

***The Theology of the Unseen Realm:
How God Uses Angels, Demons and the Holy Assembly***

“Yahweh Holds a Divine Council Assembly”

I. The Heavenly Council in Session. (We have looked at Psalm 82 and 89. Here are more scenes of the divine council.

A. The earliest view is from Job – Job 38:4-7 (Job is widely recognized as the first Old Testament book written.)

⁴ Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell Me, if you have understanding,

⁵ Who set its measurements? Since you know.

Or who stretched the line on it?

⁶ On what were its bases sunk?

Or who laid its cornerstone,

⁷ When the morning stars sang together

And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

1. Key insights

a. The heavenly host were with God before and during creation. They are obviously not human. Some may think of them as “angels” but this designation does not account for rank and authority.

b. In the ancient Semitic world, “Sons of God” (Hebrew: *beney Elohim*) is a phrase used to identify divine beings with higher levels of responsibility and jurisdiction – See *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 2, 1992, p. 215-216.

c. Note the Hebrew term for “angel” is (*mal’akim*). It describes importance, but lesser tasks such as delivering messages. The Hebrew Bible never refers to “the Sons of God” as “angels”. Heiser states “... there are no passages in which *beney elohim* and similar phrases occur in parallel with *mal’akim* (angels). Later Jewish texts such as the Septuagint ... in some instances,

render *beney Elohim* as *Angeloi* (angels), but such translation decisions are not driven by the distinctive Hebrew vocabulary.” Heiser, *Unseen Realm*, Footnote#2, p. 24.

B. The Important Descriptive Name as the “Sons of God”

1. Note “morning stars,” verse 7. The same description is found outside of the Bible in ancient texts. The ancients thought that the stars were living entities.

a. Isaiah 14:12-14

“¹² How you have fallen from heaven,
 O star of the morning, son of the dawn!
You have been cut down to the earth,
 You who have weakened the nations!
¹³ But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven;
 I will raise my throne above the stars of God,
And I will sit on the **mount of assembly** In the recesses of the north.
¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
 I will make myself like the Most High.’”

b. Astral religion and solar mythology were common in the ancient world. The idea that the stars were animate divine beings was also part of Israelite thinking. The stars had names.

1. Psalm 147:4

“⁴ He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them.”

c. They were created by God.

1. Genesis 1:16

“¹⁶ God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also.”


a. This may be a planet designation, but it may also convey a veiled reference to the host of heaven.

2. They were thought of as a divine army.

 a. Judges 5:20

“²⁰ The stars fought from heaven,
From their courses they fought against Sisera.”

(“Earthly kings were no match for the Lord’s heavenly host....” – Holman
Christian Standard Study Bible, pg. 399)

 b. Isaiah 40:25-26

“²⁵ ‘To whom then will you liken Me
That I would be his equal?’ says the Holy One.

²⁶ Lift up your eyes on high
And see who has created these stars,
The One who leads forth their host by number,
He calls them all by name;
Because of the greatness of His might
and the strength of His power,
Not one of them is missing.”

 c. Daniel 8:10

“¹⁰ It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down.”

3. The idea of the heavenly stars being spiritual entities persisted into the New Testament era. See Mark S. Smith, *Astral Religion and Representation of Divinity, The Case of Ugarit and Judah, Prayer Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antiquity World*. (ed. Scott Noegel, Joel Walker, Brannon Wheeler, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), p. 187-206.

a. Revelation 12:3-4

“³ Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. ⁴ And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the

earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.”


4. Designation and activity

- a. Notice that the divine beings are designated as “sons”. Familiar language is in use similar to Psalm 89 – “Sons of the Most High”.
- b. Notice their activity – worship. Note our calling, too. Westminster Shorter Catechism Question #1. Their sin, when fallen, is similar to ours – self-worship.

II. The View from Another Historical Old Testament Book

A. View from I Kings (Note background of text)

1. I Kings 22:19-23



“¹⁹ Micaiah said, “Therefore, hear the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right and on His left. ²⁰ The Lord said, ‘Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?’ And one said this while another said that. ²¹ Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord and said, ‘I will entice him.’ ²² The Lord said to him, ‘How?’ And he said, ‘I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ Then He said, ‘You are to entice him and also prevail. Go and do so.’ ²³ Now therefore, behold, the Lord has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; and the Lord has proclaimed disaster against you.”

B. Key Insights

1. Note that there is clearly a divine assembly held in order to deceive Ahab.
2. Apparently, both good and perhaps evil spiritual beings are present.
 - a. “Micaiah portrays Yahweh conducting a kind of contest in the heavenly council. ‘Who,’ Yahweh asks, ‘will lure Ahab, that he might go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead?’ (vs. 20). Three times a form of the verb *pātāh* (to lure, entice, seduce, deceive) occurs (vs. 20, 21, 22).” Dale Ralph Davis, *The Wisdom and Folly: An Exposition of the Book of First Kings*, pg. 326.

- b. “Although God is not the author of deceit, he is sovereign over false prophets as well as the true,” Phillip Graham Ryken, *Reformed Expository Commentary, I Kings*, p. 581.
- 3. They discuss what to do. (See also Woodhouse, *I Kings*, p. 604)
- 4. Yahweh has the final say and orders what is to be done.
 - a. This is not a parable. It is a view of the heavenly council. There is nothing in the text to suggest this is a fictional story or a parable.
- 5. The Old Testament appears to have a three-tiered council structure.
 - a. Yahweh at the top.
 - b. Family household “Sons of God” second.
 - c. Lowest level Elohim messengers.
 - 1. *Ma’akml* (word translated as “angel”)

III. The View from a Prophetic Book

A. View from Daniel

1. Daniel 4:13-26

“¹³ I was looking in the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed, and behold, an angelic watcher, a holy one, descended from heaven. ¹⁴ He shouted out and spoke as follows:

“Chop down the tree and cut off its branches,
Strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit;
Let the beasts flee from under it And the birds from its branches.

¹⁵ Yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground,
But with a band of iron and bronze around it In the new grass of the field;
And let him be drenched with the dew of heaven,
And let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth.

¹⁶ Let his mind be changed from that of a man
And let a beast’s mind be given to him,
And let seven periods of time pass over him.

¹⁷ This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers
And the decision is a command of the holy ones,
In order that the living may know



That the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind,

And bestows it on whom He wishes And sets over it the lowliest of men.”

¹⁸ This is the dream which I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, tell me its interpretation, inasmuch as none of the wise men of my kingdom is able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for a spirit of the holy gods is in you.’

“¹⁹ Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, was appalled for a while as his thoughts alarmed him. The king responded and said, ‘Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you.’ Belteshazzar replied, ‘My lord, if only the dream applied to those who hate you and its interpretation to your adversaries! ²⁰ The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth ²¹ and whose foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt and in whose branches the birds of the sky lodged— ²² it is you, O king; for you have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth. ²³ In that the king saw an angelic watcher, a holy one, descending from heaven and saying, “Chop down the tree and destroy it; yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze around it in the new grass of the field, and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts of the field until seven periods of time pass over him,” ²⁴ this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: ²⁵ that you be driven away from mankind and your dwelling place be with the beasts of the field, and you be given grass to eat like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven; and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes. ²⁶ And in that it was commanded to leave the stump with the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules”.

B. Key Insights

1. He saw a “watcher” (singular) – a term for a divine being (holy one).
 - a. The ESV, NKJV omits “angelic”. The term is not part of the Hebrew text, vs 17,23.
 - b. The term “watcher” means “one who watches.” The sense is that the watcher is always vigilant. He is watchful. Only used here in Daniel but found in Second Temple non-canonical writing.

2. (Verse 17) Notice that the decree is by the “watchers” (plural)
3. (Verse 24) Yet, sovereignty belongs to the Most High.
4. (Verses 25-26) “Here we see that the ultimate authority behind the decree is God, the Most High, and yet the watcher who delivered the decree in verse 17 said ‘the sentence is by decree of the watchers’. Both God and His divine agents were involved in the decision. ... Verse 25 says very plainly that the Most High is sovereign. It is clearly singular. The phrase “heaven is sovereign” is interesting because the Aramaic word translated heaven (*shemayin*) is plural and is accompanied by a plural verb. The plurality of (*shemayin*) can point to either the members of the council or the council as a collective.” Michael S. Heiser, *The Unseen Realm*, pg. 54. [Emphasis mine]
5. Most commentators skip over the references to “the watchers” in 4:17 (see Ian M. Duguid, *Reformed Expository Commentary*, Daniel, pp. 61-70; Gleason L. Archer, Jr. *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Daniel, Vol. 7, pp 61-63.) However, John Gill (Baptist Calvinistic theologian, 1697-1771) included this comment in his commentary “... the cutting down of the tree, and what is signified by it, was the advice, consent, and approbation of the watchers, by whom is generally understood angels; not that they were the authors of the decree, but approvers of it; and were ready, not only to subscribe it, but to execute it.” John Gill, *Exposition of the Bible*, biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/Daniel-4:17.html. [Emphasis Mine]

IV. The Earliest View While Returning to Job

A. The Early View from Job

1. Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6 (Job is widely understood as the earliest written Old Testament Book.)

“1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. ⁷ The Lord said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ Then Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.’ ⁸ The Lord said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.’ ⁹ Then Satan answered the Lord, ‘Does Job fear God for nothing? ¹⁰ Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. ¹¹ But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face.’ ¹² Then the Lord said to Satan, ‘Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.’ So Satan departed from the presence of the Lord.”

“2:1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord. ² The Lord said to Satan, ‘Where have you come from?’ Then Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.’ ³ The Lord said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause.’ ⁴ Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. ⁵ However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face.’ ⁶ So the Lord said to Satan, ‘Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.’”

B. Observations:

1. “Sons of God” appear before Yahweh, verse 1-6.
2. Satan’s rank is not clear. Is he the same rank as the sons of God or is he a servant of the council?
3. The name “Satan” is literally “the satan”. The Hebrew means something like “adversary” “prosecutor” or “challenger”. Heiser maintains that in Job 1 and 2 he is not a villain. He is merely doing the job assigned him by God. He further notes that the Book of Job does not identify “the satan” as the serpent in Genesis 3. The Old Testament never uses the word satan of the serpent figure of Genesis 3. See Heiser, *Unseen Realm*, pg. 57. I disagree because Genesis 3, like all of the

Pentateuch, was written much later than Job even though it depicted a much earlier time period (the garden). Moses may have had “the satan” figure of Job in mind when he wrote Genesis 3.

a. The dating of Job is estimated to be 1900-1700 B.C. These dates are because 1) Archaic spelling used in the book. 2) Presence of *Hapax Legomena* (words only found in one biblical book – literally “Being said once.”). 3) No religious customs – i.e. no priest, tabernacle, etc.

4. Key point for our study, once again the divine council is noted as “Sons of God.” God’s deliberation with Satan is during a council assembly in both chapter one and two.

V. New Testament correspondence

A. Paul notes the divine assembly, too.

1. I Timothy 5:21

“²¹ I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.”

a. See Ryken, Philip Graham. *Reformed Expository Commentary*, I Timothy, p.229 [Emphasis Mine]:

Here Paul takes Timothy to the throne of God, where the Father and the Son judge the whole world according to the strictest standards of justice. With Him are the angels God chose to remain unfallen by His sovereign grace. These divine messengers are mentioned....

2. Note how angels are included in along with “Christ Jesus”.

a. This is a working council while the Father and Jesus (God) are preeminent, having been listed first.

B. A leading question arises

1. Why does God need a council?

- a. The short answer is – He does not need one. However, the Bible is clear that He has one.
- b. A similar question would be – What does God need with people? – Same answer. God does not need anyone or anything. He is altogether independent.
 - 1. This is the doctrine of aseity (existence originating from and having no source other than itself.) He needs nothing and no one.
- c. Another related question would be – Why does God allow evil to exist?
 - 1. Answer: God allows it for His own infinite wise will.

VI. Are idols made of stone and wood “gods” or just inanimate objects?

- A. Some have tried to avoid the clarity of Psalm 82 (previously covered in Lesson #2) by arguing that “the gods” (lesser elohim) mentioned in Scripture are only idols. Consequently, they are not real, and Psalm 82 is about men. This is not the case. Note Moses in one of his many sermons.

1. Deuteronomy 32:17

“¹⁷ They sacrificed to demons who were not God,
 To gods whom they have not known,
New gods who came lately, Whom your fathers did not dread.”

- a. Text explained. “They (Israelites) sacrificed to demons (*shedim*) who were not God (*Eloah*) to gods (*Elohim*) whom they have not known.” NASU.
- b. This verse explicitly calls the “elohim” that the Israelites worshipped demons (*Shedim*) – a rarely used term. See below.

1. Psalm 106:37

“³⁷ They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons.”

- c. The term used “*shedim*” (Deuteronomy 32:17 and Psalm 106:37) comes from *Akkadian shedu* (Note Ludwig Koehler, et. al. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. (Leiden, New York. Brill), 1999, p. 1417.)

1. Ancient idol worshippers believed that the objects they made became inhabited by gods. This is why they had ceremonies to “open the mouth” of the idol. (See Edward M. Curtis, “Idol, Idolatry” in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*. (Doubleday, 1992), p. 377). The mouth and nostrils had to be ritually opened for the spirit to dwell in the object. Even if an idol was destroyed, another would be made so habitation could take place again. The god did not die. See Michael P. Dick, *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East*, 1999, p. 33-34.

B. New Testament Understanding

1. Note Paul’s remarks:

a. I Corinthians 8:4

“Therefore, concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one.”

b. I Corinthians 10:18-22

“¹⁸ Look at the nation Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar? ¹⁹ What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? ²⁰ No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons. ²¹ You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. ²² Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not stronger than He, are we?”

1. Note the earlier remark by Paul (I Cor. 8:4) is similar to Isaiah 40:18-20:

“¹⁸ To whom then will you liken God?

Or what likeness will you compare with Him?

¹⁹ As for the idol, a craftsman casts it, A goldsmith plates it with gold,
And a silversmith fashions chains of silver.

²⁰ He who is too impoverished for such an offering
Selects a tree that does not rot;

He seeks out for himself a skillful craftsman
To prepare an idol that will not totter.”

2. Richard L. Pratt, Holman New Testament Commentary: I and II Corinthians, p. 135 and 167-168.



Now we have to be careful here not to misunderstand Paul’s intentions. Paul believed in an evil spiritual reality behind the pagan idolatry. In accordance with other portions of Scripture, he believed that idolators worship demons (Deut. 32:16-17; Rev. 9:20). Later in this epistle he acknowledges as much when he said that ‘the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons’ and warned against participating too closely with demonic rituals (10:18-22). For this reason, we can be sure that when Paul said that idols are nothing at all in this verse, he did not make a straight-forward assertion. Instead, he spoke by way of comparison with the glory and honor of the true God of Israel. In comparison with the creator and his divine son Jesus, the demons are nothing. ... Unlike the pagans and the unknowledgeable Christians in Corinth, Paul realized that pagans do not sacrifice to great gods whom Christians should fear. In this sense, an idol is nothing. Yet, the sacrifices of pagans are made to real demons. (*Emphasis mine*)



- a. The denial statements of Paul and Isaiah do not deny that other elohim exist.
Rather they deny that any elohim compares to Yahweh!

VII. Note Moses’ remarks about “demons” and “gods”.

A. Examining Deuteronomy 32:17-19



1. Deuteronomy 32:17-19

- “¹⁷ They sacrificed to demons who were not God,
 To gods whom they have not known,
 New gods who came lately,
 Whom your fathers did not dread.
¹⁸ You neglected the Rock who begot you,
 And forgot the God who gave you birth.
¹⁹ The Lord saw this, and spurned them
 Because of the provocation of His sons and daughters.”

2. In the Context of Deuteronomy 32:19, *shedim* and *elohim* – spiritual beings guarding foreign territory who must not be worshipped.
 - a. One cannot deny the reality of the *elohim/shedim* in Deuteronomy 32:17 without denying the reality of demons.
 - b. In the wider context of Deuteronomy, these *elohim* are spiritual beings and members of the heavenly host or divine council. In a sense, they all have some role to play. They either obediently serve God or they rebel and still serve a greater and hidden aspect of God’s design. They are definitely not pieces of wood!

B. How do we understand Isaiah’s remarks about idols?

1. Isaiah on no other “gods”.
 - a. Isaiah 43:10-12

“¹⁰ ‘You are My witnesses,’ declares the Lord,
 ‘And My servant whom I have chosen,
 So that you may know and believe Me And understand that I am He.
 Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me.
¹¹ ‘I, only I, am the Lord, And there is no savior besides Me.
¹² ‘It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed,
 And there was no strange god among you;
 So you are My witnesses,’ declares the Lord, ‘And I am God.’”
 - b. Isaiah 44:6-8

“⁶ This is what the Lord says, He who is the King of Israel and his Redeemer,
 the Lord of armies:
 ‘I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.
⁷ ‘Who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it; And, let him confront Me
 Beginning with My establishing of the ancient nation.
 Then let them declare to them the things that are coming
 And the events that are going to take place.
⁸ ‘Do not tremble and do not be afraid;
 Have I not long since announced it to you and declared it?
 And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me,
 Or is there any other Rock? I know of none.’ ”

c. Also see Isaiah 45:5-11.

2. Isaiah 40-43 challenges idols and false worship of gods. Yahweh is superior.

(40:18)

a. He is incomparable (40:18).

b. No one can teach Him anything (40:12-13).

c. Establishes and destroys kings (41:2).

d. He is salvation alone (45:22).

e. He is creator (45:11-13).

f. He knows the future perfectly and exercises His will (41:21-26; 45:21).

g. All gods are worthless compared to Him (41:23,29).

3. The context for these texts (exclusive statements about Yahweh) are meant to show His uniqueness and superiority. The same statements may be found in Deuteronomy (4:35-39, 32:12,39), but the same book notes that other “gods” exist.

a. Deuteronomy 5:7-8a

“⁷ You shall have no other gods besides Me. ⁸ You shall not make for yourself an idol....”

1. The text reads “Do not make an idol for yourself”. At the beginning of the decalogue “gods” are distinguished from idols.


b. Deuteronomy 6:14

“¹⁴ You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you.”


c. Deuteronomy 10:17

“¹⁷ For the Lord your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who does not show partiality, nor take a bribe.”

d. Deuteronomy 11:16




“¹⁶ Beware that your hearts are not easily deceived, and that you do not turn away and serve other gods, and worship them.”




e. Deuteronomy 13:1-3

“¹ If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, ² and the sign or the wonder comes true, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let’s follow other gods (whom you have not known) and let’s serve them,’ ³ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”



f. Deuteronomy 13:6-8

“⁶ If your brother, your mother’s son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is like your own soul, entices you secretly, saying, ‘Let’s go and serve other gods’ (whom neither you nor your fathers have known, ⁷ of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you, or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end), ⁸ you shall not consent to him or listen to him; and your eye shall not pity him, nor shall you spare or conceal him.”



g. Deuteronomy 13:12-14

“¹² If you hear in one of your cities, which the Lord your God is giving you to live in, anyone saying that ¹³ some worthless men have gone out from among you and have seduced the inhabitants of their city, saying, ‘Let’s go and serve other gods’ (whom you have not known), ¹⁴ then you shall investigate, search out, and inquire thoroughly. And if it is true and the matter is certain that this abomination has been committed among you....”

4. In regard to Isaiah’s remarks about “gods”, Chaffey concludes:

Thus both the context of Isaiah 43-45 and the analogy of Scripture (i.e. comparing Scripture with Scripture) demonstrate that Isaiah did not deny the existence of other gods. He merely used exclusive terminology to demonstrate God’s uniqueness. He is an ‘*elohim*’, but He is distinct from all other ‘*elohim*’. He alone is Yahweh.


– Chaffey, *Fallen*, pg. 82.

5. Note further the sad testimony of the Book of Judges and I Kings.



a. Judges 3:5-6

“⁵ The sons of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; ⁶ and they took their daughters for themselves as wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.”



b. I Kings 11:1-4

“¹ Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, ² from the nations of which the Lord had said to the sons of Israel, ‘You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you; they will certainly turn your heart away to follow their gods.’ Solomon clung to these in love. ³ He had seven hundred wives, who were princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned his heart away. ⁴ For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away to follow other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of his father David had been.”

1. God’s people served live spiritual entities.