

Principalities and Powers

By Michael Clark

Have you ever wondered about the differences between the angelic hosts and men? The Bible indicates there is a vast difference between the two in the eyes of God. Angels were created first, then man. Angels are more powerful than men in their present form. Yet man was originally created in unity with God and was given great powers to govern His creation here on earth. Consider the God-like intellect of Adam as he was able to name all the animals of the earth. Also consider what powers must have been resident in him before the fall so that he could tend a garden that took up an area that was much of the current nation of Iraq.

God created man to rule over His creation in unity with Him. Man was created in the very image and likeness of God, as a son of God. Thus we have Paul referring to the first Adam and the Second Adam, even Christ.

Because the God-like dominion of Adam was corrupted by his rebellion, the God-like model of that reign was also lost from the earth. So what is left? Among men today, there is a corrupt idea of ruling and reigning. In Jesus we see a completely different principle at work. His dominion went unnoticed by the rulers of that day in both the government and the religious system, yet principalities and powers bowed before Him. Why was it unnoticed by men? Because He led from weakness and conquered through laying down His life for others. This is the paradox of the heavenly rule that He portrayed. He commanded His disciples to walk in that same rule when He told them, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all." (Mark 10:42-44, RSV).

First, let us consider what the scriptures say about angelic beings, both those loyal to God and those who rebelled against Him. Paul wrote much on this subject. To the Romans he wrote:

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created

thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38,39, NKJV).

In Ephesians, he adds these verses:

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12, NKJV).

And to the church in Colosse he wrote:

. . .having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. (Colossians 2:14-15, NKJV).

Here we see a contrast of kingdom paradigms. On the one hand is a rule of cruel proportions held together by hierarchic supervision and control in which obedience is given out of fear and constraint. This is in contrast to those who serve because of love. The one serves in order to get advantage and promotion, ruling over men. The other serves as a love slave, not seeking their own elevation and exhalation, but rather the betterment of the one who is served.



Jesus made a public spectacle of the workers of the worldly paradigm by laying down His life, the very life the other kingdom seeks to elevate and preserve. He is so opposite to them that He forced them into a public display of their hatred of all that He represents. He came as a Lamb, lowly and meek. The world confuses meekness with weakness and lowliness with lack of ambition. Jesus was and still is a constant contradiction to the earthy mind. He defied the messianic expectation of the people of Israel, who believed that the Messiah would come as a conqueror like Judas (the Hammer) Macabee. Had God sent a Lamb to war with the Romans? The strength of Jesus was not recognized. The Lord later spoke to Paul, saying, "my strength is made perfect

in weakness." Because of this Paul determined to do something that was unthinkable from an earthly perspective. Like his Lord, he made an open display of weakness, going so far as to say, "Most gladly therefore I will rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest on me" (2 Corinthians 12:9 WEB). What kind of Kingdom is this?

2 Corinthians 13:4 explains this Divine paradox. "For he was crucified through weakness, yet he lives through the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we will live with him through the power of God toward you" (2 Corinthians 13:4 WEB).

In everything fallen man does, he tries to hide his faults and weaknesses. His clothes are designed to cover his physical deficiencies. All perceived defects disturb him, so all the preparations of his life are done to offset the haunting sense of vulnerability within. Ashamed of his weakness, he continues to sew fig leaves to cover his nakedness. To assume the posture of weakness there must be a crisis, a stripping of the fig leaves.

Christ disarmed principalities and powers! He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them! How did he do this? He was crucified through weakness. The King of kings and Lord of lords conquered Satan, the world and the grave without once lifting the sword or the scepter. He had no armies, no horses or chariots. No! God sent a Lamb to conquer, not by physical, mental or mortal force, but through weakness.

Peter wrote:

[Jesus] who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him. (1 Peter 3:22, NKJV).

Because He did not love or elevate His life in this earthly walk, God gave Him a name that is above all names.

Principalities

Angelic beings have a rank and file organization and have a form of top down authority over different parts of the earth. Consider the words of Jude.

Yet in like manner these men in their dreamings defile the flesh, reject authority, and revile the glorious ones. But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil,

disputed about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a reviling judgment upon him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." (Jude 1:8,9, RSV).

Also Peter wrote:

. . .and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. Bold and willful, they are not afraid to revile the glorious ones, whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a reviling judgment upon them before the Lord. (2 Peter 2:10-11, RSV).

Here we see even Michael the archangel [the angel who leads the other angels] being careful not to rebuke the devil. Instead, he called on the rule and power of God Himself to deal with Satan. We also see that there is a respect given even to fallen angels when we deal with them as the *ekklesia* of God. They have power that was given to them by God. Could it be that God uses them even in their rebellion to rule over this fallen earth? There is a story in Daniel that reveals how things are set up among this invisible force over the earth.

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belshazzar. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict. And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision.

In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks. On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris, I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with gold of Uphaz.

His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the noise of a multitude. And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me; my radiant appearance was fearfully changed, and I retained no strength.

Then I heard the sound of his words; and when I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in a deep sleep with my face to the ground. And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees.

And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, give heed to the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood up trembling. Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your mind to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, so I left him there with the prince of the kingdom of Persia and came to make you understand what is to befall your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come." (Daniel 10:1-14, RSV).

In this story of Daniel (who was in intercession for his people), we see first that the visible Prince of Persia was Cyrus, but there was another greater power ruling over that part of the earth, a prince of the air also called the Prince of Persia. There is an invisible government that rules over various portions of the earth and often the visible governments of men are subservient to those demonic rulers, even when they don't know it.

The prophet Daniel read in the prophesy of Jeremiah that the seventy years of the captivity of the people of Israel in Babylon was fulfilled (see Jeremiah 25:11-14). God conquered Babylon by the hand of His servant Cyrus, king of the Medes and the Persians (see Isaiah 44:26-28 & 45:1-4). When Daniel saw this come to pass and realized the prophesies were fulfilled, he started praying for the release of his people from their captivity.

It was God's doing that the people of Israel were taken captive by an earthly king because of their rebellion. He turned them over to the corruption of their idols. They were held captive by God by for seventy years under the rule of different kings who served under the Princes of Persia and Babylon. But when God said the time was up, he put it on the heart of his servant, Daniel, to pray for their release. God had already set things in motion for that release by raising up His servant Cyrus to conquer Babylon and set the people free to return to their homeland.

Further in Daniel we read:

Then again, the one having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me. And he said, "O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace be to you; be strong, yes, be strong!" So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince." (Daniel 10:18-21, NKJV).

Michael the archangel tells Daniel that the Medes and Persian will eventually be conquered by the prince of Greece. He also said and that the one prince who stands totally with God in his purposes is Michael himself, the prince of God's people. He still is there to fight for those who are the seed of Abraham by faith.

Powers

Now there is the matter of demonic powers. There is a story of a man who was demon possessed in the region of Galilee.

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." (Mark 5:1-9, NKJV).

Note that when Jesus spoke to the demon possessed man, it was a demon that answered, "My name is Legion." The Roman armies were arranged in legions, and Rome ruled over Israel at that time. So now we see that demons not only rule in the same way as man with their kings and princes, but we also see that their armies are arranged in a similar manner, in legions. These are the powers of the air.

So Who Is Patterned After Who?

The patterns we see today in the governments of men in both the world and the fallen church are patterned after the demonic kingdom that was cast down to earth long before the first man and woman were created. John describes this event in Revelation.

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:7-9, NKJV).

Because of the constant influence of the demons as they rule over their individual portions of the earth, men have unwittingly patterned their authority structures after the demonic. If this is so, what is the divine pattern of God's government? Is it one of top down management? Was it His perfect will for men to rule over one another both in the church and in the governments of the world or to yield to Him as their king? For the most part, what we see today is NOT what Jesus spoke of and modeled before men.

Where did the governments of men come from in the beginning? It was from the rebellion of Cain. Because he was the first to lie to God and the first to kill a man created in the likeness and image of God (see Genesis 4: 1-15), God told Cain that he was cursed above all men and that he would be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth.

Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son--Enoch. (Genesis 4:16,17, NKJV).

Note that first Cain rose up and killed his brother, and then went out from the presence of the Lord. He was a rebel! He hated God's people and he hated God. In his rebellion

against God's command that he must be a wanderer, he built cities and named them after his children. God never commanded man to build cities or towers, nor did He command man to create governments, rule over one another, or become hunters of other men in warfare. He never commanded men to do great things and make a name for themselves. God had something else in mind for those who were created in HIS image and in HIS likeness.

There Are Two Patterns

There are two kingdom patterns on display before men. One is predominant in our western society, where we see kings, princes and powers, presidents and governors. Even arch-bishops, popes, and so called apostles and pastors can be the wrong model if this principle is not understood. Anywhere that you see men exercising dominion over other men you see the demonic pattern (see Matt. 20:25-28, Mark 10:42-45, Luke 12:41-46, Luke 17:7-10, John 13:12-17 NASB).

So what does this all have to do with the Pattern Son? Absolutely nothing! That is the point! This has no more to do with the Pattern Son than what is identified as church authority today. What is the pattern that Jesus put forth? Was it one of Cain, rising up and killing his brother who was favored by God? Was it one of building cities like Cain and Nimrod? These things are all modeled after the pattern of Satan who said, "[I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High.](#)" (Isaiah 14:13-14).

Those who truly walk by faith desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them." ([Hebrews 11:16](#)).

Did Jesus give us the example of ruling over one another when He said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many"?

The Pattern Son

What did Jesus come to model as the Pattern Son? First, He was born in a barn! Like David before Him, the Son of David was found among the sheepfolds. His crib was a

trough for feeding livestock. Blinded by that other earthly paradigm of the Babylonian kings, the wise men looked for him in the King's palace. No, He was born in Bethlehem, the least of the cities of Judea. Imagine the shock when these astrologers found Him in His humble surroundings.

According to Isaiah, He was not physically attractive and there was nothing about Him that was appealing to the carnal senses. He grew up in a town that was considered a backwash in Israel. "Can any good thing can come out of Nazareth?" was the cry of that day's religious leadership. Even the people of His hometown rejected Him. At one point as He ministered in their synagogue, they dragged Him out of town and tried to throw him off a cliff. They failed.

He was a "man of sorrows acquainted with grief" and His own people "hid their faces from Him." And what was the sign of His kingship? A King entering the capitol city of His nation on a white charger? No! He came riding in meek and lowly, mounted on a borrowed ass. He was rejected or abandoned by one and all. They finally succeeded in killing Him and hung Him up between two thieves. Their Prince sent from heaven was even buried in a borrowed tomb.

So what is the point? The kingdom of God is not patterned in any shape or fashion after the kingdoms of fallen principalities and rebellious men. That wisdom is worldly, sensual and devilish. God's kingdom is based on loving servitude and human weakness, not lording over others as the kings of the Gentiles do. In the Book of Revelation it is written,

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Revelation 11:15, NKJV).

How did this ever come to pass in the mind of God? How will the kingdoms of this world that hate everything Christ-like and weak, finally become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ? His victory is still the same whether through Himself or His saints.

. . .having stripped the rulers and the authorities, He made a show of them in public, triumphing over them in it. (Colossians 2:15, GLT).

What was the public show? What was it that stripped all rulers and authorities? What was it that brought about Christ's triumph over them? It was the death of the cross. This is the triumph by which even death is swallowed up in victory.

Jesus has conquered by weakness and obedience to God. So must we. This is not "kingdom now theology," employing political power by filling governmental offices or by getting out the vote for favored candidates. This is not the way the kingdoms of this world becomes the kingdoms of the Lord and His Christ. Satan is not cast out by satanic principles, nor are his weapons used to upset His own kingdom. Our weapons are not carnal, but mighty, able to pull down satanic strongholds as we follow after Christ in the principle of the cross, in His brokenness and humility.

John had a heavenly vision of Jesus. The heavenly being who drew his attention to Jesus saw Him as a lion, but when John turned he saw a Lamb that was slain. This is the contrast between men and angels. God reveals Himself to the ekklesia in His Son, who reigns over them in weakness as an example to follow in how we relate with one another.

But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals." And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. (Revelation 5:5,6, NKJV).

This Lamb is the Spirit of the seven churches that belong to Him. Seven is the number of perfection, indicating the whole church of Jesus Christ in His perfect will. Remember, the kingdom of heaven comes without the outward display of those who rule on this earth. If your church is not showing the weakness and humility that is in Christ, pray that the Lord will show you what He wants you to do. Many are returning to the heavenly paradigm even if they have to do so outside the camp.

May Jesus bless you as you show forth the Pattern Son in your daily lives. It was a people who lived out this heavenly pattern of whom it was said, "These are they who turn the world upside-down!"

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