

## Nurturing a Biblical End Times View – Part II (Evangelical Neo-Gnosticism)

- James P. Steel

*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; - 1 Timothy 4:1*

### Emergent Babylon

#### Introduction

Many of us grew up in the modernist era, a period of time when belief in the supernatural in any form was snidely mocked. We watched the times change as spirituality occupied the front seat right along with science. However, we did not see a generation that was truly prepared for antichrist and the kind of idolatry and demonic activity which books like Revelation clearly treat as commonplace. This has all changed. More importantly, the doctrines of demons have infiltrated evangelical Christianity as the old established lines of demarcation between heaven and earth are being eroded before our eyes. This study serves as an admonition for the body of Christ to mitigate their intense focus on the immediate political and medical issues which face us, in favor of understanding where we are in the grand scheme of things as we observe the melding of Babylon future with Babylon past. Everything is changing.

#### Our Twofold Goal:

**In Part I of this series, we *looked forward* with a broad view toward the consummation of all things and rejoiced in Heaven's final doxology as we celebrated the future fall of Babylon.** We began by establishing our futurist position and reminding ourselves that the doctrine of the rapture of the church prevents us from falling into prophetic error. We then established Babylon's great significance and pointed to the tentacles of its influences in our time. Our essential proposition was that the mystery of iniquity which was already emergent in Paul's time is now accelerating exponentially and that we have likely reached a critical mass from which the world will not return. We called for believers to come out of Babylon and not to be partakers of her plagues. While the believer must not predict the day or hour of the rapture of the church, he has a certain obligation to know where he is in the march of time and to adjust his own life and teachings accordingly.

**In Part II of this series, we take a broad glance backward at the great contest between heaven and earth and things under the earth.** We will discover that Babylon is central to Satan's program and take special note of Satan's devices so that we will not be deceived into partaking with the plan and program of Babylon. We will, at once, decry our own lack of attention to all that God says about *this contest between heaven and earth*, while at the same time, we will warn against new evangelical teachings and obsessions with heaven and earth which are making us vulnerable to the fables against which Paul warned us. Remember, we are taking a

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broad glance backward. I speak of Babylon in its broadest sense being aware that, from a prophetic perspective it is a composite term representing a system which is typically evidenced in paganism, the Ugaritic empire, Canaan, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Babylon proper in its respective periods of ascendancy as both a city, a nation, and a pervasive idolatrous force.

Our general outline is as follows.

#### I. CRITICAL INTERPRETIVE PRINCIPLES

II. HEAVEN, EARTH, AND THE NEW JERUSALEM ARE REAL AND ARE THREE DISTINCT ENTITIES THOUGH THEY CAN SHARE QUALITIES.

III. GOD HAS METERED WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT HEAVEN, HELL, AND THE SPIRIT WORLD.

IV. SATAN IS BLURRING THESE BIBLICALLY DEFINED LINES AS WE APPROACH THE END TIMES.

V. HEAVEN AND EARTH BOUNDARY PASSAGES

VI. WHY THIS MATTERS

#### **I. CRITICAL INTERPRETIVE PRINCIPLES**

A. Tares *will* be sown among the wheat (Mat. 13:25-40) and by that understand that error will always be sown alongside truth. It will not be eradicated until it comes to fruition for all to see. Often, these tares have been sown centuries earlier for future exploitation by Satan.

B. Like tares, the closer the lie parallels the truth the easier it is to be confused. In the coming end times, even the elect will be deceived, if such a thing is conceivable (Matthew 24:24).

C. The inscripturated Word of God is self-sufficient. We may illuminate the Bible with history, but *we may never interpret the Bible or add to it with history, philosophy, or scholarship*. We never begin our pursuit spiritual truth *outside* the Bible. While the scriptures use history to illuminate divine revelation, divine revelation is never, ever, revealed separately from the inscripturated Word of God (2 Peter 1:19-21).

#### **II. HEAVEN, EARTH, AND THE NEW JERUSALEM ARE REAL AND ARE THREE DISTINCT ENTITIES THOUGH THEY CAN SHARE QUALITIES.**

A. While the battle over heaven and earth is both spiritual and physical, the Bible consistently speaks of heaven and earth as directional geographic places, *not* in terms of dimensions or categories. Because of the thematic nature of Bible prophecy, some have blended these to make their “dimensional” schemes work (Colossians 3:1,2).

B. The heavens and the earth which *are now* will be destroyed and replaced with new heavens and earth wherein dwells righteousness (2 Peter 3:11-13).

C. The New Jerusalem, which is presently in heaven and will come down from God out of heaven, is an entirely distinct entity. The Bible does not suggest that it has been corrupted by sin and does not suggest it will be destroyed or re-created (Revelation 21:1 and John 14:2,3 likely speak of this place). We have every reason to believe, of course, that it will be within the eternal state. While it is paradisiacal, there is nothing in scripture which indicates it will be Eden restored. Redemption improves upon the old creation in every way and no one should desire a simple return to Eden.

### III. GOD HAS METERED WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT HEAVEN, HELL, AND THE SPIRIT WORLD.

#### A. What we have overlooked.

On the one hand, we have often overlooked much that the Bible teaches about heaven and earth and this makes us vulnerable to error.

1. Notice how often the words heaven and earth (or their equivalents) occur in proximity to each other in both Testaments of your Bible. They are the first subject in Genesis and the last theme in Revelation.

2. We suggest students make a quick scrub through the references to heaven and earth in Ephesians and Colossians, for example, to help inform ourselves about the importance of this theme and the underlying heaven/earth contest.

#### B. What God has limited.

On the other hand, God has metered or specifically limited our knowledge of things beyond this earthly plane and warned us about pursuing them.

1. Things we <u>must</u> know:
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a. We must know there are heavenly beings, principalities, and powers and that Christ has openly triumphed over them though they have not yet experienced full judgment (Colossians 2:15).

b. We must know there is a great unseen conflict going on and that we are equipped for our warfare (Ephesians 6). Satan's end goal is, undoubtedly, to bring the mystery of iniquity to its fulness (pleroma) in the unveiling of the man of sin. See 2 Thessalonians 2:5-12.

c. We must know the role of the church in this conflict. Again, those of us who lived during the modernist era have been more likely to neglect what God wants us to know about the spirit world, thus making us vulnerable to error (Ephesians 3:10, Colossians 1:16, 2:15, and, of course, the apocalyptic scriptures). Our role is limited to calling out a people for His name from among the Gentiles (Acts 15:14). It is not world geographic conquest. Christ will do that in person.

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## 2. Things we must handle with extreme caution:

a. Our biblically based history of this conflict is most generally limited to: The fall, the flood, the tower of Babel, the events of Daniel, and comments in the general epistles along with Revelation. These, in turn would be fleshed out by further information found in books such as Job, Psalms, Isaiah, and Ezekiel.

b. We are specifically warned about obsessions and contact with the spirit world (idolatry, demons, or angels) and about giving heed to the doctrines of devils (Deuteronomy 18:9-15, 1 Timothy 4:1, 2 Timothy 4:4, 2 Peter 1:16). These extra sources of data are not viable and are strictly forbidden.

## 3. Lines we must draw:

a. Remember, crossing these lines lead to essential idolatry.

b. We must not add to the scriptures using traditions or fables. The scriptures are our only information source about the spirit world. Many modern commentaries and tools (and even some translations) are infusing the Second Temple doctrines of demons into our literature, building a false back story or metanarrative. For example, we are seeing a new stress on the book(s) of Enoch. It is being suggested that we cannot understand the Old and New Testaments without this ancient near east paradigm, sponsored by Babylon. In short, these practices are infusing Neo Gnosticism into our thinking.

c. Jesus Christ is our only portal into the heavenlies where we are seated with Him. He is the reliable prophet of whom Moses spoke. (Example: John 14:6).

d. In the end, our spiritual warfare is first, last, and always, in and through the resurrected Christ who moves and works through His *one* Holy Spirit (in contrast to the many manifestations and activities of demons.) The operative word here is one. There is one Father and one whole family. There is one Lord, one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all (Ephesians 3:14,15; 4:1-5, etc.).

## **IV. SATAN IS BLURRING THESE BIBLICALLY DEFINED LINES AS WE APPROACH THE END TIMES.**

### **A. Satan's cosmological worldview.**

Consider some of the more striking things we are observing. While we will list some of these activities here, they go beyond the scope of this presentation.

*The heretofore state of the cosmos.* Satan has always been at work and his demons have worked consistently for the destruction of human life in all its states. With emergent

evolution<sup>1</sup>, we saw God's authority systematically dismantled over a wide range of human pursuits. Perhaps most damning is Satan's success in promoting the offering of our children to Molech, for which irreversible judgment is impending.

*What now stands out as unique to our time.* Our present state is beyond alarming as our adversary moves us en masse into a cosmological revolution. We have crossed the cosmological Rubicon. We have messed with the creation itself. While man was charged with ordering and ruling the creation (Genesis 1:27,28) his dominion was never extended to fundamentally altering the natural state. Like would be primeval alchemists we are tinkering with the very engines of creation, altering the very essence of created things, and we are doing so without accountability. We are not merely moving molecules around, we are altering atomic structures, creating new elements, modifying genetics, cloning new morphology, and swimming nude in the treacherous waters of transhumanism. We need to know that these enterprises go far beyond the dominion mandate. We are defiling and perverting the creation, trespassing on the boundaries of life, and crossing and mixing genetic lines from which we may not return. There are no adjectives, not even in the expressive vocabulary of the millennials, to describe the epic consequences now in the pipe. We are not in Kansas anymore.

Even so, these are only pointers to something far more ominous. Students of the Word who watch these events more closely than I do, are quick to remind us what the real stakes are about. In a word, they represent the substance of this study. Combined, these over-the-edge endeavors are effecting the same outcome. These multiple breaches in our first estate are blurring the lines between heaven and earth, between the material world and the spiritual world. They are each, in their sphere, blending science and spirituality. They are opening the doors to a new world view, a whole new (yet emergent) paradigm. In pagan terms, Uranus, Gaius, and Chaos are meeting at the ecumenical table.

Enough of that. We must turn to far more threatening matters. They are more dangerous because they are rising in our own camps.

## **B. A New Evangelical Worldview is emerging.**

While politics and COVID and similar issues have saturated our frontal lobes, we are witnessing a far more consequential change emerging in the pews of both liberal and conservative evangelicals that is permeating our collective consciousness. It is deep and it is systemic, and rarely countered by conservative teachers. Curiously, it began with the cogitations of one man. If you would serve your generation with a prepared answer you need to listen to what is happening.

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<sup>1</sup> We can trace an articulate expression of evolution as far back as 500 BC with Anaximander of Miletus. However, we may find traces of evolutionary thought even before this.

During the last half of the last century the trail was blazed to a smaller degree by those elements of the charismatic movement which had clearly embedded the doctrines of demons in their spiritual manifestations, creation-based word of faith declarations, and the notions of the spiritual warfare proponents who obliged us by naming their demons and distracting us with their silliness. And to be fair, those who care about truth and doctrine confronted these once fringe elements somewhat consistently.

What we failed to do, was to view the whole package as embryonic to a larger plan, this plan to begin blurring the lines between heaven and earth so that the doctrines and fables of demons could be infused into mainstream evangelicalism. What were seeds in the twentieth century are now healthy growing tares in the twenty first century.

### **What has changed.**

These incidental intrusions into evangelicalism would have little impact until a few things changed and change they did.

First, the general evangelical population had to become doctrinally ignorant. This has occurred to a great extent, thanks to convergent worship centers, the so-called churches which include a lot of convergence, some performance in the name of worship, and precious little biblical exposition. This subsequential ignorance, growing by bounds, can be measured in each sequential PEWS survey. Evangelicals are doctrinally ambivalent, if not antagonistic.

Secondly, we began to think collectively. If these lines between the spiritual and material realms were to become blurred there had to be a systemic change in the way evangelicals think, and the way they process what biblical facts they do know. Old lines of demarcation were brought into question while novel new ideas regarding inspiration and dogma came into vogue, thanks to our new postmodern mindset. That is the stuff of a whole different discourse. We did, however, forever alter the way we process data in a short twenty-year interim.

Thirdly, we are constructing a new narrative or backstory. The most important element had to come into play. If we were to open the doors to myths and fables (especially the idolatrous kinds we see prophesied in the end times) and the lines between heaven and earth were to be blurred, we must contrive a new metanarrative, a whole new evangelical world view. This metanarrative must be wide enough to accommodate new ideas and purport to provide solutions to long unanswered questions.

### **Our earlier evangelical worldview.**

When we speak of the evangelical narrative (or metanarrative, depending on context) we speak of those things which are held collectively, a bank of data from which most evangelicals process their explanation for the way things are. In a broad sense, we might say that these explanations were generally held across the whole gamut of biblical Christianity and were essentially

grounded in the scriptures. In this respect, we were very much unlike Catholicism which had already infused many extra-biblical sources into its theological and philosophical narrative.

When it came to the lines between heaven and earth, between the unseen and seen realms, evangelicals tended to bump up against those specific biblical passages (passages which we will label “boundary passages” for our purpose), they would teach these as they are found while leaving the unanswered questions to personal contemplation. There was a mutual and healthy consensus among evangelicals that God had said, “This far, and no more.” The scriptures took us as far as we needed to go to apply the truths at hand.<sup>2</sup>

We must not be fooled into thinking that evangelical scholars were not aware of alternate explanations and the efforts of some to infuse pagan thinking into our mindset or that they were intentionally ignorant or hiding facts from us as some claim<sup>3</sup>. Rather, most considered the sources of those ideas, and rejected them at hand because they were extra biblical. The scholars who did seek to introduce these ideas were simply dismissed.

We knew what God wanted us to know and that was sufficient. We did not have all the explanations for what happened in or before the garden, about the spirit world and its conflicts. Heaven was a real place, not a dimension. Hell was a real place. The spirit world was real, and the severest biblical warnings of scripture regarding the danger of messing with these boundaries were strongly embraced.

These boundary events were mentioned earlier in this study. They typically include the fall, the flood, the tower of Babel, the events of Daniel, and comments in the general epistles along with Revelation. These, in turn, would be enhanced to a lesser degree by further information found in Job, Psalms, Isaiah, and Ezekiel.

### **Our melding evangelical worldview.**

One man is changing this whole perspective. He is a man who boldly suggests that his theology will inform every Bible doctrine in significant ways.”<sup>4</sup> As shocking and presumptuous as this may sound, it is an understatement.

Dr. Michael Heiser, former theologian in residence for Logos software and current Executive Director of the School of Ministry at Celebration Church, has managed to embed the leaven of

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<sup>2</sup> As we shall see later, Michael Heiser decries the silence of mainstream commentators on these passages. What we evangelicals understood as a healthy respect for those uncrossable lines, Heiser will decry.

<sup>3</sup> See a typical YouTube example of this kind of accusation: [\(25\) Michael Heiser — Questions Theologians Aren't Answering For You - YouTube](#)

<sup>4</sup> Heath Henning: According to Heiser, “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” (p. 13, italics original).

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his world view at a somewhat scholarly and philosophical level for years. In addition, he has concentrated on elevating the importance of ancient (commonly called Second Temple Period writings) along with ancient fragments from the Dead Sea scrolls. That, in turn, has led him to re-translate some pivotal biblical passages. The product is a whole new world view, one that may rightfully be classified as neo-gnostic<sup>5</sup>. Heiser is certainly not alone and it must also be noted that this study certainly does not represent a full critique of his views. It certainly is not intended as a treatment of Heiser's character. It is important to understand, however, that the views of this one man are now embraced by hundreds and hundreds of thousands of evangelicals, worldwide and they represent the most dangerous intrusion into evangelical theology we have seen since the days of contemplative prayer and postmodern emergence.

To understand this new danger, we will include a brief overview of key boundary passages which have limited our speculation about the unseen realm in times past. Then, using as little ink as possible, we will shed light on this new paradigm and sound a warning.

## V. HEAVEN AND EARTH BOUNDARY PASSAGES

### A. The New Theology, or What Happens When We Mix Fact and Legend

**Once upon a time.** In The Unseen Realm, Heiser's Naked Bible podcast, and in YouTube interviews, Heiser tells folks about his own watershed event which happened as a result of a friend's admonition to examine Psalm 82 in the Hebrew<sup>6</sup> where God is standing in the midst of the elohim. Time stamps below are from the cited video in the footnote entitled "Demons? Giants? & Other Gods".

*"God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; He judgeth among the gods."* (Psalm 82:1, KJV 1900)

The claim is that because these elohim are subsequently judged by YHWH in what Heiser calls the Divine Council, they clearly are not YHWH. He will couple Psalm 82 with Psalm 89, and in Heiser's own recollection:

"...and I looked at that and I thought well that looks like a Pantheon. God the god of Israel, the God of the Bible is judging a bunch of other gods and it sure doesn't sound like idols because you know if you take that you need to keep reading you get to verse 6 where the speaker who is God ,says to this group you know, 'I said to all of you' know plural pronouns, 'you are gods, Elohim, and idols aren't sons of the Most High,

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<sup>5</sup> For a developed treatment of Heiser from a Neo-Gnostic perspective, see Heath Henning's blog: [Heath Henning, Author at Truth Watchers](#). In it he provides pre-publication materials which have been most helpful in this study.

<sup>6</sup> The above account is taken from Heiser's own testimony regarding his journey in the Demons? Giants? & Other Gods interview, minute 3:43 and following, which is available on YouTube.com. They may also be substantiated from his ground-breaking book The Unseen Realm. It should be noted that Heiser is speaking in an informal interview which belies his usual scholarly presentations.



you know ,but you're gonna die like men...and then you go over to Psalm 89 to get the same counsel language you get the same sons of God terminology and they're the council's in the skies and you know I was just, I was lost, like, what am I gonna do with this?" (Citation begins with 3:43 - Edited from the electronically generated transcript but left intact as much as possible for authenticity.)

Now, notice, Heiser had already embraced some serious assumptions. From the term *congregation of the mighty*, he had assumed there is a divine council (the likes of which will shock many who later delve into Heiser's thesis), and he had assumed this council consisted of a pantheon of gods, not idols, though they would eventually die like men.

Heiser went on to say that, providentially, it occurred to him that there must be some way that the theology of Jesus and Paul, would not overturn this, that somehow, it fits together. (5:52)

Heiser was not, of course, the first to encounter these two Psalms or the teachings of Jesus and Paul. These have been treated consistently by Bible teachers. He was the first, however, to break ranks within orthodox circles in *an impactful way*. At the same time, Heiser is not alone. The long tentacles of Ugaritic teachings have been leaching into our study materials for generations. A good amount of these have been highlighted at the hand of Heiser, but not from him exclusively. Of course, Gnostics and modern cultists have embraced variations on these themes for millennia.

**The Divine Council.** While Bible teachers have not always been in lock step, it is consistent to say that God, may and does call a congregation together as He pleases, be it in heaven or earth, and be His congregation Israel or angelic beings. These convocations are generally seen to be for forensic purposes. God is calling His witnesses together to observe his righteous justice either being tested (as in Micaiah's vision in 2 Chronicles 18:18 and following) or simply witnessed for what we would call legal purposes. There is absolutely no evidence biblically constituted Divine Council in which members are seated in perpetuity unless the legitimate Bible student wishes to label the self-contained Trinity as such a council. Such assemblages may consist of men and angels, but are never, ever, recorded in scripture as second tier gods.

**The Pantheon.** So, where then, did Heiser get the idea that there was a pantheon of gods, ontologically unlike the creator God, unlike angels, and certainly unlike men, and why does this concern us? We have already noted the backdrop of Gnosticism. One of Heiser's areas of expertise is in what he calls Second Temple teachings. He is referring to teachings which filtered into the period of second temple writings, though they extend into the far past. These Ugaritic, and ancient near east teachings were imported into Jewish thought in Babylon and upon their return. Bible students understand that the Jews, upon returning from Babylon, may have left their idols behind, but they most certainly did not leave their idolatry behind. Their world was pregnant with myths and fables.

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Bible students are also aware that importing a pagan worldview into a biblical mindset is an egregious error in any time. Heiser cannot sanitize this sin by suggesting that we have lost our ability to interpret the scriptures rightly because of our inattention to these writings, most of which have been sourced from poisoned cisterns.

A single error conceives and spawns multiple errors. This error, once embraced, the notion of a pantheon of gods which make up a divine council, be they divine, demi-gods, fallen angels (demons or otherwise) begs a bevy of questions. Do these same ancients offer a narrative? a backstory, from which we can build our world view? Be assured that Satan had long-since sown the tares for this hour.

## **B. Here's A Brief Take on Our Boundary Passages – Where Truth is Blended with Legend**

**The Pantheon.** Our first boundary passage grouping (Psalm 82, synced with Psalm 89) lays the foundation for all of Heiser's subsequent teachings on his pantheon of gods which make up his perceived divine council. Heiser's treatment of this passage raises the whole issue of evangelical polytheism, or monolatry<sup>7</sup>.

**Eden and the Fall.** Our second boundary passage grouping (Genesis 1:26-28 and Genesis 3) will occasion Heiser to do a refresh on the Garden of Eden (home of God and the gods), the creation of man, and the fall and their relative meanings. This is, again, asserted with a rich infusion of pagan literature.

**The Sons of God and The Flood.** Our third boundary passage (Genesis 6) prompts Heiser's rewrite of the flood (which he sees as local, quite possibly to explain for the reappearance of Nephilim after the destruction of his proposed Nephilim god class who are trying to create offspring after their own image) and the role of these Nephilim sons of God and the daughters of men and their subsequent Nephilim offspring.

**Babel and the Nations.** Our fourth boundary passage (Genesis 11, synced with Deuteronomy 32:8,9) and, apparently, most important in Heiser's world, is the tower of Babel where this fallen class of divine beings have the nations assigned to them. To accomplish this, Heiser will find some obscure variant texts to replace longstanding traditional texts which comprise the LXX, once again inserting the leaven of pagan teaching to flesh out his view.

Notice that the importance Heiser assigns to these three events, the fall, the flood, and babel, is unique from mainline Bible teachers. In Heiser's world, the fall is least important, a kickstart, as it were, followed by the flood where the fallen god class teaches humans how to exploit their

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<sup>7</sup> **Monolatry** ([Greek](#): *μόνος* [*monos*] = single, and *λατρεία* [*latreia*] = [worship](#)) is belief in the existence of many [gods](#), but with the consistent worship of only one deity.<sup>[1]</sup> The term "monolatry" was perhaps first used by [Julius Wellhausen](#).<sup>[2]</sup> - Wikipedia

depravity. Finally, Babel provides the explanation for the present state of things and our mandate to reclaim the gentile nations remanded to the fallen gods who ruled all but Israel.

**PLEASE SEE THE ACCOMPANYING CHART(S) FOR AN OVERVIEW OF THE BOUNDARY PASSAGES.**

- A. Evangelical Boundary Breach # 1. The Divine Council and the Pantheon – Psalm 82**
- B. Evangelical Boundary Breach #2. Creation, Eden, and the Fall - Genesis 1:26-28 and Gen. 3**
- C. Evangelical Boundary Breach #3. The Sons of God and the Flood – Genesis 6**
- D. Evangelical Boundary Breach #4. Babel and the Nations – Genesis 11, synced with Deuteronomy 32:8,9**

# Evangelical Boundary Breach # 1

## The Divine Council and the “Pantheon” – Psalm 82

To understand Michael Heiser’s view of the unseen realm one must start where he started, with Psalm 82 coupled with Psalm 89. This is where Heiser had his epiphany and determined that there really was a pantheon of gods, real gods. This premise will lead him, in his words, to “inform” every other biblical doctrine.

### Subject and Starter Passage

#### Divine Council

“God standeth in the **congregation of the mighty**; He judgeth among the gods.” (Psalm 82:1, KJV 1900)

#### “Pantheon”

“I have said, **Ye are gods**; And all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men, And fall like one of the princes.” (Psalm 82:6–7, KJV 1900)

“Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, **Ye are gods?** If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;” (John 10:34–35, KJV 1900)

### Traditional Biblical Views

This designation occurs some 42 times in the Bible. All but a few of these refer to the congregation of Israel. The remaining refer to animals. In this Psalm God himself is judging those earthly leaders who had abused this authority. Divine beings have never been given the authority or liberty to judge men.

The term gods was early on associated with kings and judges because they were designated by God to speak in His name. Thus, they carried His weight. Proof of the fact that they were not deity always lies in the fact that kings and princes die like everyone else.

- Consider doing a walk-through of Isaiah 40–50 to see how emphatic the Lord God is about His claim that there simply are no other gods.
- Top it off with similar New Testament passages such as 1 Corinthians 8:4,5 - just for starters!

### Pagan Error Infused

#### Divine Council

Heiser’s divine council consists ultimately of good gods and bad gods. The pagans called these gods “Watchers” (Jubilee 15:31). Heiser will use this term throughout his literature imbuing the god-like powers of ruling and judging to them.

#### Monolatry

Heiser originally claimed to be a monolater, but has placed more emphasis on the idea that these gods are “ontologically” unique from Jehovah, and own different attributes<sup>1</sup>. They are gods nonetheless. In the end, if you believe on one true God without denying the existence of other gods, you are a polytheist. Note: Biblical idolaters were essentially monolaters.

#### Neo-Gnosticism

Gnosticism has consistently taught that our ascension is dependent upon an echelon of divine beings. These Neo-Gnostics will insist that there are no gods like Jehovah, BUT that these gods really exist. “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,” (Colossians 2:18, KJV)

*Additional Comments: 1) In Alexander’s Gordian Knot we have a perfect blurring of legend and fact. Satan will always have a counterfeit backstory ready to put into use. 2.) By constructing a class of “Watcher” gods which occupy a divine council we have blurred the lines between Jehovah, angels, and men, making God just a little more like us, and ourselves a little more like God.*

# Evangelical Boundary Breach #2

## Creation, Eden, and the Fall - Genesis 1:26-28 and Genesis 3

Having decided that there was a pantheon seated as the divine council, Dr. Heiser's foundation for the infusion of pagan error was laid. When God created the human family, members of His divine family were jealous and subsequently instigated the Fall. Heiser was susceptible to this thinking because he was a student of pagan religions.

Subject and Starter Passage	Traditional Biblical Views	Pagan Error Infused
<p><b>Creation</b></p> <p>“And God said, <b>Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:</b> and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man <b>in his own image</b>, in the image of God created he him; male and female created <b>he</b> them.” (Genesis 1:26–27, KJV 1900)</p> <p><b>Satan</b></p> <p>“Now the <b>serpent</b> was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (Genesis 3:1, KJV 1900)</p> <p><b>The Fall</b></p> <p>“And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is <b>become as one of us, to know good and evil:</b> and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.” (Genesis 3:22, KJV 1900)</p> <p>“For as <b>in Adam</b> all die, even so <b>in Christ</b> shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22, KJV)</p>	<p><b>Creation</b></p> <p>The Jewish people, of course, saw the “<b>us</b>” as angels as they did not see the trinity in ancient times. As they also taught that God alone is the creator, they were on the horns of a dilemma.</p> <p>New Testament believing Jews, of course, saw Elohim as the divine plurality we call the trinity. Christians have never seen men as having been created in the likeness of angels.</p> <p><b>Satan</b></p> <p>While it is true that the word Satan can be used in a broad sense, he is referred to as a person and, specifically as an angel and as the devil in both Testaments and is associated specifically with the fall. See: <i>Gospels</i> (Matt 4:1-11; Mark 3:22-26; Luke 10:18; John 13:27), <i>Pauline Epistles</i> (Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor. 5:5; 7:5; 2 Cor. 2:11; 11:14), <i>Revelation</i> (2:24; 12:9; 20:2)</p> <p><b>The Fall</b></p> <p>“<b>...become as one of us.</b>” This is a reference to the godhead, just as it is in 1:26 and 27. God simply intended us to understand that Adam and Eve would have a new knowledge of good and evil which was previously understood only by God.</p>	<p><b>Creation</b></p> <p>From pagan sources, Heiser teaches that the “<b>us</b>” are specially created members of the divine council, and that “as one of us” in 3:22 means men entered a new state of being like members of the supposed divine council<sup>2</sup>.</p> <p><b>Satan</b></p> <p>Heiser’s “The Satan” is in reference to any adversary<sup>3</sup>. The unrighteous adversary who deceived Eve is not the same as the righteous Satan who appears before God in Job who began as good and went rogue. This is all derived from pagan sources.</p> <p><b>Serpent</b></p> <p>Heiser’s non-literal serpent who exploited Eve and Adam was not an animal. This is likely because Heiser prefers to link this serpent as a “shining one”, one of the ruler gods and not an angel.</p> <p><b>The Fall</b></p> <p>Heiser rejects the doctrine that the sin nature was passed down to us through Adam and that we share any guilt for Adam’s sin. This nullifies the truth that God’s promises are made to men and their seed. See also Hebrews 7 where Levi pays tithes in Abraham.</p>

**Additional Comments:** *How Heiser deceives us: 1.) He denies the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and Joshua’s authorship of his book; 2.) He then advances the dating of these so as to be contemporary with the pagan writings he infuses. 3.) He then suggests that we are at fault for not understanding the common “Jewish” understanding of the background of these books as recorded in the pagan Egyptian Nag Hammadi scrolls and the highly eclectic library of Dead Sea Scrolls! Heiser denies the verbal plenary inspiration of the Bible while embracing pagan writings.*

# Evangelical Boundary Breach #3

## The Sons of God and the Flood – Genesis 6

We have now embraced a pagan worldview where the battle is between two families of God, His divine family and His human family. (Angels are mere messengers.) Two cosmic families of created beings are warring it out, and thanks to Christ, we now have the power (through loving sacrifice and the resurrection) to win!

### Subject and Starter Passage

“There were **giants** in the earth in those days; and **also after that**, when the **sons of God** came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.” (Genesis 6:4–7, KJV 1900)

“The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; **for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth**. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.” (Genesis 6:11–13, KJV 1900)

### Traditional Biblical Views

#### The Nephilim (giants)

The nephilim are mere giants which existed before and after the flood. The sons of God came in after the nephilim, and there were also nephilim after the flood (Numbers 13:33).

Various view on the sons of God exist, but none of them, throughout mainline Jewish or Christian history ever suggested there is a race of demi-gods called Nephilim.

As to what the Bible means when it speaks of those fallen *angels* who left their first estate, they were just that, angels (Jude 6).

#### The Universal Flood

**All flesh** on the entire earth had corrupted themselves, and **the end of all flesh** was required, (except for those who found grace). This required a universal flood, not a local one as Heiser prefers. (2 Peter 3:5-7)

The flood was far from being specific to the sons of God/daughter’s of men issue.

### Pagan Error Infused

This entire construct of gods, imbued with free will, who are fallen Divine Council members originates in pagan Ugaritic/Mesopotamian writings.

The issues this ANR backstory belies are pregnant with consequence. Consider just one tangled web:

This opens the door to the notion that **any** of God’s creatures could have and may fall at any time, past, present, or future - redeemed or unredeemed. This is due to the pagan notion of free will which must be inherent in all of God’s creatures. **The historic Christian view is that God has allowed one fall and one contamination of the race.** Can you imagine this whole scenario repeating itself ad infinitum throughout the future? The pagan construct of this imagined Divine Council necessitates this potential.

Worse, Heiser’s pagan brand of free will demands absolute freedom. Thus, while Heiser’s God can sovereignly intervene among His creatures, He cannot determine what His subjects will do. This remanding of absolute freedom is at the heart of open theism, a pagan notion, and demolishes Bible prophecy.

**Additional Comments:** *Historically, one could entertain the idea that fallen angels could inseminate human flesh and not be seen as heretical. The idea that such flesh could then reproduce itself, thus creating a whole new race of demi-gods, is Gnostic and has never been seriously entertained inside biblical orthodoxy.*

# Evangelical Boundary Breach #4

## Babel and the Nations – Genesis 11:6-9 and Deuteronomy 32:8,9

The closer the lie is to the truth the more palpable it is. There is no pantheon of divine beings, no divine council, and no cosmological (gnostic or dualistic) war going on between two classes of created beings AND NO ASSIGNING OF THE NATIONS TO DEMONS!

### Subject and Starter Passage

“Go to, **let us** go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence **did the LORD scatter them** abroad upon the face of all the earth.” (Genesis 11:6–9, KJV)

“When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, When he separated **the sons of Adam**, He set the bounds of the people **According to the number of the children of Israel**. For the LORD’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.” (Deuteronomy 32:8–9, KJV 1900)

### Host of Heaven

“And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all **the host of heaven**, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven. But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day.” (Deuteronomy 4:19–20, KJV 1900)

• See also, Daniel 10: 12,13, 21

### Traditional Biblical Views

The Trinity conjunctively scattered the nations in the person of YHWH.

The most High divided the nations and separated the sons of Adam.

This was according to the number of the children of Israel, the families who went into bondage in Egypt, not according to the supposed number of nations already in existence at Babel (Genesis 46:27, Exodus 1:5).

### Host of Heaven

While any large group of beings or objects may be called hosts, (such as angelic hosts), the warning here is that Israel is not to worship the stars under the heaven. When we observe the stars we are not only compelled to worship God, we are to be reminded not to worship them *or the false gods who like to be represented by them* as did Babel, Egypt, and the nations.

### Pagan Error Infused

Heiser insists that the most High divided the nations according to the number of the sons of God (not Israel.) These sons of God are supposed to be fallen divine council members who conspired against men.

It was necessary for Heiser to directly alter biblical texts in order to buttress his view. In the words of Heath Henning: “Another problem with Heiser’s hermeneutic is he focuses on ambiguous text, plays fast and loose with the Hebrew language whenever he can, and when he cannot twist an interpretation of the existing grammar to fit his pre-supposition, he becomes the textual critic and changes the text itself or uses a different text to justify his position.” Heiser’s hermeneutics are notorious<sup>4</sup>. In addition to blatant mistranslation and re-definition of words, Heiser:

1. Chose some obscure texts that contributed to the Septuagint versions in preference to the Masoretic text and the majority of texts which inform the LXX. Only 2 of the 33 manuscripts in view agree with Heiser.
2. Relied heavily on ancient libraries which contained a rich mix of pagan and mythological teachings along with quality manuscripts.

**Final Comment:** *By now Heiser has made it clear that his Bible is not sufficient and cannot stand alone. It is a partially inspired narrative which must be informed with a pagan backdrop of thought, thought which eventually, informs every christian doctrine. Ask yourself this final question: **Would God entrust truth, supposedly this vital, to one man of this persuasion?***

**Truth Stewards Discern and Disseminate! - Matthew 13:52**

**Typical catch phrases to listen for in Heiser’s Evangelical Gnosticism:**

- Sacred space
- Watchers
- ANR
- Divine Council

**How false teachers have always worked:**

- Knowledge, falsely so-called - Heiser will intimidate folks with his skills in ancient languages.
- Scriptures, falsely added - Heiser will alter translations and words to fit his paradigm.
- Authority, falsely presumed - Heiser’s sacred space theory re-writes the purpose of the Great Commission.
- History, falsely retold - Heiser will insist the scriptures cannot be relied upon without pagan insights.
- Fruits, falsely demonstrated - Heiser’s doctrines corrupt every major biblical doctrine including the nature of God and the Trinity, sin, salvation, angels, demons, heaven, hell, the inspiration of scriptures, the universal flood are all perverted. His willingness to altar words and meanings, his infusion of lies into the truth are all evidences of false fruit.

**No Trespassing!**

	<b>It’s OK to struggle.</b>	<b>It’s NOT OK to cross the biblical line.</b>
Divine Council	To struggle over whether there is a permanent divine council or whether God calls assemblies of men or angels together to witness His deeds or carry out His will.	To suggest that a pantheon of gods make up a divine council, a separate created family.
Satan	To struggle over whether the name Satan is proper or just a title.	To teach that Satan is an advocate as well as an adversary.
Nephilim	To struggle over whether Nephilim were the product of co-habitation or just giants.	To teach Nephilim were the product of <i>gods</i> and women.
Babylon	Struggle over what all happened at Babylon and why and how this fits prophetic themes.	To teach that the governance of 70 nations was remanded to fallen demons or gods.
Temple	Struggle over the past, present, and future biblical temples and their roles.	To teach that temples are sacred spaces and that the goal of the gospel is to reclaim sacred space through believers who are His temple.



## Moving Forward:

For very light reading and a broad overview - this paper and consider watching the Bible Project video expose's at StandingTrue.com. The Bible Project has done much to popularize Dr. Heiser's work.

For a moderate treatment of Heiser's the Unseen Realm that you can rely upon: Gary Gilley  
<https://tottministries.org/the-unseen-realm-a-critique/>

For an advanced treatment of Heiser's the Unseen Realm that you can rely upon: Heath Henning (Keep in mind this is a pre-publication treatment which is not fully edited at this time.)  
<http://truthwatchers.com/author/ushenninhe/>

For a fine overview of the Nephilim you can rely upon: Don Vernoit  
<https://midwestoutreach.org/2019/11/21/here-be-giants/>

## Endnotes

1. For full documentation see: <http://truthwatchers.com/michael-heisers-gnostic-heresy-part-2/>
2. Michael S. Heiser, "God's Most Wonderful, Terrible Decision." The Naked Bible. <http://www.michaelsheiser.com/TheNakedBible/Chapter%204.doc>
3. For a more thorough citation and a partial treatment of this, see the following citation from Kenneth Berding's blog (<https://www.biola.edu/blogs/good-book-blog/2021/why-michael-heiser-is-probably-wrong-about-satan-in-the-book-of-job>) where he footnotes: "1. Michael S. Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the supernatural worldview of the Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015). Two other recent books that draw similar conclusions (albeit with individual nuances) are John H. Walton and J. Harvey Walton. *Demons and Spirits in Biblical Theology: Reading the Biblical Text in Its Cultural and Literary Context* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2019) and Ryan E. Stokes, *The Satan: How God's Executioner Became the Enemy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019). To find others who hold similar views, consult Stokes's footnotes. I chose to focus this post upon Heiser because of his popularity."
4. For documentation on Heiser's hermeneutics see: [read://http\\_truthwatchers.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Ftruthwatchers.com%2Fmichael-heisers-gnostic-heresy-of-a-divine-counsel-in-psalm-82-part-1%2F](http://truthwatchers.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Ftruthwatchers.com%2Fmichael-heisers-gnostic-heresy-of-a-divine-counsel-in-psalm-82-part-1%2F)



A slide from Dr. Heiser's Divine Council Presentation

*Starter sheets for discussing the errors of Michael Heiser's infusion of paganism*  
The Evangelical Neo Gnostic World View A Brief Overview of Michael Heiser's World View

- Steel - 6.  
- Steel 000017

A final word:

## VI. WHY THIS MATTERS

These emergent<sup>1</sup> errors are deadly because they are infused into virtually every area of biblical doctrine including another expression of the purpose and nature of the triune God, another doctrine of man, sin and evil, another doctrine of spiritual beings (including a derelict rebellion within an imaginative divine council and a race of demi-gods), another perspective on the essence of salvation, and, another reliance on extra biblical sources and corrupted translations of specific passages in order to understand God's Word. These are no small matters.

These errors are also deadly because they parallel the truth so closely and are, thus, palpable, to the less conversant Bible student. They are dangerous because they blur the lines which have protected us from the intrusion of demonic doctrines as the world is prepared for a collective end time narrative.

Satan's ultimate ecumenical goal is the re-union of heaven and earth under one authority, himself. To do this, those lines between God and His creation and creatures, must first be blurred and then marginalized. God's authority must be seen as having been remanded to his free-willed creatures. God's nature must be muted and mitigated. God's Word must be expanded to accommodate demonic sources. Michael Heiser, along with his handmaiden, the Bible Project, has accomplished all this and more and has spread the leaven to untold thousands of evangelicals.

*"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, That ye be not partakers of her sins, And that ye receive not of her plagues." (Revelation 18:4, KJV 1900)*

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<sup>1</sup> We classify these as emergent because their origins can be easily traced to the original doctrines of demons which are now returning to the light because of the postmodern era into which we have entered.