

**AWAKENING TO
THE SUPERNATURAL
META-NARRATIVE
OF THE BIBLE**

PART 1

**AWAKENING
CONFERENCE**

**Celebration
Church
Jacksonville, FL**

AWAKENING OPEN HOUSE

- Sacred Space
- Believing Loyalty
- Returning to our First Love
- Restoring the Essentials of the Faith
- Resurrecting a Priesthood Model of Ministry

SOME CONTEXT

Who am I? Why am I here?

- **Providence**
- **Personal awakening**
- **Didn't know what I didn't know**
- **The matrix and the mission**
- **In my experience, believers are hungry for three things (missing these)...**

SOME CONTEXT

- **Serious Content**
- **Sense of Identity**
- **Sense of Mission**

SERIOUS CONTENT

- Supernatural taken seriously (!)
- Scripture should make sense
- Outliers should be explainable
- Preaching shouldn't be simplistic
- Core truths vs. preferences
- Data + meta-narrative
- Post-modern translation

SENSE OF IDENTITY

- **One Body, not many tribes**
- **Imagers of God**
- **Bearers of the Name**
- **Sacred Space**
- **What God Wants**
- **Unity, not Conformity**

SENSE OF MISSION

- Expand the family God desires
- Make disciples, not fans
- Be Eden amid anti-Eden
- Here to win the world, not endorse it
- Great Commission has a context

HEADS UP

- Documentation
- “My church (= tradition) doesn’t get into this stuff”
- “This is something new”
- “The text can’t just mean what it says”
- “We know better now”
- “Too weird to be important”

HEADS UP

- Who am I? What do I believe?
- What's my approach to Scripture?
- Long term: Awakening school
 - Careful thinking rooted in the text
 - Believing loyalty that replicates
- Today?

CREATION – WHY BOTHER?

Family
partners

WHY DID GOD CREATE?

- **Not lonely**
- **No lack or deficiency**
- **Not incomplete**

- **By nature God is creative / Creator**

WHY DID GOD CREATE?

God wanted a different kind of **family** than the one he already had. He also wanted family **partners**.

- And yes, before creation God already had a family
- Not the Trinity. Other members are not “children” of God.

WHY DID GOD CREATE?

God wanted a different kind of family than the one he already had.

- He wanted embodied, material children who'd be like him, but different than the others
- Humanity

WHY DID GOD CREATE?

Humans would need a world in which to live.

- God would live there, too
- God came to earth because humanity could not go to him
- Earth would be God's home

WHAT WAS EDEN?

More
than a
garden

WHAT WAS EDEN?

- God's earthly home; one spot
- All the earth not Eden, and needs "subduing" (*kabaś*), vs. "working" (*'abad*) and "keeping" (*shamar*); Gen 1:28; 2:8-15
- "very good" (*tob*) but not perfect (*tam*); Gen 1:31

WHAT WAS EDEN?

God's home, the divine abode, the cosmic center of all creation.

- Eden can only be properly understood in light of the **worldview** the biblical writers shared with other people of the ancient Near East.

WHAT WAS EDEN?

Israelites, Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Canaanites, etc. believed in an unseen spiritual world that was governed by a **divine council**.

- The gods lived somewhere and governed the affairs of the human world from those places.

WHAT WAS EDEN?

- Divine **living spaces and seats of authority.**
- **Sacred space** – humans are not allowed, unless invited; there are rules for occupancy

WHAT WAS EDEN?

Two of the most common descriptions of divine **sacred space** were **gardens** and **mountains**

- Eden is described as both in the Old Testament (Gen 2; Ezek [28](#):13-14)
 - Garden-temple
 - Mountain-temple

WHAT WAS EDEN?

Ancient people thought of their gods living in **luxuriant gardens or mountains** for simple reasons:

- **Abundance and inaccessibility.**
 - *Yahweh includes humans by default; co-regents.*

WHAT WAS EDEN?

The ancient Near East was primarily an agrarian culture where most people subsisted day-to-day, hand-to-mouth.

- The gods lived in places where there was no conceivable lack.
- **Paradise**

WHAT WAS EDEN?

Mountain peaks touched the heavens, which was obviously the domain of the gods

- This is one reason why ancients built pyramids and ziggurats (“towers”) – **artificial mountains**

WHAT WAS EDEN?

- So God makes a material world
- He builds his own residence (Eden)
- Creates humanity to live in that sacred space with him ... which is also his throne room (“home office”)

WHAT WAS EDEN?

- God's home and seat of authority is already occupied as it were.
- Where God is his entourage is.
- ANE kingship, biblical throne room scenes.
- The heavenly host there from the beginning.

WHAT WAS EDEN?

- The **sacred space (gardens and mountains)** descriptions continue in both testaments
 - i.e., garden and mountain imagery associated with deity via Edenic mimicking and/or events

GOD'S FIRST FAMILY

God's
audience

GOD'S FIRST FAMILY

- The heavenly host there from the beginning.
- Job [38](#):4-7
- Their presence prepares us for the scene of human creation.

GENESIS 1:26-27

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

GENESIS 1:26-27

Then God said, "Let **us** make man in **our** image, in **our** likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in **his own** image, in the image of God **he** created him; male and female **he** created them.

WHY THE PLURALS?

- The plurality is assumed by most Christian denominations to the Trinity (completely flawed)
- Also not the “plural of majesty”

Pluralis Majestatis: Biblical Hebrew

The term ‘majestic plural’ or *pluralis majestatis* refers to the use of a plural word to refer honorifically to a single person or entity. It is also called the ‘plural of respect’, the ‘honorific plural’, the ‘plural of excellence’, or the ‘plural of intensity’. In the Hebrew Bible such plural forms are most commonly used when referring to the God of Israel, e.g., אֲדֹנָיִם אֲנִי *’ădōnīm ’ānī* ‘I am a master (lit. ‘masters’)’ (Mal. 1.6), although it can also be used when referring to a human, e.g., אֲדֹנָי אַבְרָהָם *’abrāhām ’ădōnāw* ‘Abraham his master (lit. ‘masters’)’ (Gen. 24.9),

*Encyclopedia of
Hebrew
Language &
Linguistics*, vol 3
(Brill, 2013): 145

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her house' (Prov. 9.1). The pluralis majestatis appears most frequently in nouns, particularly אֱלֹהִים 'ēlōhīm 'God (lit. 'gods')', but may also be used with nominalized adjectives, e.g., קְדוֹשִׁים qəḏōšīm 'the Holy One (lit. 'holy ones')' (Prov. 9.10); some participles, e.g., עֹשֵׂיֶךָ 'ōšayik 'your maker (lit. 'makers')' (Isa.54.5) seem to be examples of the pluralis majestatis as well

WHY THE PLURALS?

- But **WHY** the plurals?
- To understand that, we need to understand what the “image of God” language” really means.

WHY THE PLURALS?

- Important part of the story, for it telegraphs God's intent:
- To model human family after divine family – fit sacred space, shared partnership in their proper domain.
- **Remember:** God doesn't need children or partners: he wants them.

THE IMAGE OF GOD

verb, not
noun

THE IMAGE: CRITERIA

- Men and women
- Equally possessed
- Distinct from all earthly creatures
- Neither incremental nor partial
- Passed on generationally (intrinsic;
Gen 5:1-3; 9:6)

WHAT FAILS THESE CRITERIA?

- **Consciousness**
- **Sentience**
- **Intelligence / rationality**
- **Emotions**
- **Soul-spirit**
- **Conscience / sense of morality**
- **Communication**

WHY?

- Cannot be said to be present equally among all human beings.
 - Cannot be said to be present actually among all human beings.
 - (Some) are not unique to humankind
- = Brain function

“SOUL”?

Humans are animated by the breath of God in Gen 2:7 (*nephesh ḥayyah* = “living soul”)

“SOUL”?

Animals described the same way.

Gen 1:21 - So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature (*nephesh ha-ḥayyah*) that moves ...

“SPIRIT”? “BREATH OF LIFE”?

Animals also have a *ruach* (Eccl 3:21) –
i.e., animate life

Man given “the breath of life” (*nishmat ḥayyim*); cp. Gen 7:22-23 (all land life)

SO WHAT IS IT?

If all these alternatives, common as they are, fail the biblical criteria, to what does the “image of God” refer?

- **Meaning of “in” is the key**
- **Hebrew grammar / syntax illustrated via English**

SO WHAT IS IT?

The image is a status =
representation, proxy

- Think verb rather than a noun
- imagers = God's proxies, agents
- We are equipped by God sharing his attributes with us (as he also has with supernatural family).

SO WHAT IS IT?

God deliberates to his heavenly host, his council

- **We image him, not them, because he is the lone creator (Gen 1:27)**
- **We “bear his name” (Exod 20:7)**

SO WHAT IS IT?

The result is a new family who, like them (the members of the heavenly host) will represent God

Humans do that on earth (embodied domain); the heavenly sons of God do it in heaven.

SO WHAT IS IT?

**But for the time being (Eden),
heaven has come to earth**

- **The task was (and is) to make the whole world like Eden; to spread God's glory and goodness; multiply the family for that purpose.**

WHAT DOES "IMAGING" MEAN?

Edenic version was short-lived

- Ruined at the Fall (Gen 3)
- In a fallen world, only **the redeemed** can do this as intended
- The redeemed are to be God everywhere to everyone.

WHAT DOES "IMAGING" MEAN?

- What is God like? (in terms of character, the answer is supposed to be US)
- What is it like to be in God's family (the answer is supposed to be the CHURCH)
- No other agency

IMAGING EXAMPLE: JESUS

“The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of **Christ, who is the image of God.**” (2 Cor 4:4)

IMAGING EXAMPLE: JESUS

Believers “have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after **the image** of its creator.” (Col 3:10)

IMAGING EXAMPLE: JESUS

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the **same image** from one degree of glory to another. (2 Cor 3:18)

IMAGING EXAMPLE: JESUS

- God has predestinated that all who believe will ultimately be “conformed to **the image of his son**” (Rom 8:29)
- We will ultimately be like Jesus (1 Jn 3:1-3)

IMAGING EXAMPLE: JESUS

But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and "Let everyone **who names the name** of the Lord depart from iniquity." (2 Tim 2:19)

REBELLIONS

three,
not one

TRADITION DISCONNECTION

Why is humanity so depraved?

Why is the world so wicked?

ANSWER

Church Tradition

- The Fall (Gen 3)

Biblical Period

- The Fall (Gen 3)
- Sons of God (Gen 6:1-4)
- Babel (Deut 32:8-9; cp. Psalm 82)

THREE REBELLIONS

Rebellion

- The Fall (Gen 3)
- Sons of God (Gen 6:1-4)
- Babel (Deut 32:8-9; cp. Psalm 82)

Fallout

- Death, estranged from God
- Lethal threat; demons; depravity
- Abandonment; idolatry; national chaos

FIRST REBELLION

EDEN / GEN 3 / FALL

- **supernatural rebel, not a mere snake**
- **Genesis 3 isn't trying to teach us about zoology (or evolution)**

EDEN / GEN 3 / FALL

- Ezek 28, Isa 14 make this clear
- Cherubim, seraphim imagery and metaphor (not a zoology lesson)
- Prompts humanity to rebel
- Cp. Rev 12:9; 20:2

THE DIVINE COUNCIL CONTEXT

Hebrew Term	English Meaning	Concept	Important Verses
<i>elim, elohim</i> (plural)	"gods"	council members	Gen 3:5, 22; Psa 82:1, 6; Ezek 28:2
<i>beney elim</i> <i>beney elohim</i> <i>kokebey boqer</i> <i>kokebey el</i> <i>helel ben-shachar</i>	"sons of God" "morning stars" "stars of God" "shining one, son of the dawn"	council members shining appearance	Job 38:7; Pss 29:1; 89:6; Isa 14:13; Ezek 28:13 (gems)
<i>gan</i>	"garden"	divine abode, council meeting place	Gen 2:8-10, 15-16 Gen 3:1-3, 8, 10, 23-24 Ezek 28:13
<i>ʿed</i> <i>nahar</i> <i>yamim</i>	"(watery) mist" "river" "seas, waters"	description of the well-watered garden of the council	Gen 2:6, 10-14 (Zion); Ezek 47:1-12 (Jerusalem temple; cf. Zech 14:8); Ezek 28:2
<i>tsaphon</i> <i>yarketey tsaphon</i> <i>bamot</i>	"north" "heights of the north" "heights"	mountain range where divine council met	Psa 48:1-2 (Jerusalem temple; cf. Ezek 40:2); Isa 14:13-14
<i>har</i>	"mount, mountain"	mountain range where divine council met	Exod 24:15 (Sinai; cf. Psa 68:15-17; Deut 33:1-2); Isa 14:13; 27:13 (Zion); Ezek 47:1-12 (Jerusalem temple)
<i>adat</i> <i>sod</i> <i>mo'ed</i> <i>moshab</i>	"assembly" "council" "meeting" "seat" (governing)	the divine assembly	Pss 82:1; 89:7; Isa 14:13; Ezek 28:2

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FALLOUT

- Estrangement from God
- Humanity not at home with God; a broken home (chaos)
- Death / mortality
- The rebel is “cast down” to the Earth / Underworld (*'erets*)
- Lord of the Dead (everything dies)

FALLOUT

The realm of death = Chaos

- **De-creation, Dis-order, Anti-Eden**
- **HQ (and agents) for the way things aren't supposed to be**
 - **Inhospitable, threatening, death**
 - **Desert wilderness, barrenness**
 - **Azazel, Rephaim spirits, etc.**

SECOND REBELLION

GENESIS 6:1-4

Controversial Passage

- Failures of dominant view (“Sethite”) in *The Unseen Realm*
- Contrary to original context

Greatest flaw:

- [2 Peter 2:4-5](#)
- [Jude 6](#)

GENESIS 6:1-4

What did you notice from Peter and Jude?

- “angels that sinned”
- “cast them into [hell](#)”
- “chains of gloomy darkness”

- Peter drawing on material not in OT, something that actually provides the original context to Gen 6:1-4

GENESIS 6:1-4

Peter and Jude are drawing directly on ancient Jewish books like 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and the Book of Giants. (2nd Temple period)

- **All witnessed in the Dead Sea Scrolls**
- **Peter, Jude, and other NT writers draw on this material in various places**

GENESIS 6:1-4

Those books in turn are drawing on ancient Mesopotamian material about the great flood that was the original context for Gen 6:1-4 (and the biblical flood story).

Apkallu (Erra Epic)

GENESIS 6:1-4

This material also explains the relationship of Genesis 6:1-4 ... to v. 5.

Gen 6:5 - The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

BACKSTORY GENESIS 6:1-4

- Apkallu story
- Every item in Gen 6:1-4 (and really v. 5) is accounted for ...
- This original context was preserved in ancient Jewish books witnessed at Qumran and was known to Peter and Jude.
- **SIDEBAR:** Post 2010 commentaries

GENESIS 6:1-4

- The messiah must reverse what happened not only in Eden (Gen 3), but also the chaos threats produced via Gen 6:1-5 (giants, acceleration of depravity)
- Giants taken care of by the three OT archetypal precursors to Messiah:
 - Moses, Joshua, David
- Depravity dealt with in a different way

GENESIS 6:1-4

- Messianic role telegraphed cryptically (except for those literate 2nd temple Jews who knew what to look for)
- Jesus' birth (Date, Noah traditions)
- Four women in Jesus' genealogy
- Galatians [3:19-20](#)
- Doom of the Watchers commemorated in baptism (1 Pet 3:18-22)

DON'T LOSE THE POINT

- **What God wants (human family and partners on earth to spread his presence and goodness) is opposed by supernatural enemies and those people enslaved by them and their tactics.**
- **Jesus, the perfect imager, is the only answer to estrangement from God, death, and depravity.**

THIRD REBELLION

BABEL (GEN 11; DEUT 32:8-9)

- The story we know: Gen 11:1-9
- The story we don't know because it's never taught: [Deut 32:8-9](#)

SONS OF GOD OR SONS OF ISRAEL?

Michael S. Heiser, "Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God,"
Bibliotheca Sacra 158 (January-March 2001): 52–74.

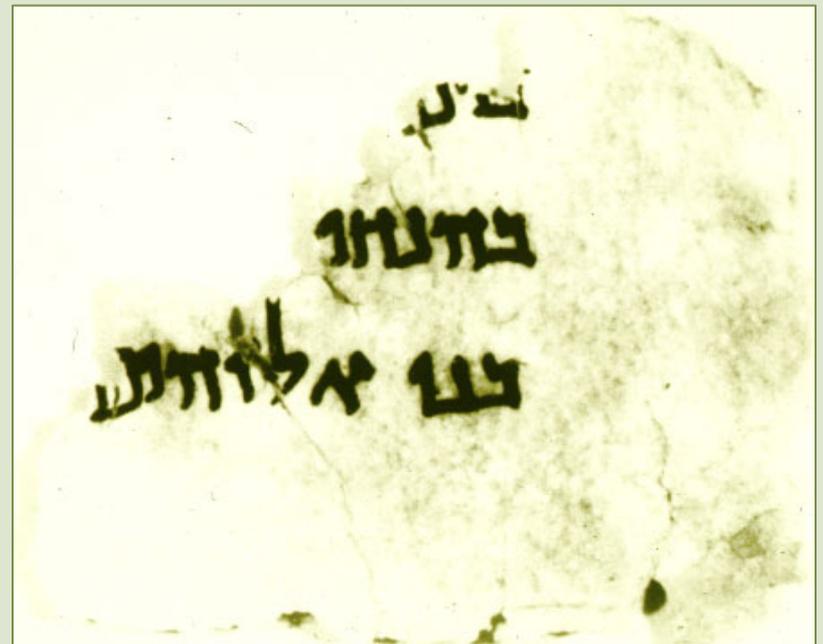
Col. XII, Deuteronomy 32:7–8

] בֵּינֵם 32:7 12

8 בהנחי] ל 13

] בני אלוהים 14

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BABEL & DEUT 32:8-9

- Nations divided at tower of Babel
- Nations = Gen 10 “Table of Nations”
- Israel didn’t exist at the time
- “sons of Israel” makes no sense
- v. 43 has same textual issue

BABEL & DEUT 32:8-9

- **Disinheriting of the nations (Gen 10)**
- **Not permanent**
 - **Genesis 12 = Call of Abram (Deut 32:9)**
 - **Promised seed / blessing (Gen 12:3)**
 - **Exod 19:5-6 - “kingdom of priests”**
 - **Acts 17:24-27**
- **Makes strange passages coherent...**

OT COSMIC GEOGRAPHY

- OT examples:
 - Daniel [10:13, 20-21](#)
 - 1 Sam [5:1-5](#)
 - 1 Samuel [26:17-19](#)
 - 2 Kings [5:15-19](#)

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DIVINE COUNCIL

Backdrop for disaster of [Psalm 82](#)

Just men?

- Psalm 89:[5-7](#)
- 1 Kings 22:[19-23](#)
- Daniel 7:[9-10](#)

GOD OF GODS ... OR NOT?

Pretending? Fake declarations?

- Psalm 86:8
- Psalm 95:3
- Psalm 96:4
- Psalm 97:7, 9
- Psalm 136:2
- Exodus 15:11

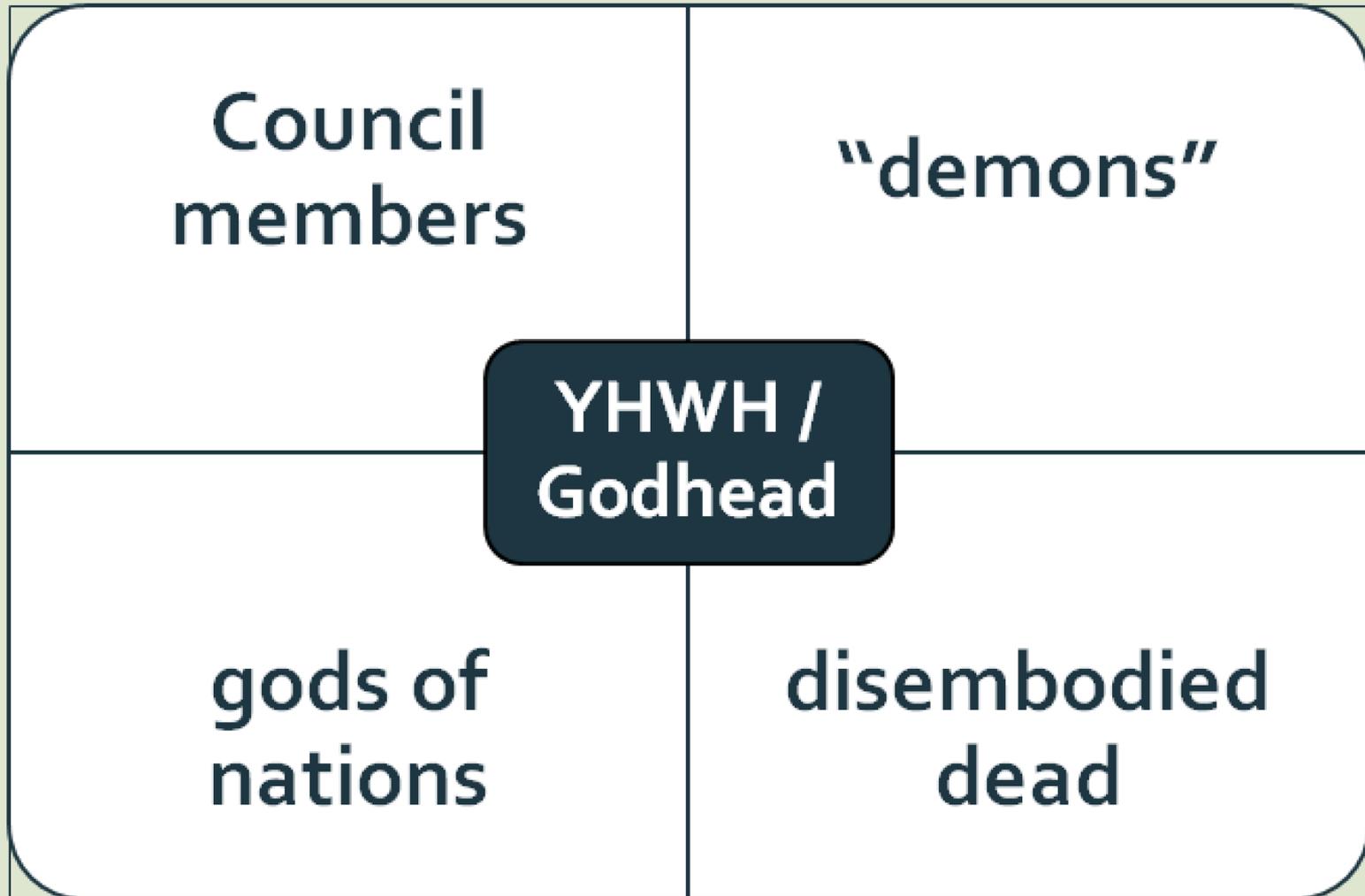
MULTIPLE GODS?

Why does this trouble us?

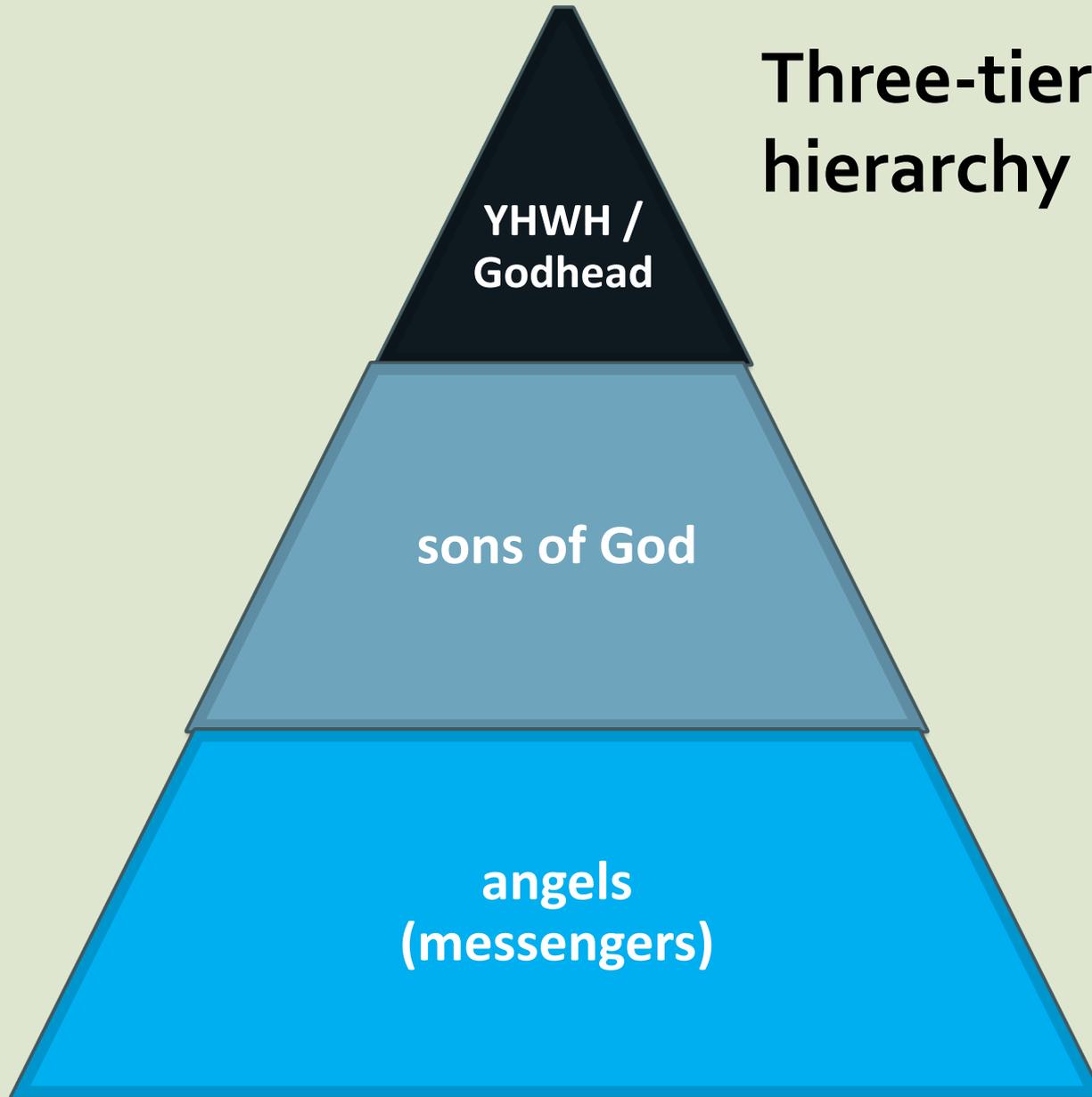
What's an *elohim*?

- God of Israel (Psa 82:1)
- council members (Psa 82:1,6)
- gods of the nations (1 Kings 11:33)
- *shedim* of the nations ([Deut 32:17](#); cp. 1 Cor 10:[20-22](#))
- Disembodied human dead ([1 Sam 28:13](#))

MULTIPLE GODS?



Three-tiered hierarchy



FAQ # 1

**What about: none besides me";
"none like me"?**

- **The phrases are not denials of the existence of other *elohim*.**
- **They are statements of incomparability.**

INCOMPARABILITY, NOT EXCLUSIVITY

- Plural *elohim* (spirit beings) in various verses
- Tour through Deuteronomy

[Deut 4:35](#) vs. Deut 4:19-20;
Deut 17:2-3;
Deut 29:24-26
Deut 32:17 (NLT)

INCOMPARABILITY, NOT EXCLUSIVITY

These alleged “denial phrases” are used elsewhere where denial of existence is not possible.

Isa 47:1, 8, 10

Zeph 2:13, 15

FAQ # 2

Why does God need a council? (What would they do that he can't?)

1 Kings 22:19-23

Dan 4:13, 17, 24

Dan 7:9-10

FAQ # 3

What about Jesus? How can he be the son of God if other divine sons of God are real?

- [John](#) 3:16
- [Hebrews](#) 11:17

AFTER REBELLIONS: OT SUMMARY

OT SUMMARY

The rest of the OT is framed by these rebellions:

- Nations remain estranged from the true God
- Israelites are in covenant relationship, but must *believe* like Abraham (“election” is *not* tied to ethnicity)

OT SUMMARY

God restores (re-births) his people at the exodus event, covenant at Sinai

- **Not a covenant of meriting salvation**
- **Sinai = mountain; fellowship (Ex 24)**
- **Tabernacle described in Edenic garden terms**

OT SUMMARY

- Jerusalem temple as the “architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain” (Lundquist)
- Plans, building at Sinai
- Ark of the covenant (Aaron’s rod? Manna?)
- Bread of the Presence?
- Tree of life? (= menorah)

OT SUMMARY

- Temple accessories (i.e. cups, flower buds, and almond blossoms) **adorned the six branches** and formed one solid piece with its stem and base.
- Seven (Sabbath rest) lamps mounted on the six branches to provide continual **light** (cf. Exod. 25:31–37), a symbol of Yahweh's presence (cf. Exod. 29:43)

OT SUMMARY

- **Temple built on a mountain (Zion) and referred to as a mountain**
 - **“holy mountain’ (Isa 11:9; (Pss. 2:6; 87:1–2; 99:1–3, 9)**
 - **"heights of the north" (Psa 48:1-2)**
- **Temple cherubim; temple decorated as lush, fertile garden (plants, animals)**

OT SUMMARY

- Occupied by **humans (priests)**
- **Garden terms** (*'abad, shamar*; Gen 2:15) used of priestly service in Tabernacle and Temple (Num 3:7–8; 8:25–26; 18:5–6; 1 Chron 23:32)

OT SUMMARY

- Temple sacred space expanded to all believers in OT (and NT)

Psalm 36:7 How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings. 8 They **feast on the abundance** of your house, and you give them **drink from the river** of your delights. 9 For with you is the **fountain of life**; in your light do we see **light**.

OT SUMMARY

New Testament??

- Garden?
- Mountain?
- Tree of life? Believer-priests? Light of men? Waters of life? Abundant life? Presence of God? Bread of life? New Eden?
- Who *is* the Temple?

SIGNIFICANCE?

ALL OF THIS = the worldview of the Bible, the supernatural, cosmic context of which messiah is part.

- **What the NT tells us about Jesus PRESUMES this material and this worldview.**

SIGNIFICANCE?

This is also the reality in which the Bible places BELIEVERS – you and me.

- **God wants a human family.**
- **That family was intended, from the beginning, to be made fit for sacred space, to live with him and the sons of God (his earlier family).**

SIGNIFICANCE?

God's supernatural family was the template for God's new, earthly family:

- **To image their Father and make all the world like his home – and put more people in the family.**
- **The Fall never changed the original goal; it just made it much harder.**

SIGNIFICANCE?

- **Some of the sons of God (i.e., members of God's supernatural family) are rebels.**
- **Didn't want co-existence**
- **Wanted their own peoples**
- **Accelerate their self-destruction**
- **Rivals to Yahweh and "his portion"**

SIGNIFICANCE?

- Turn their charges – the nations – against Yahweh and to idolatry
- Sow chaos among the nations
- Creating a series of “anti-Edens” where justice *should have* reigned, and where hearts *could have* been molded to see the true God

SIGNIFICANCE?

- **The biblical worldview pits real supernatural beings (above demons, different than demons) against Yahweh and his people**
- **The solution is consistent with the original plan:**

SIGNIFICANCE?

- A seed of the woman, a **human** man, must fulfill all the covenants, avoid sin, erase the gap between God and humanity, catalyze the cure for depravity (the Spirit and glorification), and restore the peoples of the nations back to the one family of God in a new Eden.

SIGNIFICANCE?

- **The only way to do this was if this man was also God.**
- **God had foreseen this & prepared his people.**
- **He had given the Law (inhibit depravity) and a kingdom beachhead (his portion = new Eden)**

SIGNIFICANCE?

- He had come as a man before to make covenant and start over
- But his people always failed to believe, seduced by the gods of the nations
- Their kings, even in the line of David, were fallible

SIGNIFICANCE?

- **Success would begin at incarnation, God come as man – it had to for the Seed to be truly human, a son of Adam, Abraham, and David.**
- **This much was known from the beginning by the powers of darkness**

SIGNIFICANCE?

- The “human one” (“son of man”) would come to kick-start the Edenic dream, the kingdom of God, and roll back the rebellions of gods and humans.
- He’d show up for sure, but HOW he’d pull all this off was a mystery.

SIGNIFICANCE?

Do we take Paul seriously?

None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. (1 Cor 2:8)