

The Sons of God

Part III of IV of the series:

“The Cosmic War of the Sons of God”

"... When the morning stars sang together
and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

(Job 38:7)

Human Sons of God

I am sure that in the dark recesses of your memory, or perhaps right there in the very frontal lobe, you remember hearing something in the NT about **Christians being called “sons of God.”** For example, in **the Beatitudes** Jesus says, “**Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God** (*huiioi theou*)” (**Matt 5:9**). In **Galatians**, Paul talks about how a person becomes a “son of God”: “**In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith**” (**Gal 3:26**). Faith in who? Jesus Christ. That is, we believe that Jesus is precisely who he said that he is and one of the great benefits of this is that

God adopts you into his family. This is itself a work of the Holy Spirit of God. As he says in Romans 8, “All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God” (Rom 8:14).

There are at least a dozen more passages that talk about similar things, whether it calls us sons of God, “children” of God, or other variations (Luke 20:36; Rom 8:16, 17, 19; John 1:12; Php 2:15; 1Jn 3:1–2; 1Jn 5:2; Heb 12:7; Eph 1:5; 2Cor 6:18; etc.). But that opens us up to a question. Why? Why would the NT care about such thing? I mean, it’s obviously an amazing blessing that God would adopt us into his family. But what does that mean, exactly? Where does the idea come from? And is there anything more to it than this?

One answer lies in Exodus 4:22 where God commands Moses, “You shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son.’” There is absolutely a connection going on here between the people of Israel and Christians. But we are not ready to fully understand the implications of this today. Instead, if we jumped right into that, you would have a deficient and truncated understanding of this amazing doctrine of the Bible and you would not be able to see why I’m leading a series of sermons on a cosmic war against supernatural evil up to this as the climactic event. In fact, you would

be totally left asking, what does being sons of God have anything at all to do with a war like that?

A major clue that will connect us to this human side of the sons of God to this cosmic war is found in a passage that, ironically in its parallel in Matthew's gospel, is often used by people to actually dismiss this very war as it appears in Genesis 6 where we first encounter the "sons of God" language. We will get to that passage soon enough. But here it is in Luke, "They cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God (*huiioi theou*), being sons of the resurrection" (Luke 20:36). Did you hear how the language of "sons of God" is in this verse connected for some strange reason to "angels?" In fact, the verse identifies the two as being identical. This then is what we are going to talk about today.

Sons of God and the gods

Our third sermon in this series is going to talk about a totally different group of beings from Christians that are called sons of God. These beings are not humans. Recall that in our first sermon, we spent the entire time talking about the nature and doctrine of God, using Ch. 2 of our confession of faith as the baseline. It was imperative that you understand who God

is so that you can much more easily spot counterfeits. [Week 2](#) then discussed the “gods.” In the OT, both God and the gods are identified with the same word: *elohim*. That doesn’t mean they are on a scale of being with one another or that the gods are somehow rivals to God. No. God is incomparably God in all of his divine attributes, and no one in heaven or on earth shares his Divine nature.

Nevertheless, [real entities are called “gods.”](#) The first and foremost of these entities is Satan—the “[god of this world](#)” ([2Cor 4:4](#)). And [Satan](#), as we saw, is identified in the NT as both [Baal](#) and [Zeus](#). They are all the same entity. That means what some people think is a [mere statue](#)—an idol of human imagination, actually represents and houses a fallen heavenly being. It also means that what some people think is a [pure myth](#)—a fairy tale made up by superstitious crazy people, is actually the same fallen heavenly being.

I gave you many different terms for these gods, which are synonyms in the Scripture. Among them we looked at “[prin-](#)
[cipalities](#)” and “[thrones](#)” and “[dominions](#)” and “[powers](#).” We saw that these gods share two things in common. They are all *supernatural* entities that belong to the invisible realm of spirit and they all share some kind of *ruling* function. God decreed

that they should rule and govern. That's what nearly all of these terms overtly demonstrate.

One of the most important terms that the LXX and NT use is *archōn*, translated as either a “**ruler**” or a “**prince**.” The “god” (*theos*) of this age is elsewhere called the “ruler” or “prince” (*archōn*) of this world. They are **synonyms**. Now, what is a prince? A prince is a son of a king. If God is the King, then this means that anyone who is a “son of God” would be, by definition, a prince—and hence, a ruler. Princes rule.

In fact, there are other heavenly beings called *archōns*. In Daniel 10 we read that “**the prince of the kingdom of Persia**” (**Dan 10:13**) withstood the mighty angel Gabriel for three full weeks. This is obviously no human prince, for what could even the mightiest king on earth possibly do to detain a mighty angel of the heavenly realm? Just a few verses later we read about his counterpart the “**prince of Greece**” (**vs. 20**). And in fact, we see at the beginning of Chapter 12 that Michael is called **the prince of Israel** (**12:1**; cf. **10:13**). This is **territorial language** of heavenly beings somehow in charge of earthly realms. And in fact, the Jews actually referred to Satan as the “**prince of Rome!**”¹

¹ Douglas Van Dorn, “[Satan, Zeus, Baal, and the Prince of Rome](#),” *Academia* (Feb 27, 2024): 9.

You will be able to understand this before we are through today, and it is massively important for understanding the entire theology of the sons of God as human Christians in the NT in Week 5. What it does for now is help you [link in your mind the “gods” to the “sons of God.”](#) For in fact, they are the very same thing. “Sons of God” is the one synonym I really left out of last week’s discussion of the gods, precisely because I needed an entire week to deal with it properly.

Sons of God in the OT

To do this right, I want us to look today at the 10 or so different places that OT refers to these “sons of God.” By “sons of God” I refer to [a technical phrase](#) that was found throughout the ANE. For example, among the Canaanites, their “father” god figure is named El. El had a consort named Asherah. Together, they spawned “[seventy sons](#)” of God. Among them are [Baal](#) the sky god, [Yam](#) the sea god, and [Mot](#) the underworld god. They correspond directly to [Zeus](#), [Poseidon](#), and [Hades](#) as the Greeks literally took these ANE

gods and incorporated them in a one-to-one direction into their pantheon.²

UGARIT	HEBREW
<i>bn 'il</i>	<i>beney ha-'elohim</i>
<i>bn 'ilm</i>	<i>beney 'elim</i>

The phrase is *beney ha-'elohim* or a variation on it in Hebrew such as *beney 'elim*. Almost the exact same phrases are found among the Canaanites for [the seventy gods](#) (see above). We find this technical phrase about eight times in the Hebrew and two more in the Greek OT:

"SONS OF GOD" PASSAGE	HEBREW PHRASE
Genesis 6:2 Genesis 6:4 Job 1:6 Job 2:1 Job 38:7	<i>beney ha-'elohim</i>
Psalms 29:1 Psalms 89:6	<i>beney 'elim</i>
Psalms 82:6	<i>beney 'elyon</i>
Deut 32:8	<i>aggelōn theou*</i>
Deut 32:43	<i>uioi theou*</i>
* signifies only found in LXX	

Ten Occurrences of "Sons of God"

² Michael S. Heiser, "[Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God](#)," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158 (Jan-Mar 2001): 54-55.

Job 38:7

What will do now is **go in chronological order** of their appearances as it would be found **in history**, at least up to a certain point after which it will not matter as much. But we need to do this in order to clearly see just who it is that these sons of God are. To that end, we will first look at **Job 38:7**. To do it right, we will look at several verses before it to get the context. God comes to Job at the last possible moment before he finally curses God in his anger and hubris. God asks Job,

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its
measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the
line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its
cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all
the sons of God shouted for joy?

(**Job 38:4-7**)

Context is always king. A text without a context is a pre-text. That simply means, it is easy to take any verse out of context and make it say whatever you want it to say. Here though we see very clearly that God is speaking about the very earliest moments of creation, perhaps as early as Day 1

or 2 in Genesis 1. Obviously, humans were not made until Day 6. Yet, here they are these beings called “stars” and “sons of God” who are there watching God create. Therefore, *these sons of God are not human*. That they are also called stars shows you very clearly that they are *heavenly* beings. Importantly, some of the LXX manuscripts read “*angels of God*” while others say “*sons of God*.” Those two things become synonyms and we will see this several more times before we are finished today.

It should be obvious that *if there are heavenly beings called sons of God that this would make them princes of the King*. This gives you your first clue that the princes of Persia, Greece, and Rome are in fact heavenly angelic entities, sons (not through natural generation, but like Christians, only through adoption) for some reason given rule of territories and peoples of the earth. We will find out *how and why* this happened soon enough.

Now, briefly, before coming to our second “sons of God” passage, I want to mention a very important verse in *Genesis 1:26-27*. *Vs. 27* says very clearly that *God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*” So God made humans by himself.

Yet, **vs. 26** says, “**Let us make man in our image.**” Scholar often wonder, who is the “our?” It is popular to say that the “our” is the **Trinity**. And I’m actually not opposed to that, because clearly the Persons of the Trinity were present at this announcement. And yet so also were the heavenly sons of God, as we’ve just seen. So there’s more to it.

For this reason, going back to the early church and right on through to today in a line uninterrupted, many have said that the “our” actually refers to the angels. Now, someone is always quick to ask, “**Are you saying that angels are made in God’s image?**” And they usually ask this rhetorically, because **everyone knows that only humans are made in God’s image.** But of course, the Bible never says *that*. Listen to the following quotes.

The Jewish Targum says, “*And the Lord said to the angels who ministered before Him, who had been created on the second day of creation, ‘Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness...’*” **Thomas Aquinas** said, “The image of God is more perfect in the angels than in man, because their intellectual nature is more perfect” (*Summa Theologiae* 1.93.3). The great Puritan **William Perkins** said, “The inhabitants of the world are reasonable creatures, made according to God’s own image; they

are either angels or men” (*The Order of Salvation and Damnation*). Meredith Kline says, “In the creative fiat addressed to the heavenly council, ‘Let us make man in our image,’ angels are identified as sharing in the image-likeness to God. The lines of likeness connect not only God and man but God and angels, and man and angels. Agreeably, in the reflection of Genesis 1:26ff. in Psalm 8:5ff., man’s likeness to God is expounded in a comparison of man and angels.”³

Specifically, it is important to note that the “image of God” as defined in **Genesis 1:26** is **ruling or having dominion**. “**Let them have dominion**,” it says. To be an image bearer of the King is therefore to have dominion, to rule as his son. Hence, Adam will be called “**God’s son**” (**Luke 3:38**). Their authority here is not that of the King. It is that of a prince or a vassal king, a subservient lord who is given direct and immediate authority over a more local region under the sovereign authority of Almighty God.

Genesis 6:2, 4

We need to continue. The second chronological place we find the “sons of God” mentioned is that wild passage in **Genesis 6:1-4**.

³ **Meredith G. Kline**, *Images of the Spirit* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1999), 27.

When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the *sons of God* saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose ... The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when *the sons of God* came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

The “*sons of God*” are mentioned *twice*, once in *vs. 2* and again in *vs. 4*. Again, as with the image of God stuff, we find controversy in the interpretation of these verses. *The popular view* of these verses since Chrysostom and Augustine has been that the “sons of God” are children of Seth while the “daughters of men” are daughters of Cain. For them, the problem is basically that *Christians married non-Christians*. Of course, no one is able to explain how such a union could produce Nephilim, a word that the LXX rightly translated a “*giants*” (the word actually comes from Aramaic, not Hebrew).⁴ So all they are left with is spiritualizing these “giants” as in they are giants in their own eyes, very powerful or something like that. But obviously not literal giants!

⁴ *Michael S. Heiser*, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*, First Edition (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 105-07.

This occurs even as they spiritualize the “sons of God” and “daughters of men.” But notice, technically, it doesn’t say “sons of Seth.” It says sons of God. And it most definitely does not say daughters of Cain. It literally says, “daughters of ‘adam,” and guess who both Seth and Cain were? They were sons of Adam! The language literally is telling you that whoever the sons of God are, they have to be something other than a son/daughter of Adam. But since we have already looked at Job 38:7, we have the ability to know exactly who they are. They are fallen angels, the same entities that were singing for joy before God ever even made Adam.

Francis Schaeffer, the great Reformed apologist of the last half of the last century once said, “More and more we are finding that mythology in general, though greatly contorted, very often has some historic base. And the interesting thing is that one myth that one finds over and over again in many parts of the world is that somewhere a long time ago supernatural beings had sexual intercourse with natural women and produced a special breed of people.”⁵ This is exactly right, and in fact, it is very important that you understand something.

⁵ Francis Schaeffer, “Genesis in Space and Time,” in *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1996), 89;

Literally every single Jewish source we have of this (at least 17) prior to the second century, and every single Christian source have of this (at least 33) prior the middle of the 4th century spoke with one voice here.⁶ They all took the angelic view. Without exception. This is seen in the LXX, which sometimes again translates this as “angels of God,” while sometimes leaving it as “sons of God.” Exactly zero have any kind of an anti-supernatural view. Those views did not exist until the rabbis of the second century went on the war-path against Christianity and Jesus in particular because they hated him so much that they literally changed their text revolving around several of our “sons of God” passages. And in fact, this is how the Sethite view entered the church, unbeknownst to those who adopted this novelty.⁷ The original view was always angelic beings and this is reflected in Jude 6; 2Pet 2:4;

⁶ Jacob J. T. Doedens, “The Sons of God in Genesis 6:1-4,” Ph.D. Dissertation Theologische Universiteit Kampen (2013), 89-167.

⁷ Jaap Doedens, “The Indecent Descent of the Sethites: The Provenance of the Sethites-Interpretation of Genesis 6:1-4.” *Sárospataki Füzetek* 16:3-4 (2012): 47-57; A. F. J. Klijn, *Seth in Jewish, Christian and Gnostic Literature*, NovTSuppl 46 (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 60-77; Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition*, revised edition (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 221-22 and n. 5 (p. 221); Stroumsa; L. R. Wickham, “The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men: Genesis VI 2 in Early Christian Exegesis,” *Language and Meaning. Studies in Hebrew Language and Biblical Exegesis*, papers read at the Joint British-Dutch Old Testament Conference held at London, 1973. *Oudtestamentische Studiën* (Old Testament Studies) 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1974): 135-47.

and other NT passages including our verse in Luke that equates angels with the sons of God.

Ironically, the parallel passage to Luke is found in **Matthew 22:30**. “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.” People use this to teach that angels do not marry, that angels cannot have sex, and that angels cannot procreate. For the record, this passage teaches none of those things. First, it says that angels *in heaven* do not marry. That says nothing about angels who fell to earth. Second, just because you do not marry, you can still have sex! Plenty of people in this world show you that every day by their actions. Third, angels and humans both share an identifying term: ‘*ish*. This is translated as “men.” Angels are “men,” in the Bible, and in fact, if you remember your Sodom story, the human men of the city want Lot to bring the angel men out to them so they could “know” them. Apparently they thought it was possible! Also, that story is a recapitulation of the Genesis 6 story.

But what’s so ironic about using this Matthew verse is that **Luke literally tells you that angels are sons of God**. He equates them. Furthermore, you have to remember that Jesus is talking to Sadducees, who do not believe angels even exist. What good would it do Jesus in an argument to talk about

creatures that his opponents don't even believe exist? They would just look at each other and [start laughing](#) and then kick him out of the temple for his stupidity. But not if Jesus were actually interpreting Genesis 6—one of the few places he could actually go from the Scripture that they would accept his teaching. They all knew full well what everyone thought of this passage, and in identifying angels as sons of God, Jesus is literally giving them the LXX translation, proving to them that their trick question about marriage, which Jesus relates to angels, is a sham.

Deuteronomy 32:8

As you know, I've written a whole book on this, so I could talk about it all day, but we really must continue. The [third time](#) we discover “sons of God” chronologically in the Bible is in a passage that refers us to [the Tower of Babel](#) story. Moses says, “[Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you, your elders, and they will tell you. 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*. But the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage" (Deut 32:7-9).

A couple of things to point out there. First, notice "sons of God" appears at the end of vs. 8. What is the context? God is giving them their "*inheritance*." Second, that inheritance is tied directly to the time when God "*divided mankind*" and "*fixed the borders*" of the peoples. That's the Tower of Babel story.⁸ Third, there is a "number" here of the sons of God. That number corresponds somehow to the Tower. When you go and count the total number of children of Noah in Genesis 10, you discover that there are *seventy total descendants*. Recognize that number? That's the number of the sons of God in Canaanite theology. It's the same number here. The Targum remembers the tradition. "*When the Most High gave the world as an inheritance to the peoples who came from the sons of Noah, when he divided the writings and languages among mankind, in the generation of the division, at that time, he cast lots on seventy angels, the leaders of nations.*" Seventy is a number *we will return to in our last week*—it is intimately tied to our storyline.

⁸ "Divided" is the word *parad*. It's the same word found in Gen 10:25, "The earth was divided" in Peleg's day.

But now you need to be made aware of something else going on here. If you had, for example, an NASB, you would not read “sons of God” at all, but rather “[sons of Israel](#).” This is the [third time](#) we have seen something pretty significantly disagreed upon in interpretation. This one is due to [a literal change of text](#). Both cannot be original. When we go back to the DSS and LXX, we discover that there is no “Israel” found there. There is only “sons of God” or, again, “angels of God.”⁹ So what happened?

[Our war](#) is what happened. We will see this in our next appearance of the term as well, but essentially, in the Second Century, the rabbis changed the text. This was deliberate, calculated, and diabolical, for it attacked Christianity at a major point that the Christians were using to argue that Jesus is divine. Why? How?

Look at [vs. 9](#). “[But the LORD’s portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance](#).” Not only are the sons of God inheriting nations. [So now is the LORD](#). He is inheriting them. But what kind of a person inherits? [Sons inherit](#). Fathers do not inherit. Sons do. Therefore, the LORD (Yahweh) in mind here is the Son of God. The sons of God inherited their nations; the Son of God inherits Israel. It is happening to the

⁹ On this see Heiser, “[Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God](#),” 52-74.

nations as punishment for Babel. They wanted to reach up to the gods, so God says “Fine, you can have them.” It is an act of grace that the LORD would come to any peoples after this and be their God. That’s vs. 9.

But guess what? If suddenly “sons of God” isn’t there, and it is rather “sons of Israel,” then it not only destroys the meaning of vs. 8, it also destroys the meaning of vs. 9. If Israel was original, quite frankly, *it doesn’t even make sense* that God inherits Israel. But think back to our prince of Persia and Prince of Greece and Prince of Rome and Michael the Prince of Israel. These guys are sons of God and they are ruling over the nations, exactly as Deut 32:8 AND 9 tell you because God gave them this inheritance as punishment for Babel.

Psalm 82:1

If this isn’t wild enough, let’s now turn to **Psalm 82:1**. The text in the ESV reads, “*God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment.*” You have *two elohim* in this verse. The first is God. It is singular (taken with the verb). God has taken his place. The second is “*in the midst of the gods...*” This is plural (taken with the verb). God is judging the gods.

Importantly, he is judging them from something called “the divine council.” This is rendered literally by the NET Bible, “God stands in *the assembly of El*; in the midst of the gods he renders judgment.” Do you remember that I said that El was the father god of the Canaanites and that he had seventy sons? Well, this father god ruled from a heavenly divine council, exactly the way Zeus rules from Olympus with eleven other gods. A divine council is an assembly of heavenly beings who rule over the affairs of the cosmos.

This sounds completely crazy to many Christians. In fact, some utterly deny its truth. Many will point to something like the NAS (again) as proof. It says something radically different, “God takes His stand in His own congregation; He judges in the midst of the rulers.” To them, this is perfectly normal. God is ruling over something like the Sanhedrin and getting mad at them for not judging properly.

The problem is, this is *not what the text originally said*. We have many copies of this verse from the days of Jesus and before. They all read supernaturally. This is identical to the supernatural interpretation of Genesis 6 prior the second century. In fact, it is not until the second century that we actually find these changes. But suddenly, we find several of them, all very natural in the way they read. Why?

Go to **verse 6**. “I said, “You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you.” “Sons of the Most High” is one of our technical terms for sons of God. It just uses Elyon instead of Elohim. Now, we will come back to this verse **next week** when we talk about Jesus as the “Son of God.” But for today, it is enough to see that vs. 1 plays directly into another “sons of God” text and it is no accident that we have massive discrepancies here. Why? The rabbis literally tampered with God’s word. They changed the text precisely again because Christians were using this as part of their great argument to convince Jews that Jesus was God in human flesh. Take away the sons of God being supernatural and you deal a significant blow to the Christian testimony about Jesus. This psalm isn’t about Jews not ruling the world well, but heavenly entities that fell into great sin. It’s an entire worldview that everyone once knew but in our culture dominated by naturalism and materialism and rationalism and evolution we have forgotten.

Psalm 89:6

At this point, I want to go to **Psalm 89**, because it is a parallel passage to Psalm 82. It also has one of our “sons of God” references. We will begin in **vs. 5**. “Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness in the assembly of

the holy ones!” So where are we? We are in heaven, not on earth. And what is here? An assembly of holy ones. We saw last time that “holy ones” is one of the synonyms for the gods.

“For who in the skies can be compared to the LORD? Who among the *sons of God* (ESV: heavenly beings) is like the LORD...” Again, we are in the skies, not on the ground. And here in vs. 6 we have our “sons of God” again. So these sons of God are in the skies and in the heavens. But then we read vs. 7, “A God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones...” And there you have the divine council again. It is a council in the heavens, in the sky. A council comprised of heavenly beings, of the sons of God. This is what Psalm 82 used to say universally, until the rabbis changed it. Fortunately, even though they also changed it to “sons of the mighty” here, they couldn’t get rid of the geographical references and so this one still reads like a heavenly council of heavenly beings, even in the NAS, which only uses the rabbi’s text.

Psalm 29:1

We have a handful of other texts to look at. Psalm 29 is the last in the Psalms. It is a fascinating song that harkens back to the language of the Flood, just like Gen 6 (Ps 29:10). God sits enthroned over the Flood and importantly he sits

enthroned “as king forever.” He is the king. All others are at best princes. It is also a psalm that profoundly recalls Canaanite theology as there is a storm that is coming right from Baal’s mountain in the North, on down over Mt. Hermon, and into Canaan. Any Jew or Canaanite would have understood the imagery. It is a profound lyric declaring God’s glory over the gods.¹⁰ It is into this context that the first verse says, “Ascribe to the LORD, on sons of God (ESV: O heavenly beings”), ascribe to the LORD glory and strength” (29:1). The psalm literally commands the sons of God to praise God their King for his superiority over them. This is exactly like what we find later in the Psalter when it says things like, “Worship him, all you gods” (Ps 97:7). Or again, “Praise him, all his. Angels; praise him, all his hosts! Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars.” (148:2-3). God is their infinite superior, for he is their creator and they owe him everything.

Job 1:6, 2:1

We’ve already seen one example from Job. But the book actually begins with the same “sons of God” that we find later

¹⁰ See my sermon on Psalm 29 as well as Psalm 82 and 89 at www.rbcnc.com/psalms.

were there at creation praising God, just like the Psalms command. Listen carefully, “Now there was a day when *the sons of God* came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them” (Job 1:6). The same thing repeats in 2:1 nearly verbatim. What do you notice? The sons of God are coming to present themselves with Satan!

Now, I know that many OT scholars like to point out here that “Satan” is actually “the satan” (*ha-satan*), and that *satan* is a function or a role that various entities can play throughout the Bible. It simply means an accuser. I will point out that we also find the article most times in the NT with “Satan,” and yet it is still the figure we know as Satan. For today, this doesn’t matter a whole lot, though I rather like the capitalization because it keeps our mind firmly in the supernatural realm. If the sons of God are going with Satan, then the sons of God must be supernatural entities.

Where are they going? They are going to God. And where is that? Heaven! This is Isaiah 6 stuff where the prophet gets a glimpse of the heavenly throne and Jesus is sitting on it as Yahweh (John 12:41). Why would they do this? Because this is where the divine council meets to deliberate over the affairs of the earth. And what happens in the story? That is exactly what happens. As the meeting begins, God asks Satan if he has

considered his faithful servant Job. And you know the rest of the story. The point is, the whole scene is one of **a group of heavenly beings interacting together to decide the fate of Job**. However, and going back to our first week again, God is the one in charge here, not the Devil. God instigates the whole thing. God has a plan not only for Job, but for you and I all these centuries later, to learn from his story all about the problem of evil. The council is not out of God's control. In fact, going back to Psalm 82, the whole point is that God judges these evil sons of God for ruling wickedly and he punishes them to “**die like men**” (7), something that is totally obvious if they are already men! But if they are *heavenly* beings? Someone will surely say that angels don't die. Tell that to Satan who will be thrown into the Lake of Fire at the End of Days.

Deut 32:43

We have **one more passage** to consider this morning. This is a fascinating text found back in **Deuteronomy 32**. I save it till now because it puts the perfect cap on what we've been discussing, but also because it is **eschatological** in its message in that it deals with a coming judgment. Let's start with the

NASB, again, the text that only uses the rabbinical Masoretic as its base for translation. Vs. 43 reads, “Rejoice, O nations, with His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And will render vengeance on His adversaries, And will atone for His land and His people.” You say, “What does that have to do with the sons of God?” Answer: nothing!

But now let’s look at the ESV: “Rejoice with him, O heavens; bow down to him, *all gods*, for he avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries. He repays those who hate him and cleanses his people’s land.” The ESV is different, reading “heavens” instead of “nations,” and “gods” instead of “his people.” Those are massive differences. The ESV isn’t making this up, but is using the DSS to inform its translation, for this is how the Scroll reads. But let’s continue, for we still don’t see any “sons of God” here.

This is where the LXX comes in. “Rejoice, ye heavens, with him, and let all the *angels* of God worship him; rejoice ye Gentiles, with his people, and let all *the sons of God* strengthen themselves in him, for he will avenge the blood of his sons, and he will render vengeance, and recompense justice to his enemies, and will reward them that hate him; and the Lord shall purge the land of his people.” The LXX is significantly longer, keeping

both the rejoicing of the heavens and the nations, both the gods and the people of Israel. The only difference there is that “angels” replaces “gods,” something we’ve seen before as it brings clarification as to who these gods both are and are not.

However, the LXX has an entire line that isn’t in either the Masoretic or the Scroll. This is the line about the “sons of God.” It is clear from the text that these “**sons of God**” parallel the “**angels of God.**” They are heavenly beings.¹¹

Masoretic (NASB)	Dead Sea Scroll (ESV)	LXX (Brenton)
Rejoice, O nations,	Rejoice with him, O heav-	Rejoice, ye heavens, with him,
	ens;	
	bow down to him, all gods,	and let all the angels of God worship
		him;
with His people;		rejoice ye Gentiles, with his people,
		and let all the sons of God strengthen
		themselves in him,
For He will avenge the blood of His servants,	for he avenges the blood of his children	for he will avenge the blood of his sons,
And will render vengeance on His adversaries,	and takes vengeance on his adversaries.	and he will render vengeance, and recompense justice to his enemies,
	He repays those who hate him	and will reward them that hate him;
And will atone for His land and His people.	and cleanses his people’s land.	and the Lord shall purge the land of his people.

So what happened? How does a text get so jumbled up, confused, and hopelessly contradictory? The only way I see

¹¹ For the technical differences see Heiser, “Deut 32.”
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that happening is from **the same tampering** with the very same theological text (“sons of God”) as we have already seen now with **Gen 6:1-4**, **Deut 32:8**, and **Psalm 82:1**. Scribes do not just change words so radically by mistake. This is not mistaking a *he* (ה) for a *het* (ח) or a *tav* (ט) or a *mem* (מ or its final form ם) for a *samekh* (ס), or in letters more familiar to you, the lower case l (l Calibri font) for a capital I (I Calibri font). These are **deliberate changes** of words and words dropping out of the text. Can it possibly a coincidence that of the less than 1% differences in all the other texts of the LXX and Masoretic, where well over 99% of all the Scripture matches exactly, that all of these just so happen to have *the sons of God* at the very center of the controversy?

No way. And the earliest Church Fathers knew this. **Justin** who lived at the exact time that these changes were taking place with the Rabbis (100-165 AD) said, “**Your Rabbis have absolutely expunged many passages out of the Septuagint version, as I would have you to know. Still, I will argue with you even from those received passages which you still allow, which if your Rabbis had understood, be assured they would have expunged them**” (**Justin**, *Dialogue with Trypho* 71). **Irenaeus** who started pastoring at the tail end of these changes (125-202 AD) was even more blunt. Irenaeus was even more

blunt. “If the Jews had known that we should have made use of those testimonies that are to be drawn from the Scriptures, they would never have hesitated themselves to burn their own Scriptures” (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.21.1).¹²

The Cosmic War of the Sons of God Against Christ and his People

Up to this point in this brief series on “The Cosmic War of the Sons of God,” we have been exploring the profound biblical reality of God vs. the gods. Today, we have finally entered into the battle proper. “sons of God” is a term that unveils that battle between the forces of good and evil, both in heaven and on earth. Today, we’ve seen that the heavenly “sons of God” in the Old Testament are supernatural beings, often called angels, parallel with the gods of the nations, who were tasked with ruling over them (Deut 32:8). The symbolic number was seventy, who govern from the divine council, a heavenly assembly where God presides and delegates authority to these sons to administer the affairs over the seventy nations of Babel (Ps 82:1; 89:5-7).

¹² Hales, *Analysis*, 277.

Intriguingly, the seventy sons of God in this council parallel the seventy members of the Jewish Sanhedrin, the earthly council that governed Israel. By the early second century, after many priests and even members of this Sanhedrin council converted to Christ by faith ([Acts 6:7](#)), the Sanhedrin became increasingly hardened against the Gospel, doubling down on their predecessor's own hatred for Jesus in the Gospels. This numerical parallel is striking, almost as if the heavenly and earthly councils were designed to mirror one another—fathers to sons. In fact, recall that Jesus actually identifies these men in the first century not as children of the heavenly father but of their father “the devil.” “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires” ([John 8:44](#)). That devil is Satan, the “god of this world” ([2 Cor 4:4](#)) that we looked at last time whom the Jews identified as the “prince of Rome.” His power extended now via his relationship to Rome even to the very temple in Jerusalem which he had desecrated in 70 AD when the Romans sacked, blasphemed, and destroyed it.

The cosmic conflict is not a theological abstraction; it has real, historical consequences. In the second century AD, the Jewish Rabbis, driven by their opposition to Christianity, deliberately altered key texts like [Genesis 6:1-4](#), [Deuteronomy](#)

32:8, 43, and Psalm 82:1, shifting the supernatural “sons of God” to human interpretations such as “sons of the nobles” or “sons of Israel.” As Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai declared, “R. Simeon b. Yohai called them [the beney elohim, i.e., the ‘sons of God’] the sons of the nobles; R. Simeon b. Yohai cursed all who called them sons of God” (Genesis Rabbah 26:5). This was a calculated attack on the Christian claim that Jesus is the divine Son of God. By desupernaturalizing these texts, the Rabbis sought to undermine the scriptural foundation for Jesus’ divinity, effectively turning their religion into a unitarian framework that obscured the Messiah’s identity. And it worked so well that the church unwittingly invited in these changes to its own interpretations, not realizing that those interpretations that they use to so zealously guard God against some pantheon of polytheism was actually created to undermine their very faith in a Triune God.

This battle for the Bible was instigated by none other than Satan himself. The Pharisees, influenced by their diabolical father, rejected Jesus as the Son of God, and their successors continued this assault by tampering with their very own Scriptures and cursing Christians in their synagogues, even as they would later write from Babylon that Jesus Christ died

for his blasphemous crimes and now sits in hell in boiling excrement forever.¹³

You need to see the sons of God for precisely this reason. As I've been reminding you, the enemy of our faith is not flesh and blood, including even these rabbis, let alone the Jewish people. They are all image bearers held captive to Satan and in great need of the liberty that comes from the gospel. Rather, it is principalities and powers in the heavenly realms (**Eph 6:12**). These fallen sons of God, led by Satan, **inspire human agents** to launch direct assaults on the Gospel. The second-century rabbinical changes were a critical battle in this cosmic war, aimed at severing the Jewish people from the truth of their Scriptures and the hope of their Messiah. The stakes could not be higher: these alterations have shaped Jewish thought for centuries, rendering it profoundly unitarian and resistant to the claims of Christ.

However, **not all sons of God are fallen**. Many, perhaps as many as two-thirds (**Rev 12:4** suggests a third of the angels fell with Satan), remain loyal to the LORD, fighting alongside us in this spiritual battle (**Dan 10:13, 20; Heb 1:14**). These faithful heavenly beings serve God's purposes, aiding His people. Yet, we must remain vigilant, for the fallen sons

¹³ Peter Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 8-9.

of God—the gods of old—are real, powerful, ancient, diabolical, pernicious, and clever. They seek to deceive and draw us away from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our only hope and comfort in this world and the next. And sometimes they even do it by making us think that we are upholding orthodox truth, when the reality is we are upholding deliberate tampering meant to destroy our reasons for the faith we have in Jesus Christ.

As we conclude, let us [fix our eyes on Jesus](#), the true Son of God who adopts us into God's family through faith in Him ([Gal 3:26](#)). The cosmic war continues, but the victory is assured in Christ. Let us stand firm, aware of the enemy's schemes, and proclaim the true myth—the historical, life-transforming truth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who triumphs over all powers and principalities.

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