

# PAUL AND THE POWERS III (Ephesians PartVIII)

What Actually Happened?

Today we will wrap up our portion of Ephesians that deals with “the powers.” I know it seems like we have been on this for an inordinate amount of time, but if you read Paul’s letters you can see that he also spends some time talking about this. Why? Because for Paul, he must educate folks on what Jesus has done. You may say, “I thought Jesus died for our sins.” Well, He did, but that is not all that was accomplished on the cross. Many people don’t know that, or at least they don’t fully comprehend what means.

Paul explains that the powers are responsible for why things are the way they are. The powers have enslaved people to sin since the beginning. And to whom is Paul speaking, especially in Galatians? He is speaking to Gentiles and explaining to them how they have now been grafted into the family of God from which they were once estranged. How were they enslaved? They were enslaved by the powers who have, among other things, led them into the paganism that was their world. They understood what Paul was saying. They knew about councils of gods and the struggle in the heavenly realm. But their understanding was skewed due to the powers themselves. Paul is having to re-educate them. He is having to de-construct and then rebuild their worldview. And that is what happens whenever someone comes to Christ. Their worldview has to be reset or rebooted in the modern vernacular.

Let’s finish what up this week with where it is that Paul got this theology.

**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. They are to carry out the Dominion Mandate just as Adam and Eve were. 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. Some see this as a curse, but the Jews wouldn't have seen it this way, and today most still don't. This was God acting in mercy just as He did when He expelled Adam and Eve from the garden. Was it exile? Yes, and we see how that works in Torah. But look at what God did. In both cases, He has removed humanity from something that would at some point bring their doom and judgment. Had Adam and Eve been allowed to continue in the garden, they would have still had access to the tree of life. And therefore, the logic goes, they would have lived forever in their sinful state, piling up judgment. Had God not scattered the people at the tower, then they would, as He said, been capable of anything. That may sound like a good thing, but they were in rebellion and every thought of their hearts was evil. Therefore, God acted in love and mercy. The OT God is not an ogre while Jesus is a hippy. That is not what the Bible says.

Pentecost reverses this scattering, hence, the tongues and the nations listed there that correspond with the nations listed in the Table of Nations in Genesis 10. What does this then do? It allows for the gospel to go throughout the known world and reclaim the nations as well as sacred space in order that God can have one big family.

What else happened at the scattering of the people?

#### **Dt. 32:7-9**

- <sup>7</sup> **Remember the days of old;  
consider the years of many generations;  
<sup>z</sup>ask your father, and he will show you,  
your elders, and they will tell you.**
- <sup>8</sup> **When the Most High <sup>a</sup>gave to the nations their inheritance,  
when he <sup>b</sup>divided mankind,  
he fixed the borders<sup>1</sup> of the peoples  
according to the number of the sons of God.<sup>2</sup>**
- <sup>9</sup> **But the LORD's portion is his people,  
Jacob his allotted heritage.**

(Explain all this).

- Psa. 82:1      <sup>m</sup>God <sup>n</sup>has taken his place in the divine council;  
in the midst of <sup>p</sup>the gods he <sup>q</sup>holds judgment:**
- <sup>2</sup> **"How long will you judge unjustly  
and <sup>r</sup>show partiality to <sup>s</sup>the wicked? *Selah***
- <sup>3</sup> **<sup>t</sup>Give justice to <sup>u</sup>the weak and the fatherless;  
<sup>v</sup>maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.**
- <sup>4</sup> **<sup>w</sup>Rescue the weak and the needy;  
<sup>x</sup>deliver them from the hand of the wicked."**

**Psa. 82:5**      <sup>y</sup>They have neither knowledge nor understanding,  
                      <sup>z</sup>they walk about in darkness;  
                      <sup>a</sup>all the foundations of the earth are <sup>b</sup>shaken.

**Psa. 82:6**      <sup>c</sup>I said, "You are gods,  
                      sons of the Most High, all of you;  
<sup>7</sup>                nevertheless, like men <sup>d</sup>you 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**

<sup>12</sup> For <sup>p</sup>I 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 <sup>a</sup>all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: <sup>i</sup>I am the LORD.

This is de-creation, where God destroys the maat of Egypt, for which the Egyptian pantheon and Pharaoh are responsible.

Who was being struck in the 10<sup>th</sup> 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. We

will talk about that when we get there, but it goes hand in hand with what we have seen the last couple weeks.

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. Therefore, we have the imagery of God leading Israel out of their bondage through the Red Sea – another recreation. What did He create then? He created a new nation. What did He do in the NT? He created a new Israel, a new family. What happens when we accept Jesus? He creates a new person.

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