

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

“The Third Primeval Rebellion” – Part C

I. Tower of Babel interface with Psalm 82 and cosmic geography.

A. The judgment at Babel altered the relationship between God and the nations.

1. God chose to divorce himself from humanity and begin anew with Abraham – the beginning of Israel.

2. Yet, the nations remained as God’s objective to redeem:

a. Genesis 12:1-3

“<sup>1</sup> Now the Lord 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; <sup>2</sup> 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; <sup>3</sup> 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.”

3. There is no Old Testament indication that divine sons of God were fallen (adversaries to Yahweh) when the assignment took place.

4. Later these same “sons of God” inspire mankind to worship the heavenlies – “sun, moon, and stars”. God did not intend that this false worship would take place or be sanctioned by the delegated divine overseers.

B. God abhorred worship of false gods within Israel and the nations outside of the Jewish people. There is a general condemnation of all false god worship. Note the many commands from Moses in Deuteronomy. This is an additional list to those cited in Lesson #15.

1. Scriptures



a. Psalm 97:7

“<sup>7</sup> Let all those be ashamed who serve graven images, Who boast themselves of idols; Worship Him, all you gods.”



b. Deuteronomy 17:2-5

“<sup>2</sup> If there is found in your midst, in any of your towns, which the Lord your God is giving you, a man or a woman who does what is evil in the sight of the Lord your God, by transgressing His covenant, <sup>3</sup> and has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, or the sun or the moon or any of the heavenly host, which I have not commanded, <sup>4</sup> and if it is told you and you have heard of it, then you shall inquire thoroughly. Behold, if it is true and the thing certain that this detestable thing has been done in Israel, <sup>5</sup> then you shall bring out that man or that woman who has done this evil deed to your gates, that is, the man or the woman, and you shall stone them to death.”

2. God judges the nations and their gods.

a. See Deuteronomy 12:29-31, 18:9-14, 20:15-18, and 29:24-28

3. The gods allotted to the nations are false and lead to the stumbling of human beings.



a. Jeremiah 18:15

“<sup>15</sup> For My people have forgotten Me, They burn incense to worthless gods and they have stumbled from their ways, from the ancient paths, to walk in bypaths, not on a highway.”

1. Note “have stumbled”. Ancient versions render the Hebrew “cause them to stumble”. See NASU footnote, verse 15.

4. The worship of these gods is worthless.



a. Psalm 97:7

“<sup>7</sup> Let all those be ashamed who serve graven images, who boast themselves of idols; Worship Him, all you gods.”

1. “gods” also rendered as “supernatural powers” NASU footnote on word “gods”.

C. How do we understand all of the above texts?



1. Note Acts 17:26-27

“<sup>6</sup> 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, <sup>27</sup> 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. God intended His divorce of humanity to be a stimulus to seek Him – a right

relationship. Israel would be the conduit, but the biblical record depicts hostility to Israel (Gen. 3:15) and the deliberate worship of lesser gods. Human depravity, fomented by lesser *elohim*, resulted in greater wickedness.

3. The divorce by God of the nations was real, but He still wanted those created in His image to be ruled justly by lesser *elohim*. This did not happen!

D. In Psalm 82, God excoriates the lesser *elohim* for abusing their charge.

1. Psalm 82:1-8



<sup>1</sup> God has taken his place in the divine council;  
in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:

<sup>2</sup> ‘How long will you judge unjustly  
and show partiality to the wicked? Selah

<sup>3</sup> Give justice to the weak and the fatherless;  
maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.

<sup>4</sup> Rescue the weak and the needy;  
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.’



<sup>5</sup> They have neither knowledge nor understanding,  
they walk about in darkness;  
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

<sup>6</sup> I said, ‘You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you;

<sup>7</sup> nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince.’

<sup>8</sup> Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations!”

a. The psalmist cries out for God to “inherit all the nations!”

1. Michael Heiser, *Demons*, p. 152:

The reference to the gods (*elōhîm*) of Yahweh’s council (verse 6) as “sons of the Most High (*elyōn*)” aligns completely with apportionment of the nations by the Most High (*elyōn*) among his sons. The Hebrew

lemma translated “inherit” (*nāhāl*) is the same as the translated “inheritance” in Deuteronomy 32:8.



a. Deuteronomy 32:8 (ESV)

“<sup>8</sup> 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.”

2. They are condemned for the chaos they have fomented within the nations.

a. While commenting on Jeremiah, John Geyer writes in “Desolation and Cosmos”, pg. 49-64:

When Jeremiah extols Yahweh as king over the nations (x7,10) he records that the earth trembles. The final stage of the Desolation of the earth is the complete dissolution of the universe. The lords of heaven are thrown into confusion by the general chaos. Sun moon and stars no longer give their light and the world is plunged into darkness (Isa. xiii 10; Ezek. xxxii 7-8).  
[Emphasis Mine]



b. Revelation 21:1 (This is the reason for the restoration of heaven and earth.)

“<sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.”

## II. Cosmic Geography

A. Israel was completely isolated – actually, very similar to today.

1. The nation would be surrounded on all sides by pagan lands whose lesser gods were corrupt and would expend all effort to destroy Yahweh’s allotted heritage, Israel – kill the seed of the woman.

B. Many Old Testament events may seem odd to modern readers, but do make sense with



“cosmic geography” (Heiser’s term) in mind. The term refers to regions allotted to lesser *elohim* in contrast to Yahweh’s conquered land of Canaan, i.e. Israel. My term for this regional authority is “Geographical Dominion”. Heiser uses “cosmic” to focus

attention upon the unseen realm, but my term highlights the oversight within the unseen realm which affects the seen realm.



1. I Samuel 26:19

“<sup>19</sup> Now therefore, please let my lord the king listen to the words of his servant. If the Lord has stirred you up against me, let Him accept an offering; but if it is men, cursed are they before the Lord, for they have driven me out today so that I would have no attachment with the inheritance of the Lord, saying, ‘Go, serve other gods.’”

a. David describes himself as being driven away from “the inheritance of Yahweh”. David notes that Saul and his minions have expelled him to “go serve other gods”. Outside of Israel, the land is under control of lesser *elohim*.



1. Richard Phillips, *I Samuel*, p. 454:

“This statement reflects the theology at work in the Old Testament, since one needed to worship God at his tabernacle to benefit from the atoning sacrifices made there. Saul was driving David into the cursed condition of paganism by depriving him of God’s sacred ordinances.”



2. Ronald F. Youngblood, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, vol. 3: I & II Samuel*, pg.771:

“In ancient times it was commonly believed that to be driven from one’s homeland was tantamount to leaving one’s god(s) and being forced to ‘serve other gods,’ the gods of the alien territory of exile.”


a. See also Daniel Isaac Block, *The Gods of the Nations: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern National Theology*.



3. Dale Ralph Davis, *Focus on the Bible: I Samuel*, p. 223:

“Yahweh’s face (or presence) was especially seen in the sanctuary (Ps. 63:2); yet David was being driven away and cut off from tabernacle and sacrifice, from priest and festival. He was being shut out of the land and sanctuary where Yahweh met with his people. To be cut off from the ordinances of public worship is David’s most severe grief. Would that


cause me anguish? Christians have surpassed David in privileges but few have approached him in appetite.”



## 2. II Kings 5:17-19

“<sup>17</sup> Naaman said, ‘If not, please let your servant at least be given two mules’ load of earth; for your servant will no longer offer burnt offering nor will he sacrifice to other gods, but to the Lord. <sup>18</sup> In this matter may the Lord pardon your servant: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon your servant in this matter.’ <sup>19</sup> He said to him, ‘Go in peace.’ So he departed from him some distance.”

a. Naaman, the Syrian commander, was healed of leprosy and then asks Elisha for permission to carry dirt from Israel back to his home country. Naaman recognized the lordship of Yahweh over all gods and pledged to sacrifice only to Him. Since Yahweh was to be worshipped in His own land, Naaman asks if he may carry dirt from Israel so Yahweh may be worshipped in his own land, still ruled by lesser *elohim*.



1. Philip Graham Ryken, *The Reformed Expository Commentary: II Kings*, p. 106:

“It almost sounds as if Naaman is asking for permission to compromise his faith by worshipping idols. Yet he is solid in his commitment to worship God alone. He wants to take a wheelbarrow full of the promised land back with him so that he can build an altar to the living God. Naaman’s faith is genuine; he will not sacrifice to any other God.”



## 3. I Samuel 5:1-5

“<sup>1</sup> Now the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. <sup>2</sup> Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it to the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon. <sup>3</sup> When the Ashdodites arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord. So they took Dagon and set him in his place again. <sup>4</sup> But when they arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord. And the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off on the threshold; only the trunk of Dagon was left to him. <sup>5</sup> Therefore neither the

priests of Dagon nor all who enter Dagon's house tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day."

- a. The Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines and taken to Dagan's Temple. In less than twenty-four hours, Dagon's idol was reduced to a stump. Note how Dagan's priests refused to walk over the ground where Yahweh had destroyed Dagon. This was the case even though the space was in Dagon's temple. The ground had been conquered by Yahweh!



#### 4. Daniel 10:13, 20

"<sup>13</sup> But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia."

"<sup>20</sup> Then he said, 'Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come.'"

- a. The "princes" are supernatural beings ruling over lands previously allotted by Yahweh to the sons of God (lesser *elohim*). They are confronted by Michael, Israel's prince, one of the chief princes.



#### 1. Daniel 10:13

"<sup>13</sup> But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia."



#### 2. Daniel 10:21

"<sup>21</sup> However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince."

#### 3. Daniel 12:1

"<sup>1</sup> Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that



time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.”



b. John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, pg. 663.

“By analogy with Michael it is clear that the ‘princes’ of Greece and Persia are the patron angels of these nations. The notion that different nations were allotted to different gods or heavenly beings was wide-spread in the ancient world. ... The origin of this [prince] idea is to be sought in the ancient Near Eastern concept of the Divine Council. The existence of national deities is assumed in the Rabshaketh’s taunt: ‘Who among all the gods of the countries have delivered their countries out of my hand that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?’ (2 Kgs 18:35 = Isa 36:20)”



1. II Kings 18:35

“<sup>35</sup> ‘Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their land from my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?’ ”

2. Isaiah 36:20

“<sup>20</sup> ‘Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their land from my hand, that the Lord would deliver Jerusalem from my hand?’ ”



c. Louis F. Hartman & Alexander A. DiLella, *The Book of Daniel: A New*

*Translation with Notes and Commentary on Chapters 1-9*, pg. 282-283:

“‘The prince of the kingdom of Persia’ mentioned twice in 10:13, and called simply ‘the prince of Persia’ in 10:20 is not King Cyrus of 10:1 or a corporate person representing as a group of the kings of Persia, as Calvin and most of the reformers thought, but is rather the tutelary spirit or guardian angel of the Persian kingdom, as the rabbis and most Christian commentators have rightly acknowledged. ... The belief in guardian angels for nations is a survival of an ancient polytheistic theology which held that each city-state or nation or empire had a tutelary god who was in a particular way its protector, enjoying in return special status and cultic recognition. As in former times the patron-god looked after the interests of the nation in his charge, so in orthodox monotheistic circles the guardian angel was thought to be commissioned by the one God to see to it that the affairs of state ran smoothly. If anything went wrong in the nation, then the guardian angel could be blamed for lack of wisdom or skill. In this way, God would be excused from any charge of mismanagement or neglect. To preserve the basic Israelite tenet of





monotheism, guardian angels were made subject to God's supreme authority." [Emphasis Mine]

C. Note the sad story of the Danites. Spiritual compromise ends in idolatry which was facilitated/fomented by "Geographical Dominion".

1. Background – The Danites eventually settle in the wrong location.

a. "Dan" means "judge".

b. It is the second largest tribe – second only to Judah. During the first census, upon leaving Egypt, there were 62,700 of fighting age (Num. 1:39). In the second census they were numbered 64,400 (Num. 26:43).

c. The tribe gained notoriety from its hero – Samson and Aholiah.

1. Samson was a Nazarite – voluntary vow to be holy unto the Lord (Num. 6:1-21).

2. Aholiah, of the tribe of Dan, was the man in charge of the tabernacle construction (Ex. 31:6).

d. Dan was blessed by Jacob but in a strange way.

1. Genesis 49:16-18

<sup>16</sup> Dan shall judge his people,  
As one of the tribes of Israel.

<sup>17</sup> Dan shall be a serpent in the way,  
A horned snake in the path,  
That bites the horse's heels,  
So that his rider falls backward.

<sup>18</sup> For Your salvation I wait, O Lord."

2. The judgment was in part realized through Samson (Judges 15:20, cf Gen. 49:16).

3. But what about the serpent? – The sense is a lack of faithfulness and harks back to Genesis 3.

e. After the conquest of the Promised Land, Dan was assigned a territory west of Jerusalem, west of Ephraim, and bordering the Mediterranean Sea. They were seafarers.



1. See Map

f. Dan was unable to drive out the Amorites and was forced to the hill country. They would not fight to restore order during the days of the judges. They remained in their ships when they should have fought.

g. The tribe eventually uprooted and headed north. They stole a back-slidden priest's idols, annihilated a people group, and took over their land. They became the first tribe to embrace idolatry. They took the city Larish and renamed it Dan (Judges 18:28-29). See Map. It is located at the foot of Mt. Hermon. This land was originally given to Naphtali. Three tributaries from the water of Mt. Hermon flowed through this territory. The largest of the three was called the Dan River.



1. Map



2. The tribe later became part of the ten-tribe rebellion and followed Jeroboam. New worship sites were located at Bethel and Dan. Major idolatry occurred. (Judges 18:30-31). Idolatry was fomented by Johnathan, the son of Gershom. Gershom was the son of Moses (Ex. 2:21-22). The family had a long history for the potential for idolatry. (Remember Aaron.)

3. The tribe of Ephraim, the source of the stolen idol, assumed control over the land originally intended for Dan. They aided and abetted the Danites in bringing

idolatry into the land of Israel. As a result, God had just cause to exclude them from the symbolic tribe list in Revelation 7:5-8. Dan and Ephraim are absent!

### III. Additional scholarship on the nations allotted to lesser *elohim*.

 A. Christopher Wright, *The International Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy*, p. 300:


“There is no possibility that Yahweh is simply one of the ‘sons of the gods’ to whom nations are allocated. The point is that the one and only God, known to Israel as Yahweh, is the same Most High God who is sovereign among the nations of humanity.” [Emphasis Mine]

B. J. A. Thompson, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentary: Deuteronomy*, p. 299:

“...that God ordained a plan whereby the number of nations corresponded to the number of the sons of Israel. However, if the LXX reading be followed, there may be some idea of a supervising heavenly being, a kind of guardian angel in view.”

C. Deanna A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy: A Theoretical Commentary on the Bible*, p. 223:

“What is especially noteworthy here is the reference to God’s apportioning of the rest of the people of the world with other gods. It is clear that Israel is God’s ‘own portion’ (vs. 9); at the same time, God is also presented as having given other peoples to other gods (vs. 8) when we link Deuteronomy 32:8 together with passages such as 4:19 that support the existence of the other religions and other ‘gods’.”

 1. Deuteronomy 4:19

“<sup>19</sup> And beware not to lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.”

D. For ESV and NRSV translations as having merit for the rendering of Deuteronomy 32:8-9, see Charles F. Pfeiffer, ed., *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, p. 199.

E. F.F. Bruce, *The International Bible Commentary*, p. 280:

“... the RSV follows the LXX (later supported by a Qumran MS) in relating this to activities of the heavenly council (cf Gen. 1:26; Job 1:6; 38:7; I Kings 22:19-22; Dan. 10:13; Rev. 4:2,4).”

F. Note Peter C. Craigie, while commenting on Deuteronomy 32:8-9 in *The New*



*International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Deuteronomy*, pg. 380 and 393:

“God is given the title ‘Elyon (“Most High”)’ which is used only here in Deuteronomy. The title emphasizes God’s sovereignty and authority over all nations, whereas in relation to his own people he is called Yahweh or Lord (v.9). All nations received their *inheritance* and had their boundaries fixed by this sovereign God (v. 8) whose role was in no way restricted to the sphere of Israelite life and history (see also Ps. 74:17). The boundaries were fixed according to the number of the sons of God (v. 8b; see n. 18). The exact sense of the phrase is difficult to determine, but the reference seems to be to the divine council of the Lord. His council consisted of ‘holy ones’ (see 33:2 and commentary), who are called ‘angels’ in the LXX: the poetry indicates that the number of nations is related to the number of these Sons of God.” [Emphasis Mine]



The author further states in regard to Deuteronomy 33:2-3:

“... the people affirm the role of the members of the divine council in assisting Moses in his task. “His (i.e. God’s holy ones) are at your right hand (i.e. Moses’). ... The reference is to the assistance given to Moses by members of the divine council....”

#### 1. Deuteronomy 33:2-3

“<sup>2</sup> He said, ‘The Lord came from Sinai,  
And dawned on them from Seir;  
He shone forth from Mount Paran,  
And He came from the midst of ten thousand holy ones;  
At His right hand there was flashing lightning for them.

<sup>3</sup> Indeed, He loves the people;  
All Your holy ones are in Your hand,  
And they followed in Your steps;  
Everyone receives of Your words.’”

2. Loyal sons of God to Yahweh looked after you, too! Never forget the power utilized by God to hold on to you.

a. John 20:27-30

“<sup>27</sup> My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; <sup>28</sup> and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. <sup>30</sup> I and the Father are one.”

IV. Note the multiple transgressions of the sons of God who became the powers of darkness.

A. Power Point chart and put on last page of class notes.

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