

PAUL AND THE POWERS OF THE AIR

THE BEGINNING STORY OF ALL OF REDEMPTIVE HISTORY REVOLVES AROUND THE EVIL ONE, THE POWERS OF THE AIR, AND THE DECEPTION OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD. GOD'S ORIGINAL INTENTIONS APPEAR TO BE SHATTERED BY THE EVIL ONE, AND IT APPEARS AS THOUGH THERE IS A GREAT DEMISE THAT CANNOT BE RECTIFIED. REDEMPTIVE HISTORY IS A GREAT CONFLICT THAT AROSE IN THE GARDEN; IT IS BOOKENDED BY THE BOOK OF REVELATION WITH THE BRIDE OF CHRIST BACK IN THE GARDEN IN SPLENDOR, FELLOWSHIP, AND UNION WITH THE LORD - IN THE VERY PLACE WHERE FELLOWSHIP WAS LOST.

I. MATTHEW

- A. For context, Mount Hermon was historically the place of worship to a false god and came to be known as the “gates of hell.” The book of Enoch, which is not canonical Scripture but is quoted in the Scriptures in Jude, says there was demonic interaction on Mount Hermon between the powers of the air and human beings in a way that brought about great evil on the earth. And that great evil was the great provocation of the judgment of God in [Genesis 6](#). This is the location where Jesus decided to go in [Matthew 16](#) and pose this question, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”
- 1) He didn't say, “Who do you say that I am?” until later. Instead, Jesus frames the discussion around the Son of Man. This is significant for two reasons
 - a) in the book of Daniel, the coming Messiah - to whom the kingdom belongs, the One who will destroy the man of sin - is called “the Son of Man.” On the night of Jesus' trials before He was crucified, He is indicted for blasphemy by claiming to be Son of Man. Son of Man didn't just mean He was a son of Adam and Eve; it had much more meaning to it because of the book of Daniel
 - i. in Jesus' trial, they said He claimed Son of Man and had blasphemed, which means you've declared yourself to be God. Jesus was ultimately crucified for saying He is Son of Man
 - b) by going to this location, Jesus was making a mirrored connection between what He was doing in that generation and what happened on Hermon in the beginning in that corresponding, mirrored demonic attempt at an incarnation to thwart the purposes of God and further galvanize the depravity of humanity in the judgment that should rest upon them forever

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- 2) in [Genesis 3](#), we see that the one who's going to come will crush the head of the serpent to reverse what happened in the garden, and now we see that Jesus is in the place where this demonic incarnation happened and, in essence, is saying, I'm standing here to make a statement that I intend to reverse that which happened here. That is why I have come
 - a) He's also saying that He is the Son of Man from the book of Daniel, which means that to Him the kingdom will be given by the Ancient of Days
- B. [Matthew 16:18](#) is the first statement in the New Testament concerning the church. This is the first statement in the New Testament that's defining what the church is, what it is intended to do, and what it will be. It's defining the identity and the destiny of this thing called the church.
 - 1) Jesus is choosing to define the church on the edge of the Golan Heights, at the base of Mount Hermon, in the very place where the powers of the air committed an offense that brought about the judgment of God and the purging of the whole earth
 - 2) Jesus is saying there, at the Gates of Hell, that He will build His church on this rock; and the gates of hell, where the powers of the air mingled with humanity in a way that wrought judgment and disaster and crisis for humanity, will not prevail. That's what He intends to unravel, to destroy and to dismantle. He intends to restore all things, and the church will be the chosen instrument of the demise of the powers of the air
 - a) this is significant to the maranatha church conversation because any definition of church that is not rooted in the reality that the church exists to prevail against the powers of the air ceases to be the church
 - i. the church must have its relationship and reason for being in light of the context of this cosmic clash with the powers and principalities and rulers of the air
 - 3) in [Acts 19](#), the seven sons of Sceva went to cast the demons out and the demons ended up casting them out. I think this is a parable for the nature of the church when it ceases to be the church. A church that's not known by the powers of the air is not the church, either individually or corporately and collectively. The church exists to prevail over the powers of the earth, not to be dismantled and driven out by the powers of the air
 - 4) a gate doesn't move at you and push you; you push at a gate. So for a gate to not prevail and for the church to prevail over the gate, it means that you are destroying and dismantling the gates and pushing the gates back
- C. "[Who do you say that I am?](#)" That is the revelation of the Person, the identity of Jesus. The revelation of the Son of Man produces the foundation upon which the church is built.
- D. "[On this rock, I'll build My church.](#)"
 - 1) on one level it is referring to Peter in that Peter would be instrumental as an apostolic leader in that generation to forge the church of Jesus' desires

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- 2) on another level the rock refers to the revelation that the Father gave by the Spirit concerning the Son. The bedrock of the church is the Trinitarian revelation of God
 - a) a church that isn't conscious of the true identity of the Son of Man is, at best, living beneath the intentions of God for the church
 - b) this isn't just knowing that Jesus died for your sins. This is knowing who the Son of Man is, what He did and is yet to do
- 3) the next level is not merely the revelation and formation of the church, it's the formation of the church against the powers of the air - and prevailing over the powers of the air

II. EPHESIANS

- A. In [Ephesians 3:7-13](#), Paul makes six assertions concerning “[the eternal purpose of God](#)” ([vs 11](#))
- 1) Paul is defining the story of the ages so that it doesn't get hijacked and so that we would not have liberty to define it however we wanted
 - 2) the eternal purpose of God is rooted in this: that God's highest intention and highest priority in time and eternity is to manifest and display what the manifold wisdom of God is
 - a) manifold means something like variegated in color and glory. The manifold wisdom of God doesn't mean how smart or how wise He is. Wisdom means nature and character. Throughout the rest of the New Testament, whenever Paul uses the word wisdom, he is speaking of a value system clash
 - 3) the eternal purpose of God is to display the manifold wisdom of God to the powers and principalities and rulers of the air
 - a) it is not, first and foremost, to save people or to restore creation
 - 4) the church is the chosen conduit through which the manifestation of God's manifold wisdom is made known to the powers of the air
 - a) it's not just that through the church the powers of the air would see certain things; it's that the display of God's wisdom being manifested in and through the church is actually dismantling the powers of the air
 - b) a church that exists outside of the context of the bounds of a relationship of confrontation and conflict with the powers of the air is not church. It's something else. It could be humanism, religion, philosophy, and even theology, but it's not the church. We are called to interact with the wisdom of God and to incarnate the wisdom of God so that we would display and demonstrate the wisdom of God, thus pulling the pins out of the plans of the evil one
 - 5) the eternal purpose of God is empowered by the revelation of “[the unsearchable riches of Christ](#)” ([vs 8](#)), which is the experiential knowledge, the deep knowing of Son of Man

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- a) there is no encounter of revelation without the proclamation of Christ. The proclamation of Christ is what produces the church, which produces the witness to the powers of the air, which fulfills the eternal purpose of God
- 6) grace and power produces the proclamation that produces the revelation that produces the witness to the powers of the air that fulfills the purposes of God
 - a) gifts, grace, and power produces a laborer. The laborer proclaims Christ, and the encounter of His worth produces the church
 - b) the ultimate eternal purpose of God is the ultimate, eschatological cosmic destruction of the powers of the air which will take place during the tribulation
- B. I believe that Paul is expositing [Matthew 16](#) in [Ephesians 3](#) because he says the same thing: grace and power for was given to him like it was given to Peter. The revelation of Son of Man's identity and destiny is the bedrock for the church; that church becomes the conduit of the wisdom of God to the powers of the air, which ultimately is about securing their ultimate destruction and demise in the age to come.
- C. The temporal identity and historical function of the church is the display of the wisdom of God, which is no more clearly seen in display than in crucifixion and resurrection.
 - 1) that church is intended to secure the destruction of the evil one in the fulfillment of the promise in [Genesis 3](#)
- D. Maranatha is focused on the destruction of the powers of the air. The way we do that is by submitting to the wisdom of God.
 - 1) [1 Corinthians 2](#) tells us what the wisdom of God is
 - a) the path of the maranatha church is to embrace the way of crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. Not for some weird philosophical reason, but for this apocalyptic, eschatological, salvific reason that this is how the restoration of all things will be affected in time and space through the church