3 And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Having done this on day one, God then delegates this separation/ separating to the greater and lesser lights, (through them, as well as others) on day four.

Gen. 1:14 And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for ⁱsigns and for ^jseasons,⁶ and for days and years,¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶ And God ^kmade the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to **rule** the night—and the stars. ¹⁷ And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to ^lrule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

Rule - 4910. מַשַּׁל *mashal*, *maw-shal'*; a primitive root; to rule: — (have, make to have) dominion, governor, x indeed, reign, (bear, cause to, have) rule (-ing, -r), have power.

These lights were not named. God referred to them as the greater and lesser light, following up with a generic, “and the stars.” Notice that the two lights aren't given names, and neither are the stars. This was done, polemically. In the pagan world, nature and creation are/ become gods. Not so in the bible. There is only one God, YHWH. But look at what eventually happens as mankind seeks to go its own way.

Deut. 4:15 “Therefore watch yourselves very carefully. Since ^wyou saw no form on the day that the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, ¹⁶ beware ^xlest you act corruptly ^yby making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, ²the likeness of male or female, ¹⁷ the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, ¹⁸ the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth. ¹⁹ And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see ^athe sun and the moon and the stars, ^ball the host of heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, things that the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.

The Sun, moon and stars came to be worshipped. (this passage is given in the context of the Baal of Peor; pagan gods/ goddesses). Look at verse 19. These lights are referred to as all the host of heaven.

Gen. 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and ^wall the host of them.

Deut. 17:3 and has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, or ^mthe sun or the moon or any of the host of heaven, ⁿwhich I have forbidden,

Now look at this.

1Kings 22:19 And Micaiah said, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD: ^fI saw the LORD sitting on his throne, ^gand all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left;

We now see the host of heaven personified, as it were, standing on either of God in a Divine Council scene.

Neh. 9:6 ^{2 d}“You are the LORD, you alone. ^eYou have made heaven, ^fthe heaven of heavens, ^gwith all their host, ^ethe earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; ^hand you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.

See if this doesn’t ring a bell in light of what Paul has been saying.

Is. 24:21 On that day the LORD will punish
the host of heaven, in heaven,
and ^ethe kings of the earth, on the earth.

Here we have both the host of heaven as well as the kings of the earth. How does that square with Paul says?

Jer. 19:13 The houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah—^ball the houses on whose ^croofs offerings have been offered ^dto all the host of heaven, and ^edrink offerings have been poured out to other gods—shall be defiled ^alike the place of Topheth.”

Israel came to worship this host. We can see that the host is more than just planets, stars, sun and moon. Those are the natural creation that came to represent the beings known as the host when a portion of them decided to rebel. They wanted more than they were given. One of those was the serpent in the garden. But he was only the first of a much larger group. It is here that we see the host referred to by another name.

Gen. 6:1 When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, ² the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. ³ Then the LORD said, ^z“My Spirit shall not abide in¹ man forever, ^afor he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.” ⁴ The Nephilim² were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

5303. נִפְּלִי nphiyl, *nef-eel'*; or נִפְּלִי nphil, *nef-eel'*; from 5307; properly, a feller, i.e. a bully or tyrant:—giant.

Nephil, not nephal.

Job 1:6 Now there was a day when ^kthe sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and ^lSatan² also came among them.

Job 2:1 Again ^mthere was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD.

Job 38:4 “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell me, if you have understanding.

5 Who determined its measurements—surely you know!
Or who stretched the line upon it?

6 On what were its bases sunk,
or who laid its cornerstone,

7 when the morning stars vsang together
and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

The host, the council, the sons of God are one and the same.

It is after this that God floods the earth and the story starts over with Noah and his family. What are they to do? They are to repopulate the earth. They are to spread out over the earth. However, they rebel, build a tower and vow to stay in the same region from whence Noah's family settled. This is the story of the Tower of Babel. God then came down and scattered the people by changing their languages according to tribes, clans and families. Pentecost reverses this, hence, the tongues and the nations listed there that correspond with the nations listed in the Table of Nations in Genesis 10. Explain why this had to happen and how it was mercy and not JUST a judgment. In this it is like when Adam and Eve were exiled from the garden. It was a consequence and a judgment, but it was also merciful in that they didn't need to live forever in their sin.

What else happened at the scattering of the people?

Dt. 32:7-9

⁷ ^yRemember the days of old;

consider the years of many generations;
^zask your father, and he will show you,
 your elders, and they will tell you.
 8 When the Most High ^agave to the nations their inheritance,
 when he ^bdivided mankind,
 he fixed the borders¹ of the peoples
 according to the number of the sons of God.²
 9 But the LORD's portion is his people,
 Jacob his allotted heritage.

(Explain all this).

Psa. 82:1 ^mGod ⁿhas taken his place in the divine council;
 in the midst of ^pthe gods he ^qholds judgment:
 2 "How long will you judge unjustly
 and ^rshow partiality to ^sthe wicked? *Selah*
 3 ^tGive justice to ^uthe weak and the fatherless;
^vmaintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.
 4 ^wRescue the weak and the needy;
^xdeliver them from the hand of the wicked."

Psa. 82:5 ^yThey have neither knowledge nor understanding,
^zthey walk about in darkness;
^aall the foundations of the earth are ^bshaken.

Psa. 82:6 ^cI said, "You are gods,
 sons of the Most High, all of you;
 7 nevertheless, like men ^dyou shall die,
 and fall like any prince."

(Explain)

This battle had been going on since the beginning. It continued throughout the OT.

Ex. 12:12

¹² For ^pI will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on ^qall the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: 'I am the LORD.

Who was being struck in the 10th plague? The firstborn sons AND the gods of Egypt. Why the firstborn sons? Normally, the firstborn son was the one who inherited everything. Of course, we know God often ignored that custom. What was the first instance God ignored that custom? The Host of Heaven were created first and were to rule over the heavenlies. But then God made mankind and gave dominion of the earth to them, the last to be created in His image, (status and rank, not looking like God). This jealousy is what caused the serpent to enter the garden in

Genesis 3. It is what caused Cain to kill Abel. It is what caused Ham to do what he did to his mother, siring Canaan, who was a pain in the side of Israel.

Questions:

1. Who was the chief god of the Egyptian pantheon? It was Ra, the sun god. The Egyptians had made Ra, the sun, supreme. Who was struck in Egypt? The firstborn, (literal in Egypt as well as the council) which included Ra.
2. Who separated the light from the darkness in the beginning and created the sun? It was the one true God, YHWH.

The plagues were a de-creation in which God made a statement that He was the only true God and more powerful than the sun/ Ra. This is the same thing that happened when Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel.

Paul believed that there was a war going on that had begun shortly after creation. And it was this war that was responsible for the mess the world was in then as well as now. Jesus conquered those powers with victory over death. In chapter four Paul makes another statement concerning Jesus' victory over the powers – the ones who enslave people in sin. However, we no longer have to be enslaved. If we are enslaved it is because we have, in one way or another, walked into the slaver's camp and given ourselves to him. This is the imagery of God leading Israel out of their bondage.

Will we follow Jesus in order to be led out of our bondage?