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THE PRINCE OF PERSIA

PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS- Paul wrote, *"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."* (Eph.6:12) To get the true meaning of what Paul was teaching here, it is important that we understand what and where these heavenly places are. In his epistles, the apostle Paul reveals levels of these places. Before we come to Jesus and are baptized in His Holy Spirit, we are taught according to man's wisdom and knowledge, and we live according to *"...the prince of the power of the air."* (Eph.2:2) The "air" is the level of consciousness and understanding where earthly people live. This level knows nothing about realities in the invisible spirit realm.

At that level, man can only acquire knowledge of physical things that can be seen with the eyes or touched or discovered by our natural senses, or with the help of telescopes, microscopes and such apparatus. This is why Jesus told Nicodemus, *"Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven."* (Jn.3:3) And Nicodemus who was a teacher of the Jews but still in the realm of the flesh, answered, *"How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter his mother's womb a second time and be born?"* (Vs.4) It was perfectly natural for him to ask these questions. By the same token it is perfectly normal for anyone to question where are the heavenly places, or the kingdom of heaven, or heaven itself.

HEAVEN AND HEAVENLY PLACES- Paul teaches that "Heaven and heavenly places" are indeed where princes or rulers of wickedness have their being. And it is also the realm where God and His angels dwell, and where Christ is seated, and where we sit with Him. *"He, (God) raised Him, (Christ), from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places...But God who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together and **made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.**"* (Eph.1:20 and 2:4-6) Hallelujah! We are seated in Him in the highest realm of spirit. Seated, does not mean that we are sitting on a chair or throne next to Him; it means that we are fully established and at rest in that state of being and position of authority.

Paul also speaks of another realm, which he calls the "third heaven." He writes about a man in Christ, that he knew fourteen years before, most likely himself, *"...who was caught up to the third heaven."* (II Cor.12:2) Paul could not reveal all he saw in that realm, and we can only surmise that it concerns the new creation of God in Christ, which will be made known at the resurrection of the firstfruits. Altogether, Paul introduces us to three levels of the heavenly, invisible realms that exist in this earthly creation. These are where God is, and also where the devil and his angels are, continually fighting against God and anyone who strives to know Christ.

Paul gives us a clue of where these heavenly places are found when he says that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. We cannot win against anyone who comes against us by fighting them with fleshly means. We have to wrestle against the spirits that are causing the problem in our own minds first. It is true that while we wrestle the spirits, the strong man must be restrained, but the problem will not be solved until all

evil spirits are stripped of their power. Jesus went about showing His power over the devil and his network of spirits, and He has been training the sons to do the same works and even greater works, to free creation at the end of the age. *"...For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."* (I Jn.3:8) And, *"Most assuredly I say to you, he who believes in me, the works I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do because I go to my Father."* (Jn.14:12)

INVISIBLE POWERS OVER US ALL- In Christ, we are seated above all principalities and powers in heavenly places, (Christ gives us power over our own minds, emotions and temptations). This takes repeated practice and trust in Him. It means that Christ has power over all powers of wickedness in heavenly places, which work to take up their dwellings in our minds and even in our hearts, and cause us to fight one another, and to do damage even to ourselves. But their most destructive work is done by men or women who hold power over nations. Israel of old turned against Yahweh and worshiped many strange gods, such as Baal, who took over and demanded that they sacrifice even their own children to their god. King Saul became possessed by some of these spirits, and could not rest unless he hunted David to kill him. These gods take possession of the kings or leaders' minds and cause endless conflicts and wars to the detriment and loss of lives of their people.

Heavenly places or heaven are also where God and His angels dwell, in the minds and hearts of men, women, and children followers everywhere. *"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you..."* (Jer.1:5) Our minds and hearts are where the Spirit of God dwells, and also where powers of darkness seek to abide and to take control; this is the battle ground. The Holy Spirit was given unto us, that by His power, we might overcome the powers of darkness, and be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Most humans have very weak wills, they are mostly unable to make proper decisions and they have little strength against these bully spirits. This is why the Holy Spirit teaches us to turn our thoughts away from the desires of the flesh and to obey Jesus, that we might know what is God's good and perfect will. *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..."* (Rom.12:2)

In a vision, the apostle John saw Michael the archangel, fighting to rid heaven from the evil bully spirits that have merged together against God and become a dragon force in the world. *"And war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was there place found for them in heaven any longer."* (Rev.12: 7-8) This gives us an insight on the battle that takes place in the minds of world leaders who are driven by the thoughts inspired by these spirits. We can understand this, because the work of ridding the "heavens" has first happened in our own minds. We have fought and still do, against spirits of unbelief, doubt, unforgiveness, revenge and more. We have had to resist all kinds of thoughts moving us to say and do things that disturb our peace with God. We have tried to force our will upon others; we have strived to rule our own little private kingdom. *"For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?"* (I Pet.4:17)

Indeed, we who belong to God's house are the first to be judged by God's righteousness, and made free from following the lies of evil spirits, disguised as pious angels of light. So now, we can understand the righteous judgment that is falling upon the governments and nations of the world. We know that this judgment will not stop until it is completed. At this time, the sons stand ready, in Christ, with the Word of the archangel, to overcome all enemies, the last enemy is death, and to see God's kingdom established in the hearts of all people so that God may be all in all. *"For He, (Christ) must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. ...Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."* (I Cor.15:26,26,28) The battle is not only against evil; it is also against death.

GODS OVER THE NATIONS- Just as invisible spirits are at work to control our thoughts on a personal basis, there are strong princes and rulers in high places, working continually to control leaders of governments. Asaph, one of king David's musicians, who was also a prophet or seer, wrote psalms of things he saw in the heavens where God dwells. *"God, (Elohim), stands in the congregation of the mighty. He judges among the gods."* (Ps.82:1) Our God, the Elohim, sits higher than all other powers, or gods. He judges them as they rule over the kingdoms or governments of the world. *"...Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings. He gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to those who have understanding."* (Dan.2:20-21) When God decreed that king Nebuchadnezzar be severely tested, Daniel explained, *"This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men. Gives it to whomsoever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men."* (Dan.4:17) The gods which rule the world from on high, are also appointed by our God, and are under His control. Satan came to God for permission to challenge Job, and God gave it to him, with restriction to not take his life.

The scene of Ps.82 is a window on how the leaders of nations are controlled by spirit powers also called princes, heads of principalities, whole networks in the invisible realm of spirit. These powers exert strong influences over the minds and decisions of this world's rulers. In this scene, these gods are standing in front of Elohim, the true God, whose standard of judgment is His righteousness. Elohim reprimands them, *"How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked? Defraud the poor and fatherless..."* (Ps.82:2) Then He counsels them to *"Deliver the poor and needy; free them from the hand of the wicked. They do not know, neither do they understand; they walk about in darkness..."* (vs.4-5) He rebukes them, *"I said 'You are gods.' And all of you are children, (sons), of the Most High, but you shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit the nations."* (Vs.6-7)

These were sons of God who had been sent to rule the nations with fairness and justice. But they chose to dwell among men and to please the desires of the flesh above their calling. *"Now it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful, and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose."* (Gen.6:1-2) These sons were to be dedicated to God; they were given power to rule fairly over the nations, but instead, they chose the way of the flesh and became as mortal men. These sons failed, but the sons that God is raising up in Christ cannot fail because they are faithful and true to the same Spirit as Jesus, the first begotten among them who did not fail. *"For whom He, (God), foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."* (Rom.8:29)

THE PRINCE OF PERSIA- In Bible history, there are literally several kings or princes of Persia. Cyrus is renowned for being a supporter of Israel during the time of their exile. Jeremiah conveyed God's word to Cyrus, and as a result, he was moved to make this declaration, *"Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth, the Lord God has given to me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up!"* (II Chron.36:23) This is repeated in the book of Ezra which records the history of the Jews who went up to rebuild first the walls, under Nehemiah, then the temple at Jerusalem.

Cyrus king of Persia, was led by the Spirit of God and was supportive of Israel, but Daniel introduces us to a very powerful, invisible Prince of Persia. When Daniel had made a request by prayer, the angel who brought him the answer explained why he had been delayed in coming, *"...your words were heard, and I have come because of your words, but the Prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days,*

and behold Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia." (Dan.10:12b-13) This prince of Persia had to be restrained by Michael the archangel. Ezekiel's chapters 38-39 records the prophecy of the warfare that is now raging in the Middle-East, which is spiritual warfare being played out in the physical world. Ezekiel names several countries conspiring and merging their forces together to destroy Israel at the end of the age. Gog and Magog are among the interesting subjects of those who study and research biblical prophecy for today. It is certain that Gog and Magog represent some of the most powerful forces of evil that conspire against the followers of Yahweh and of Christ at the end of the age. The exceedingly strong invisible prince of Persia, who was restrained by the archangel Michael in Daniel's time, is now loose again, fighting fearlessly to establish his authoritarian government, (regime), over the whole world.

The prince of Persia on high has set up his throne in the hearts and minds of the religious leaders of Persia, (Iran). In turn, these extremists have stretched their powerful tentacles, and created cells into nations around the world. At the end of the age, they are poised to totally annihilate the followers of Yahweh and of Christ. Think not that this warfare is about minerals, oil, wealth or literal territory; this is spiritual warfare that has been in the works from the foundation of the world. This invisible prince of Persia has been busy putting together a coalition of nations, which at the end of the age has become an incredible force in the world. This force is now rising to destroy, not only the nation Israel, but to bring all Christian nations to their knees under their regime. Howbeit, Jesus Christ is Lord!

MICHAEL IS STANDING UP- Speaking of the times of the end and echoing the Word of Jesus, Daniel writes, *"At that time Michael shall stand up, the great Prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time, your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. Some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever."* (Dan.12: 1-3) What we are plainly told is that the time of the greatest warfare in heaven and in earth, is also the time of resurrection. It is the time when the sons of God stand up in the full power of Christ the Lord of lords and King of kings!

In conclusion, we are now living in the times which Daniel and Jesus warned us about. The books, (prophecies), that were written and shut long ago, are now being opened and revealing the spirit realm that is stirring and upending the governments of the world. These powers on high, cannot be destroyed with bombs or military might of any kind; this is spiritual warfare which only the sons of God in Christ are equipped and ready to face by the Spirit of Almighty God. May all who have ears to hear and hearts to understand, stand in faith with Michael the archangel, until the heavens are clear and the victory over the powers of evil and over death itself is wrought!

DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY- It is at the time of the victory over the powers in high places and in the world, that our redemption has come! Paul gives us a clear account of that time, *"But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the Word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."* (I Thess. 4: 13-17) Theologian C.I. Scofield's theory on this scripture, has led multitudes to believe in a literal catching up in the sky to escape the

tribulations in the world. This is a deceptive and dangerous teaching, which is keeping many from being prepared to withstand the terrible times that are already spreading in the world.

What Daniel saw in his day, was indeed the time of resurrection that Paul wrote about, and the time that we are coming into now. The trumpet signifies a strong Word from the Lord, the Word that has the power to bring about the manifestation of the sons of God in the world. In the Old Testament, they blew the trumpet or shofar to assemble the tribes, or to announce a victory. So Michael's last trump, is to assemble the saints who have been hid in the world, and those who have been waiting on the other side of the veil, and join them together to be forever the body of Jesus in the world. The time has come when the power of the prince of Persia and his stronghold is being obliterated both in the heavenlies and in the physical realm.

WE'VE ARRIVED! WE'VE ARRIVED! A DREAM- A sister who wishes to remain anonymous sent me this dream- I felt that it is fitting as we are still now walking very carefully, making sure to avoid tripping over all the things that are thrown at us through so many false prophets and deceiving spirits. She writes, *"In the dream, I was walking in an underground area along with others that was somewhat messy to walk through. There were things laying in the path like short pieces of wood and other things I had to watch and walk carefully so I did not stumble. Also there was furniture off to the side of our path that were unkempt and not neat.*

All of us were walking in single file in this underground, following each other till we came out of the underground space to an open clearing on the outside. There, next to me was this lady whom we greeted each other with a very warm hug and both of us said to each other "We've arrived! We've arrived!" In the dream I knew this was 'heaven' and I felt ecstatic joy in this reality. Then I woke up and as I came out of the dream the ecstatic joy was still felt in my physical body. It was so beautiful I did not want it to leave."

Our journey has been hid in the midst of the world; this is what being underground means. The work of the inner preparation of the saints has been hidden from the world. Now we come to the time of our unveiling which is the appearing of Christ that creation is groaning for. Jesus is being raised in us all. One by one, single file, the saints have been walking carefully and being made ready for the day at hand. The woman with the warm hug, represents the church on high, the one Paul calls *"...Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem with an innumerable company of angels,(messengers), the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect. To Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant..."* (Excerpt from Heb.12:22-24)

In the dream, our sister felt the uniting with the spirits of all who are part of this glorious church, and the joy was so great that she did not want to leave it. Be encouraged !We have arrived! We have arrived!

Because He is love, *Angèle Caporaso (Jackie)*