

The Supernatural Worldview of the Nations Through Second Temple Eyes

INTRO: We begin by stepping into the worldview of the Bible’s authors — a worldview shared by faithful Jews during the Second Temple period. This worldview is not speculative. It’s grounded in Scripture, confirmed by ancient Jewish writings, and assumed by Jesus and the apostles.

I. THE MOST HIGH AND HIS COUNCIL

INTRO:

Begin by stepping into the worldview of the Bible’s authors — a worldview shared by faithful Jews during the Second Temple period. This worldview is not speculative. It’s grounded in Scripture, confirmed by ancient Jewish writings, and assumed by Jesus and the apostles. **The Supernatural World According to a Second Temple Jew (300 BC–100 AD)**

Below is how a Jew living in the time of Jesus, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and 1 Enoch would explain the supernatural world.

This is historically accurate, textually grounded, and reflective of the worldview that shaped the New Testament.

A. Yahweh: The Most High

A Second Temple Jew would begin here:

“There is one Most High God, the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the Creator of heaven, earth, and all the heavenly beings.”

“Israel believed in one supreme God — Yahweh, the Most High. He is uncreated, eternal, and sovereign over all spiritual beings.”

This reflects:

- Deut. 32:8–9
- Isaiah 40–48
- 1 Enoch 9, 14
- Psalm 97

B. The Divine Council

Yahweh rules over a heavenly council — the *sons of God*, the *holy ones*, the *host of heaven*.

These are not rivals. They are created spiritual beings who serve under Him.

A Second Temple Jew would say:

The Most High rules over a heavenly council of holy ones — the sons of God. They serve Him, carry out His decrees, and govern the nations.

This reflects:

- Psalm 82
- Psalm 89: 5-7
- 1 Kings 22:19-23
- 1 Enoch 14

Why This Matters:

This is the Bible's starting point for understanding angels, demons, the nations, and spiritual conflict.

If we miss the council, we miss the story!

II. THE WATCHERS AND THE GIANTS

INTRO:

Before the Flood, the Bible describes a supernatural rebellion that shaped Jewish thinking for centuries.

A. The Watchers Descend

Genesis 6:1–4 is brief, but Second Temple Jews filled in the details using texts like 1 Enoch and Jubilees.

Key points:

- Certain angels (“Watchers”) descended to earth
- They took human women
- They produced the Nephilim — giant warrior kings
- They taught forbidden knowledge

Read: Genesis 6:1–4, 1 Enoch 6–11, Jubilees 5

The Rebellion of the Watchers (Genesis 6)

This is central to Second Temple thought.

“In the days before the Flood, certain Watchers descended to earth.

They took human wives, taught forbidden knowledge, and produced giants — the Nephilim.”

This reflects:

- Genesis 6:1–4
 - 1 Enoch 6–16
 - Jubilees 5
 - Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q201, 4Q530–532)
-

B. The Judgment of the Watchers

God imprisoned the Watchers until the final judgment.

Read: 2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6

C. Why This Matters

This rebellion explains the origin of demons, the rise of ancient evil, and the worldview Jesus steps into.

III. DEMONS IN SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM

INTRO:

Demons in the New Testament are not fallen angels.

A Second Temple Jew saw them very differently.

A. The Origin of Demons

When the giants — the Nephilim — were killed, their spirits remained on earth.

Read: 1 Enoch 15–16, Jubilees 10

Key points:

- Giants = hybrid beings
 - Their bodies died in the Flood
 - Their spirits became demons
 - They roam the earth until final judgment
-

B. The Nature of Demons

A Second Temple Jew would say:

When the giants died, their spirits became the evil spirits — the demons — who now roam the earth.

This reflects:

- **1 Enoch 15–16**
- **Jubilees 10**
- **Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q510–511)**

Demons are:

- **restless**
- **hostile**
- **disembodied**
- **tied to violence and corruption**
- **seeking embodiment**

This matches the NT descriptions perfectly.

C. Jesus and Demons

Jesus' authority over demons is a direct fulfillment of Second Temple expectations.

Read: Mark 1:21–27, Luke 11:20

IV. THE NATIONS AND THEIR GODS

INTRO:

Turning now to the second great rebellion — the one at Babel.

A Second Temple Jew would explain:

After the Flood, at Babel, the Most High divided the nations and placed them under the authority of the sons of God. But many of these heavenly rulers became corrupt and led the nations astray.

This reflects:

- Deut. 32:8–9 (LXX/Dead Sea Scrolls reading)
 - Psalm 82:1-7
 - 1 Enoch 89–90
 - Jubilees 15
-

A. The Division of the Nations

Deuteronomy 32:8–9 teaches that God divided the nations and assigned them to the sons of God.

Read: Deut. 32:8–9 (ESV or DSS/LXX)

Key points:

- God disinherited the nations
- He assigned them to heavenly rulers
- Israel remained Yahweh's portion

“Sons of _____” Explained:

■ Deuteronomy 32:8 — The Three Competing Readings

The critical phrase is:

בְּנֵי _____
“sons of _____”

The blank is where the manuscripts differ.

Here are the three readings:

>Masoretic Text (MT)

בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

“sons of Israel”

This is the reading in most modern Jewish Bibles and many Christian translations.

Per Michael Heiser’s Analysis:

- This reading cannot be original.
 - Israel did not exist when the nations were divided at Babel (Genesis 10–11).
 - It breaks the logic of the passage.
 - It appears to be a later scribal change to avoid the idea of “other gods.”
-

>Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS)

בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים

“sons of God”

This is the reading found in 4QDeut^g, a very ancient Hebrew manuscript.

Michael Heiser’s analysis:

- This is the oldest Hebrew reading we possess.
- It matches the divine council worldview.
- It fits the context of Deut. 32:8–9 perfectly.
- It explains why verse 9 says Israel is Yahweh’s “portion.”

This is the reading Heiser argued is original.

>Septuagint (LXX — Greek OT)

ἀγγέλων θεοῦ

“angels of God”

This is the Greek translator’s interpretation of the Hebrew phrase.

Heiser’s analysis:

- The LXX translator understood the Hebrew to refer to divine beings, not humans.
- “Angels of God” is a paraphrase of “sons of God.”
- This confirms that ancient Jews did not read this as “sons of Israel.”

Summary Table

<u>Text Tradition</u>	<u>Hebrew/Greek Phrase</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Heiser’s View</u>
Masoretic Text	בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	sons of Israel	Late change; not original
Dead Sea Scrolls	בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים	sons of God	Original reading
Septuagint	ἄγγέλων θεοῦ	angels of God	Supports DSS reading

Why “Sons of God” Is the Original Reading

Heiser’s core argument:

The Most High divided the nations among the sons of God (divine beings), not among the sons of Israel.

Reasons:

1. Israel did not exist at Babel

You can’t divide nations “according to the number of the sons of Israel” when Israel isn’t born yet.

2. Verse 9 depends on verse 8

“But Yahweh’s portion is His people, Jacob His inheritance.”

This only makes sense if:

- Yahweh gets Israel
- Other divine beings get other nations

3. Psalm 82 matches this worldview

The “gods” (elohim) who rule the nations are judged for corruption.

4. Daniel 10 matches this worldview

“Prince of Persia” and “Prince of Greece” = territorial divine beings.

5. The Dead Sea Scrolls preserve the oldest Hebrew reading

This is the strongest textual evidence.

The Hebrew Grammar (Short, Precise, Teachable)

בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים

- בְּנֵי = “sons of”
- אֱלֹהִים = “God/gods/elohim”
- In this context: divine beings, not humans

This phrase appears in:

- Job 1:6
- Job 2:1
- Job 38:7
- Psalm 29:1 (בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים)
- Psalm 89:6

In every case, it refers to heavenly beings, not people.

Heiser’s One-Sentence Conclusion

Deuteronomy 32:8 originally said “sons of God,” teaching that God assigned the nations to lesser divine beings at Babel, while keeping Israel for Himself.

This is the foundation of the entire “Deuteronomy 32 worldview.”

2. The Corruption of the Rulers

“Psalm 82 shows these rulers became corrupt.”

Read: Psalm 82

Key points:

- They accepted worship
 - They ruled unjustly
 - They led nations into idolatry
 - God promises to judge them
-

3. The Nations Under Spiritual Powers

“This worldview explains why every ancient nation had gods, idols, temples, and territorial spirits.”

V. IDOLATRY AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE

To a Second Temple Jew, idolatry was not symbolic.
It was spiritual treason.

A Second Temple Jew would say:

Idols are nothing but wood and stone — but the spirits behind them are real.
Those who worship idols enter into fellowship with demons.

This reflects:

- Wisdom of Solomon 13–15
 - Tobit 8
 - 1 Corinthians 10:20 (reflecting Jewish thought)
-

A. Idols Are Dead Objects

Read: Psalm 115, Isaiah 44

“Idols are wood and stone — powerless in themselves.”

B. But Spirits Operate Behind Idols

Read: Wisdom of Solomon 13–15, 1 Corinthians 10:20

Key points:

- Idols are gateways
 - Demons attach to idol worship
 - Idolatry = allegiance to hostile powers
-

C. Spiritual Warfare

For Jews of this period, spiritual warfare was not about rituals — it was about loyalty.

- Loyalty to Yahweh
 - Rejecting the gods of the nations
 - Remaining faithful under pressure
-

VI. THE MESSIAH’S COSMIC MISSION

The Messiah was not merely a political figure.

He was expected to confront the powers of heaven.

A Second Temple Jew would say:

When the Messiah comes, He will overthrow the spirits of wickedness, judge the fallen angels, and reclaim the nations for the Most High.

This reflects:

- 1 Enoch 48, 62–63
- Dead Sea Scrolls (1QM, 4Q246)

- Isaiah 11, 42, 49
-

A. The Messiah Judges the Fallen Powers

Read: 1 Enoch 48, 1 Enoch 62–63, Isaiah 11

Key points:

- Judge the Watchers
 - Defeat the spirits of wickedness
 - Reclaim the nations
 - Restore creation
-

B. Jesus Fulfills This Mission

Read: Matthew 28:18–20, Colossians 2:15, Revelation 12

Key points:

- Jesus disarms the powers
 - Sends disciples to reclaim the nations
 - Announces the end of the old spiritual order
-

C. The End of the Age

A Second Temple Jew would say:

The Watchers will be cast into the abyss.

The demons will be destroyed.

The nations will return to the God of Israel.

And the righteous will shine like the stars.

This reflects:

- Daniel 12

- 1 Enoch 90
- 1 Enoch 108
- Dead Sea Scrolls (1QM)

Read: Daniel 12, 1 Enoch 90

Key points:

- Resurrection
- Judgment of angels
- Restoration of the nations
- Renewal of creation

IN CLOSING :

This is the supernatural worldview of the Bible — the worldview Jesus and the apostles assumed. Understanding it unlocks the entire biblical story from Genesis to Revelation.

STRUCTURED SUMMARY

I. The Most High and His Council

- Yahweh is supreme.
 - He rules over a council of holy ones.
 - These beings are not equal to Him.
 - They administer creation and the nations.
-

II. The Watchers' Rebellion

- Certain angels descended to earth.
- They took human wives.
- They produced giants (Nephilim).

- They taught forbidden knowledge.
 - They were imprisoned until judgment.
-

III. The Origin of Demons

- When the giants died, their spirits remained.
 - These spirits became demons.
 - They afflict humanity until the final judgment.
-

IV. The Nations Under Fallen Powers

- After Babel, God assigned the nations to heavenly rulers.
 - Many of these rulers became corrupt.
 - They accepted worship.
 - They led nations into idolatry.
 - Israel alone belonged to Yahweh.
-

V. Idolatry as Spiritual Treason

- Idols are lifeless objects.
 - But demons operate behind them.
 - Worshiping idols = joining the rebellion.
 - Idolatry is allegiance to hostile powers.
-

VI. The Messiah's Role

- The Messiah will defeat the fallen powers.

- He will reclaim the nations.
- He will judge the Watchers.
- He will restore creation.

VII. The End of the Age

- The Watchers are punished.
- Demons are destroyed.
- The nations return to the Most High.
- The righteous are resurrected.

Side-By-Side Comparison of the 2nd Temple Jew & Modern Christianity

Christian vs. Second Temple Jewish Worldview

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Second Temple Jew</u>	<u>Christian</u>
Supreme God	Yahweh, Most High	Same
Divine Council	Sons of God under Yahweh	Same (expanded in NT)
Watchers	Fallen angels of Gen 6	Same (2 Peter, Jude)
Demons	Spirits of dead giants	NT affirms demons but not origin
Nations	Under fallen heavenly rulers	Christ reclaims them
Messiah	Judge of angels, restorer of nations	Jesus fulfills this
Idolatry	Fellowship with demons	Same (1 Cor. 10:20)