

Questions:

1. Have you ever read the Bible just for the narrative? Why or why not?
2. Listening to the narrative we have gotten through so far, has it helped your understanding of the Bible yet?
3. Do you see Jesus (or things pointing to Jesus) in the story we covered this week?
4. Saul and David were both anointed of the Lord; the difference was that Saul was after his own fame, whereas David was "after God's own heart." What do you think about this distinction in your own life?
5. What do you think of the portrayal of Spiritual Warfare in the Old Testament? Does it change your perspective of our battle against the spiritual forces of darkness? How so?

Recap

- God's name is Yahweh, which means HE IS.
- Yahweh created everything.
- Man lived in the Garden of Eden, where God dwelled with man face-to-face.
- Mankind and the angels rebelled a total of 3 times each.
 1. Garden
 2. Nephilim/Flood
 3. Tower of Babel/Disinheritance of the Nations.
- After the tower of Babel, Yahweh placed angels over the nations to rule them justly (Deuteronomy 32, Psalm 82). However, these angels themselves rebelled against Yahweh and received the worship of their allotted nations; they became the "gods of the nations."
- God made a nation for Himself through a man named Abraham.
- Abraham's descendants became numerous and were called the Israelites.
- The Israelites were enslaved in Egypt until God raised up Moses.
- Spiritual Warfare takes place against the gods of Egypt and their religious system.
- God's people leave Egypt for the promised land.
- When Israel got to the promised land, they refused to enter the land because of the Nephilim.
- After 40 years of wandering in the wilderness and fighting 2 Nephilim kings, Israel enters the promised land.
- In the promised land, the Israelites war against the Giants/Nephilim, wiping them out except for a few places where the remnant of the giants remained. This, too, is Spiritual Warfare taking place on Earth.
- Israel occupied the promised land but didn't destroy all the Giants.
- Israel began worshipping the gods of the nations.
- Yahweh gave Israel judges to bring Israel back to Yahweh, but once the Judge passed away, they quickly fell back into idolatry.
- After the judges, Israel desired a King to fight their battles for them.
- Samuel, the prophet, anointed a man named Saul, King of Israel.
- Saul was more concerned with how he looked in the eyes of the people than obeying Yahweh.
- Samuel anointed David, the second King of Israel.
- David defeated a giant named Goliath and served in Saul's court.

Saul vs. David

David quickly became a famous warrior in Israel. He became known as the most excellent soldier of Israel. This made Saul very angry and jealous. Saul, not wanting to kill David by his hand, gave David his daughter Michal, who loved David, as a bride. In return for a bride and becoming son-in-law to the king, David would be obligated to "be valiant for me and fight the LORD's battles" - 1 Samuel 18:17. But David did not back down; David went out and defeated the Philistines to pay the "bride-price" to Saul. This angered Saul all the more.

1 Samuel 19:9–10 (ESV)

9 [One day] a harmful spirit from the Lord came upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand. And David was playing the lyre. 10 And Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he eluded Saul, so that he struck the spear into the wall. And David fled and escaped that night.

David fled from Saul with the aid of his wife, Michal. David spends the next several years running from Saul. Several times, David had the opportunity to kill Saul but refused each time to touch the Lord's anointed. David understood that Yahweh Himself would take care of the evil that Saul was doing.

1 Samuel 26:9–11 (ESV)

9 But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him, for who can put out his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?" 10 And David said, "As the Lord lives, the Lord will strike him, or his day will come to die, or he will go down into battle and perish. 11 The Lord forbid that I should put out my hand against the Lord's anointed. But take now the spear that is at his head and the jar of water, and let us go."

Because of Saul's relentless pursuit, David would have to live among Israel's enemies, the Philistines. While we all, to an extent, can understand a little bit of what David was going through (being separated from his wife, his family, his home, etc.,) there is a further cultural and spiritual side to being driven from the land of Israel. As David explains to Saul while Saul is pursuing him:

1 Samuel 26:17–20 (ESV)

17 Saul recognized David's voice and said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And David said, "It is my voice, my lord, O king." 18 And he said, "Why does my lord pursue after his servant? For what have I done? What evil is on my hands? 19 Now therefore let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If it is the Lord who has stirred you up against me, may he accept an offering, but if it is men, may they be cursed before the Lord, for they have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of the Lord, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.' 20 Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of the Lord, for the king of Israel has come out to seek a single flea like one who hunts a partridge in the mountains."

Spiritual Warfare: Yahweh vs the gods of the Nations

In theology talk, there is an important phrase called "Cosmic Geography." An ancient people viewed the nation they lived in as a physical location and a spiritual one. Spiritual Warfare is described in the Bible as territorial. Much like Rome would invade a neighboring nation to control its land, Spiritual Warfare works much the same way. We can see this in the Book of Daniel.

In the Book of Daniel, Daniel receives a vision that has him praying to Yahweh to receive understanding. Daniel fasts and prays for 21 days before the Angel of the Lord comes to Daniel. The Angel of the Lord says to Daniel:

Daniel 10:12–13 (ESV)

12 "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. 13 The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia.

The Angel of the Lord was delayed because He was engaged in spiritual warfare with the “Prince of Persia” (Persia is where Daniel is living). A territorial demonic being. After talking to Daniel, the Angel of the Lord says:

Daniel 10:20 ESV

20 Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come.

They knew that Yahweh was not limited to a particular piece of land, but they also knew He had a piece of land that He called His own. They also understood from the time of Babel that the surrounding nations were under the authority of other gods. Moses describes what is going on this way:

Deuteronomy 32:7–14 (LEB)

7 Remember the old days, the years long past; ask your father, and he will inform you, your elders and they will tell you. 8 When the Most High apportioned the nations, at his dividing up of the sons of humankind, he fixed the boundaries of the peoples, according to the number of the sons of God. 9 For Yahweh’s portion was his people, Jacob the share of his inheritance. 10 He found him in a desert land, and in a howling, desert wasteland; he encircled him, he cared for him, he protected him like the apple of his eye. 11 As an eagle stirs up its nest, hovers over its young, spreads out its wings, takes them, carries them on its pinions, 12 so Yahweh alone guided him, and there was no foreign god accompanying him. 13 And he set him on the high places of the land, and he fed him the crops of the field, and he nursed him with honey from crags, and with oil from flinty rock, 14 With curds from the herd, and with milk from the flock, with the fat of young rams, and rams, the offspring of Bashan, and with goats along with the finest kernels of wheat, and from the blood of grapes you drank fermented wine.

Moses continues with how Israel then rebelled like the other nations. (For context, ‘Jeshurun’ is a name given for Israel in irony. Jeshurin means ‘upright,’ which the Israelites in this part of Moses’ speech are not upright.)

Deuteronomy 32:15–18 (LEB)

15 And Jeshurun [Israel] grew fat, and he kicked; you grew fat, you bloated, and you became obstinate; and he abandoned God, his maker, and he scoffed at the rock of his salvation. 16 They made him jealous with strange gods; with detestable things they provoked him. 17 They sacrificed to the demons, not God, to gods whom they had not known, new gods who came from recent times; their ancestors had not known them. 18 The rock who bore you, you neglected, and you forgot God, the one giving you birth.

The Hebrew word translated demons in this passage more literally means ‘territorial spirit.’

This is what is going through David’s head when he says:

1 Samuel 26:19–20 (ESV)

19 ...may they be cursed before the Lord, for they have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of the Lord, saying, ‘Go, serve other gods.’ 20 Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of the Lord, for the king of Israel has come out to seek a single flea like one who hunts a partridge in the mountains.”

It seems a little dramatic. David curses the men because he is driven away from the presence of Yahweh. Isn’t Yahweh’s presence anywhere He wants to be present? Israel was Yahweh’s portion: the people and the land. It’s why Jesus will rule and reign in Israel for all eternity; it is His land. The surrounding nations were under the dominion of these fallen angelic beings.

But why would Yahweh allow this? He obviously could have defeated them at any time (and did defeat them at the Cross), but remember why these nations are under the dominion of these gods: because that's what they wanted:

Deuteronomy 32:8 (LEB)

8 When the Most High apportioned the nations, at his dividing up of the sons of humankind, he fixed the boundaries of the peoples, according to the number of the sons of God.

The nations are not controlled by these "territorial spirits" because they defeated Yahweh but because the people asked for it when they rebelled against Yahweh. There are two really clear examples of this principle in the Old Testament:

When the Philistines captured the Ark back when Samuel was born the Philistines put the Ark of the Covenant in the temple of Dagon, one of the Philistine gods.

1 Samuel 5:2–5 (LEB)

2 Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it to the temple of Dagon and placed it beside Dagon. 3 When the Ashdodites got up early the next morning, there was Dagon fallen with his face to the ground before the ark of Yahweh! So they took Dagon and returned him to his place. 4 When they got up early in the morning the next day, there was Dagon fallen again with his face to the ground before the ark of Yahweh! The head of Dagon and the palms of his two hands were cut off, lying at the threshold; only the body of Dagon was left. 5 (Therefore the priests of Dagon and all who come into the house of Dagon do not tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod until this very day.)

Why don't they touch the threshold of Dagon? Because a battle took place in that temple, and Dagon got whooped. The Philistines saw that Yahweh had defeated their god, and this piece of land now belonged to Him.

Further in Israel's history, Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army, came to Israel because he had leprosy. A little girl tells Naaman that there is a prophet of Yahweh whom he should see for healing. So Naaman goes to this prophet. The prophet doesn't even meet with Naaman but tells him to wash seven times in the Jordan River. The commander thinks it's ridiculous but does so anyway. After the seventh time, Naaman emerges from the water, healed of his skin disease (2 Kings 5:11–14).

2 Kings 5:15–18 (LEB)

15 When [Naaman] returned to the man of God, he and all of his army, he came and stood before him and said, "Please now, I know that there is no God in all of the world except in Israel. So then, please take a gift from your servant." 16 And he said, "As Yahweh lives, before whom I stand, I surely will not take it." Still he urged him to take it, but he refused. 17 Then Naaman said, "If not, then please let a load of soil on a pair of mules be given to your servants, for your servant will never again bring a burnt offering and sacrifice to other gods, but only to Yahweh. 18 As far as this matter, may Yahweh pardon your servant when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he is leaning himself on my arm, that I also bow down in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down in the house of Rimmon, may Yahweh please pardon your servant in this matter."

Why did Naaman ask for dirt? Because it was Yahweh's portion, it was His land. Naaman would have taken the dirt home, poured it in his backyard, and worshipped on that soil because it was the dirt that belonged to Yahweh.

This thinking is why David is so upset at having to leave Israel; this is the backdrop for the warfare and the struggle with the nations we read about in the Old Testament; it's about Yahweh vs. the gods of the nations.

This carries over to us today. When Paul speaks about spiritual warfare, he says this:

Ephesians 6:10–13 (ESV)

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

Rulers, authority, and cosmic powers are all Greek words that have to do with geographical rulership. Today, we battle not against flesh and blood but against the gods of the nations. Their authority has been stripped from them; they no longer rule their territories and don't like it.

At the cross, Jesus defeated these powers of darkness and took authority over all the earth:

Matthew 28:18–20 (ESV)

18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

In the New Covenant with Jesus, His land is not limited to Israel; it is everywhere. We are His soldiers who fight this spiritual war. We do this not with physical weapons but with prayer, worship, preaching the Gospel, and making disciples.

These demonic spirits are still fighting for their territory. They desire to halt the advancement of the Kingdom of Jesus on earth. Why? The longer they delay the discipleship of the nations, the longer it is until their judgment when Jesus returns. The judgment of the powers of darkness comes when the Gospel is preached to every tongue, language, nation, and tribe; the longer they can keep that from happening, the longer they prolong their demise.

This is why you face spiritual battles when you seek after Jesus with your whole heart. This is why you may find it hard to pray or worship. This is why you will find it challenging to pursue holiness and face resistance when sharing who Jesus is. The powers of darkness will fight against anyone attempting to be a light in the darkness.

Don't give up; don't be discouraged. Wars aren't fought for things that have no use. Wars are fought over things that are valuable. You will face spiritual warfare because you are valuable, the people you are reaching out to are valuable, and what you are doing is of value.

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