

God's Cosmic and Human Families

>>>>>> *Conclusion – Final Definition of the Enemy* <<<<<<<

- 1) Continuing on with the discussion, Gen 2:9 tells us that there were Trees of Life and Knowledge of Good and Evil in this Garden.
 - a) We see the actual tree of life mentioned 4 times in Revelation and in Genesis.
 - b) It is mentioned in proverbs but there it is wisdom and other things but, NOT the physical “Tree of Life.”
- 2) We know the tree of knowledge of good and evil was in the Garden of Eden as well and we determined that it only occurs in Genesis.
- 3) So, we left with the question...

Why do think God put it in the Garden?

- a) It created a real opportunity for obedience or rebellion.
- b) It marked the boundary between God's authority and human autonomy.
- c) It required trust in God's wisdom.
- d) It became the starting point of the biblical narrative of fall and redemption.

Extra NOTES

- 1) Other detail not covered in class:
 - a) Provides a choice to obey or not.
 - i) Without it obedience would be automatic.
 - ii) Without it loyalty to God could not be demonstrated.
 - iii) Trust God's wisdom
 - iv) Or decide independently what is good and evil
 - b) The tree represented moral autonomy
 - i) The phrase “knowledge of good and evil” often refers in Hebrew thought to the ability to determine or decide moral matters.
 - ii) So the issue may not be merely gaining information, but claiming the authority to define good and evil independently of God.
 - iii) When the serpent speaks in Book of Genesis 3:5, he says:
 - (1) “You will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
 - iv) The temptation is essentially humanity deciding for itself what is right and wrong.
 - c) The command defined humanity's proper role
 - i) In Book of Genesis 1:26–28, humans are given dominion over creation, but they are still creatures under God's authority.
 - ii) The tree marks the boundary between:
 - iii) God as moral authority
 - iv) humanity as dependent creatures
 - v) Eating from it symbolized crossing that boundary.
 - d) The tree made trust possible
 - i) God had given humans abundant provision in Eden.
 - ii) In Book of Genesis 2:9, the garden contained many trees that were:
 - iii) “pleasant to the sight and good for food.”
 - iv) Only one tree was restricted.
 - v) This emphasizes that the issue was not deprivation but trust in God's command.

God's Cosmic and Human Families

- e) It sets up the biblical storyline
 - i) The tree also functions as the starting point of the entire redemption story.
 - ii) After the fall:
 - iii) sin enters the human world
 - iv) humanity is separated from the tree of life
 - v) the rest of the Bible unfolds God's plan to restore what was lost
 - vi) The final book of the Bible even returns to this theme.
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- 1) Continuing with Rebellions and bad actors, next we see the sons of God being both bad actors and rebelling:

Genesis 6:1–4 (NASB 2020)

The Corruption of Mankind

¹Now it came about, when mankind began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, ²that the sons of God saw that the daughters of mankind were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. ³Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not remain with man forever, because he is also flesh; nevertheless his days shall be 120 years.” ⁴The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of mankind, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown.

- a) There are several opinions as to who the “sons of God” are however, many modern scholars favor the idea that they are part of the council – part of the heavenly host.
- b) This is also supported by Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2:4

Jude 6 (ESV)

⁶And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—

2 Peter 2:4 (ESV)

⁴For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment;

- c) That being the case and not diving into the other theories these “sons of God” are both bad actors and part of God's Spiritual/Heavenly family.
- d) In Genesis 6:5 we read ...

“... the wickedness of mankind was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually.”

- i) Because this statement is placed immediately after verses 1 to 4, it is seen as this rebellion by the sons of God is seen as a cause of the further degradation of mankind.
- ii) This is also supported in the apocryphal writing 1 Enoch:6 to 16. One source gives a summary:
 - the “sons of God” are called Watchers
 - they descend to earth and take human wives
 - they teach forbidden knowledge:

God's Cosmic and Human Families

- warfare
- sorcery
- astrology
- cosmetics (often framed as moral corruption)

A paraphrased example from 1 Enoch 8 is: They taught humanity weapons, enchantments, and various corrupting arts.

- 2) So, God in essence pushes RESET and, except for Noah and his family and the animals, wipes out all of the creation from the earth.
 - a) The one thing that was not a part of this RESET was the reestablishment of man's innocence.
 - i) Man's position was the same in relation to creation – he was to rule over it.
 - ii) However, sin was not removed.
 - b) Man continues to sin but God promises not to wipe out the human race again – His plan is in motion.
- 3) However, there is another serious rebellion on the horizon.
- 4) Even though God does not destroy them because of it He must act.
 - a) As we look back at Genesis, we see that God tells Noah just as he did Adam to ... “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.”
 - b) And, this becomes the source of this next problem we find in Genesis 11.
 - c) Beginning in Gen 10, we see that all the nations come from the three sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.
 - d) They eventually gather in the region of Shinar (Mesopotamia) where they attempt to build the tower.

Genesis 11:1–9 (NASB 2020)

The Tower of Babel

¹Now all the earth used the same language and the same words. ²And it came about, as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³Then they said to one another, “Come, let's make bricks and fire *them* thoroughly.” And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. ⁴And they said, “Come, let's build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *will reach* into heaven, and let's make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of all the earth.” ⁵Now the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the men had built. ⁶And the LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they have started to do, and now nothing which they plan to do will be impossible for them. ⁷Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech.” ⁸So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth; and they stopped building the city. ⁹Therefore it was named Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

- 5) This is another rebellion, a rebellion of man alone attempting to countermand God.
 - a) God told Noah to populate the earth – man says we do not want to be scattered over the earth so...

God's Cosmic and Human Families

- b) In this there is hubris, and not only a contradiction of God's command but it placed his plan in jeopardy.
- c) There is another very important part of this that is uncovered in God's statement:

And this is what they have started to do, and now nothing which they plan to do will be impossible for them.

- d) Not unlike the Garden situation, by man's contradiction of God's plan, bad things are going to happen that have an impact on a cosmic scale.
 - i) How could God carry out his plan for a chosen people / nation if there were no nations?
- e) Note again here the idea of God speaking to his Heavenly Host "let us go down and confuse their language."
- f) Of course, that happens and the nations are formed.

- 1) The next passage we will look at is Psalm 82.
- 2) In Psalm 82, God addresses members of the divine council:
 - a) called "gods" (elohim)
 - b) called "sons of the Most High."
 - c) condemned for ruling unjustly.
 - d) sentenced to "die like men."
- 3) All of this suggests authorities with responsibility over the world (likely the nations).
- 4) Many scholars tie this to Deut 32:8-9

Deuteronomy 32:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ 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.

⁹ But the LORD's portion is his people,
Jacob his allotted heritage.

- 5) So, in Genesis 6 we have seen some members of the "sons of God" condemned for their actions with humankind.
- 6) Now, in Psalm 82 we see some of them being condemned for ruling unjustly.
- 7) The point here is that we have other members of God's Spiritual Family who are condemned and as such may have become part of the enemy we are trying to define.
- 8) I have placed a paragraph at the end of the notes titled:

Linking Psalm 82, Deut 32:8-9, and Eph 6:12 Scholarly View with References.

- a) If you are interested, you can use the references to dig deeper into this.

- 1) Ok, we are almost finished defining our enemy.
- 2) To do this we have to revisit our enemy's general the commander in chief – Satan.
- 3) As we indicated earlier, Satan had rebelled against God before creation as can be assumed by Gen 3, to be the serpent temptation which triggered man's fall.
 - a) However, it appears from what we see in Job, he still has access to heaven.

God's Cosmic and Human Families

- b) As the millennia pass, we see him as the accuser, and of course, as the probable source of the demons which are cast out by Christ throughout the gospels.
- c) Finally, we get to Revelation 12.

Revelation 12:7–12 (ESV)

Satan Thrown Down to Earth

⁷Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. ⁹And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. ¹⁰And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. ¹¹And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. ¹²Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”

- 4) Now, one question that might come to our mind is when did this casting down happen?
 - a) There are three common views given in answer to this.
 - i) **Before the crucifixion.**
 - (1) In this scenario, Satan was cast out of heaven prior to creation.
 - (2) Those holding to this view look at Rev 12 as a retelling of that fall and casting out.
 - ii) **After the crucifixion meaning when Christ is exalted.**
 - iii) And the third is a **synthesis of the two** which really makes the most sense to me.
 - (1) The original rebellion takes place prior to Gen 3 (probably prior to the creation)
 - (2) He then obviously becomes an adversary of God but, he still has access to heaven.
 - (3) We see this in Job and also in this period he is an “accuser of our brothers.”
 - (4) One comment that I found tied this expulsion and the final victory together.

So the “war in heaven” in Revelation 12 likely represents not the initial rebellion, but the decisive expulsion following Christ’s work.

- 5) The real take away here for us in this study is in Rev 12:12

¹²Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”

- a) To summarize, the heavenly host (God’s Spiritual Family) is to rejoice because Satan and all his angels are gone from heaven.
- b) “But, ...” and here is the real definition of our enemy.

God's Cosmic and Human Families

... woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!

c) Here are the things that come out of that verse for us:

- i) Satan has lost the war.
- ii) His rebellion against God has been crushed.
- iii) He is living on borrowed time – his fate is sealed – eternal punishment!
- iv) The Devil is cast down in great wrath.

(1) The wrath is not just because he's been defeated, but because his time is short and he knows it.

6) Now, here are the final questions that let us see, not the details, but the big picture of where we are now.

Even though the victor has been determined, does either God or Satan believe the war is over?

- a) Obvious answer here is NO!
- b) If at this point, we consider Satan, his angels, and possibly the condemned members of the council (sons of God) are who Paul is defining as our enemy in Eph 6:12 then here is the question.

All their fates are sealed so what are they trying to do and why?

- a) Vindictiveness.
 - i) Bottomline is if he can't have it all (which he knows he can't) he will take as many of us as he can with him into hell.
 - ii) And the real goal is to cause God grief by thwarting his desire as stated in 1 Timothy 2 where God desires all people to be saved.
 - iii) When Satan wins one of us – God loses, not the war, but one of us – that is the enemy and the battle we are fighting.

God's Cosmic and Human Families

Paragraph Linking Psalm 82, Deut 32:8-9, and Eph 6:12 Scholarly View with References.

A growing number of scholars understand **Psalm 82** as depicting God judging members of the heavenly council, described as “gods” (*elohim*) and “sons of the Most High,” for their unjust governance of the nations.³ This interpretation is often linked to **Book of Deuteronomy 32:8–9**, where the nations are divided according to the “sons of God” (as preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls), suggesting a framework in which divine beings were allotted authority over the nations.⁴ Within this conceptual background, many scholars see continuity with the New Testament’s description of hostile spiritual powers, particularly in **Epistle to the Ephesians 6:12**, where Paul speaks of “rulers,” “authorities,” and “cosmic powers” opposing believers.⁵ While Scripture does not explicitly identify the beings of Psalm 82 with those in Ephesians 6, the shared portrayal of structured spiritual authorities influencing the world has led many interpreters to view these passages as reflecting different stages of the same broader biblical theme of rebellious heavenly powers under God’s ultimate judgment.⁶

Psalm 82:title–8 (ESV)

Rescue the Weak and Needy

82 A Psalm of Asaph.

- ¹ God has taken his place in the divine council;
in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:
- ² “How long will you judge unjustly
and show partiality to the wicked? *Selah*
- ³ Give justice to the weak and the fatherless;
maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.
- ⁴ Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”
- ⁵ They have neither knowledge nor understanding,
they walk about in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.
- ⁶ I said, “You are gods,
sons of the Most High, all of you;
- ⁷ nevertheless, like men you shall die,
and fall like any prince.”
- ⁸ Arise, O God, judge the earth;
for you shall inherit all the nations!

Deuteronomy 32:8–9 (ESV)

- ⁸ 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.
- ⁹ But the LORD’s portion is his people,
Jacob his allotted heritage.

³ John Goldingay, *Psalms, Volume 2: Psalms 42–89* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 530–34; James L. Mays, *Psalms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 268–70.

⁴ Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 605–9; Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 514–18.

⁵ Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 447–52; Frank Thielman, *Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 400–405.

⁶ Michael S. Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 113–23, 269–76.

God's Cosmic and Human Families

Ephesians 6:12 (ESV)

¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.