

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

“The Heavenly Host and Divine Army”

I. Our emphasis thus far:

A. Our study has been mainly concerned with those members of the heavenly host (sons of God) who rebelled.

1. We noted how the satan (accuser) became Satan and leader for the powers of darkness.

2. Note the three primeval rebellions and their interface with man’s wickedness.

a. **Genesis 3** – The serpent’s encounter with Adam and Eve.

b. **Genesis 6** – The sons of God’s defection for lust and events that led to the Flood.

1. We explored the New Testament correspondence of Genesis 6:1-4 with Jude, I Peter, and II Peter.

c. **Genesis 10-11**—The disinheritance of the nations by God and later defection by the sons of God (Psalm 82).

B. We will now turn attention to the loyal host of heaven.

1. They worship God.

2. They serve God.

3. They are faithful to God.

C. They have been elected by God as we have been elected by God.

1. Humans

a. Ephesians 1:4

“<sup>4</sup> just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.”

## 2. Angels

### a. I Timothy 5:21

“<sup>21</sup> 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.”

## 3. Angels who have fallen have no hope.

### a. Hebrews 2:16

“<sup>16</sup> For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.”

## II. Terms that describe their being (Noted by Michael Heiser in his book *Angels*, p. 3-16.)

### A. “Spirit” (*ruah*; plural: *ruahot*) – pronounced “ruah”

#### 1. I Kings 22:19-22

“<sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> The Lord said, “Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?” And one said this while another said that. <sup>21</sup> Then a spirit (*ruah*) came forward and stood before the Lord and said, “I will entice him.” <sup>22</sup> The Lord said to him, “How?” And he said, “I will go out and be a deceiving spirit (*ruah*) in the mouth of all his prophets.” Then He said, “You are to entice him and also prevail. Go and do so.””

#### 2. Observations:

a. First note that the heavenly host are identified as spirit beings.

b. Ahab’s prophets were confounded by a “lying spirit” who is identified as a member of the heavenly host. The work of this spirit resulted in a deliberate deception (I Kings 22:21-22). Regarding deception ordered by God, Heiser offers this remark in *Angels*, pg. 3, Footnote #4:

“Some readers may have difficulty with God’s use of deception to judge evildoers, but it is plainly taught in Scripture. At times the deception is in the context of warfare (Josh. 8:1-9). In other instances, God uses


deception to set the stage for his judgment (I Sam 16:1-5). It is up to the righteous Judge to determine how evil is punished.”

1. Regarding evil, God ordains everything. However, He is not the author of sin. *Westminster Confession of Faith* 3.1,2,3.


3. Spirits have been sent to cause adverse circumstances among individuals or entire people groups.

 a. Judges 9:22-23


“<sup>22</sup> Now Abimelech ruled over Israel three years. <sup>23</sup> Then God sent an evil spirit (*ruach*) between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech.”

 b. I Samuel 16:14-15

“<sup>14</sup> Now the Spirit (*ruach*) of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit (*ruach*) from the Lord terrorized him. <sup>15</sup> Saul’s servants then said to him, ‘Behold now, an evil spirit (*ruach*) from God is terrorizing you’”


 c. I Samuel 18:10

“<sup>10</sup> Now it came about on the next day that an evil spirit (*ruach*) from God came mightily upon Saul, and he raved in the midst of the house....”

 d. Isaiah 19:13-14

“<sup>13</sup> The princes of Zoan have acted foolishly,  
The princes of Memphis are deluded;  
Those who are the cornerstone of her tribes  
Have led Egypt astray.

<sup>14</sup> The Lord has mixed within her a spirit (*ruach*) of distortion....”

 e. Isaiah 37:5-7

“<sup>5</sup> So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. <sup>6</sup> Isaiah said to them, “Thus you shall say to your master, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. <sup>7</sup> Behold, I will put a spirit (*ruach*) in him so that he will hear a rumor and return to his own land. And I will make him fall by the sword in his own land.’” ’”

B. “Heavenly Ones” (*Samayim*) – pronounced “smīne”

1. Heiser remarks (IBID, p. 7):

“The Hebrew word *samayim* occurs over four hundred times in the Hebrew Bible. In nearly all cases, the referent is either the visible sky, the space above the earth (Gen. 1:8; Deut 4:32; 33:26) or the spiritual realm beyond or above the visible sky in which God dwells (Ps 115:3; Isa 66:1). The Hebrew word is found always in plural form. In a handful of passages, *samayim* describes the members of God’s supernatural host and should be translated (though it often is not) as “heavenly ones” for clarity on that point. This usage should be no surprise, since it makes perfect sense that members of the heavenly host should be called “heavenly ones.” Psalm 89:5-7 (vv. 6-8 in Hebrew) is a case in point.”

a. Psalm 89:5-7

<sup>5</sup> The heavens will praise Your wonders, O Lord;  
Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones.  
<sup>6</sup> For who in the skies is comparable to the Lord?  
Who among the sons of the mighty is like the Lord,  
<sup>7</sup> A God greatly feared in the council of the holy ones,  
And awesome above all those who are around Him?”

C. “Stars” (*Kokebim*) – pronounced “coŭkfēen”

1. Celestial stars have always been identified with the “Heavenly Ones.”

a. Job 38:5-7

<sup>5</sup> Who set its measurements? Since you know.  
Or who stretched the line on it?  
<sup>6</sup> On what were its bases sunk?  
Or who laid its cornerstone,  
<sup>7</sup> When the morning stars sang together  
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

2. Note further the pride of the king of Babylon as he was analogized with the divine rebel “Satan”.

a. Isaiah 14:13

<sup>13</sup> 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.”

1. “Stars of God” – a reference to the heavenly host.

D. “Holy Ones” (*gedosim*) – pronounced “kaydsēm”


 1. Psalm 89:5-7

“<sup>5</sup> The heavens will praise Your wonders, O Lord;  
Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones.  
<sup>6</sup> For who in the skies is comparable to the Lord?  
Who among the sons of the mighty is like the Lord,  
<sup>7</sup> A God greatly feared in the council of the holy ones,  
And awesome above all those who are around Him?”

 2. Job 15:15

“<sup>15</sup> Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones,  
And the heavens are not pure in His sight;”


3. This term may refer to people (Psalm 16:3, Daniel 8:24) but it is more often used of spiritual beings in God’s service.

 a. 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.’”

b. See also Job 5:1, Zech. 14:5, Dan. 4:17.

4. “Holy ones” does not denote perfection. The “holy ones” can become corrupted.

 a. Job 4:17-18

“<sup>17</sup> Can mankind be just before God?  
Can a man be pure before his Maker?  
<sup>18</sup> He puts no trust even in His servants (Holy Ones);  
And against His angels He charges error.”

E. God's Divine Beings (lesser *elohim*) – pronounced as it appears

1. This point was covered in Lesson #2.



Psalm 82:1,6

“<sup>1</sup> God (*Elohim*) takes His stand in His own congregation;  
He judges in the midst of the rulers (*elohim*).”

...

“<sup>6</sup> I said, ‘You are gods, (*elohim*)  
And all of you are sons of the Most High.’”

- a. “Elohim” occurs twice in one verse and by context the second use is plural, yet most often in a singular sense while referring to God alone. The Hebrew noun occurs with a singular verb (the predicator for grammatical agreement) over 2000 times in the Hebrew Bible. See Heiser, IBID, footnote, p. 11).
- b. Some scholars have argued, based upon the above text that early Israel was polytheistic. This is misguided. Lesser *elohim* do not possess any of Yahweh’s attributes.

III. Terms that describe position.

A. “Assembly” (*edah*) or “Council”(sod) – pronounced “ēdāh”

1. It is found in both Psalm 82 and 89.



a. Psalm 82:1

“<sup>1</sup> God takes His stand in His own congregation;  
He judges in the midst of the rulers.”

1. NASU, ESV, and NKJ translates as “mighty congregation” while the CSB translates “divine assembly.”

2. Other terms include “congregation” (*qahal*), “assembly”, or “assembled meeting” (*mo’ed*) or “court” (Aramaic: *din*). An example is located in Daniel.



a. Daniel 7:9-10

“<sup>9</sup> I kept looking until thrones were set up,  
 And the Ancient of Days took His seat;  
 His vesture was like white snow  
 And the hair of His head like pure wool.  
 His throne was ablaze with flames,  
 Its wheels were a burning fire.  
<sup>10</sup> A river of fire was flowing  
 And coming out from before Him;  
Thousands upon thousands were attending Him,  
And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him;  
The court sat,  
 And the books were opened.”

1. Note “thrones” are in place of “court” (dina; council) “sat in judgement.”

3. Note Jesus’ triumph after the crucifixion.



a. Philippians 2:8-11

“<sup>8</sup> Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

b. Now note His position before the heavenly assembly.



1. Psalm 22:22,25

“<sup>22</sup> I will tell of Your name to my brethren;  
 In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.”

...

“<sup>25</sup> From You comes my praise in the great assembly;  
 I shall pay my vows before those who fear Him.”

B. There appears to be three tiers within the divine council.

1. Heiser notes in *Angels*, pg. 15: (This remark only concerns the Old Testament.)

“Many scholars have pointed out that there is a discernible hierarchy within the divine council. All council members, including Yahweh, are heavenly spirit

beings (*rûhûl; samayim; elôhîm*). However, a careful comparison of the council terminology sketched here with texts from ancient Canaan, particularly Ugarit, and the terms “sons of God” (*benê [ha] elôhîm|êlîm*) and “angel” (*mal âk*), allows one to discern three tiers within the council.”

## 2. Divine order



- a. Yahweh – Most High God
- b. Sons of God – Princes assigned to nations (Deut. 32:8-9) and additional positions of authority.
- c. Angels – The Hebrew term means “messenger” and refers generally to a business journey or trade mission in the Hebrew Bible. More about “angels” will follow in III D.
  1. I would add that an angel may be a son of God sent on a mission.

C. The term “Prince” (*sar* – pronounced as it appears) is also of note. It indicates hierarchy and authority.



### 1. 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.’”

2. Not all members of the heavenly host are designated with this title. “Princes” of the supernatural realm are to be identified with the “sons of God” assigned to the nations (Deut. 32:8-9) of the world at the Babel event.

3. “Chief Prince” indicates a higher rank. Note Michael as Prince of Israel.



### a. Daniel 10:13; 10:21

“<sup>10:13</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>10:21</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.”

#### IV. Terms that describe function.

##### A. “Angel” (Mal’ak; plural: malakim) – pronounced “mēlă”

1. The Hebrew term means “messenger”
2. The term may be used of human beings.
  - a. Prophets – Haggai 1:13; 2 Chronicles 36:15; Priests – Malachi 2:7
3. Nevertheless angelic messengers are at times described as men in the Old Testament.

##### a. Genesis 18:1, 2, 22

“<sup>1</sup> Now the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day. <sup>2</sup> When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him....”

“<sup>22</sup> Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before the Lord.”

##### 1. See also Genesis 19:1-22

- b. Yet, human form was not necessary for angelic interaction with people.

##### B. “Minister” (verb (*srt*), (*piel*) stem: *seret*) pronounced “esarte”

1. Note Psalm usage.

##### a. Psalm 103:21

“<sup>21</sup> Bless the Lord, all you His hosts,  
You who serve Him, doing His will.”

##### b. Psalm 104:4

“<sup>4</sup> He makes the winds His messengers,  
Flaming fire His ministers.”

1. Of note are the above verses. They are the only occasions where the verb is used to describe angelic service.

C. “Watcher” (*ir*; plural: *irn*) pronounced as it appears.

1. This Aramaic term occurs three times in the Old Testament.

a. Daniel 4:13

“<sup>13</sup> 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.”

b. Daniel 4:17

“<sup>17</sup> This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers  
And the decision is a command of the holy ones....”

c. Daniel 4:23

“<sup>23</sup> In that the king saw an angelic watcher, a holy one, descending from heaven and saying....”

1. This Aramaic term is used extensively in Second Temple Jewish literature which was highlighted in previous lectures.

2. The term does have a connection to Akkadian material and in specific to the ‘*apkallu*’.

a. Amar Annus wrote: (Annus, “On the Origin of Watchers”, 277-320)

“Figurines of *apkallu* were buried in boxes as foundation deposits in Mesopotamian buildings in order to avert evil from the house. The term *mašsarē*, ‘watchers’, is used of these sets of figurines in Akkadian incantations according to ritual texts. The appellation matches the Aramaic term ‘*yryn*, ‘the wakeful ones,’ for both good angels and the Watchers.”  
[Emphasis Mine]

3. The Book of I Enoch, The Book of the Giants, and Jubilees draw on Mesopotamian material for the retelling of events associated with the flood. The term “watchers”

is the overwhelming choice of term for the fallen sons of God in Genesis 6:1-4 in this later Second Temple literature.

D. “Host” (*saba*; plural: *sebaot*) pronounced “sāhā”: “Mighty Ones” (*gibborim, abbirim*)



1. I Kings 22:19

“<sup>19</sup> 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.’”

a. God is surrounded by a heavenly host of spirit beings.

2. Texts



a. Psalm 103:21

“<sup>21</sup> Bless the Lord, all you His hosts,  
You who serve Him, doing His will.”

b. Psalm 148:2

“<sup>2</sup> Praise Him, all His angels;  
Praise Him, all His hosts!”

c. See also Jeremiah 33:22; Nehemiah 9:6 and Daniel 4:35.

3. A connected term is “Lord”

a. “Lord of Hosts”

1. God is commander-in-chief.

b. Lord – probable meaning in Hebrew context is “Yahweh the Almighty” – God-King: The Uncontested Lord of All Heavenly Powers.

1. I Samuel 4:4

“<sup>4</sup> So the people sent to Shiloh, and from there they carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts who sits above the cherubim; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.”

E. “Cherubim” (*kerubim*); “Seraphim” (*serafim*)

1. Both terms describe the same function – guardianship of the presence of God.
2. They are divine creatures.
  - a. Both are said to have wings though the number varies (Ex. 25:20; 37:9; Is 6:2).
  - b. Cherubim are at times assigned four faces, in human, bovine, and other creature parts.

1. Ezekiel 1:10

“<sup>10</sup> As for the form of their faces, each had the face of a man; all four had the face of a lion on the right and the face of a bull on the left, and all four had the face of an eagle.”

3. Seraphim is a plural form of a Hebrew term translated as snake.

a. Numbers 21:6,8

“<sup>6</sup> The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. ... <sup>8</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live.’”

4. Both terms are never associated with the term *mal’ak* (angel). Consequently, it is wrong to think of them as angels.

- a. Some view the terminology behind “seraphim” with the word “*sarap*” which means “to burn”. More recent research suggests that “It is more likely that seraphim derives from the Hebrew noun *saraph* (serpent) which in turn is drawn from Egyptian throne guardian terminology.

“As recent research demonstrates, the Egyptian Uraeus [emblem of an Egyptian goddess who protects the pharaoh] serpent, drawn from two species of Egyptian cobras, fits all the elements of the supernatural seraphim who attend Yahweh’s holy presence in Isaiah 6. The relevant cobra species spit ‘burning’ venom, can expand wide flanges of skin on either side of their bodies – considered ‘wings’ in antiquity – when threatened, and are (obviously) serpentine. As Joines notes, the protective nature of the uraeus cobra is evident: ‘A function of the uraeus

is to protect the pharaoh and sacred objects by breathing out fire on his enemies.” – Heiser, *Angels*, p. 26-27. [emphasis mine]

1. See Karen R. Joines, “Winged Serpents in Isaiah’s Inaugural Vision”, *JBL* 86-4 (1967): 410-415.

## V. The Heavenly Army Revealed.

A. Another text where the curtain to the unseen realm is pulled back is found in a historical book of the Old Testament.

### 1. II Kings 6:14-18

“<sup>14</sup> He sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city. <sup>15</sup> Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, ‘Alas, my master! What shall we do?’ <sup>16</sup> So he answered, ‘Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.’ <sup>17</sup> Then Elisha prayed and said, ‘O Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.’ <sup>18</sup> And the Lord opened the servant’s eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. <sup>18</sup> When they came down to him, Elisha prayed to the Lord and said, ‘Strike this people with blindness, I pray.’ So He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.”

2. Mighty is God’s army, but it is often taken lightly. Wings and halos do not convey the Biblical picture of the heavenly army. See Robert Linith writes in *City of God, City of Satan*, p. 73.

3. Military activity of the heavenly army has been noted by ancient historians.

a. Regarding the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70) Josephus reports (Josephus,

*War*, 6.4.8, 267-268):

“I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable were it not related by those who saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable nature as to deserve such signals; for before sun-setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities, moreover, at that feast which we call Pentecost as the priests were going by night into the inner (court of the temple) as their

custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, 'Let us remove hence.'" [Emphasis mine]



1. Probably a fulfillment of Matthew 27:24-25:

“<sup>24</sup> When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, ‘I am innocent of this Man’s blood; see to that yourselves.’ <sup>25</sup> And all the people said, ‘His blood shall be on us and on our children!’”



b. Regarding the same event the Roman historian remarked (*Tacitus*, Book 3):

“There had been seen hosts joining the battle in the skies, the fiery gleam of arms, the temple illuminated by a sudden radiance from the clouds, the doors of the inner shrine were suddenly thrown open, and a voice of more than mortal tone was heard to cry ‘the gods were departing.’ At the same instance there was a mighty stir as of departure.” [Emphasis Mine]

B. Additional peeks behind the curtain.



1. Genesis 32:1-2

“<sup>1</sup> Now as Jacob went on his way, the angels of God met him. <sup>2</sup> Jacob said when he saw them, ‘This is God’s camp.’ So he named that place Mahanaim.”

2. Psalm 68:17

“<sup>17</sup> The chariots of God are myriads, thousands upon thousands;  
The Lord is among them as at Sinai, in holiness.”

C. The heavenly host do not cease in worship and service to the “Most High” and this will be our destiny as well!

1. Revelation 4:6-8

“<sup>6</sup> and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. <sup>7</sup> The first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a

flying eagle. <sup>8</sup> And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say,  
‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty,  
who was and who is and who is to come.’”

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