

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


“How the Deceiver (Serpent) Became Satan”

I. Introduction (Clues offered in Job)


A. The Sons of God appear before Yahweh.

1. Satan’s rank is unclear.


a. Job 1:6-12




“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. Is he the same rank as the “Sons of God”?




3. “Satan” – The term in Hebrew means adversary, prosecutor, challenger.



B. Problems in the Divine Council.

1. One of Job’s friends, Eliphaz, responds to Job’s wish for death (Job 3:11). Later, Eliphaz makes an interesting point recorded in two separate chapters.



a. Job 4:17-19

“¹⁷ Can mankind be just before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker? ¹⁸ He puts no trust even in His servants; And against His angels He charges

error.¹⁹ How much more those who dwell in houses of clay, Whose foundation is in the dust, Who are crushed before the moth!”



b. Job 15:14-15

“¹⁴ What is man, that he should be pure, Or he who is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? ¹⁵ Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones, And the heavens are not pure in His sight.”

2. The remark in Chapter 15 is a repeat of the one made earlier in Job 4:17-19.

3. The point I want you to see is that we have two Scriptural statements that God’s heavenly council members are corruptible. They are not perfect. The only perfect being is God Himself.

a. Eliphaz was rebuked by God (Job 42:7-9) for wrong counsel with respect to the Most High allowing the righteous to suffer. Yet, there was no correction in regard to God having no trust in His “holy ones.”

b. Even the lesser Elohim cannot be completely trusted.

c. We will study this aspect in detail in later lessons.

II. Studying Ezekiel, dating roughly between 593-571 B.C. (about 22 years)

A. Ezekiel 28:1-11



“¹ The word of the Lord came again to me, saying, ² ‘Son of man, say to the leader of Tyre, “Thus says the Lord God,

‘Because your heart is lifted up and you have said, ‘I am a god,
I sit in the seat of gods in the heart of the seas’;
Yet you are a man and not God,
Although you make your heart like the heart of God—



³ Behold, you are wiser than Daniel;
There is no secret that is a match for you.

⁴ By your wisdom and understanding you have acquired riches for yourself
And have acquired gold and silver for your treasuries.

⁵ By your great wisdom, by your trade you have increased your riches
And your heart is lifted up because of your riches—



⁶ Therefore thus says the Lord God,

‘Because you have made your heart like the heart of God,
⁷ Therefore, behold, I will bring strangers upon you,
 The most ruthless of the nations. And they will draw their swords
 Against the beauty of your wisdom and defile your splendor.
⁸ They will bring you down to the pit,
 And you will die the death of those who are slain in the heart of the seas.
⁹ Will you still say, “I am a god,” in the presence of your slayer,
 Though you are a man and not God, in the hands of those who wound you?
¹⁰ You will die the death of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers,
 For I have spoken!’ declares the Lord God!” ’ ”


1. The Prince of Tyre is being rebuked for his arrogance.
2. The Prince considers himself a god (*el*) who sits in the seat of the gods (*mo shalo elohim*) a term associated with the divine council – “seat of gods”.
3. In addition, “heart of the sea” or “seat of the gods” points to the divine assembly as noted in ancient literature of Israel’s Mesopotamian neighbors.
4. God acknowledges the intelligence of the Prince, but he is not like the most high.
5. Michael S. Heiser from *The Unseen Realm*, Lexham Press, Bellingham, WA, 2015, p. 77:


In verse 10 God adds a strange detail: “You will die the death of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers.” Since the prince of Tyre is an uncircumcised Gentile anyway, the phrasing seems to lack coherence. If we read a little further in Ezekiel, the point would be clear to an ancient reader. The underworld realm of the dead, Sheol, is described by Ezekiel as the place where the uncircumcised warrior-king enemies of Israel find themselves (Ezek 32:21, 24-30,32; Isa 14:9). This is the place of the Rephaim dead, quasi-supernatural beings we’ll encounter later.


B. Ezekiel 28:12-19

“¹² Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord God,
 “You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
¹³ You were in Eden, the garden of God;
 Every precious stone was your covering:

The ruby, the topaz and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx and the jasper;
The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald;
And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you.
On the day that you were created they were prepared.

 14 You were the anointed cherub who covers,
And I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God;
You walked in the midst of the stones of fire.
15 You were blameless in your ways
From the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you.


 16 By the abundance of your trade
You were internally filled with violence, and you sinned;
Therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God.
And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub,
From the midst of the stones of fire.

 17 Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty;
You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor.
I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, that they may see you.

18 By the multitude of your iniquities,
In the unrighteousness of your trade You profaned your sanctuaries.
Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; It has consumed you,
And I have turned you to ashes on the earth in the eyes of all who see you.

19 All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you;
You have become terrified and you will cease to be forever.” ’ ’ ”

1. The Prince of Tyre was never in Eden. He was in Tyre.

 2. Although Ezekiel 28 is about the Prince of Tyre, the prophet utilizes an older tale of an earlier downfall in Eden to describe the human king's judgment.

3. Many scholars argue that the Edenic figure in view is Adam. This view rejects the traditional Hebrew text of this passage. There is no sense for the personage of “Adam”. He was never referred to as an anointed guardian cherub. A cherub was a divine throne guardian in the Ancient Near East worldviews. See Alice Wood, *Of Wings and Wheels: A Synthetic Study of the Biblical Cherubim*.

a. Commentators assert the many jewels listed are on the breastplate of the high priest (Ex 28:17-20; 39:10-13) refer to Adam. The picture is that of Adam as

priest/king of Eden. Jesus as the perfect priest/king, commentators say, makes the correlation fit. Nonetheless, the figure described does not appear to be Adam. This is a stretch.

b. Even in Adam's sin there is no hint that he (Adam) desired to be "above the stars of God". He would be Lord of the Divine Council if he was above the "Stars of God".

c. Adam became like God knowing good and evil, but not God in his omnipotence.

4. The prince was in Eden, the garden of God (vs. 13). He is beautiful like "shining" or "radiant". The stones have one thing in common – they shine and sparkle.

Luminescence is a characteristic of the divine beings or divine presence across the Ancient Near East (Ezk 1:4-7, 2:7-28; 10:19-20; Dan. 10:5-6; Rev. 1:15).

a. Daniel 10:5-6

⁵ I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. ⁶ His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult."

5. Further, note that the anointed cherub is cast out of Eden from the midst of "the stones of fire," verse 16. This phrase is associated with additional Jewish texts (I Enoch 18:6-11; Chapters 24 & 25). The phrase notes a supernatural mountain dwelling of God and the divine council.

6. The "ground" to which this haughty divine being is cast to is also of interest.

"Ground," verses 17 & 18, is the translation for the Hebrew ERETZ. This is a common term for the earth under our feet. Yet, It is also used to refer to the underworld, the realm of the dead (Jonah 2:6) where warrior kings await their comrades in death (Ezek. 32:21,24-30; Isa. 14:9).


III. Studying Isaiah – dating 750-695 B.C.


A. Isaiah 14:4-8

- ⁴ that you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon, and say,
‘How the oppressor has ceased, And how fury has ceased!
- ⁵ The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of rulers
- ⁶ Which used to strike the peoples in fury with unceasing strokes,
Which subdued the nations in anger with unrestrained persecution.
- ⁷ The whole earth is at rest and is quiet; They break forth into shouts of joy.
- ⁸ Even the cypress trees rejoice over you, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying,
‘Since you were laid low, no tree cutter comes up against us.’

1. God tells the prophet to take up a “taunt” (Hebrew MASHAL) against the King of Babylon. The figure of the text is probably an Assyrian king. Erlandsson points out that Assyrian kings such as Tiglath-Pileser, Sargon and Sennacherib received the honorary title “King of Babylon”. This took place at the Babylonian New Year’s Day Festival when the ruler would grasp the hand of Marduk and be declared “King of Babylon”. See Seth Erlandsson, *The Burden of Babylon*, A Study of Israel 13:2-14:23; Cwk Gleerup, Lund. 1970, pp. 160-166. A MASHAL is better described as a comparative parable. See Michael S. Heiser, *Unseen Realm*, p. 83.
2. This is a similar unfavorable report that was delivered to the king of Tyre as noted in Ezekiel. He is an oppressor (vs. 4), persecutes the nations (vs. 5-6), and he must be laid low (vs. 7-8).

B. Isaiah 14:9-19


-  ⁹ Sheol from beneath is excited over you to meet you when you come;
It arouses for you the spirits of the dead, all the leaders of the earth;
It raises all the kings of the nations from their thrones.
- ¹⁰ They will all respond and say to you,
‘Even you have been made weak as we, you have become like us.’



¹¹ Your pomp and the music of your harps have been brought down to Sheol;
Maggots are spread out as your bed beneath you and worms are your covering.’

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.’

¹⁵ Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit.

¹⁶ Those who see you will gaze at you; They will ponder over you, saying,
‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms,



¹⁷ Who made the world like a wilderness and overthrew its cities,
Who did not allow his prisoners to go home?’

¹⁸ All the kings of the nations lie in glory, each in his own tomb.

¹⁹ But you have been cast out of your tomb like a rejected branch,
Clothed with the slain who are pierced with a sword,
Who go down to the stones of the pit like a trampled corpse.”

1. As in Ezekiel 28, the figure of Isaiah 14 goes to Sheol, i.e. the underworld (recesses of the pit, vs. 15).
2. The Rephaim (vs. 18-19, dead spirits) are those who are identified as dead warrior-kings. “You have become like one of us,” verse 10. The King of Babylon will be like one of these dead, like the Prince of Tyre (Ezek. 28:17).
3. Just as in the shift from earthly king to a divine context in Ezekiel, Isaiah moves in discourse the same way in verses 11-15. (Vs. 11, The choir director of heaven?)
4. The figure to whom the King of Babylon is being compared is a divine being fallen from heaven (verse 12). – A much older tale.
5. “Morning star”, vs. 12. “Lucifer” in KJV. Literally “shining one”.

- a. This language harks back to Job 38:7 where the sons of God are referred to as “morning stars”. However, the Hebrew terms in Isaiah 14:12 are different than those used in Job 38:7, yet the meaning is the same.
6. Using similar language found in Ezekiel 28, Isaiah portrays this divine being as hopelessly enamored with his own brilliance. The arrogance is so great that this figure declared himself above all the “stars of God.” The reference to “stars of God” refers to the divine council (Job 38:7). See Michael S. Heiser, *Unseen Realm*, p. 85.
7. Isaiah clearly shifts to a divine context with linkage to Ezekiel 28. Although Isaiah wrote before Ezekiel, the narrative is about a divine being who fell from heaven. See I. A. 5.
8. The mountain assembly (vs. 13) speaks of the divine assembly or council. The “seat” or “throne” (vs. 13) language is familiar having been used by Ezekiel in Chapter 28:2.
9. Note the “I will” statements.
 - a. “I will ascend to heaven.”
 - b. “I will raise my throne above the stars.”
 - c. “I will sit on the mount of the assembly.”
 - d. “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.”
 - e. “I will make myself like the Most High.”
 1. Once again, like Ezekiel, Isaiah uses a much older tale to describe the King of Babylon. The rebellion of this original divine being is clearly evident.
 2. Tertullian, Justin and Origen were among the first to identify the King of Babylon as the devil.

IV. Satan as a proper name

A. Hebrew understanding.

1. The Hebrew word “sātān” transformed over time into the personal name “Satan”.

The Hebraic term is not a personal noun, and therefore does not point to a specific figure as known in the New Testament. See Michael S. Heiser, *Demons*, Lexham Press, Bellingham, WA, 2020, p.76.

2. “Sātān” occurs 27 times in the Hebrew Bible. Only ten occurrences are without the definite article.

a.

Without Definite Article	With Definite Article
Numbers 22:22, 32	Zechariah 3:1,2
Isaiah 29:4	Job 1:6, 7, 8, 9, 12; 2:1, 3, 4, 6, 7
II Samuel 19:23	
I Kings 5:18; 11:14, 23,25	
I Chronicles 21:1	
Psalm 109:6	

- b. By Hebrew grammar rules, a noun preceded by a definite article is not a proper personal name. Without exception, every rendering of satan as “Satan” in English translations of Job 1 and 2 and Zechariah 3 has the definite article. “The term should not be rendered as a proper personal name in those passages – passages presumed by English readers to be critically important for a doctrine of the original rebel of Eden (Satan)” Heiser, *Demons*, p. 76. The correct translation of these texts should be “the adversary” or “the accuser”, Heiser, *Demons*, p. 77.

B. Further Explanation of the Hebrew Grammar

1. Of the ten occurrences that lack the definite article, all but three have a human being in view. See V. A. 2. a.

a. An example is Psalm 109:6-7

“⁶ Appoint a wicked man over him, and let an accuser (*sātān*) stand at his right hand. ⁷ When he is judged, let him come forth guilty, and let his prayer become sin.”

2. See other examples

a. Numbers 22:22

“²² But God was angry because he was going, and the angel of the Lord took his stand in the way as an adversary (*sātān*) against him. Now he was riding on his donkey and his two servants were with him.”

b. Numbers 22:32

“³² The angel of the Lord said to him, ‘Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out as an adversary (*sātān*) [Literally, ‘I have come as a (*sātān*).], because your way was contrary to me.’”

1. Obviously, the Angel of the Lord is not the rebel of Eden, i.e. the Satan of later Judaism and the New Testament.

c. I Chronicles 21:1-2

“¹ Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel. ² So David said to Joab and to the princes of the people, ‘Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan, and bring me word that I may know their number.’”

d. II Samuel 24:1-2

“¹ Now again the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and it incited David against them to say, ‘Go, number Israel and Judah.’ ² The king said to Joab the commander of the army who was with him, ‘Go about now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and register the people, that I may know the number of the people.’”


1. Heiser notes (*Demons*, p. 80):

In light of the related account in Numbers 22; I Chronicles 21:1 ought to be translated, “Then an adversary stood against Israel...” This adversary is later identified as the angel of Yahweh in both accounts (I Ch. 21:14-15; 2 Sam. 24:15-16). If, as evident in other Old Testament accounts, identities were blurred (e.g. Gen. 48:15-16; Exod 3[cp. Josh 5:13-15]; Jud 6), then there is no contradiction between the passages. The angel and Yahweh can be coidentified. The answer to the question of who incited David is “Yahweh” in both accounts.

V. “Satan” in second temple Judaism. (Return from Exile to AD 70.)

A Development

1. It took additional time in revelation history for the label “adversary” (*sātān*) to be applied to the serpent of Genesis 3.
2. The confrontation between *sātān* of Job 1 and 2 and God was indeed adversarial and not collegial. This means that the *sātān* of Job 1 and 2 could be perceived as the enemy of God. This conclusion could be read back into Genesis 3. This indeed did take place in many intertestamental works from the second temple period.
Heiser, *Demons*, p. 102-108.



B. Intertestamental writings developed in such a way that the personages known as “Mastema” and “Satan” became identified as the same individual.

1. In second temple texts, *sātān* or *mastema* becomes a proper name.
2. Introduction to **Pseudepigrapha** literature.
 - a. Pseudepigrapha – literally means “false writing”. The term refers to the practice of producing written works and then assigning their authorship to someone else (real or imagined) other than the author. Often oral tradition (stories) would later be written using this means.
 - b. D. A. Carson in the *Dictionary of the New Testament Background*, pg. 858:
“A literary forgery is a work written or modified with the intent to deceive. All literary forgeries are pseudepigraphical, but not all pseudepigrapha are literary forgeries. There is a substantial class of pseudepigraphical writings that, in the course of their transmission, somehow became associated with some figure or other. These connections between a text and an ancient figure, however fallacious, were judgments made with the best will in the world.”
 - c. During the Second Temple Period this type of literature was common to faithful Jews who regarded these books with great value even though they were not canonical. See D. A. Carson, “Pseudonymity and Pseudepigraphy”, 859;
James H. Charlesworth “Pseudonymity and Pseudepigraphy”, 540.

3. See pseudepigrapha book *Jubilees*. This book references an apparently older book known as the *Book of Noah*. In this book, Noah is concerned for his grandchildren who are being targeted by demons after the flood. He prays [Heiser, *Demons*, p. 96, 97]:

[O Lord] you know that which your Watchers, the fathers of these spirits, did in my days and also these spirits who are alive. Shut them up and take them to the place of judgment. And do not let them cause corruption among the sons of your servant, O my God, because they are cruel and were created to destroy.⁶ And let them not rule over the spirits of the living because you alone know their judgment, and do not let them have power over the children of the righteous henceforth and forever.

God responds by instructing the archangels to bind the evil spirits but is then approached by their over lord with a request:

And the Lord our God spoke to us [the archangels] so that we might bind all of them.^{7,8} And the chief of the spirits, Mastema, came and he said, “O Lord, Creator, leave some of them before me, and let them obey my voice. And let them do everything which I tell them, because if some of them are not left for me, I will not be able to exercise the authority of my will among the children of men because they are (intended) to corrupt and lead astray before my judgment because the evil of the sons of men is great.”⁹ And he said, “Let a tenth of them remain before him, but let nine parts go down into the place of judgment.”¹⁰ And he told one of us to teach Noah all of their healing because he knew that they would not walk uprightly and would not strive righteously.¹¹ And we acted in accord with all of his words. All of the evil ones, who were cruel, we bound in the place of judgment, but a tenth of them we let remain so that they might be subject to Satan upon the earth.¹² And the healing of all their illnesses together with their seductions we told Noah so that he might heal by means of herbs of the earth.¹³ And Noah wrote everything in a book just as we taught him according to every kind of healing. And the evil spirits were restrained from following the sons of Noah.

- a. Prince Mastema is noted in Qumran Scrolls (Same as DSS). Mastema means “animosity, hostility”. The only occurrence in the Hebrew Bible is Hosea 9:7-8. The NASU translates it as “hostility.”

1. Hosea 9:7-8

“⁷ The days of punishment have come,
The days of retribution have come;

Let Israel know this!

The prophet is a fool, The inspired man is demented,
Because of the grossness of your iniquity,
And because your hostility is so great.

⁸ Ephraim was a watchman with my God, a prophet;
Yet the snare of a bird catcher is in all his ways,
And there is only hostility in the house of his God.”

3. Further, note that “Mastema” is used as a designation for Satan. The Prince of Mastema (4Q225 2.2.13) is a noun which developed as a name or title at a later time. It is found twice in the Hebrew Bible (Hos. 9:7,8 where it means “animosity” or “hostility”. The phrase “the Prince of Mastema in *Jubilees* clearly designates an individual who bears this title “Mastema”. It becomes a name. In *Jubilees* 10:11 the context implies he is identified with Satan. Once again, nowhere in *Jubilees* is “Mastema” identified as the serpent in Genesis 3.
 - a. There are numerous second temple Jewish writing examples of the term Satan as a name being ascribed to the archenemy of God.
4. Mastema’s request of God is strange, and God indeed grants it. This may reflect predestination theology that was a mainstay within the Qumran community. It was understood that individuals were predestined to good or evil.
5. By the time of the LXX translation of the Old Testament “diabolis” (devil) was used to translate the term “*sātān*” throughout Job 1 and 2.
 - a. Heiser notes (*Demons*, p. 107-108):

“We have seen that there is no single unified presentation of Satan, the original deceiver, rebel of Eden in the second temple Jewish literature. Nevertheless, all the particulars of the New Testament’s theology of Satan are present in the literature of this earlier period.”

6. John in Revelation clearly links Satan with the serpent of Genesis 3.

a. Revelation 12:9, 13, 15, 17

“⁹ And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

“¹³ And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child.”

“¹⁵ And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood.”

“¹⁷ So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”

VI. Satan Imagery

A. Why is he depicted with horns, hooves, and a tail?

1. Early Christian writers got the images from the ancient god known as Pan. “Pan worship” dates back to the Egyptians.
2. Pan was worshipped at Panias, which was the largest city in Caesarea Philippi. The worship of Pan included drinking, nudity, orgies, and rituals set in and around nature.
3. Pan is depicted as being half man and half goat. The hooves and horns come from the goat connection.

B. Personification of Satan is discernible in Christian writings dating to the second century.

1. There was a natural connection (perhaps) with the Satan of the Bible and Greco-Roman worship of Pan. See Rebecca Denova, “The Origin of Satan”, *World History Encyclopedia*, worldhistory.org. February 18, 2021.

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