

# Origin and Significance of the Nations (and More)

By Rich Jacobs, M.D.

## How Did We Get Here and Now and Why?

### ✳️ ETERNITY-PAST

“Before” God created Adam and Eve, He created a kingdom/family of supernatural spirit beings who live in heavenly dimensions with Him. These spirits sometimes are called “*morning stars*” or “*the sons of God*” in the Bible. They have other titles, as well (see 1, below). Their “prior-existence” is revealed in the book of Job.

(Speaking to Job:) “*Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding, Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on 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 (NASB)

1. There are many different kinds of heavenly spirits who have different ranks, functions, titles, powers, positions and functions. One classification of them was compiled by Dionysius (also called “Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite”), in the 4th - 5th Century AD (*De Doelesti Hierachia*)<sup>1</sup>. These included
  - Serephim (Isaiah 6)
  - Cherubim (Ezekiel 28)
  - Thrones (Ezekiel 10; Daniel 7)
  - Lordships or Dominions (Ephesians 1:21; Colossians 1:16)
  - Powers (Ephesians 1:21)
  - Authorities (Ephesians 3:10)
  - Principalities (Ephesians 3:10)
  - Archangels (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Jude 1:9)
  - Angels (Genesis (over 188 Bible references to angels))
  - Others, *i.e.* Choirs (Revelation 19), *etc.*

The Apostle Paul provides a similar classification of the heavenly spirit authorities, “rulers of this age” (1 Corinthians 2:6,8; Ephesians 2:2; 3:10). He focuses mainly on apostate spirit rulers in the context of the earthly territories and human proxies.

- Principalities
  - Authorities
  - Powers
  - Lords
  - Thrones
2. The heavenly sons of God are magnificent and powerful compared to humans, but they are not omniscient and do not compare to God (*i.e.* they are not qualified or able to be God). Their lack of wisdom, knowledge, insight, and understanding compared to God leads them astray.
    - a. They become perplexed by God’s plan for creation and His plan of salvation (1 Peter 1:10-12). They wondered what God is doing and why!

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/Volumell/CelestialHierarchy.html>

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- b. A high-ranking heavenly son of God, mentioned in the Bible, “*the anointed cherub who covers*”, Lucifer, begins to think that he can do God’s job and take God’s place (**Ezekiel 28:14-17; Isaiah 14:12-14**).

*“You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you. By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.” **Ezekiel 28:14-17 (NASB)***

*“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven; I will <sup>b</sup>raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” **Isaiah 14:12-14 (NASB)***

- c. Many heavenly spirits shared Lucifer’s doubt of God; some followed their own ideas rather than God’s will.
- d. **Interestingly, rather than ending the rebellious grumbling and subversion of His Kingdom by some of His spiritual sons, God elects to prove their cases. He give them a whole new “stage” on which to play out their claims.**
- e. Lucifer in the end-times will lead about a third of the heavenly host into overt rebellion against God and His holy ones (**Revelation 12**). Several Bible verses reveal the corruption of Lucifer’s heart.

## ✳ **THE WORLD -TIME PAST & PRESENT**

1. God began time and created this world, adding a single man and woman to His family. He called this one man His son (**Luke 3:38**). Man became a son of God along with the other heavenly spirits whom God created.
  - a. Later, we learn that God’s plan was that mere humans one day would reign with Him over His family of heavenly spirits; they will even judge angels! (READ **1 Corinthians 6:3; Revelation 20: 4, 6**)
  - b. God’s decision to exalt man was not a welcomed decision by all of His heavenly sons, some of whom were predisposed to doubt Him!
  - c. A proud, high-ranking, heavenly spirit-being (now called “Satan” or “Adversary”) tried to stop God’s plan for man; he does not want mere man to reign over him.
    - (1) Satan invaded earthly Eden as a “serpent” and seduced Eve into rebelling against God. Adam joined her in her foolishness.
    - (2) God judged Adam and Eve for their rebellion, but He also judged the spirit-serpent’s deceiving them. (**Genesis 1-3**)
    - (3) At first, it may looked like God’s plan had failed. To many heavenly spiritual observers, it appeared as though the foolishness of Adam

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had been used by Satan to disprove the wisdom of God. But they did not really know God or His plan! God would use His earthly sons to teach His heavenly sons.

*“. . . God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong . . . “*

**1 Corinthians 1:27 (NASB)**

2. Adam and Eve had many children. Among those children there arose profane and unbelieving men, such as Cain, who killed his brother, Able. Violence and misery increased in the world. But it was about to become a lot worse - supernaturally worse.
  - a. In time, some rebellious heavenly spirits, not content with their divine positions and calling, left Heaven and visited earth to intermarry with human women and to sire “hybrid” or “chimeric” offspring on earth, who became called “*nephelim*” (**Genesis 6:1-4**, and **Enoch** - considered to be canonical by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and by Beta Israel. Quoted in **Jude 1:14-4**; **1 Peter 3:19, 20**; **2 Peter 2:4, 5**). These nephelim were extremely powerful people who exceeded normal men in strength, size, and ability. They exalted themselves in warfare, violence, and wickedness.
    - (1) There is debate whether “nephelim” means “*fallen ones*” (from the Hebrew **BHS**) or “*giants*” (“*gigantes*” - γίγαντες, from the Greek **LXX**).
    - (2) Many scholars argue that “*nephelim*” is an Aramaic word that Israel adopted during the Babylonian exile. They show that the unusual spelling of this word found in **Numbers 13:33**, is exactly correct for the Aramaic root word, which clearly means “*giants*”. This translation agrees with the Greek Septuagint (**LXX**).
  - b. Violence and wickedness grew to dominate the earth, causing God to judge and destroy it by deluge. (**Genesis 6:5-8, 11**). The bloodline of Adam, with whom God had made a covenant in the Garden, seem to be thoroughly tainted.
    - (1) God chose to preserve His promise to Adam through Noah, whom He found to be righteous, and his family.
    - (2) Some scholars argue that Noah’s blood line was the only one left that was untainted by angelic inbreeding.
    - (3) Following the Deluge, God renewed His covenant of grace with Noah. (**Genesis 6:13-22; 9:1-17**)
4. The generations after Noah, all survivors of the flood, forgot God and neglected His grace. Though men were created for the earth, they now sought heavenly positions for themselves, hoping to become like heavenly beings, or “gods”.
  - a. Notice that whereas previously the “angels” sinned by abandoning their proper God-appointed places and calling, now mankind was now seeking to abandon his proper God-appointed places and calling.

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- b. They began this effort by building towering shrine at Babel, (“Shinar”), in Mesopotamia.

*“Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. They said to one another, ‘Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.’ And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. They said, ‘Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a **name**\*, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.” **Genesis 11:11:1-4 (NASB)***

\* **Note:** Ancient peoples, including Israel, often referred to God as the “**Name**”. God was even considered to be present “in His Name”. That the people is Babel were seeking to make a name for themselves is not as innocent as it sounds to the modern reader.

- c. Because God intended for man to be fruitful, multiply, and populate the earth as His earthly people, God decided to interfere in man’s ill-conceived plan.

*“The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. The LORD said, ‘Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be <sup>2</sup>impossible for them. ‘Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.” So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.” **Genesis 11:5-9 (NASB)***

- d. As a result of God’s intervention, people were forced to seek out other people who spoke the same language as themselves. But **Deuteronomy 32:8** gives us the rest of the amazing story. The significance of this verse is unlocked in the oldest manuscript versions, which are worth understanding and comparing to current popular translations.

## **Deuteronomy 32:8 - Different Translations Compared**

**Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS-W4, 1971** - adapted from Leningrad Codex, 1008 AD.) - the “official Hebrew Bible”. The verse ends with “. . . according to the number of the sons of Israel.”

בְּהִנָּחֵל עֲלֵיוֹן גּוֹזִים בְּהַפְרִיזוֹ בְּנֵי אָדָם יִצַּב גְּבֻלֹת **Deut. 32,8**

(Sons of Israel)  
עַמִּים לְמִסְפָּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל :

## **New American Standard Bible (NASB, 1995)**

*“When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of man, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the **sons of Israel**.”*

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## New International Version (NIV, 1984)

*“When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the **sons of Israel.**”*

- (1) The NASB and NIV rely heavily of the BHS, the official Hebrew version of the Masoretic text, but older Bible manuscripts provide a slightly different version of this story. For example, the Dead Sea Scroll, which are about 1000 years older than the Masoretic text ends **Deut. 32:8**, with “. . . according to the sons of God.” The LXX ends with “. . . the number of the angels of God”

## Dead Sea Scroll 1Q5 (Hebrew & Aramaic, from c. 150 BC to c. 50 AD)<sup>2</sup>

*“When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the children of men, he set the bounds of the peoples according to the **sons of God.**”*

**Septuagint (LXX**, Greek from Hebrew, translated in Egypt c. 250 BC. The LXX was usually the version quoted by the authors of the New Testament)<sup>3</sup>

**Deut. 32,8** ὅτε διεμέριζεν ὁ ὕψιστος ἔθνη,  
ὡς δι᾿σπειρεν υἱοὺς Ἀδαμ, ἔστησεν ὄρια ἔθνω<sup>ν</sup>  
κατὰ ἀριθμὸν ἀγγέλων θεοῦ,  
**(angels of God)**

- (2) Many English translations use the older manuscripts, believing they represent the original language of the revealed Word. (See below)

## ESV

*“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.**”*

## New Jerusalem Bible

*“When the Most High gave the nations each their heritage, when he partitioned out the human race, he assigned the boundaries of nations according to the number of the **children of God.**”*

## NET

*“When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided up humankind, he set the boundaries of the peoples, according to the number of the **heavenly assembly.**”*

## Message (paraphrased)

*“When the High God gave the nations their stake, gave them their place on Earth, He put each of the peoples within boundaries under the care of **divine guardians.**”*

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/manuscript/1Q5-1>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13722a.htm>

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- (3) The older versions of Scripture state that God did the following at Babel.
  - Sorted the people into groups by creating different languages. People of like tongue would naturally sort together.
  - Assigning “*boundaries*” or “*borders*” to each group. Each group was given its own geographic territory or land in which to live; each became a separate nation.
  - Each nation was “disinherited” by God at Babel and was allowed to choose their own “gods”; they were given over to idolatry.
  - The number of nations that God created was according to, or determined, by the number of angels or sons of God! These heavenly powers or spirits became the “gods” of the disinherited nations!
  - Each of these nations became corrupted; each of their “divine guardians” joined or led them into this error.

**Deuteronomy 4: 19-20**, reinforces history, when God disinherits the nations He just created, allots to them spirit rulers, and assigns to them lands in which to live. It also confirms God’s choice of Israel as His nation and His inheritance.

*“And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, things that the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven. But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be a people of his own inheritance, as you are this day.” **Deuteronomy 4:19-20 (ESV)***

4. But God did choose to retain one person from among the people of Mesopotamia to become His national inheritance. That man’s name was Abram (**Genesis 12:1-7**)
  - a. Abram was led by God to the land of Israel, which became the boundaries or border of his descendants, their land, which became the nation of Israel
  - b. Only God was to be their God and none of the other gods of “the nations”
  - c. Abram became Abraham when he confirmed his covenant with God, but with his new name came God’s new promise - Abraham would become the “father of many nations” (**Genesis 17:5**)
    - (1) From Abraham, came Isaac (**Genesis 17:19**), and from Isaac came Jacob (**Genesis 25:26**).
    - (2) Jacob was renamed Israel by God (**Genesis 32:28**), and Israel became the “father” of God’s nation, Israel, which emerged following their exodus from Egypt, in 1446 BC (See **Exodus**), to settle in the land promised to Abram.
    - (3) God entered into a covenant of Israel that included promises of blessings and protection for obedience, but also punishment and discipline for disobedience - including banishment and oppression by the nations he created (**Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 4; 28; Psalm 44:11; 106:17;**

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**Jeremiah 31:10; Ezekiel 12:15; 20:23; Zechariah 7:14**). As a result of Israel's unfaithfulness to God - their God - they underwent 3 banishments from their land into the other nations and were grievously oppressed.

- c. 744 BC - 10 Northern tribes of Israel conquered by the Assyrians and exiled to all parts of their empire.
  - c. 604 BC - Judah was conquered by the Babylonians and exiled to all parts of their empire. Some of the Jews were allowed to return to their homeland under Persians about 70 years later.
  - c. 70 AD to 135 AD - After Israel rejected God in Christ, she was exiled to many parts of the Roman Empire, where they remained among the nations and were oppressed until 1948 AD. Jerusalem did not become a Jewish-controlled city again until 1973. (**Luke 19:41-46**).
  - While in exile, Jews were grievously oppressed, exploited, enslaved, tormented, slaughtered, mocked, and condemned by the nations (See Montgomery and O'Dell. *The List*. Jerusalem: Root Source Press, 2019. Print.)
- (4) But from the remnant people came Christ's Church, beginning with the Jewish disciples, but extending now to the gentile nations.
- God made a new covenant that now included Jews and gentiles (**Luke 22:10, 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 8:8, 13; 9:15; 12:24**)
  - The new covenant fulfills God's promise to Abraham to be the "father of many nations" (**Mark 16:15; Romans 10:18; Genesis 17:5; 18:18; Galatians 3:8**)
  - Notice that the Church, as yet, has no boundary set for itself by God! We are sent as ambassadors for Christ among the nations with no home of our own (yet)! (**2 Corinthians 5:20; Ephesians 6:20**)
  - But the nations, which God created at Babel, became corrupted by their wayward idolatry ("gods"), whom God allocated to them at Babel. These unfaithful spirit-sons of God thought they could be God! (recall **Daniel 10**, etc.)
  - God actually rebukes His heavenly council of nation-ruling spirits for not promoting justice and for corrupting the kings and people under their influence and control.

*"God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment: How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked. They have neither knowledge or understanding; they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken."* **Psalm 82:1-4 (ESV)**

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- But the ruling spirits disobey God. Now, both the heavens and the earth are engaged in a struggle between God, with His faithful sons, against the unfaithful spirit and human sons of God.

*“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places”.* **Ephesians 6:12 (NASB)**

## ✳ **THE WORLD-TIME FUTURE**

1. The book of **Isaiah** explains all of the information this hand covers in great detail.
  - a. God reminds Israel of His actions and choices in the past, including His warnings and promises for the future.
  - b. God explains to Israel their role and responsibilities in the covenant and to the nations.
  - c. God explains to Israel why they continue to experience disasters, military set-backs, and eventual conquest and mistreatment by the nations.
  - d. God explains to the Israel His purposes in the nations; they are the instruments of Israel’s discipline — but they also are to be their precious inheritance in the Day of their Obedience.
  - e. God foretells to Israel what will happen to them in the future - that He will never forsake them, that ultimately, they will repent and believe, and that they will remain His nation among the nations of the world.
    - (1) The path to Israel’s redemption is preceded by their continued stubborn unbelief and by increasing tribulation from the nations
    - (2) God tells Israel that the day of their redemption will be dominated by supernatural divine plagues, like those of Egypt.
    - (3) Israel’s day of redemption will be born from warfare and bloodshed, when they are led by Messiah against the overwhelming armies of the nations.
    - (4) He promises them resettlement in their homeland, Israel, with Christ as King.
    - (5) He explains to Israel that Judgment of the nations and their spiritual principalities will take place when God is made their Lord.
  - f. The Christians New Testament quotes from Isaiah more than any other book in the Old Testament. The New Testament says that believing gentiles are joint-heirs with Israel to God’s promises. We also will experience many of her tribulations from unbelieving nations.
  - g. Christians, along with Israel, will judge both nations and “angels” to prove conclusively and irrevocably that only God is manifoldly wise, always knowing the right thing to do; only He is fit to be our King! All of this God accomplished through His Son, Christ Jesus, and through His obedient sons, the saints.
2. Revealed in **Isaiah**, and elsewhere in the Bible is our future, which includes Antichrist, Great Tribulation, Resurrection and Rapture, Divine Wrath, Israel’s



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Salvation, Christ's Return, the defeat of the Antichrist nations, Judgment of the nations, Millennium, Judge of the Wicked, The New Creation. Through all of history, using Israel and the nations, God is making at least one vital point . . .

*"To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; **so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.**" Ephesians 3:8-11 (NASB)*

**Questions:** From what you just have learned, answer the following questions (*hint*: the answer to each question is found in the colored box, above)

1. What is God trying to prove by allowing all the turmoil, heartache, and trouble in this world?
2. To whom is He trying to prove His point? (i.e. Who seems to need convincing that God knows what He's doing?)
3. Why is there so much trouble in the world? What or who is the source of it?
4. Why do you think God needs to prove His point?
5. Whom is God using to prove His point?
6. Why do you think the Bible calls saints "witnesses"? Witnesses to what?
7. When did God make this plan?
8. Did God already have this plan in mind when He created the Garden of Eden?
9. How did God tell us what He was trying to do?
10. How does God proving His point finally establish lasting peace and blessing?

**Now, we are ready to begin the study of Isaiah 43!**