

What Story Are You Living?

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I. Introduction

What story are you living? You are living a story and the main character in that story is you. How's that story going? Would you say you're winning or losing? Do you think your story will have a happy ending? If your story has left you wishing you were living someone else's story, God has a better story for you? What if in your story there was always a happy ending, regardless of the odds, or anything else? Is it possible to have a different story, a better one...how would you like to have heaven on earth...now?

II. Does the Story You're Living Coincide with God's Story About You?

Where does God's story (and yours) begin? It begins with God making His home with us and us having dominion over the earth. After God created the heavens and the earth, He made us, provided a home, and dwelt among us. Heaven had come to earth. It was a beautiful existence, a peaceful existence, a wonderful existence living in a perfect creation with the God who made it all. He was our Father, we were His children and everything we needed, whether food, purpose, or protection, He provided (Genesis 1-2).

Where does God's story (and yours) end? It ends with God making His home with us and us having dominion over the earth. At the end of human history, after God vanquishes Satan forever and creates a new heaven and a new earth, He comes down from heaven to permanently dwell with us. He will be our Father and we will be His children, cared for and provided for by Him, no more tears, no more death, no more sorrow, no more pain (Revelation 20:1-22:5). Would you like this to be your ending?

Can we have heaven on earth now? We had it in the beginning: heaven came down and dwelt among us. And this will be our destiny in the end: God will come down again from heaven and dwell among us forever. But what about now? Heaven is ours for the taking. Jesus already came down to bring us heaven: *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* (John 1:14). He came with healing in His hands to remove death, sorrow and tears; He came to bring us an abundant life (Luke 4:18; John 10:10; Hebrews 2:14-15). That's why He taught us to pray, *Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven...* (Matthew 6:9-10). A heavenly existence is not just for the afterlife. You can have it here and now.

How did we lose our way? If your life doesn't reflect the real story, the actual reality of this universe: that Satan has been defeated and is awaiting his ultimate demise, then Satan has deceived you. But this is nothing new: Satan never sleeps and he's always out to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10; 1 Peter 5:8). The way he does this is through deception and isolation. It's how he got us in the beginning and how he keeps getting us now, (Genesis 3). But notice that even when Satan is having his way with us, his ploys do not escape God's eye. In fact, God uses Satan's arrows to perfect, establish, strengthen and settle us (1 Peter 5:6-11). Satan may bruise us badly, but God gives us the power to resist and endure these sufferings.

How do you find your way back to your true story, God's story?.....How do you escape the bad story you're living in? God's story is happening now and you can live that story, the one with the ultimate happy ending, the one which promises heaven on earth now.

"Wait a minute preacher! Are you saying that if I become a Christian that my life will be a bed of roses? That everything will work out no matter what?!"

I'm telling you that life is miserable and seems to get more miserable every day. There will always be bad (and worse) times. This world and the people in it will do what they will do. But those who belong to God have another option. Yes, they will face the same miserable circumstances, but when they face them with God, even the worst challenge becomes an opportunity for victory, an opportunity to find peace, meaning, and beauty in the midst of a horrific storm.

Exhibit A: Caleb and Joshua vs. the Ten Spies (Numbers 13-14). What is life like when you try to live it without God compared to facing life with Him? When God freed Israel from Egypt, He brought them to the Promise Land, a land flowing with milk and honey. But before they enter the Land, God told Moses to send twelve spies to do a little reconnaissance. When they return, ten of the spies give a report to the people. They confirm that the Land is bountiful. But then their report quickly turns ugly. They tell of all the fortified cities and armies and giants! that are there. This report is so frightening, that it terrifies the entire nation. Caleb interrupts this horrible report and tries to convince the people that they're able to conquer the land. But the Ten Spies will have none of it and again frightened the people with tales of the giants. What's the result? The entire nation weeps all night. Then they wish they had died back in Egypt or the wilderness, accuse God of trying to kill them and their children, and make plans to return to Egypt, even appointing a leader (Nehemiah 9:17). Caleb and Joshua try one last time to prevent this disaster. They remind the people of the truth: God promised them a bountiful land and that's exactly what it is. And it doesn't matter who's there. They will be able to possess it because "the Lord is with us." In fact, the giants are not giants at all but bread that the Lord has set before them as a meal.

What do the Ten Spies see and why? They saw the ten plagues that God brought upon the people of Egypt; they saw the parting of the Red Sea. But all they see now are giants who will eat them alive. Why? Who told them that they can't defeat these giants? Who told them that they are grasshoppers compared to the giants? Who's interpreting everything they see?

What do Caleb and Joshua see and why? They too saw the ten plagues and the parting of the Red Sea. But when they look at the giants, they don't see insurmountable odds. All they see is bread to eat. Why? When you look at your life, what do you see and who's interpreting the events for you, Satan or Jesus?

Is it true that the giants of your life will eat you up like grasshoppers? The Israelites thought the giants were descendants of the Nephilim (Numbers 13:33; Deuteronomy 9:2), a super race that was half angel, half man (Genesis 6:4). This is likely where Greek mythology got its heroes, except that the real story is that they weren't half god, half man. Individuals like Hercules were half angel, half man. Goliath, who was from the city of Gath and 9' 9" tall, was likely a descendant of these giants since a few of them were left when Joshua drove them out of the Land (Joshua 11:21-22). So are these giants too much for Israel? No!! Look at what Caleb does to them when he's 85 years old!! (Joshua 14:6-15; 15:14).....how do you see your giants?

III. Conclusion

*"Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and **the LORD is with us**. Do not fear them."*