



The Supernatural and Scripture Learning To Read Your Bible Again for The First Time

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You're standing on a battlefield. A war rages around you, although you can't perceive it— not directly, anyway. The combatants are supernatural. On one side, the Creator of the universe: God. Yahweh, or YHWH, if you prefer. On the other, evil intelligences who chose rebellion over service long ago. (Gilbert 2017, Kindle Locations 141-143)

We are told in the scriptures the supernatural aspect of this battle, yet for most of us, we tend to discount this.

We are a generation of rationalists who have the tendency to either totally discount the supernatural completely, or we go so far in the direction of the supernatural we lose all perspective of what reality actually is.

For many of us, we filter the Bible through what we have learned over the years.

For me, it was Bible school

I was taught that many of those things we see in scripture that are weird, and there are a few of those, have explanations that force rational decisions onto the text but do not come from the text itself
Yes, God's word is the best commentary on God's word, but at times, we force our context onto the actual context of the scripture

Scriptural context – what was the view of those writing the text at the time they were inspired but God to write?

What was their understanding of the world both physical and spiritual?

How heavily was their world skewed towards the supernatural?

What was it that kept them going back to false gods after all and were they just carvings?

We just finished the book of Ezekiel which we found was filled with the supernatural.

Ezekiel traveled through time, saw the actually multidimensional throne of God and tried to explain it to us in three dimensional terms.

He also introduced us to some of those who are throne guardians.

Ezekiel 1:5–11

“And in the middle there was something like the likeness of four living beings, and this was the appearance of them: there was a likeness of a human upon them. And each one had four faces, and each one had four wings; and their legs were straight, and their feet feathered, and sparks were like flashing bronze, and their wings were light in weight. And underneath their wings on their four parts there was a hand of a human, and their four faces did not turn about when they walked. Each one went before their face. And the likeness of their faces was a face of a human and a face of a lion on the right of the four, and a face of a calf on the left of the four, and a face of an eagle to the four. And their wings were stretched out above the four; each had two wings touching one another, and two above were covering their body.” (Lexham Press 2020, Ezekiel 1:5-11)

We will talk more about these living beings as we go along.

Isaiah had a similar audience.

Isaiah 6:1–7

“And this happened in the year when Uzziah the king died: I saw the Lord seated on a high and raised throne, and the building was full of his glory. And seraphim stood around him; each one had six wings, and with two they were covering their face, and with two they were covering their feet, and with two they were flying. And one cried aloud to the other, and they were saying, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord Sabaoth; the whole land is full of his glory!” And the lintel was lifted because of the sound that they were shouting, and the building filled with smoke. And I said, “Oh, I am wretched, because I am pierced; for I live in the middle of a people having impure lips, being a person and having impure lips, and I have seen the king, the Lord Sabaoth, with my eyes!” And one of the seraphim was sent to me, and in its hand it was holding a coal that it took with a holder from the altar. And it touched my mouth and said, “Look, this has touched your lips and will take away your transgressions and will purge away your sins.”” (Lexham Press 2020, Isaiah 6:1-7)

In the New Testament, Paul, who was well versed in both the gentile world view as well as in the Jewish world view with essentially a double doctorate provides the following for us.

Ephesians 6:10–12

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” (NASB95)

Paul begins to outline for us the reality of the spiritual world which is real and exists.

As we begin our study, we will see things that are weird. I anticipate that some of the things we see in God’s word will challenge how you see the world and how you read His word.



We will rely on God's word, it is what tells us of the reality of this unseen world we are going to examine.

Some background.

Our Premise

We believe that the entire Bible is the inspired Word of God and that it is without error. It is the final authority for faith and life.

We believe in the verbal, plenary, infallible, unlimited inerrancy of the Bible.

It is a supernatural book

After all, Jesus, born of a virgin, died on the cross and rose from the dead and currently is seated at the right hand of the Father

Verbal inspiration

The very words are inspired by God

Plenary

The whole Bible
Completely

Infallible

The words are the exact words God wanted

2 Timothy 3:16 - 17

"All Scripture is inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man or woman of God may be fully capable, equipped for every good work."
(NASB 2020)

...inspired - θεόπνευστος (theopnewstos)

God breathed

From θεός (theos) God and πνεῦμα (nooma) breath

The Source

God through the Holy Spirit

The Results

- Profitable
- Teaching
- Reproof
- Correction
- Training in righteousness
- Adequacy
- Equipped

John 14:26

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and remind you of all that I said to you.” (NASB 2020)

2 Peter 1:20-21

“But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture becomes a matter of someone’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” (NASB 2020)

Yes. God has spoken, and He has not stuttered. The God of truth has given us the Word of Truth, and it does not contain any untruth in it. The Bible is the unerring Word of God. (Geisler and Howe 1992, 12)

Our Premise

Authoritative

- Every word is authoritative
- Every place name
- Every phrase
- Every number
- The Bible is the final word

Unlimited inerrancy

- The Bible is fully inspired of God
- There is no error

Christ’s Example

- He assumed the historicity of God’s appearance to Moses.
- He assumed that every word of that statement could be trusted to be precisely accurate.
- He assumed that one could use even unlikely passages and trust their accuracy.
- He assumed that God’s revelation came in a propositional statement.
- He assumed that doctrinal truth has to be based on historical accuracy. The Bible cannot be inaccurate in matters of history and accurate in doctrine. (Ryrie 1998)

So, let’s dig in.

In my studies over the year, I have prayed for and asked the Lord to help me see His word as it should be seen.

I have studied it to see what it says, what does it mean, what does it mean to me, and in the context of what the scripture was trying to address. I do not want to read anything into the scripture but do want to extract every ounce of truth possible. There were things I was taught in Bible school that were troublesome for me and have kept me searching the scripture. The supernatural aspect of scripture was one.

Acts 17:11

“Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.” (NASB95)

I have discovered that some of my view of scripture was filtered through what I had read and studied in the past. Paradise Lost weighed heavily as did various doctrinal treatises. Being a historian by training, I learned that to understand history you have to place yourself into the time period and not let your current view of the world affect what you are reading. So, I wanted to understand the scripture from the same mindset as those who wrote it and read it.

What you'll learn is that a theology of the unseen world that derives exclusively from the text understood through the lens of the ancient, premodern worldview of the authors informs every Bible doctrine in significant ways. (Heiser 2015, 13)

We will try and cover them from the old testament and then into the new. My goal for us is the same as I had for myself, I want us to see the text of the scriptures the same way the writers saw it, without our reason, prejudices and preconceived notions in the way. Let's see if we can let the text do the speaking.

In the Bible we see the term, heavenly hosts or some variant, at least 70 times.

Genesis 2:1

"Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts." (NASB95)

Psalms 33:6

"By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host."
(NASB95)

Nehemiah 9:6

"You alone are the LORD. You have made the heavens, The heaven of heavens with all their host, The earth and all that is on it, The seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them And the heavenly host bows down before You." (NASB95)

We are not talking about stars, we are talking about something completely different here.

1 Kings 22:19–22

"And Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left; and the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said one thing, and another said another. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, saying, 'I will entice him.' And the LORD said to him, 'By what means?' And he said, 'I will go out, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And he said, 'You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do so.'" (ESV)

In a vision Micah ben Jimlah sees "the LORD seated on his throne, with all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right and on his left" (1 Kgs 22:19). This picture is borrowed from terrestrial realities: A king sitting on his throne and his ministers and attendants surrounding him. Though not using the term 'host of heaven' this picture of the divine council also underlies Isa 6, where Yahweh as king carries the title 'LORD of hosts' (Isa 6:3, 5). (Niehr 1999, 428)

God created everything. We usually think only about the physical realm, but He also, as you see, created a spiritual realm as well. Oh, and we just saw a term, a Divine Council

I want to fast forward to a section of scripture that references this and then we will go back to Genesis and see where it all began.

Psalms 82

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

I want to take a look first at the term in the Hebrew which translates as council.

The noun *sôd* is found 23 times in the Hebrew Bible: twice in personal names, otherwise in poetry (though Ezek 13:9 may be termed high prose). Its semantic range includes ‘council, assembly; counsel, deliberation, plan(s), will; company, fellowship, friendship’—each of which may be applied to both the human and divine spheres. It refers specifically to the divine court in four passages, implies its existence in two others, and could possibly refer to it in an additional two. (Parker 1999, 204)

We looked at the ESV, let’s take a look at another translation.

Psalm 82

“A psalm of Asaph. God stands in the assembly of El; in the midst of the gods he renders judgment. He says, “How long will you make unjust legal decisions and show favoritism to the wicked? (Selah) Defend the cause of the poor and the fatherless! Vindicate the oppressed and suffering! Rescue the poor and needy! Deliver them from the power of the wicked! They neither know nor understand. They stumble around in the dark, while all the foundations of the earth crumble. I thought, ‘You are gods; all of you are sons of the Most High.’ Yet you will die like mortals; you will fall like all the other rulers.” Rise up, O God, and execute judgment on the earth! For you own all the nations.” (NET)

The Hebrew word used here, *nitsav*, is a singular verbal form, which means that its subject, which is *elohim* in Hebrew—and could be translated as “God” or “gods”—should be translated in the singular as “God.” The imagery that extends from this verb is one of presiding, since the setting is a formal council meeting. (Barry, et al. 2012, 2016, Ps 82:1)

Divine Council – (Assembly of El) A descriptive phrase used of the heavenly host. Like other ancient Near Eastern cultures, the psalmist conceived of God as directing the affairs of the unseen world through an administration of divine beings. The members of the heavenly host are often referred to as a “council” or “assembly” (see 1 Kgs 22:19–23). The Hebrew preposition used here, *qerev*, requires the Hebrew word *elohim* to be translated as a plural here—as “gods.” The gods in the verse are the council members, the heavenly host (see Psa 82:6). A council of divine beings is also mentioned in 89:5–7, where they are depicted as in heaven or the skies. (Barry, et al. 2012, 2016, Ps 82:1)

The psalm opens with the scene in heaven where God takes his place in the heavenly council, that is, his place as chief; before him are assembled all the ‘*elohim*’ to hear his decision. It seems fairly evident that the ‘*elohim*’ in line b are the gods of the other nations. Some take them to be Israel’s judges (so the Targum; see Kirkpatrick), while others think they are Israel’s foreign oppressors (see Briggs). But the language of verses 6–7 makes it quite clear that these are divine beings. (Bratcher and Reyburn 1991, 727)

God has a council. This council consists of the heavenly host. Divine beings that He created.

Saying that they are angels is probably incorrect as angel is more of a job title as we will see rather than a specific line of divine beings. Remember, we already saw that there is some differentiation in appearance when we looked at Ezekiel 1 as well as Isaiah 6

They have failed and are being held accountable to God for their failure.

What is that all about?

We will get to that when we go back to Genesis and learn about:

The Divine Criminal
The Fall of Man
Additional failures of Divine Beings (watchers)
God’s divorce of the nations of the world
God’s solution

We see here in Psalm 82 that God, YHWH, is talking to His heavenly host, His divine council. YHWH is an Elohim, but no other Elohim is YHWH. “The Old Testament writers understood that Yahweh was an elohim—but no other elohim was Yahweh. He was species-unique among all residents of the spiritual world.” (Heiser 2015, 32)

Psalm 95:3

“For the LORD is a great God, a great king who is superior to all gods.” (NET)

Daniel 4:35

“all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?”” (ESV)

We see an indictment against those Elohim, those Divine Beings who are part of the Divine Council, the Heavenly Hosts. They are not all following God’s law.

We see in the book of Daniel an interchange between Gabriel and Daniel about what is going on behind the scenes.

Daniel 10:12–13

“Then he said to me, “Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was standing in my way 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.” (NASB 2020)

Daniel 10:20–21

“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 leaving, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come. However, I will tell you what is recorded in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince.” (NASB 2020)

The Indictment

- We get to look in on the trial
- Unjust judgment
- Favoritism to the wicked
- No justice
- Not defending those who had no means of a defense

The language the psalmist uses emphasizes the need for the wicked (who could be rich or poor) to be prevented from mistreating the lower social classes. The lowest classes—which were commonly neglected in ancient Near Eastern cultures—were to be protected. The divine order God commands would remedy this situation. (Barry, et al. 2012, 2016, Ps 82:3 - 4)

A side note, just a quick look at who is part of the group to solve this problem.

Romans 8:14–17

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, “Abba, Father.” For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God’s glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.” (NLT)

1 Corinthians 6:2–3

“Don’t you realize that someday we believers will judge the world? And since you are going to judge the world, can’t you decide even these little things among yourselves? Don’t you realize that we will judge angels? So you should surely be able to resolve ordinary disputes in this life.” (NLT)

Revelation 4:4

“Around the throne were 24 other thrones, and on these thrones sat 24 elders wearing white robes and gold victor’s crowns on their heads.” (ISV)

Revelation 2:25–28

“Just hold on to what you have until I come. I will give authority over the nations to the person who overcomes and continues to do what I’ve commanded to the end, and ‘He will rule them with an iron scepter; shattering them like clay pots.’ ‘Just as I have received authority from my Father, I will also give him the morning star.” (ISV)

Revelation 3:20–21

“Look! I am standing at the door and knocking. If anyone listens to my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he will eat with me. I will give a place to sit with me on my throne to the one who overcomes, just as I have overcome and have sat down with my Father on his throne.” (ISV)

Believer, you have an appointment waiting for you.

God has new members He needs to fill His council, and as joint heirs with Christ, who is at the right hand of the Father (Hebrews 12:2) right now, you have a job waiting for you. God’s original intent was to have His family of Elohim (divine beings) and humans (us) be with Him for all eternity, as I said, you have an appointment.

Back to Psalm 82, we saw the indictment

The members of the Divine Council who have failed are inept.

Psalm 82:5

“They do not know nor do they understand; They walk about in darkness; All the foundations of the earth are shaken.” (NASB95)

To make sure we know who the Psalmist is talking about, another term is used, bene elohim. This term commonly refers to Divine Beings in the OT.

Adam was a bene elohim, a son of God, we are sons and daughters of Adam

But as believers, we are...

Galatians 3:26

“for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.” (ESV)

Already but not yet glorified

The bottom line, those Divine Beings who have blown it are judged. They will experience death, just as those who are earthly and do not know God will experience death, eternal separation from their creator. The Psalmist concludes by asking God to rise up and take back the nations He divorced at Babel in Genesis 11.

More on that in the coming weeks.

We will pick up next week talking about the fall.

If you want to read ahead.

Genesis 3

Isaiah 14

Ezekiel 28

Psalm 89:1–7

“I will sing continually about the LORD’s faithful deeds; to future generations I will proclaim your faithfulness. For I say, “Loyal love is permanently established; in the skies you set up your faithfulness.” The LORD said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have made a promise on oath to David, my servant: ‘I will give you an eternal dynasty and establish your throne throughout future generations.’” (Selah) O LORD, the heavens praise your amazing deeds, as well as your faithfulness in the angelic assembly. For who in the skies can compare to the LORD? Who is like the LORD among the heavenly beings, a God who is honored in the great angelic assembly, and more awesome than all who surround him?” (NET)

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