

Imagining the Kingdom: Cosmic War – Cosmic Reconciliation

Jerry Cisar — July 30, 2023

Text: Ephesians 2

Introduction

Ephesians 2 recasts a cosmic battle from Psalm 2:1-4.

I. Ruled (2:1-3)

- A. The ruler of the kingdom of the air, of the spirit (wind) who is now working in the sons of disobedience.
- B. If Ephesians 2:1-10 is about a cosmic battle, we should see evidence of that in the rest of the letter. And we do.
 - i. The trajectory of Ephesians 2 moves toward the wall of hostility being broken down.
 - ii. Ephesians culminates with 6:11-13 informing us who our enemy is.

C. Contrast to Psalm 2

Psalm 2 pictures a hostile cosmic battle between the nations (ethne) and their rulers against YHWH, His Messiah, and His people.



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LIVE THE STORY

The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- What is the goal of “the ruler of the authority of the air, of the spirit (wind) at work in the sons of disobedience”? How does he seek to accomplish it?
- How had the conflict between the rulers of this age and God in Psalm 2 been transformed in the NT (Eph. 2 and Acts 4:25-28)?
- What were the reasons Jerry offered for why he would take “children of wrath” (2:3) to more likely mean “children characterized by wrath” than “children destined for wrath”?
- How is the church today doing in the area of no longer living as “children of wrath” (“characterized by”)? How can we grow?
- How does the Gospel transform our lives from wrath/rage to love and reconciliation? Explain.
- How does the Gospel offer a counter story to the worlds which intends to transform how we engage one another?
- Why are the truths discussed from Ephesians 2 central to our understanding of Gospel culture, Gospel mercy, Gospel outreach, and Gospel unity? What are some ways our Gospel formation works to form us into these truths?

- i. “Children of wrath”
 - a) “Deserving of wrath” or “characterized by wrath/rage.”
 - b) “Sons of disobedience”
 - ii. The larger context of God breaking down the wall of hostility between Jews and Gentiles, of Paul’s instruction for these believers in 4:31 to put away all anger and wrath.
- D. Why is this important? Does it matter?
- i. The rulers of this age have death in mind... ours and others. He uses lies to achieve that end and when we are ruled by such impulses, such cravings, it produces death upon death!
 - ii. It matters because if we are going to get to the bottom of the hostility which is beginning to increasingly describe our culture, even among Christians, we need to understand the spiritual nature of this issue. (John 8:39-44)
 - iii. Divisiveness and hostility might most succinctly describe our age. And in such a time, we need to recognize that this is how the world’s spirit works to accomplish his will (death and destruction) through lies—lies that lead us to hate and not love, lies that build a wall of hostility!

II. Rescued (2:4-10)

- A. Despite our disobedience and hostility God never stopped loving us!

The children of wrath and anger were not treated with wrath and anger but with love because of God’s rich mercy.

- B. We have been rescued from the enslavement to the ruler of the authority of this air, the ruler of the spirit that is at work in the sons of disobedience, from our impulses and inclinations, by the pure grace and mercy of God our adoptive Father!

We’ve been ruled by the spirit of darkness to walk in the darkness, we’ve been rescued, and now, as adopted children of the light, we are to walk in reconciliation!

III. Reconciled (2:11-22)

- A. The battle is no longer an “us against them” kind of war. The two groups have been made one.
 - i. People are not the enemy (Eph. 6:10-13).
 - ii. We have a cosmic enemy who tells lies. Lies intent on getting us to hate one another.
- B. Counter story!
 - i. The Gospel offers a counter-story.
 - ii. Our message about God will not make sense if we are not doing as God did for us.