

THE UNSEEN WORLD OF THE BIBLE
Session 3: 'Once and Future Kings'
23 October 2022

Objectives

Distinguish: Two realms and two councils.

Define: The 'image' of God.

Discover: God's plan for the future of the world

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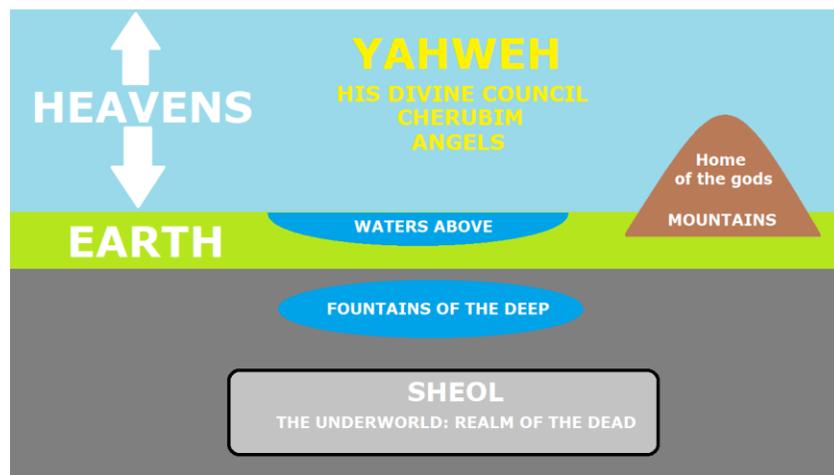
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Once and Future Kings

"God's rule in the unseen spiritual world through his council is a template for his rule on earth—what theologians call the Kingdom of God." M S Heiser, *Supernatural*, p.27



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FIVE VIEWS OF THE EDEN STORY

History: An actual place, real events & persons.

Folklore: A fable that we can safely ignore.

Literature: A creative scenario to teach morality.

Mythology: Ancient near-eastern beliefs borrowed by the Bible to communicate about Yahweh.

Vision: God revealed past history in graphic terms, as he did future history apocalyptic visions.

Advice: Regardless of which view you hold, read the account for its own story, and learn its teaching.

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"The Garden of God"

"You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in **Eden**, the garden of **God**; ... Ezek 28:12-13

"The holy mountain of God"

You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the **holy mount of God**; you walked among the fiery stones. Ezek 28:14



Who was present at the creation of human beings?

1. God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Gen 1:26
2. When I laid the earth's foundation ... while the morning stars sang together and all the angels [**the sons of God**] shouted for joy? Job 38:4-7
3. **The sons of God** saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful. Gen 6:2
4. The **serpent** said to the woman... Gen 3:1
5. You were in Eden ... a guardian **cherub** ... from the day you were created. Ezek 28:13-14

Genesis 1:24-25

1. Read the text aloud.
2. Who are the two subjects of verbs?
3. Who commanded action?
4. Who performed that action?
5. Formulate a summary of 1:24-25.

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Summary: God has a plan for the natural realm. Although he orders creature to multiply, only he has the power to create them.

Genesis 1:26-27

1. Read the text aloud.
2. Who are the subjects of the first verb in 1:26?
3. Who alone performed the first verb?
4. Who are the subjects of the second verb in 1:26?
5. In 1:25-26, who share in a same 'image'?
6. In 1:25-26, what is the 'image'? (Do not guess.)

Summary: As God and his council rule over the supernatural realm, so the humans are to rule over the natural realm. The image is rulership.

FIVE VIEWS OF THE IMAGE

Theology: God shares his **attributes** with humans.

Religion: God is a glorified human who **begets** human children who may become gods.

Society: Humans are made by God, so should be **respected**, despite their race or background .

Mythology: A Some humans were **begotten** by the gods, so have special powers and privileges.

Genesis: God created human beings to subdue and to rule the earthly realm as his '**imagers**'.

TITLES OF HUMANS IN THE DIVINE COUNCIL

- Adopted / sons / children / heirs
- "Participate in the divine nature" 2 Pet 1:4
- "Authority over the nations." Rev 2:26
- "We will judge angels" 1 Cor 6:3
- "God ... seated us with him in the heavenly realms." Eph 2:6

THREE SETS OF DIVINE IMAGERS

- The divine council in the supernatural realm.
"In our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule." Gen 1:26
- The human beings in the natural realm.
"God created mankind in his own image." Gen 1:27
- The incarnate Son of God. "He is the image of the invisible God." Col 1:15

OTHER INTERPRETATIONS

- **Rabbinic:** God consulted with some unknown beings or entities.
- **Mythological:** It is an idea borrowed from pagan polytheism.
- **Christian:** It is the Trinity or the Bi-unity agreeing on what to do.
- **Linguistic:** It is the plural language of majesty.
- **Literary:** It is a rhetorical device to express a divine prerogative.
- **Literal:** It is God exhorting himself, 'Let's do this!'

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Heavenly Realm	Earthly Realm	Heaven and Earth
Divine council	Walked with God	Triune God
Manage affairs in the heavens	Subdue and rule the earth	Redeems humans, reconciles all things
Many disobeyed	Tempted, disobeyed	Jesus obeyed God
Will die like men	All die	Died and rose
Some remain loyal	Repent and believe	Saves the repentant
Remain in the divine council	Join the divine council	Lord of the divine council



Christ as the Image of God

"The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created." Col 1:15-16

"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." 2 Cor 4:4

Christians in the Image of God

"The new self ... being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator." Col 3:10 NIV

"Being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory." 2 Cor 3:18

"Predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son." Rom 8:29

"Man ... is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man." 1 Cor 11:7

How should we think or do about God's imagers?

- How should we think or do about 'ourselves'?
- How should we think or do about each other?
- How should we think or do about strangers?
- How should we think or do about enemies?