

STUDY QUESTIONS (2)

1. Compare Jacob's blessing to each of his sons, and the blessing of Moses to the twelve tribes of Israel. What stands out to you? Describe (or color in on your map) the land allotted to each tribe. [Genesis 49:1-27; Deuteronomy 33; Joshua 14-19].
2. What clan-nations already occupied the land that God intended for Israel to inhabit? Make note of their location on your map. [Numbers 13:25-33]
3. The word '*rephaim*' or '*nephilim*' meant several things to the Ancient Israelite: 'terrible ones', 'giants', departed spirits of warrior kings', or a horrible physical/spiritual combination of all three. The *Rephaim* are also called Zuzim, Emim, and Anakim in the Hebrew Bible (Genesis 14:5). When the spies return and give their report to the Israelite congregation, what does it mean to *them* when they say they've seen the "sons of Anak"? [Genesis 6:-1-8; Deuteronomy 9:2; Joshua 14:15]
4. Who are the clans that Israel encounters on the *east* side of the Jordan? Is there anything notable about how each encounter begin and end? [Numbers 20:14-21; Deuteronomy 2:3; Joshua 2:9-11].

5. What role does Edom (also known as Seir; Idumea) play in the Israelite story? PS. Edom is a name derived from the Semitic root meaning “red;ruddy”. [Numbers 20:14-21; Deuteronomy 2:22, 23:8-9]

6. What do we know about the role the Moabites and the Midianites played in the story of Israel in the years prior to crossing the Jordan? [Numbers 25; Deuteronomy 23:1-7]

7. What was the role of the prophet Balaam in Israel's encounter with King Balak (Moab; Numbers 22-24)? Why is Balaam so frequently denounced by biblical writers in the NT? [Numbers 31:1-16; Deuteronomy 23:1-6, Jude 1:11-16; 2 Peter 2:15; Revelation 2:14]

8. King Sihon and Og are kings of what people/nation? What information are we given about King Og, in particular? How many fortified cities were under his rule at the time? What were the two main cities in Gog and Sihon's kingdoms, and who are we told lived there? Who or what else comes to mind when you think about King Og? [Deuteronomy 2:10-12, 3:1-11; Joshua 12:1-5, 13:8, 29-31]

9. The Bashan region was and is a beautiful and impressive site. Mt. Hermon, with its three peaks and snow-capped mountains sits 9200 feet above sea-level. Bashan is verdant and well watered, with fruitful plains, groves, forests, and abundant pasture-lands. *This is clearly the type of place you'd expect to find the gods.* Mt Hermon was (and is) a significant physical and spiritual landmark for the Israelites. It marked their Northern border in the same way the Mediterranean marked their western border, and it was also the 'high places' where worship of Ba'al and other astral gods was most prolific. What tribe of Israel settled in Bashan? [Deuteronomy 3:13-14; Joshua 13:29-31]

10. During the first-century, a city at the foothills of Mount Hermon was still the epi-center of cultic worship. Caesarea Philippi (formerly Panais, now Banais) was the location of a massive rock grotto where the greek god, Pan, was worshipped. The grotto held a spring so deep it appeared bottomless, and was thought to be the entrance down to the underworld. This very location was known as the "gates of Hades" where the *rephaim* lived. The abundant spring was one of three sources of the Jordan river. What Israelite temple was built in this same most northern boundary of Israel? Why was it built, and by whom? [1 Kings 12:25-30]

11. Mt. Zion is 2500 feet above sea-level and is not nearly so well watered or verdant. What reason does the Hebrew Bible give for God choosing Mt. Zion as his abode, instead of Mt. Hermon? [Exodus 15:11-18; Psalm 87; 68; 132:13-; Hebrews 12:22; 1 Peter 2:6]

12. What 'terror' exists today as you survey the landscape around you? What terrifies you as you consider the route God has for you into new territory? What did the biblical authors want God's people to *understand* and *do* in response to those looming threats?

WEEK TWO NOTES: ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

The account of Stephen in Acts 7 in the NT gives us a glimpse into God's 'throne room' where the God of Glory 'sits' enthroned, with Jesus is at his right hand. The 'heaven's were opened' giving Stephen (and us) a glimpse into God's heavenly abode.

Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and John also testify to the heavens being opened and seeing a vision(s) of God. The ANE (Ancient Near Eastern) understanding was that God sat 'enthroned above the heavens' (above the sky-dome) and that the earthly temple was a representation of the heavenly one. God's residence was in this heavenly temple and he had lots of company!

The seraphim (6-wings, above the throne) were the throne guardians in Isaiah's vision, and the cherubim (4-wings, four-faced, below the throne) in Ezekiel's account. John describes the throne guardians in Revelation as a combination of both (6 wings, four-faced) but they are always a part of the calling out "Holy! Holy! Holy!". PS. Only the seraphim and cherubim have wings. No other *elohim* or angels are ever described as having wings...sorry...:)

The word Isaiah uses to describe the throne guardians (seraphim) is the only place this used for a throne-guardian in the OT. Serpahim is used in other places for 'venemous snakes' or 'flying snakes' (Numbers 21:89) which is interesting when you consider the context of Egypt/Hezekiah/Isaiah and all the primary sources that we are privy to due to archeology (ie: Isaiah's seal and Hezekiah's seal were discovered in the same dirt; Egypt was an ally against Assyria during Hezekiah's rule etc.).

The first mention of a cherubim is in Genesis 3 as a guardian of Eden. He is stationed by God at the entrance of Eden so that Adam and Eve cannot access the tree of life once they've been banished. The nachash enticed Adam and Eve into a rebellion against God's will and now they will surely die (as he hoped). They failed *the* test which all imagers will encounter. And Cain will likewise fail *his* test, and in doing so, he will act, not like an image-bearer of God on earth, but like a beast.

Cherubim and seraphim are *elohim*. Their primary residence is in the heavenly realm and they are a part of God's heavenly entourage. We find the term *elohim* used, literally, thousands of times in the OT. Most often it is used for Yahweh (EI) but also for members of his divine council (*bene ha'elohim*; Psalms Job 38:4-7; 82; 89:5), angels (messengers, armies, hosts), and even to describe the spirit of a dead Samuel (1 Samuel

28:13). Some gods and goddesses of other nations are occasionally called *elohim* (Judges 11:24; 1 Kings 11:33).

Yahweh is an *elohim*, but there is no *elohim* like Yahweh. He is a species unto himself (Exodus 15:11). The Israelite worldview is most adamant on this issue.

All *elohim* are created by Yahweh and therefore apart from Yahweh. Job 4:18-19 and Job 15:15 give insight into the fact that God will not entrust himself fully to any *elohim*.

Jesus is God's '*only begotten son*' (*Ben El Elyon*; John 3:16). Jesus is a 'son of God' that is made out of the *unique* species that Yahweh is. Jesus is also a 'Son of Man'; a 'Son of Abraham'; and a 'son of David' (Matthew 1:1). He is the seed of Adam that will crush the rebellious serpent's head (*Ben ha Adam*; Genesis 3:15).

The heavens, and all the created *elohim* that are in it, are created to rule with Yahweh; they are tasked with rulership - to carry out his will on heaven and on earth. The *elohim* are intended to partner with God and with mankind to represent (image) God's righteous and just rule in the earthly realm as it is in the heavenly realm.

There's an interesting account in 1 Kings 22:13-28. God decided that it was time for King Ahab to die and the prophet Micaiah, in a vision, gets to witness a 'heavenly council' meeting in which God allows the *elohim* to discuss and offer various plans for what he has ordained (Ahab is to die). And so we learn that the *elohim* who are with God in his heavenly realm are not mindless robots! God allows for them to carry out his will and participate in his rule. And this freedom carries some risk, as he well knows.

There is also a scene described in Job 1 and 2 where the sons of God come to 'present themselves to the LORD' and 'ha satan' (the accuser; Satan) is also there. Who are these 'sons of God' assembled? Isn't it interesting that they are called 'sons' - as if they are a part of God's heavenly family? Job 38:47 tells that the sons of God (the morning stars) were present with God when he laid the foundations for the earth. The 'special stars', sun, moon, and constellations were often worshiped in the ANE culture, but the Israelites understanding was that these 'rulers' were under God's authority and never to be worshiped. Astral worship is always denounced by the biblical writers and practiced by those in rebellion to God's rule (*Deuteronomy 4:15-20*).

There are some *elohim* that were originally part of God's family, but have freely chosen to rebel against Yahweh's will and decidedly *not* partner in his original creation ideal

(Psalm 82). It is God's intention (his Ederic Ideal) that mankind would represent Yahweh on earth for the blessing of earth's inhabitants, and Yahweh has tasked even his *elohim* to help with this mission.

The rebel *elohim* are opposed to God's will. The ancient Israelite's understanding was that these rebel *elohim* were jealous. What? God's will is to give rulership to *them*? Doesn't everyone in the heavenly realm know that non-*elohim* (the sons of man) are lower than the angels (Psalm 8)? But the *elohim* are the firstborn! They've been with God longest! They are his first family! Even the animals were made before the man! (Genesis 3:1) And God chose *them* to partner with *him* and rule over this new creation?

And this ushers in the biblical narrative of the second-born being chosen over the first born...(more to come...)

Texts to chew on:

- **Job 38:4-7** describes the the 'sons of God' as 'morning stars' who sang when he laid the foundations of the earth.
- **Isaiah 14:12-21** describes the 'Day Star' falling from heaven.
- **Psalms 82:** describes the sons of God being rebuked for not ruling like Yahweh.
- **Genesis 6:1-5:** describes the sons of God crossing divine boundaries
- **Luke 10:18** describes Jesus telling of seeing Satan fall, like lightning, from the heavens.
- **Matthew 5:9:** "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called *sons of God*."

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become *children of God*, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." **John 1:12-13**

Land of Canaan at Time of Joshua





THE GREAT SEA
(Mediterranean Sea)

PHOENICIA

MT. LEBANON

MT. HERMON

ARAM
(SYRIANS)

BASHAN

ISRAEL

SEA OF CHINNERETH
YARMUK R.

JABBOK R.

GILEAD

AMMON

JORDAN R.

SALT SEA
(DEAD SEA)

MOAB

EDOM

JUDAH

PHILISTIA

RIVER OF EGYPT

Israel and Judah
In the Days of the Kings