

GROWING IN GOD PODCAST



GIG69 – The Attempt To Destroy Christmas

When we study the story of Christmas, the birth of Yeshua, Jesus, we of course are filled with joy at the fulfillment of God's promise to bring to earth the Messiah for the purpose of redeeming mankind to Himself, and breaking the power of Satan's hold as the god of this world, who is usurping God's Messianic Kingdom of peace on earth.

We see in the birth of Yeshua the first phase of God's unfolding plan that is to proceed step by step, from the birth of Christ in that manger, through His growth and maturity, into becoming our teacher and miracle worker; to His perfection, His sacrifice of obedience on the cross, to becoming our risen Savior and Lord; to His Ascension back to the Father, where He receives as King of kings His heavenly Kingdom; and His glorious return to earth, establishing His earthly Kingdom on the throne of David, as promised by God through all of the prophets. So this is the story, and this is what we see beginning in the process of that birth of Messiah, from step to step to step of what God had planned to bring forth into the earth in fulfilling His Word.

So why in the world am I talking about spiritual warfare, when we see such a beautiful picture of God's plan beginning its fulfillment in the story on that night in Bethlehem? Why are we not just pouring a glass of eggnog and singing Joy to the World? The reason is because we read in this story through the Scriptures also about what began as the move of Satan to destroy God's plan, and to destroy Christ as the vessel and fulfillment of that plan that God had for mankind. He was anointed to bring God's promise to earth. But if we look at Matthew the second chapter, we begin to see how that plan of God was battled from the very beginning, from the very birth of Christ. And of course, we have the joy of the birth and the Christmas story that everyone is involved with during that time. But we cannot forget this portion of what happened also at that same time, with the determination of the adversary to stop the plan of God while it was in motion.

Matthew two, starting at verses 1-13, says, "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.' When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They said to him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: "And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel."' Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him.'" So Herod is acting as though he is going to worship Him also.

"After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His

mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way. Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him.'" And we know the story, how Herod did seek to destroy the Child, sought to destroy that Messiah at His very time of birth. So he goes and kills all the children that would have been about that age; and it is a horrible thing that happens. But luckily, God had spoken to His parents, and He was sequestered away in Egypt.

So we see again, this is part of this Christmas story; that not only is it a time of rejoicing and great joy that the angels proclaimed to the shepherds that night, but it is also the story of how satan is determined to destroy everything that God is bringing forth in the earth – especially when it is related to His Kingdom and His Messiah. We move from here to recognize that His parents not only were the ones to bring Him forth. Mary not only brought Him to birth, but she also had to be part of what saves Him after His birth, and prevents satan from destroying Him. It is not over with the birth story. It is not over in that manger. It goes on beyond that. From these events, we, as believers, must learn that when God begins to move to bring about His will upon the earth and execute His plan and purposes, the adversary, satan, will begin executing his plan to thwart the will of God and destroy God's chosen vessels of fulfillment. This is why Christ taught His disciples to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." This is a directive from the Lord. If we are going to see the fulfillment of God's Word and His will, we must understand our part as His disciples in bringing His will and His Kingdom to this earth.

Matthew 6:9 says, "Pray then in this way: Our Father, who art in heaven, sanctified be Thy Name. Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done" is more than just a prayer that Christ taught the disciples. It involves the application of the principles of spiritual warfare that must enforce that Word being spoken. Do we understand how to make the words of that prayer happen so that our prayer, our intercession and prophecy, are bringing God's Kingdom to earth? Spiritual warfare through prayer holds a key to how this works.

Let's look at Matthew 16, starting at verse 18. "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it." What a tremendous promise we have about the ekklesia, that the gates of hell, that Hades itself, that the devil himself, will not be able to overpower it. But the attempt is there to destroy it. And we know from the very beginning of the Church, following the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, that immediately the Church went into persecution; that there was the stoning of Stephen; that there was the killing of James the apostle; and it went on from there. So once again, we see this principle that when God is bringing His will into the earth, there is this corresponding spiritual warfare that is unleashed by satan against what God's will and what His plan is.

Verse 19, He goes on to say, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." I believe these are keys. Christ gave us the keys to enter into the heavenlies. He said, "Where I am, there you will be also." He gave us access. He says, "Come boldly before the throne of grace, that we find grace in the time of need." We have this access. We have these keys that allow us into the

courts of heaven, that allow us into the Kingdom of heaven. And He tells us that from that place, whatever we bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven.

Now I know a lot of times people read these verses and they go, "Well, that means whatever we pray, whatever I want to pray on earth, then it will be bound in heaven and bound on earth." I don't read it that way. Let's look again at Matthew 18, verse 18: "Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." I think what Christ is saying here is, "What you bind on earth is what you realize has already been bound in heaven." Those things you know exist in the Kingdom of God in heaven right now at this moment, you then have the ability on the earth to bind it. You bind earth to heaven. You bind the things of earth into the things of heaven, and as it is in heaven. That is what the prayer is: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." So however it is in heaven. Is there sickness in heaven? No, there is not, because the Kingdom of God is manifest there with Christ seated at the right hand of the Father. That gives us the ability to bind disease on earth, because we know it no longer exists in heaven.

When we read Revelation the twelfth chapter, we find that there was war in heaven, and satan was cast out. He no longer is in heaven. He no longer has access to heaven. We have access to heaven. We can enter the heavenlies, and we can bind on earth those things that have been bound in heaven. The devil has been bound from heaven. And we see many things that exist now in heaven, as the Kingdom of heaven exists there; those things that do exist, then He is telling us bind on earth. Whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound. Whatever you see has been bound in heaven, those things you bind on earth. You do not allow them to exist or have free course to function on earth, because they have been bound in the heavenly places, in the Kingdom of heaven. And we make this earth line up to that which is existent already in heaven.

In verses 19-20, He goes on to say, "Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst." So again, we see this prayer. We can pray. And we should get two and three and four together and pray and proclaim that the things on earth shall be in alignment with the things that are in heaven. Those are the things that we ask. If we ask anything that we know is bound in heaven, we will see those things manifest and begin to take place on the earth.

So there are keys and principles. This to me is one of the greatest elements of warfare, is that He gave His Church the authority to bind and to loose; what is loosed in heaven, what is bound in heaven, He gave us the authority to bind those things also on earth, that earth become the reflection, the mirror image of what exists in the Kingdom. "On earth, as it is in heaven" – that is the cry of the Body of Christ. And as we do that, we see then that there are keys and necessary principal elements that make that intercession actually work and be effective. One of those keys is that the Body of Christ must become one. We must repent of division in the Body, and we must bind the spirits of division, because heaven is not divided. The Kingdom of heaven is not divided. The armies of God – God comes bringing all the hosts of heaven with Him – they are not divided. They are one. And therefore, we as the Body of Christ must bind the spirits of division that make us separated and make us incapable of coming into a oneness. Remember, He said if two or three agree on earth touching these things, that they shall happen. He says it again here, that we must know that we are one.

In Mark 3:24-27 it says, "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. If Satan has risen up against himself and is

divided," – which, we could loose that – "he cannot stand, but he is finished! But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house." That is who we are as the Body of Christ. We are those on the earth, plundering his house. He has been the ruler of this world. He has been the god of this age, and we are going to plunder his house. But the only way we can do it is to bind him. So we look to heaven and say, "Is satan bound in heaven?" Absolutely. He was cast out. He was cast out of heaven, therefore his workings in heaven no longer exist. That gives us the ability to bind on earth his work as well. And so we enter in to that. But we recognize to make it work, there must be a oneness among us in the Body of Christ. We must be in agreement on these things, and able, therefore, to bind the strong man that his house may be plundered.

And listen, another part of this is that we are not at war with people, but we are binding the spirits that are at work. Many times the spirits drive people, but that is not the point. We don't war against people. In Ephesians 6:10-13 it says, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm." We stand firm. This is how we work. We are not at war against people, against the human race, against individuals in it. We are at war against the principalities and powers. And again, we see in heaven, those spirits have been bound; and therefore, we are able to work against it, and we will see that in these verses. We must understand, this battle is won. And what we are doing is not trying to move in our own efforts or our own abilities, but we are invoking Christ's authority and dominion through His victory on the cross. As the Lord and the King of heaven and earth, He is able to have that authority move through us, His Body. He has given us the keys to the Kingdom of heaven. He has directed us to bind on earth that which has been bound in heaven.

Ephesians 1:18-23 goes on to say, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority" – see, if our war is against principalities and powers, Christ has been raised above all authority, all power, all dominion, "and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." We are His Body. We are to be the fullness and manifest the fullness of this rule and authority and dominion, and every name that is named that has been given to Christ by the Father. We see these things manifest on earth. How? Our simple prayer, as He taught us to pray: Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on this earth as it is in heaven. It is not our authority. It is not our power, our dominion, or our rule. It is Christ who is ruling and reigning from that place at the right hand of the Father. But that rule and authority must be manifest here on earth.

Colossians 2:15: "When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him." He has already triumphed over the rulers and authorities. He has already made a public display of them, and He is the one who is triumphant. In First Peter 3:22, it says, "Who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him." These things are now in subjection to Him. Therefore, we are able,

according to the Word, to bind these things also; bind them on earth, because He is over them, and they are subject to Him as He is seated in heaven. Remember, Christ's Kingdom is not from this world. He ascended into heaven to receive His Kingdom, and that Kingdom then is brought into the earth. This is the process that we see ourselves being in, in this day and age.

Luke 19, starting at verse 11, says, "While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately." See, His disciples and His followers thought the Kingdom was immediately coming. Remember, even at His Ascension, they said, "Is it now, Lord, that You will return the Kingdom to Israel?" And so He recognized this thought in them. In verse 12, He says this parable: "A nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return." There you have the story of Christ in His Kingdom. He came to earth, but then He went on to a distant country. He went into heaven to receive a Kingdom for Himself, and then He returns. He brings that Kingdom with Him in His return. The Kingdom of God is established and exists already in heaven. The warfare is about bringing dominion and rule of that Kingdom to earth. It is the saints in the Body of Christ that are engaged in that spiritual warfare.

Daniel paints a beautiful picture of this process in Daniel chapter seven, starting at verses 13-16: he said, "I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days" – that would be God – "He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed. As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me, and the visions in my mind kept alarming me. I approached one of those who were standing by and began asking him the exact meaning of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things." What is the interpretation? In verses 17-18, "These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth." See, this issue is the earth and the Kingdom of God trying to invade the earth. "But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come." We see that this war is taking place.

In Daniel 7:21-22 it says, "I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them." See, the war is against the saints, just as the war in the beginning was against Christ coming forth. Satan realized he had to destroy Christ; and if he didn't, then the plan of God would unfold and salvation would be brought to all the earth and all mankind, and the knowledge of the ages of old through the prophets would be manifest. So now in this time, we realize that God, once again, is continuing to unfold that plan and His purposes on the earth; and this time it includes the saints of God. It talks about the fact that the war is being waged against the saints to overpower them, "until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom." Thank You Lord. We look to that time when we take possession of Your Kingdom, and the Kingdom which has manifest and been given to You in heaven will come to us as saints to be appropriated and possessed in this earth. That is what we see in these first verses.

We see that there was one like the Son of Man, going back to Daniel 7:13, one like the Son of Man who came up into heaven and came before the Ancient of Days. That is the Father. And to Him as He stood before the Ancient of Days, dominion and glory and a kingdom were given to Him. These things were

presented to Christ, just as He said in His parable, the man went away into a distant land to receive a kingdom, and then he returns. Christ went into the heavens to receive that Kingdom from the Father, then He returns. But part of this process of Him returning in the earth is that the rage of satan is turned against the saints, because it is the saints who take possession of that Kingdom.

As we go on in Daniel seven, we will pick up at verses 25-26, talking about the king that is arising on the earth. It said, ""He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One."" We see the prophecy that in this spiritual warfare, the saints will be worn down. ""And he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and a half a time. But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever."" These rulers of the earth that are the principalities and powers and the spirits that have been cast down to the earth from heaven – that are being driven and driving man on the earth to make war against the saints and to try to block and stop and hinder the Kingdom of God from coming forth and ruling on this earth – their dominion will be taken away, and their judgment will come; and there will be annihilation and destruction of these spirits, and they will be destroyed forever.

Verse 27 says, ""Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him."" The Kingdom of God is coming. Christ came and announced that. John the Baptist came and announced the Kingdom of God: "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand." And we say again today, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." We should be repenting of the division, of the things within us that hinder the effectiveness of our prayer and disallow the authority of the Christ to move through us as we proclaim, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on this earth."

If you just listen for a few more minutes, I want to recap some important points. When God acts to fulfill His Word and His will on this earth, the devil, with his demons, principalities and powers, responds. And as Yeshua said, they come as a thief to steal, to kill, and to destroy. When God plants wheat, the enemy plants tares to choke out and to destroy that wheat before it can mature. We must remember this point clearly, that as God begins to move in the earth, as God begins to bring forth the fulfillment of His Word and His plan and His heart, there will be a response against it from satan to destroy it – to destroy, to kill, and to stop what God has set in His heart to do.

Number two, the adversary sought to kill Christ before He could mature and become our Savior. Think about that. That was his purpose through Herod, to kill the Christ before He could mature, before He could go to the cross, fulfill the whole will of God, and become the Savior of the world. Also, we as sons of God, the Body of Christ, must understand this principle of spiritual warfare. We must respond with intercession, drawing upon the spiritual weapons that have been provided for us, which are mighty in God to the tearing down of these strongholds. We are able to bind and to loose. All things that have been bound in heaven, we must bind on this earth. Our mandate is, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it already is in heaven. This is how Yeshua, how Jesus, taught His disciples to pray. And Lord, we ask that You teach us to pray the same way. Enable us to bring into this earth what exists already of Your Kingdom in heaven.

As we think about these things, we still intend to celebrate the story of Christmas with a thankfulness in our hearts, with a joy that God brought to earth His Messiah, brought to earth His Son as the Son of Man, and began to unfold this great story of salvation and redemption. And we do enjoy this time, but

we don't forget that there must be the spiritual warfare and intercession that we, as the Body of Christ, engage to, in order to see that plan fulfilled. Amen.