

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

“The Third Primeval Rebellion” – Part B

I. Introduction

A. Review

1. Genesis 10-11 notes the end of primeval history.
2. Through Genesis 10, God had been patiently waiting for repentance within mankind. However, this did not occur.
3. Instead of using multiplication through the birth rate to “fill the earth” (Gen. 9:1), man congregated in a region that became a great city known as Babel/Babylon.
4. Yahweh and the council/assembly came down to investigate.

a. Genesis 11:5-8

“⁵ The Lord (Yahweh) came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. ⁶ The Lord said, ‘Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. ⁷ Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.’ ⁸ So the Lord (Yahweh) scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city.”

1. Notice, once again, that the council is involved in the decision, but Yahweh does the action.
2. This form of divine administration has been noted in previous lectures.
5. God dispersed the people through multiple languages.
6. The very next chapter (Genesis 12) records the call of Abraham and God’s design to create His own people group made possible through an Ancient Near East covenant. God will initiate an Ancient Near East suzerain relationship with Abraham who is in the vassal role.

a.



Genesis 1-11	Genesis 12-50
Primeval	Patriarchal

7. God will relate to Abraham and his descendants as His own people; His longer range plan included all of the nations. They were not forgotten.



a. "... in you (Abraham) all the families of the earth shall be blessed." – Gen. 12:3c

1. Genesis 12:1-3

¹ Now the Lord (Yahweh) said to Abram, 'Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; ² And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; ³ And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.'

2. Note how God dictates the terms of the covenant. There is no negotiation with Abraham.

8. Moses refers to this event by noting that the nations were disinherited while Jacob (Israel) was God's own.



a. Deuteronomy 32: 8-9, 43 ESV

⁸ When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance,
when he divided mankind,
he fixed the borders of the peoples
according to the number of the sons of God.

⁹ But the Lord's portion is his people,
Jacob his allotted heritage."

⁴³ Rejoice with him, O heavens;
bow down to him, all gods,
for he avenges the blood of his children
and takes vengeance on his adversaries.
He repays those who hate him
and cleanses his people's land."

9. In the last lesson, we noted textual variants on this text and the reasons for the disparity.



a. The LXX and the DSS both state that the “sons of God” were allotted to the nations as divine overseers.

b. The MT, the basis for all English Old Testament Bibles, was likely altered to prohibit a possible belief in polytheism.

c. Most theologians support the MT rendering because of the ardent belief in monotheism.

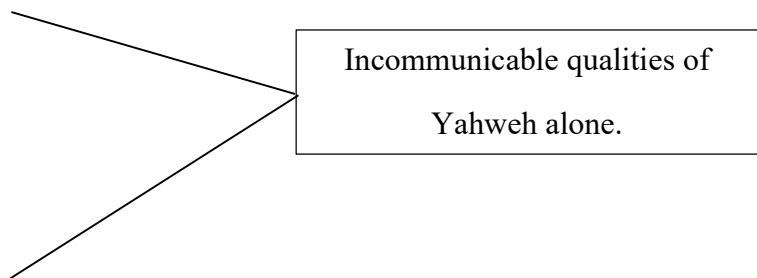
d. However, throughout this course, I have made the case that monotheism is on solid ground because no lesser *elohim* can compare to Yahweh – the Most High God.



e. “*Elohim*” is better understood as a place of residence (the spiritual realm) rather than a set of attributes. Yahweh alone possesses His communicable and incommunicable attributes. This is a Heiser insight which I believe is accurate.



1. Omniscience
2. Omnipresence
3. Omnipotence
4. Immutability
5. Aseity





10. According to Moses, lesser *elohim* were assigned the nations of the world, but they became corrupted by the quest for worship that is only due to Yahweh.

B. Interface with Psalm 82

1. This Psalm, introduced in Lesson #2, indicates that lesser *elohim* rebelled and sought worship for themselves.

II. The Interface of Psalm 82 with additional Old Testament texts.


A. Psalm 82:1-8 ESV

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- ¹ God has taken his place in the divine council;
in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:
- ² ‘How long will you judge unjustly
and show partiality to the wicked?
Selah
- ³ Give justice to the weak and the fatherless;
maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.
- ⁴ Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.’
- ⁵ They have neither knowledge nor understanding,
they walk about in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.
- ⁶ I said, ‘You are gods,
sons of the Most High, all of you;
- ⁷ nevertheless, like men you shall die,
and fall like any prince.’
- ⁸ Arise, O God, judge the earth;
for you shall inherit all the nations!”
- 

1. We noted this text earlier in Lesson #2 and #14.
2. God excoriates these “sons of God” for rebellion, fomenting wickedness, afflicting the weak and promoting injustice.
3. These are the gods of the nations that Israel encountered. Moses noted them many times.

a. In Deuteronomy


1. Deuteronomy 6:14



“¹⁴ You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you—”

2. Deuteronomy 10:17

“¹⁷ For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe.”





3. Deuteronomy 11:16

“¹⁶ Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them.”



4. Deuteronomy 13:6-8

“⁶ If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or your daughter or the wife you embrace or your friend who is as your own soul entices you secretly, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods,’ which neither you nor your fathers have known, ⁷ some of the gods of the peoples who are around you, whether near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth to the other, ⁸ you shall not yield to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him, nor shall you conceal him.”

b. These gods (lesser *elohim*) were continuing in power through the crucifixion.

Yet they as well as Satan, did not know the ultimate plan of Yahweh to resurrect Jesus.



1. I Corinthians 2:6-8

“⁶ Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. ⁷ But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. ⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

a. There was no understanding within the seen and unseen realms that

God’s plan called for a bodily resurrection of Jesus.


c. Satan enticed Judas to initiate the plan to kill the Christ, but did not know the ultimate plan (Luke 22:3; John 13:27) which called for a raising of the dead.



1. Luke 22:3

“³ And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve.”






2. John 13:27


“²⁷ After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, ‘What you do, do quickly.’”

4. Self-worship and corruption – Note once again Elephaz’s comment covered in Lesson #5. His council to Job was rejected by God because of a poor understanding of the Most High’s sovereignty (Job 42:7). Nonetheless, Eliphaz’s comments about rebellion in the divine assembly were not corrected. The reason for this is because the remarks were commonly understood within the ancient world.



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.”

B. These lesser *elohim* were delegated by God as regional governors over the many nations. Daniel is quite descriptive on this point. They are all a part of the unseen realm and under the dominion of Satan (II Corinthians 4:4).



1. Daniel 10:13

“¹³ The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia.”



2. Daniel 10:20-21

“²⁰ Then he said, ‘Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come.²¹ But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince.’”

III. New Testament Correspondence.

A. Note the Apostle Paul’s remarks at Athens.



1. Acts 17:23-27

“²³ For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.²⁴ The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;²⁵ nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;²⁶ and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,²⁷ that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.”


B. How do we understand verses 26-27? Several commentators see a connection between Paul’s remarks and Deuteronomy 32:8-9.

1. The Reformed Baptist, John Gill, notes the following (Gill, *Gill’s Exposition of the Bible*):



“ ‘... the bounds of their habitation; where men shall dwell, and how long they shall continue there the age or distinct period of time in which every man was or is to come into the world, is fixed and determined by God.’ ... And to this agrees with the Ethiopic version, which renders the whole thus, ‘and hath appointed his times, and his years, how long they shall dwell’; see Deuteronomy 32:8 to which the apostle seems to refer ... but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; that is he hath given orders, that the doctrine of repentance ... should be preached to the nations, to Gentiles as well as Jews; and it becomes them to repent of their idolatry and turn from idols and worship the one, only living and true God; and though for many hundreds of years God had neglected them and sent no messengers, nor messages to them.” [Emphasis Mine]







2. Darrel Bock, a noted evangelical scholar, makes a connection between Acts 14:15-16 with Acts 17:23-27 (Bock, *Acts: Baker Exegetical Commentary*, p. 569):

“... It appears that Paul is saying that God did little to remedy the direction of the nations as a whole in the past (besides issuing prophetic warnings and calling Israel to be a light to the nations). Acts 14:16 says that God let them go their own way. He largely ignored them. Now, however, God has acted. God calls to all people everywhere to repent. The call to repent matches Acts 14:15 with its call to turn from idols.” [Emphasis Mine]

a. Acts 14:15-18



“¹⁵ and saying, ‘Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. ¹⁶ In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; ¹⁷ and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.’ ¹⁸ Even saying these things, with difficulty they restrained the crowds from offering sacrifice to them.”



3. Kistemaker also sees a linkage to Deuteronomy 32:8: (Kistemaker, *Acts: New Testament Commentary*, p. 635):

“[God determined] the boundaries of their habitation,” which appears to be an echo of a line in the Song of Moses, ‘When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, ... He set the boundaries of the peoples’ (Deut. 32:8, NASB). God, then, has determined the epochs for and the borders of the nations of this world.”

IV. Summation of the third primeval rebellion.

A. Structure of Genesis.

1. Genesis has two very different sections concerning God’s redemptive plan.

a. Previously noted in I. A. 1. a.



b. 1-11: Primeval – Creation, Fall, Flood and the Babel Incident

12-50: Patriarchal History beginning with Abraham.

2. There are three significant rebellions during 1-11.

- a. The Fall
- b. The Flood
- c. Babel

All three denote man's sin and increasing wickedness, but also how lesser *elohim* fomented rebellion.

B. The third rebellion

1. It commences with Nimrod and Babel while God chooses to make one people group for His own possession.
2. The rest of the nations were allocated to lesser *elohim* who failed to uphold righteousness and justice. They gave into the desire for self-worship (a problem for man, too) and led their people groups into increasing forms of wickedness, licentiousness and unrighteousness. Consequently, the third rebellion began with man and ended with corrupt lesser *elohim*. The immediate effects from the corrupt sons of God would take a greater amount of time to become apparent.
3. This lesser *elohim* failure did not happen immediately, but with each passing year their failure became more and more apparent. Hence, God's ridicule of them in Psalm 82.
4. We will share with Christ in His judgment seat over fallen *elohim*.

a. Revelation 3:21

“²¹ He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

1. Vivid imagery is present. Overcoming Christians do not merely sit on their own throne, but “sit with Me on My throne.” This is a reference to the bisellium or the double-throne which was familiar in the Greco-Roman world. There is a minted coin with Augustus and his adopted grandson Agrippa sitting on the double throne.

2. We, too, have been adopted.



a. Ephesians 1:5

“⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will.”



b. I Corinthians 6:2-3 (Paul asks a pertinent question)

“² Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? ³ Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?”

1. Because of the redemptive work of Christ, we will have a higher position of power by which to judge, lesser *elohim* who are not elect.

Consequently, in the present, live with no partiality because this is an essential quality for a righteous judge.



a. 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.”

V. Understanding God's patience

A. Paul notes within his Athens sermon that God waited for mankind to seek Him.



1. Acts 17:26-27

“²⁶ and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, ²⁷ that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.”

2. The people did not turn to God. Why was this the case and what is the theological messaging?

B. God's patience for mankind to repent, even though unrepentance was foreknown, signals to the Christian how much sovereign power is necessary for an unbeliever to become a believer. Lesser *elohim* fell and we still fall for lesser lovers.

1. Man's depravity results in no desire for the Most High God.

a. Romans 3:9-18



⁹ What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; ¹⁰ as it is written, 'There is none righteous, not even one;

¹¹ There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God;

¹² All have turned aside, together they have become useless;

There is none who does good, There is not even one.'

¹³ 'Their throat is an open grave, With their tongues they keep deceiving,'

'The poison of asps is under their lips';

¹⁴ 'Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness';

¹⁵ 'Their feet are swift to shed blood,

¹⁶ Destruction and misery are in their paths,

¹⁷ And the path of peace they have not known.'

¹⁸ 'There is no fear of God before their eyes.'"



1. Paul highlights man's inability to turn from sin to God.

2. Sovereign power is necessary for conversion to take place. Jesus made this point emphatic.

a. John 3:3

³ Jesus answered and said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.'"

b. John 3:5

⁵ Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'"



C. Who is it that caused us to become born again?



1. I Peter 1:3

“³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

2. It is always all about God. He and He alone is worthy of our worship. (Noted in lesson #1.)

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