



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

## Examining the text & our hearts:

*Bible Reading: Daniel 10:1, 12-14; 11:1, 40; 12:1 CSB*

- **Bible Reading:** Daniel 10:1, 12-14; 11:1, 40; 12:1 CSB
- **Context:** Daniel, was in the Jewish exile under Babylon & Persia. He fasted & prayed for 3 weeks, then an answer came.
- 101 “In the third year of King Cyrus of Persia, a message was revealed to Daniel...The message was true and was about a great conflict. He understood the message and had understanding of the vision... [God’s angel said] 12 “Don’t be afraid, Daniel...from the first day... your prayers were heard. I have come because of your prayers. 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia opposed me for twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me ... 14 Now I have come to help you understand... I must return...to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I leave, the prince of Greece will come. 21... (No one ... support[s] me against those princes except Michael, your prince...111 In the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to strengthen and protect him.) ...40At the time of the end ...121 At that time Michael, the great prince who stands watch over your people [Israel], will rise up...” (Dan. 10:1, 12-14; 11:1, 40; 12:1 CSB)
- **SUMMARY:** Today’s wars—from the Middle East to Ukraine—remind us we live in a world on edge, raising urgent questions: What does the Bible say? Does prophecy speak to these events? And where should Christian allegiance lie? The book of Daniel unveils a deeper reality: behind earthly conflicts stands an age-old cosmic struggle. Spiritual powers—the “Prince of Persia,” the “Prince of Greece,” and “Michael, the Prince of Israel”—are portrayed wrestling for supremacy in a conflict influencing the rise and fall of nations.
- This reveals a sobering truth: our world is not only in geopolitical turmoil, but spiritual conflict as well. So, who are these “Princes,” where are they from? And, how should Christians respond to today’s conflicts? Should we align with any nation, including Israel, or has Christ redefined our loyalties? Does our allegiance to Him transcend all national ties? What’s our mission? In a world at war, how are we called to pray and live?

## I. Biblical Background

### 1. The Supernatural Unseen Realm

- Christians “believe in God, Jesus, Satan, angels, & demons... [Yet,] there’s a lot more going on in the Bible in the supernatural realm...at the intersection of an animate, spiritual world with the terrestrial human reality [which] transcends what you typically hear in church.” [Michael Heiser, *World Turned Upside Down*, p. ]
- No ‘Bad Angels’? “Modern evangelical theology...has tended to view angels merely as agents who invariably carry out God’s sovereign will...Yet...Daniel 10 clearly affirms...powerful angelic beings [with the] ability either to cooperate with or to resist God’s will...Dan. 10...presupposes spiritual beings who exist ‘between’ humanity & God & who [can] affect human existence, for better or worse.” [Gregory A. Boyd, *God at War*, p. 11]

### 2. The Cosmic Conflict of the Ages

- “Biblical authors...assume the existence of intermediary spiritual or cosmic beings ...‘gods,’ ‘angels,’ ‘principalities & powers,’ [etc.,] ... [which] can and do wage war against God, wreck havoc on His creation ...Creation is caught up in the crossfire of an age-old cosmic battle...The Bible assumes that the course of this warfare greatly affects life on earth.” [Gregory A. Boyd, *Op. cit.*, p. 18]

### 3. Signs of the Supernatural: The Divine Council

- a. Real spiritual beings claim authority over nations – e.g., “Princes of Persia, Greece, etc.” (Dan. 10:13, 20)
  - An angel told Daniel: “I’ve come because of your prayers. 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia opposed me for 21 days...Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me... 20I must return...to fight against the prince of Persia, & when I leave, the prince of Greece will come...” (Dan. 10:12-13, 20 CSB)
- b. God gives divine beings (or ‘gods’) authority & responsibilities
  - Micaiah said, “I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, with all the heavenly assembly standing beside Him on his right & on his left. 20 The LORD said, ‘Who will deceive Ahab...?’” (1 Kings 22:19-20 NET)
- c. God consults with angels/gods/divine beings to carry out his will & purpose (Ps. 82:1; 95:3).
  - “God takes his stand in the divine council; he gives judgment among the gods.” (Ps. 82:1 CEB)
  - “The LORD is a great God, a great King above all gods.” (Ps. 95:3) The LORD: the uncreated Creator
- d. Supernatural beings (angels, etc.) called “sons of God” (Job. 1:6; Ps. 29:1; 89:6)
  - “One day the sons of God presented themselves before the LORD; Satan also came with them.” (Job 1:6)
  - “Give to the LORD, you sons of God, give to the LORD glory & might.” (Ps. 29:1 NAB)
  - “Who in the sky is equal to Yahweh? Who is like YAHWEH among the sons of God?” (Ps. 89:6 LEB)
  - “The Hebrew Bible [OT] clearly reveals the existence of supernatural beings other than YHWH...These divine sons serve as members of YHWH’s divine council.” [Mark

### 4. Significance of Seventy (or 72) Nations (Gen. 10)

- a. Jesus sends out the 70 or 72 Disciples (Luke 10:1, 17)
  - “After this, the Lord appointed 72 [or “70”] others, & he sent them ahead of him in pairs to every town & place...The 72 returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” (Lk 10:1, 17 CSB)
- b. Seventy (or 72) Nations (Gen. 10)
  - “At Mt. Sinai...Moses & others had a meal with God in human form...There were 70 elders with Moses. If you count the nations in Gen. 10 that God cast aside after the Tower of Babel incident, you get 70. Those nations were assigned to the ‘sons of God –other lesser gods— when the God of Israel judged the nations (Dt. 4:19-20; 32:8-9). Why 70 elders, 70 sons of God, & 70 disinherited nations? The correspondences are deliberate. When Jesus started off his earthly ministry, he sent out 70 disciples (Lk. 10:1). This was the precursor to the ‘Great Commission.’ The number telegraphed the idea that the disciples of Jesus would reclaim the nations for the kingdom rule of God. That kingdom would reach its

final form at the end of days in the new global Eden of Revelation 21-22. The repetition of the number 70 is a message: God's new earthly family, Israel—the children of Abraham— would be the means to recover what was lost." [Michael Heiser, *Supernatural*, pp. ]

## 5. Three Rebellions

- "Deut. 32:8–9 frames the Babel event of Genesis 11 and...[implies] three rebellions (Gen 3; 6; 11)." [Joel Muddamalle, *Paul's ΟἰΚΟΣ Terminology in Ephesians*, Midwest Baptist Theological Seminary, p. 4, #10]
  - a. Involving Supernatural Beings
    - "Angels aren't perfect... The truth is that divine beings [angels, etc.] ...don't have a perfect track record. [1.] One such being was responsible for the first rebellion against God, opposing the Eden-plan of the Most High & seducing His human creations to sin (Gen. 3). [2.] This transgression was followed by the events of Gen. 6:1-4 ['Fall' of the 'sons of God,' the 'Watchers']. [3.] A different group of heavenly 'sons of God' –allowed to rule the nations as gods after the Tower of Babel judgment (Dt. 32:8-9...) later seduced the Israelites into idolatry & became corrupt (Ps. 82 cf. Dt. 32:17) ...Angels aren't above moral & spiritual failure...they don't possess God's nature & character." [Michael Heiser, *Bible Unfiltered*, p. 24]
  - b. Three Rebellions in Genesis
    - "Michael Heiser...emphasizes that although it is often thought there is only one main rebellion (the Fall), we actually see three rebellions that shape the OT story & [biblical] worldview:
      - Rebellion 1: God's human children, Adam & Eve, rebelling in the garden [of Eden], along with the divine rebellion of Satan, as told in Genesis 3.
      - Rebellion 2: God's supernatural children, the 'sons of God,' wanting to imitate God by producing their own...children in their own image, as told in Genesis 6:1-4 ['the Watchers'], & this all led to total human rebellion against God, having hearts bent on evil. This led to the Flood [at Noah's time] in Gen. 6:5-17.
      - Rebellion 3: Humans built a tower –the tower of Babel—to their own glory, & God judged [the nations], [dispersed &] disinherited them, & began a new focus for His human family – Abraham & the birth of the people of Israel, as told in Genesis 11-12." [Dan Kimball, *How (Not) to Read the Bible*, p. 304, #5]
  - c. Three Joint Rebellions of Rebel 'Sons of God' & Humanity
    - In Genesis 1-11 "there are three joint rebellions, each consisting of insubordinate ['sons of God'] & humanity in the storyline: (1) in the garden of Eden, (2) prior to the great flood [of Noah] where sin & violence proliferate, & (3) at the tower of Babel. Regarding this 3rd rebellion, T. Longman & J. Walton cite the ascent of the 70 nations in Gen. 10 & the scattering of the nations in Gen. 11, along with their allotment to the ['sons of God'] in Dt. 32:8." [Mark L. Richardson, "Corruption of the Imago Dei: ['sons of God'] Motif...", *JETS*, V. 67.4 (2024) p. 690]

## 6. The First Rebellion –The Fall (Genesis 3)

- "Yahweh has a...'divine council' (Ps. 82:1) ...It is comprised of the 'sons of God.' ...The members of this council are not the...Trinity, but lesser divine beings (Ps. 89:5-7) created by the God of Israel (Neh. 9:6; cf. Col. 1:16), who were with God before the creation of the earth (Job 38:4-7), but who are also mortal (Ps 82:7) & capable of corruption (Ps. 82:2-4). According to Isa. 14 & Ezek. 28, the "serpent" of Genesis 3 was one such council member who rebelled against God (Isa. 14:13-14; Ezek. 28:14-17) & persuaded the first humans to do the same (Gen. 3:1-5)...The serpent [is] 'the Devil & Satan' (Rev 12:9)." [Hans Moscicke, "Reconciling the Supernatural Worldviews," *Missionalia*. Vol. 45, #2, pp. 136-7]
- "Genesis 3 contains the first of three significant rebellions in Scripture (which continue in Genesis 6 and Genesis 11) that involve both humanity and the spiritual realm. This is spiritual warfare: The enemy wants to entice us into thinking, feeling, and doing things that are contrary to the ways of God. The enemy wants us to see, desire, and take [Eve's sequence in Gen. 3], but God wants us to enjoy freedom and the goodness of His creation." [Joel Muddamalle, *Peace in the Battle of Wanting*, Dec. 15, 2025]

## 7. The 2nd Rebellion –The Sons of God, Nephilim, & Demons (Genesis 6)

- After the 'Fall' in Genesis 3, "a second rebellion [occurred when] ...fallen angelic beings engaged in an unholy union with humanity. In the first rebellion of Genesis 3, we find humanity seeking to become like God, rising to the level of Yahweh in determining what they think is good and evil. Adam and Eve attempt to secure something for themselves they were not given. Now, in this second rebellion, we find dynamic movement in the other direction—divine beings lowering themselves to the level of humanity...trying to secure for themselves something they were never given. The result of this second rebellion is the rampant spread of evil." [Joel Muddamalle, Unseen Battle, p. ]

## II. The 3rd Rebellion — Tower of Babel; Dispersion of Nations under powers/'princes' (Gen. 11)

### 1. Viewed in Human Perspective (Gen. 11:1-9)

- "The whole earth had the same language and vocabulary. 2 As people migrated from the east, they found a valley in the land of Shinar and settled there. 3 They said to each other... "Come, let's build ourselves a city & a tower with its top in the sky. Let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise, we will be scattered throughout the earth." 5 Then... 6 The LORD said, "If they have begun to do this as one people all having the same language, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. 7 Come, let's go down there & confuse their language so that they will not understand one another's speech." 8 So from there the LORD scattered them throughout the earth, & they stopped building the city. 9 Therefore it is called [Babel]..., for there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth, & from there the LORD scattered them throughout the earth." (Genesis 11:1-9)

### 2. Viewed in Cosmic Perspective (Deut. 32:8-9)

- The "Tower of Babel is...much more than an ill-fated construction project & language confusion." —Michael Heiser
- "The 3rd rebellion is...the Tower of Babel in Gen. 11:1-9. In this event, humanity attempts to build a tower to reach the heavens, which is interpreted as an act of defiance against God. This rebellion has...consequences:
  - a. God confuses the languages of humanity and scatters them across the Earth, fragmenting them into separate nations (Gen. 11:7-9), &
  - b. God assigns the nations to other 'sons of God,' who become the gods of those nations, leading to idolatry & the worship of false deities (Dt. 32:8-9; Acts 17:26). This event...change[s]...their relationship with God.
  - c. The Tower of Babel...explains the origins of the nations and their relationship to spiritual forces ['gods']
  - d. This event is directly related to...cosmic geography in which different spiritual powers ['gods'] are linked to different geographical regions (Dan. 10:12-13, 20-21).
  - e. It also explains...the OT story of the people of God [Israel] in conflict with other nations and their gods.
  - f. This is the reason for idolatry in the world..." [Dale Moreau, Through Israelite Eyes (2025) pp. 26, 35-36]
- "Jesus' ministry is a challenge to the 'gods' of the nations, the spiritual beings...assigned to rule over them at the Tower of Babel... The resurrection & ascension of Jesus...stripped away the authority of these fallen spiritual beings, who had been given authority over the nations at Babel." [Dale Moreau, Op. cit., pp. 35-36]

### 3. God's Response to Babel: Assigning 70 Nations to the 'Sons of God' (Dt. 32:7-9 ESV)

- "Deut. 32:8-9 reveals a supernatural dimension to the aftermath of Babel (Gen. 11): Yahweh disinherited the nations and allotted them to lesser elohim ['gods'] while choosing Israel as His own." — D. Gene Williams Jr.
- Michael Heiser connects Deut. 32:8–9 to Babel (Genesis 11) because in it, Moses says:
  - ❖ "Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations... 8 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. [Based on the Dead Sea Scrolls] 9 But the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob [Israel] his allotted heritage." (Deut. 32:7-9 ESV)

a. 70 Nations assigned to 70 'sons of God'

- "If you count the nations in Gen. 10 that God cast aside after the Tower of Babel incident, you get 70. Those nations were assigned to the 'sons of God' –other lesser gods— when the God of Israel judged the nations (Dt. 4:19-20; 32:8-9). Why [were there] ...70 disinherited nations?" [Michael Heiser, Supernatural, p.]
- "Finding an explanation for the divine beings within the biblical texts is not difficult. Christensen interprets the use of '70'...to indicate the reference to the 70 nations of the Table of Nations in Genesis 10. According to this assessment, after God divided the 70 nations at Babel & established where each nation would be located, he then 'gave the nations as an inheritance to the sons of God.' The view of the nations being the inheritance of the divine beings is supported in the passage itself...This would make the nations subject to the "sons of God" as their respective [guardian] patron deities." [Daniel Porter, God among the gods (2010) pp. 27-28]

b. Supernatural 'sons of God' in the OT (Job 1:6; Ps. 89:6; Dt. 32:9)

- "One day the sons of God presented themselves before the LORD; Satan also came with them." (Job 1:6)
- "'Sons of God' refers to heavenly beings gathered before God like a council before a king (Ps. 29:1). The Hebrew idiom "sons of" can be used of a group that is led by a figure referred to as their "father." [ESV]
- "The heavens will praise...your faithfulness, in the assembly of the holy ones. 6 For who in the sky is equal to Yahweh? Who is like Yahweh among the sons of God?" (Ps. 89:5-6 LEB)
- "'Holy ones' (89:5) These are the angels, pictured as an assembly & council, surrounding God and doing his will (e.g. 1 Kings 22:19...). They are also called ...'sons of God' (Ps. 89:6)." [ESV]
- Belonging to the Divine Realm
- "The title 'sons of' may...be a designation of the divine realm...[In] Hebrew 'son of A,' as is well known, often has the meaning of 'member of group or category A'. Here the classification is clear cut: ['ben Elohim' 'sons of God'] is a supernatural being belonging to the sphere of God." [M. Tsevat, God & the gods, p. 126, #9]

c. Each Nation assigned to a 'lesser god'

- "The point of Deut. 32:8-9 is not merely that God created 70 territorial units after Babel, but that each...unit was given as an inheritance... To whom were the nations given? ...Dt. 32:8b provides the answer ...to other [spiritual] beings (the 'sons of God'). The point...is that sometime after God separated the people of the earth at Babel & established where on earth they were to be located, He [God] then assigned each of the 70 nations to the fallen 'sons of God' (...also 70 in number) ... Each pagan nation was overseen by a ['lesser god'/'son of God'] inferior to Yahweh." [Michael Heiser, "Deut. 32:8 & the Sons of God," Bibliotheca Sacra, #158 (2001) p. 71]

d. National gods have autonomy

- "According to Deut. 32:8-14 the Lord of Israel, the Most High God, placed a subordinate [a 'lesser god'] in charge of each of the other nations. These are angels, 'gods,' or 'sons of God,' holy ones, divine beings who belong to the heavenly court & sit in judgment on the thrones surrounding the Ancient One (God; Dan. 7:9; Job 1:6) ...These nation-angels ['national gods'] have a will of their own & can resist the will of God, who limits himself & does not violate their freedom. Daniel's prayer [Dan. 10] makes an opening for God 'to act in concert with human freedom,' leading to war in heaven –showing that 'every event on earth has its heavenly counterpart' (Walter Wink)." [Paul M. Lederach, Daniel, p. ]

e. God's Divine Council: A Heavenly Courtroom Scene (Dan. 7:9-10)

- Daniel: "As I kept watching thrones [plural] were set in place, & the Ancient of Days [God] took his seat...The court was convened, & the books were opened." (Daniel 7:9-10)
- "At the center of Daniel's vision was the heavenly courtroom, with thrones...set up for judgment. The Ancient of Days, God himself, sat on the central throne." [ESV]

## f. At Babel God 'disinherited' the Gentile Nations as His own People

- Michael Heiser sees Genesis 11 as a deliberate human refusal to “disperse” and fill the earth under God’s rule, instead centralizing power and seeking autonomy...He connects Deut. 32:8–9 to Babel and writes that Yahweh’s dispersal of the nations at Babel “resulted in his disinheriting those nations as his people,” describing this as the OT equivalent of Romans 1, where God “gave [humankind] over” to their rebellion...He states that at Babel “God, like a father dismissing and disinheriting his children, judges all the nations for their disobedience (Gen 11:1–9).” [M. Heiser, “Are Yahweh & El Distinct Deities in Dt 32:8-9 & Ps. 82?” p.]
- At Babel “God confused their languages and disinherited the nations. Instead of serving God, the nations began worshipping other created divine beings, or Elohim [They were led astray by these rebel-guardian ‘sons of God’ to worship them as national gods] ...The idea that ANE nations all served national...gods is well established.” [Max Cornell, “How the Cross Defeats the Powers,” (May 2021) p. 6]
- “In early Jewish perspective the gods/angels’ rule over the nations was the outcome of the rebellion of Adam’s [descendants] at Babel resulting in God’s disinheritance of the peoples [the nations]. This was understood as the origin of the nations (ethne), when God subjected them to the rule of the principalities & powers (i.e., the gods: Gen. 10-11).” [David A. Burnett “Neglected Deut. Scriptural Matrix,” LL. Belleville (ed.) Scripture, Texts...1 Cor., pp. 197, 200]

## g. Israel to be a Light to the (disinherited) Nations

- In Deut. 32:8 “Yahweh safeguards Israel as his chosen people, while disinheriting the rest of the nations for their disloyalty...These peoples [nations] are ‘assigned to lesser elohim [‘gods’] as a judgment from the Most High.’ [Thus,] each of these nations is ‘set under the aegis of one of the gods.’ Therefore, the people of Israel ...serve Yahweh as a lone ‘light to the nations’ (Is. 49:6) while the other nations serve (wittingly or not) the other ‘sons of God’ among the heavenly host.” [Matthew McGuire, “Mopping Up the Powers,” (2022) p. 3]

## 4. God’s long-term goal that the nations would seek &amp; find Him (Acts 17:26-27)

- “From one man [God]...made every nationality to live over the whole earth & has determined their appointed times & the boundaries of where they live. 27 He did this so that they might seek God...” (Acts 17:26-27 CSB)
- “God created the nations and set their borders. Here, [we]...see an implicit reference to Deut. 32:8-9.” –R. Campa
  - “God’s allotment of the nations to other gods frames the entire OT...That wasn’t God’s original intention. Yes, what He did at Babel to the nations was a judgment, but God never intended that the nations would be forever forsaken ...Through Abraham & his offspring (Gen. 12:3) God was planning to bring the nations back into his family at some point. Paul knew this. In his sermon... in Athens he said, ‘...[God] made every nation of the human race to inhabit the entire earth, determining their set times & the fixed limits of the places where they would live, 27 so that they would search for God & perhaps grope around for Him & find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.’ (Acts 17:26-27) ... [This] makes clear that God’s purpose was that somehow the nations would still seek after Him.” [Michael S. Heiser, Supernatural, p. ]
  - “In the NT, Paul reflects...Hebrew thought when he emphasizes...the determinative role God has played in establishing all national-territorial associations (Acts 17:26).” [Daniel Block, Gods of the Nations, pp. 30-1]

**III. Rebellion of the Lesser gods, the Guardian National-Angels**

## 1. Guardian-Angels becoming Pagan gods of the Nations

- “After...Babel, the disinherited nations allotted to the sons of God worshiped these cosmic beings [the ‘sons of God,’ ‘lesser gods’], and as an act of cosmic rebellion, the sons of God accepted their worship and established themselves as the patron deities of various nations [–the ‘gods of the nations’].” –Joel Muddamalle

- “After God gave the sons of God dominion over nations (Dt. 32:8-9), some governed corruptly and did not maintain loyalty to God. They also allowed themselves to be worshipped, instead of directing worship toward God (e.g. Dt. 17:3; 29:25-26). God told these lesser gods that they would lose their immortality and would die like mortal [humans] (Ps. 82:6-8).” [Dennis Linscomb, Op. cit., p. 18]

## 2. Lesser gods teaching Pagan Religions to the Nations

- We should “think of the mythology of the ANE as the religion taught to humans by the fallen angelic beings that are worshiped in those religions... The gods of pagan religions [are] real spiritual entities who can reveal themselves to humans and impart supernatural knowledge... The OT writers think [of] pagan mythology... as religious views foisted on humanity by evil, fallen angels who are seeking to divert worship to themselves & away from Yahweh the Creator as part of their rebellion against heaven & their war against the LORD.” [Craig A. Carter, Contemplating God..., pp. ]
- “The reason we see so many local deities [‘gods’] is because there are, in fact, territorial spirits that have interacted with humans. Humans have turned from worshipping the highest God to worshipping the territorial spirits [‘gods’] of the world... (Dt. 32:16-18).” [James Agnew, Devil’s Disbarment, p. 11]
- This “provides... [an] explanation for the otherwise inexplicable fact that the nations do worship these deities.” [John Goldingay, OT Theology: Israel’s Faith, Vol. 2, p. 46]

## 3. The Origin of the Nations’ gods

- The “sequence of events appears to [be] as follows: (1.) Originally the heavenly court consisted of Yahweh, the presiding deity, & a host of lesser [gods, supernatural] beings... ‘the sons of God,’ ‘princes,’ or angels. (2.) God divided humankind into a series of peoples/nations whose total corresponded to the number of members of the heavenly court [70]. One of the [‘sons of God,’ ‘princes’] was designated as the patron or guardian of each [people/nation]. (3.) Israel, however received special treatment... Yahweh selected her for his own direct care; she... need[s] no intermediary patron. (4.) For each of the nations Yahweh allocated a specific geographical region to be possessed.” [Block, Gods of the Nations, p. 32]
- After Babel, “every nation had its own divinities [‘god’], & the world worked according to plan when every nation remained loyal to its proper gods... This idea... [is] in Daniel 10 that every nation has a heavenly ‘prince’ who protects it & seeks its welfare, at the expense of other nations if necessary.” [R. Goldenberg, Nations that Know Thee Not, p. 15]

## 4. Divided Nations under Angelic Rulers (‘sons of God’) Facilitates Conflict

- “Angelic history mirrors human history’... [Writers like Daniel] conceived of the heavenly realm as a place of epic struggles between hostile [spiritual] forces, deity against deity... Occasionally there’s [an OT] hint of warfare in heaven between various forces. [However,] the basic claim of Deut. 32:8 that the nations were divided ‘according to the number of the sons of God’ almost guaranteed fights [conflict] between the respective angelic champions [‘princes’] of earthly protagonists [‘nations’].” [WS. Towner, Daniel, p. 172]
- A “typical feature of the 2nd-tier level gods is the conflicts & the battles... they participate in.” – Lores Vroniku

## 5. Nationalism & worshipping National gods

- “Nationalism involves the exaltation of a nation (or a particular conception of a nation) to the highest place of allegiance, concern, and devotion, [thus] it is essentially idolatrous... There is little distinction between the ancient pagan’s worship of national patron deity and the contemporary nationalist’s tendency to exalt a particular nation to a place of functional divinity.” [David A. Ritchie, Why Do the Nations Rage? p. 6]
- “It’s crucial for Christians to clearly recognize the distinction between rightly-ordered patriotism & idolatrous nationalism; to recognize the difference between gratitude to God for one’s nation and the temptation to worship one’s nation as a god. None of us are above this temptation. Sadly, the

people of God have had a long history of looking to political power for salvation... The powers are real, and they are greedy for our affection." [DA. Ritchie, Op. cit., p. 142]

#### IV. The LORD Judges the Lesser gods (Psalm 82)

- 1 God stands in the assembly of El; in the midst of the gods He renders judgment.
- 2 He says, "How long will you make unjust legal decisions & show favoritism to the wicked? (Selah)
- 3 Defend the cause of the poor & the fatherless. Vindicate the oppressed & suffering.
- 4 Rescue the poor & needy. Deliver them from the power of the wicked.
- 5 They neither know nor understand. They stumble...in the dark, while all the [earth's] foundations crumble.
- 6 I ['said'], 'You are gods; all of you are sons of the Most High.'
- 7 Yet you will die like mortals; you will fall like all the other rulers [or 'princes']."
- 8 Rise up, O God, & execute judgment on the earth! For You own all the nations. (Psalm 82:1-8 NET)

##### 1. Exposition of Psalm 82

- o "The best place to start...is Psalm 82 because it not only describes multiple gods but also indicates a relationship.
- o Psalm 82:1 states: "God (elohim) stands in the divine assembly; he administers judgment in the midst of the gods (elohim)." The 1st elohim must be singular because it is the subject of the singular verb "stands." The 2nd elohim must be plural because the preposition "in the midst of" requires more than one. You cannot be "in the midst" of one. The Hebrew grammar & syntax of Psalm 82 are clear: The singular God of Israel is presiding over a ...council of other gods (elohim). God has called this council meeting to judge the Elohim [gods] for the corrupt rule of the nations.' –M. Heiser
- o In Ps. 82:6, we discover that these elohim are sons of God: "I [singular God] have said you are gods [elohim plural], & sons of the Most High [beney elyon], all of you [plural]."
- o Ps. 82:6: "Normally in the OT the title Most High belongs to the God of Israel" NET] Of course, the Most High (elyon) was the God of Israel (e.g. Gen. 14:18-22 [etc.]). It is not clear from Ps. 82 whether all of the elohim are being judged or just some. In...Ps. 89:6, these elohim are called 'sons of God' (beney elohim).
- o God is not talking to angels or about angels in these verses [but, 'gods']. The Hebrew word for angels is mal'akim (lit., "messengers"), an entirely different word than the one for the 'sons of God' (beney elohim).

##### 2. In Psalm 82 God Judges the Fallen 'Sons of God' ('Princes')

- o "Michael Heiser...demonstrated that another world exists ...[in] Psalm 82, where 'gods were being condemned in their administration of the nations of the earth'." –Colton Allen, et. al.
- o "Psalm [82]...describes the LORD's judgment on the other gods...It...claim[s] that Israel's God is the king & chief god of all the other gods... 'the assembly' (82:1) is... the divine council... The points [82:2-4] then tell what the gods were supposed to do, but failed. It is the reason for the judgment... The final verse [82:8] is not voiced by God... [Rather,] God is implored to do what [the gods] did not, to rise up and judge...[since] all the nations ...belong to Israel's great God [YAHWEH]." [Beth L. Tanner, Book of Psalms, pp. 642-3]
- o The context of Psalm 82 is that the elohim are being judged for corruption. Ps. 82:2-5 are quite clear that God is displeased with these other elohim in his council and has indicted them for their wicked rule...It is evident from Ps. 82:8 that the judgment of the sons of God, these other elohim, has something to do with God's reclamation of the nations of the earth. The implication is that the sons of God have been ruling the earth & doing it wickedly. So, they must be removed for God's rule to come to full fruition. (Heiser) [Dennis Linscomb, Sons of God & the Divine Council, pp. 3-5]

- Dt. 32:8-9 says “God decided that His chosen people would be the future descendants of Jacob (Dt. 32:9), & the rest of the nations would be placed under the control of members of the divine council... So, at the Tower of Babel where people chose not to follow the one true God, He decided that He would match the nations up with lesser gods [the ‘sons of God’ (Dt. 32:8)]. Psalm 82 is related because it has God judging some ‘sons of God’ for their corruption in administering the nations. However, God did not ultimately give up on the nations...he promised that all nations would be blessed through Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). The Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 ...[is] God’s attempt to reclaim the nations dispossessed at the Tower of Babel.” [Dennis Linscomb, Op. cit., p. 12]

### 3. Angel Rulers’ Autonomy brings Responsibility & Judgment

- “Psalm 82 suggests that the Lord grants a certain freedom of action to the angelic princes of the nations. With this freedom comes a day of reckoning. Thus, the [divine] assembly illustrates the operation of inferior [spiritual] forces, particularly in the affairs of the nations, under [God’s] overarching divine sovereignty... Left to themselves, the gods are incompetent, corrupt rulers... Now God arises and pronounces Judgment on the gods themselves (Ps. 82:6-7).” [Stephen Noll, Angels of Light; Powers of Darkness, pp. 57-58]
- “The divine council...[is] a group of angels through whom God indirectly rules the nations of the world (see, for e.g., Dt. 32:8–9; Dan. 10 [etc.]). [However,] the ‘divine council was contaminated by evil figures & was itself judged as corrupt’ (Noll). These ‘sons of God’ have become corrupt, led the nations away from God & into idolatry, & correspond with the ‘principalities & powers’ in Paul’s letters...The work of Christ, represents a ‘palace revolution in the heavens’, but...the officials of this deposed regime [the ‘sons of God’, guardian ‘princes’ of nations] continue to function as if nothing has happened. Herein lies the struggle faced by the church today.” [Clinton Arnold, review of S. Noll, Angels of Light; Powers of Darkness, Gospel Coalition]
- Here, “the great king (of the divine assembly) [God] pronounces sentence on some of the gods who have failed in their duties’ (Tate)... ‘Injustice on the earth is attributed to those forces which carry on their activity between YAHWEH & the world as lords & tutelary [guardian] spirits of groups, peoples, and states [nations]’ (Kraus).” [John C. Peckham, Theodicy of Love: Cosmic Conflict &...Evil, p.]
- “Whether or not one adopts this [interpretation] of Deut. 32:8, a host of other texts support the concept of celestial [heavenly] rulers with real authority behind earthly rulers.” — John Peckham
- In Dt. 32:8 “YHWH is dividing the nations among a certain...spirit beings [‘sons of God’], who become patron deities of these nations. [M.] Heiser connects this with the Tower of Babel and YHWH’s judgment of the nations after that event. Hence, the foreign deities [the nations’ ‘gods’] in the OT...have been appointed by YHWH over those foreign nations. This...is supported by the references to the ‘Prince of Greece’ & the ‘Prince of Persia’ in Daniel 10:20.” [Charlie Trimm, “Who Was Michael Heiser & What Did He Teach? Part 2,” Talbot School of Theology Faculty Blog, (April 26, 2025)]

### 4. The Lesser gods’ Corruption sows Chaos

- “...Yahweh expected better from the ‘lesser gods’ ...They should have abhorred being worshipped in place of their Sovereign [YAHWEH]...As the God of gods, the Creator, & Sovereign over creation, Yahweh is the only God worthy of worship by anyone, anywhere ...The role of the lesser gods was administration of the nations...God still wanted those created in His image to be ruled justly, not abused. At some point, the sons of God transgressed Yahweh’s desire for earthly order and just rule of His human imagers, sowing chaos in the nations. This is the distinct trajectory of Psalm 82, where the gods of the nations are [rebuked] by Yahweh for abusing their charges.” [Michael Heiser, Demons, p. ]
- In “Ps. 82:5 the corruption of the gods of the nations causes chaos on the earth: ‘all the foundations of the earth are shaken’ [82:5] ...[There’s] the idea...in the OT that creation was ‘broken and... threatened by disorderly supernatural beings and forces hostile to God & humankind’.” [Michael Heiser, Demons, p. ]
- “The gods charged with the rule of the nations became corrupt administrators and... sowed chaos in the heavenly realm as well. God created a world characterized by righteousness & well-

being (shalom). In Ps. 82 'the gods are condemned to death for their failure to carry out justice in the human realm...The cosmic realm also depends on justice in the social order...The very foundations of the cosmic order are shaken...[by] injustice'." [M. Heiser, Demons, p. ]

#### 5. God will Judge & Punish both Heavenly & Earthly Rulers (Isaiah 24:21)

- "...That day the Lord will punish the host of heaven, in heaven, and the kings of the earth, on the earth" (Is. 24:21)
- "Whereas many other texts reference a loyal heavenly host, this passage refers to an explicitly rebellious 'host,' punished for their evil. Punishment of this 'host of heaven' makes sense if they are morally responsible for evil [as the] celestial beings [rebel spiritual rulers] behind the 'kings of earth'." [John C. Peckham, Theodicy of Love, p.]

#### 6. Summary of God's Response to the 3rd Rebellion

- Due to "the disobedience of Noah's offspring in constructing the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9), God disinherited the nations & placed them under the authority of members of his divine council, but claimed Israel as his own (Deut. 4:19-20; 32:8-9; cf. Acts 17:26-27...). This is why Daniel speaks of spiritual rulers of certain nations (Dan. 10:12-14, 20-21), why Satan is able to offer Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world" (Matt. 4:8-9), why Paul asserts that Christ was exalted over every 'ruler, authority, power, & dominion' (Eph. 1:20-21; cf. 2:2; 3:10; 6:12; Col. 2:15; 1 Cor. 2:6-8), & why Pentecost reverses the curse of Babel, the disciples being sent to reclaim the nations as God's own inheritance (Acts 1:8; 2:1-21; cf. Luke 10:1, 17-20)." [Hans Moscicke, Op. cit., p. 137]

## V. 'Princes of Persia, & Greece:' Supernatural Beings governing Regions & Empires

### 1. The 'sons of God' (Deut. 32) equal 'Princes' in Daniel 10

- "After God gave the sons of God dominion over nations (Deut. 32:8-9), some governed corruptly and did not maintain loyalty to God...Paul used terms for evil powers ["rulers of this age" (1 Cor. 2:6, 8, cf. Eph. 3:10, & Eph. 2:2) that reflect the cosmic-geographical worldview...in Dt. 32:8-9. In Daniel 10:13, the Septuagint [Greek OT] uses the Greek term archonton to refer to...Michael as one of the chief 'princes'." [Dennis Linscomb, Op. cit., p. 18]

### 2. Cosmic Conflict in the Unseen Realm (Daniel 10)

- "In the third year of King Cyrus of Persia, a message was revealed to Daniel...The message was true and was about a great conflict. He understood the message and had understanding of the vision... [A heavenly angel said] 12 "Don't be afraid, Daniel...from the first day... your prayers were heard. I have come because of your prayers. 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia opposed me for twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me ... 14 Now I have come to help you understand... I must return...to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I leave, the prince of Greece will come. 21... (No one ...support[s] me against those princes except Michael, your prince...111 In the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to strengthen & protect him.) 40At the time of the end ...121 At that time Michael, the great prince who stands watch over your people [Israel], will rise up..." (Dan. 10:1, 12-14; 11:1, 40; 12:1)
- Note Dan. 11:1 "The antecedent of... "I" is the angel, not Daniel. The chapter division [is confusing]" NET. Note: "The 'first year of Darius the Mede' (539 BC) is significant...It's the year... the decree allowing the Jews to return was issued. 'I stood up to...strengthen him.' ...The interpreting angel had some role in these events." [ESV]. Persia was not solely influenced by the malevolent 'Prince of Persia'." God's messenger-angel intervenes to support Darius at this time.
- "Spiritual Powers in Conflict: [Dan 10 conveys] the understanding that reality consists of conflicting spiritual powers. Human conflicts reflect...clashes among the creatures of the spiritual realm. When Cyrus was king of Persia...a revelation [was] given to Daniel. 'The message was true and one of great conflict...' (10:1)." [Mark L. Richardson, "Jesus & the Sons of God Motif," Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (2022) p. 5]

### 3. The 'Princes' –Territorial Spiritual Powers– & Cosmic Conflict

- “Daniel 10 gives us one of the clearest windows into the invisible realm of spiritual warfare. The angelic messenger tells Daniel that he was delayed for 21 days by the “prince of Persia,” & afterward will face the “prince of Greece.” These “princes” are not earthly rulers—they are territorial spiritual beings who govern regions or empires. This reflects the divine council worldview, where God appointed spiritual entities over the nations after Babel (Deut. 32:8), & some of those entities rebelled, leading their assigned nations into idolatry & oppression. This passage also introduces the archangel Michael as Israel’s “prince,” implying that Israel is the only nation still under the direct protection of a faithful heavenly ruler loyal to Yahweh [–Michael]. The warfare described here is not metaphor—it is cosmic, influencing historical events. In 2nd Temple literature like 1 Enoch & Jubilees, this belief in national angels was widespread, & the idea of hostile regional spirits helps explain the geopolitical and spiritual resistance faced by God’s people. Daniel is allowed to glimpse the truth behind the curtain: history is not just humanity, it is spiritual, contested, & providential.” [D. Gene Williams Jr., “Context is King,” NorthPointe Church, Atlanta GA., pp. 20-21]
- Daniel “10 imagines a brief conflict between heavenly princes...[in the] ranks of divine beings. So, Michael & Gabriel oppose the prince of Persia in Dan. 10:13 & the princes of Persia & Greece in 10:20-21...This particular use of ‘princes’ likely reflects a tradition...that views divine beings as charged with overseeing different peoples. So, Dt. 32:8-9 explains the rule of the nations as distributed among the sons of God... [There’s a] widespread premise [in the ANE] that gods fight on behalf of humans & are responsible for their military victories ...[e.g.,] where YHWH fights alongside Israel against her human ...enemies (e.g. 2 Kings 18:33; 19:12).” [Emma Wasserman, “One Who Sows Bountifully,” p. 198]
- “The majority opinion of scholars is that the שרים [‘princes’] were in a battle of the gods & were patron deities, to whom Yahweh was believed to have given charge of the nations.” [Reuben E. Duniya, “שרים in Daniel 10:13, 20-21: Princes or Battle Commanders?” Acta Theologica, V. 41, #1, Bloemfontein (2021) p. ]
- Popular writers propose that “‘territorial spirits’ are higher-level spirits [which] exercise authority over geographical territories [vs. ‘ground-level’ demons]. In Dan. 10:13, 20-21...an angel has to deal with the ruling spirits called ‘princes’ of Persia & Greece. Many contemporary theologians contend that the territoriality of higher-level spirits is inherent in much of the OT.” [Russell Sharroch, Spiritual Warfare, p. 151]

### 4. Supernatural Cosmic Powers behind Geopolitical Nations & Empires

- “The heavenly counterparts of nations play an important role...in Daniel 10, where the angelic ‘princes’ of Persia & Greece do battle with Michael, ‘the prince of your people’ [Israel].” [John J. Collins, Apocalyptic Imagination, p. ]
- “In Daniel...each nation is ruled by its own particular angel, while Israel is ruled by Yahweh (... Dan. 10:13-14). God allows a succession of these nations & angels to prevail, but in the end the divine, universal Empire will replace them all.” [Joseph Laycock, Possession, Communion & Demon Expulsion across Cultures, p. ]
- A “cosmic worldview stems from texts such as Genesis 11, Deut. 32:8–9, & Daniel 10. Dt. 32:8–9 frames the conflict between Israel and the nations as a byproduct of God’s judgment of humanity at Babel, where the nations were allotted to lesser gods (elohim; אֱלֹהִים ), who are members of the heavenly host (cf. Dt. 4:19–20; 17:1–3; 29:23–26; 32:17). Daniel’s notion of cosmic powers behind geopolitical empires presumes this worldview (Dan 10). Paul’s description of cosmic powers of darkness in geopolitical dominion terms (e.g., ‘principalities, powers,’ [Eph. 6:12]) also presumes this worldview...Deut. 32:8–9 is a key passage for unlocking this understanding...” [Joel Muddamalle, Unseen Battle, p. ]

### 5. Rebellious Territorial Spirits – ‘Princes of Persia, Greece’

- “The concept of hostile angels associated with territories...has biblical support in Daniel 10:13, 20, 21, which speaks of a ‘prince of Persia,’ & a ‘prince of Greece’ struggling in heaven with the angel Michael, one of the ‘chief princes’ of the heavenly host.” [Clinton Arnold, 3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare, p. 147]

- “Daniel 10...is extremely significant because it presents a conflict between rebellious territorial spirits – the ‘prince of Greece’ & the ‘prince of Persia’ –& God’s angels, including the ‘chief prince,’ Michael. NT support for the concept is found in passages referring to the ‘ruler(s) or god of this world/age.’” [Michael Heiser, Demons, p.]
- “Daniel 10 is crucial for the... [concept] of cosmic powers over the peoples of the earth...The doctrine of [patron, guardian] angels set over the nations is found explicitly...in Daniel 10:13... This verse supposes... the notion of guardian angels over the nations &...the existence of angelic warfare in the heavens...The idea is expressed that each people [group] has a protective angel.” [David E Stevens, “Dan. 10 &... Territorial Spirits,” Biblio. Sacra, V. 157, p. 412]
- “‘Prince of the Persian kingdom’: the guardian angel of Persia. Michael was a warrior angel... ‘Prince of Greece’ the guardian angel of the Seleucid empire [i.e., Macedonian/Greek empire after Alexander the Great]. The guardian angels of Israel battle those of Persia & Greece in turn.” [JPS, Jewish Study Bible, p. 1662]

#### 6. Unseen Cosmic Conflicts behind Earthly Warfare

- “There’s a spiritual dimension to [earthly] geopolitical conflict (Dan. 10; Eph. 6:12). Nations are... have a spiritual counterpart or ‘prince’ that influences their actions & direction. The battle between good & evil is not just a human struggle but is also a cosmic one, with supernatural beings involved.” [Dale Moreau, Through Israelite Eyes, pp. 20-1]
- “What we can say is that some spiritual forces are associated with major nations or powers... Whatever conflicts are going on among the kings of the earth... something related is happening unseen among the celestial host.” [John R. Gilhooly, Angels & Demons, pp. ]

#### 7. Unseen Battles in the Cosmic Realm

- “Daniel 10-12 unfold the reality of conflict that rages in the [supernatural] scene...[There’s] ‘war in heaven between the angels of the nations which has its counterpart in events on earth’ (Lincoln).” [David E. Stevens, Op. cit., p. 428]
- “This passage...teach[es] that ‘all [Gentile] nations of the earth are given over into the control of angelic powers’... [The] heavenly conflict [in Daniel 10] was closely tied to the fate of nations and peoples...There appears to be a direct correspondence between the outcome of the angelic battles and the fortunes of the corresponding nations...Daniel himself could wield influence over the unseen angelic powers. The angel... visited Daniel...in response to his piety & prayer.” [Clinton E. Arnold, Powers of Darkness, p. ]
- “Daniel 10 bears an undertone of defiance on the part of the princes of Persia & Greece... They oppose Michael, Israel’s divine guardian under Yahweh. Daniel 10 coheres with Psalm 82. Second Temple period writers took note of this 3rd OT ...divine rebellion ...[after] the earlier rebellions in Genesis 3 & Genesis 6:1-4.” [Michael Heiser, Op. cit., p. ]

#### 8. Cosmic Conflict Mirrors Earthly Warfare

- “The book of Daniel...describe[s] events in the heavenly/cosmic realm. The conflict on earth is mirrored by warfare between angel figures and their opponents, who represent national enemies of Israel...This is most clearly expressed in [Daniel 10 where] a heavenly figure tells Daniel about the ‘prince of the kingdom of Persia...is taking his stand against me’ (10:13).” [Jesse Nickel, Things that Make for Peace, pp. 58-9]
- “Earthly battles against evil mirror and reenact cosmic battles against evil...For the ancient Israelites, there was no bifurcation [divergence] between what occurs ‘in heaven’ and what occurs ‘on earth’...What occurs on earth...is a replica and a mirror of what occurs in heaven.” [Gregory A. Boyd, Op. cit., pp. 88-90]
- “‘The OT assumes that the results of battles on earth reflect the involvement of heaven’ & ‘heavenly powers share in shaping the events of earthly history’.” [John E. Goldingay, Daniel, pp. 312-4]

#### 9. The ‘Prince of Persia (Iran)’ –Relevant Today?

- “This Prince of Persia is widely understood as a celestial [supernatural] ruler who is behind the human ruler... ‘The panoply of heavenly beings...involved bespeaks a cosmic struggle taking

place...parallel to the drama of human history' (Towner)...Here 'we have a clear case of spiritual conflict. On one side...God's powerful angelic army and on the other, 'the Prince of the Persian kingdom' (Longman)." [JC. Peckham, Op. cit., p]

- o "This ['prince's'] purpose was to manipulate & control decisions coming out of the Persian court that affected the whole empire. This was relevant to Daniel because the Jewish people at this time were under the authority of Persia. If the ['prince'] could turn the hearts of the Persian rulers against Judah &/or influence them to pass laws & commands detrimental to the Jews, then this would thwart God's program." –Daniel Tanner
- o "To [T. Longman] the prince of Persia is a supernatural being who fights on behalf of that human kingdom. G. Archer calls the prince of Persia a satanic agent delegated the sponsorship and control of the Persian realm." [Elizabeth D. Guntrip, ...Prince of Persia (Dan. 10:13), Australian Catholic University (2006) p. 97]
- o "The scholarly consensus is that the 'Prince of Persia' is a divine figure who...is opposing God's plan to work with Daniel...This 'prince' is probably...the 'god' assigned to this nation [Persia]... But, in the light of Psalm 82, this national prince seems to have grossly failed in his duties [Yet,] he is...still contending for the best interests of the Persian Empire, narrowly defined... [So,] he has a stake in censoring a message [to Daniel] that foretells the destruction of the Persian Empire...It is clear that the angels of the nations have a will of their own, & are capable of resisting the will of God." [Gregory A. Boyd, Op. cit., p. 137]
- o "The great majority of scholars view the 'prince of Persia' & the 'prince of Greece' (Dan. 10:20) as referring to spiritual beings who bear a measure of spiritual domain over their respective realms...'By analogy with Michael it is clear that the 'princes' of Greece & Persia are patron angels over these nations' (JJ. Collins) ...It may be reasonable to conclude that, the 'princes' of Dan. 10:13, 20 are of the same class as Paul's 'rulers of this age' (1 Cor. 2:6, 8)...[&] to equate [them] with the "sons of God" in Dt. 32:8." [D. Ritchie, Op. cit., p. 41]
- o It "may be the case the cosmic battle between the prince[s] of Persia...Greece, & the prince of Israel fore-shadows the earthly conflict between the Persians, Greeks, &...Judeans described in Dan. 11." –Phillip J. Long
- o Daniel 10 "suggests that each empire has its own heavenly prince & that they go to war against one another. Thus...the rise of Persia & Greece involves the defeat of Michael and Gabriel [& Israel?] ... Here, the princes of Persia & Greece are [ultimately] subordinate princes of the Empire of Heaven... The weakness & failure of Michael and Gabriel [is] very brief...[and] expresses the divine plan 'written in the book of truth' (10:21)." [Emma Wasserman, Apocalypse as Holy War, p. 84]
- o In "Daniel 10:13...reference is made to a spiritual struggle between Daniel's angelic messenger (possibly Gabriel) & the archangel Michael against 'the Prince of Persia.' The context leaves no room for interpreting this Prince as a human figure; it rather portrays him as "a peer of & counterpart to the angel Michael, who is the prince of Israel' (Towner)...Dan. 10:20 anticipates the [future] ascendancy of 'the Prince of Greece'... [Dan. 10] infer[s] that, for good or ill, [loyal & rebel] 'angels inspire [influence] human governments and their leaders' (SR. Miller)." [Matthew McGuire, "Mopping Up the Powers" (April 2022) pp. 3-4]

#### 10. Contemporary Application?

- o In Daniel 10 "the prince of Persia...refer[s] to an evil spiritual entity that wielded authority over the ancient kingdom of Persia... In this passage, 3 spiritual entities are mentioned in relation to 3 earthly nations: the prince of Persia, the prince of Greece, & the prince of Israel (Michael)... It seems that, as events play out on earth, there is corresponding activity in the spiritual realm. [It seems the prince of Persia's] job was to keep the Persian Empire in a place of dominance over... Israel. [Ultimately,] he failed. It is interesting to note that Iran is modern Persia, and the leaders of Iran still want to dominate or obliterate the nation of Israel. As a Shiite Muslim nation, Iran persecutes Christian believers as well—so perhaps the spiritual prince of Persia is still active today." ["Who is the Prince of Persia in Daniel 10?" GotQuestions.com]
- o "What we are seeing in Iran...is once again geopolitical spiritual warfare being played out... At the center of the bull's eye [target] are still people, made in the image & likeness of God..." –Joel

## Muddamalle

## 11. Michael the Archangel, 'Prince of God's people, Israel' (Jude 9; Dan. 10:21)

## a. Michael assigned to National Israel

- "Michael is designated an archangel (Jude 9) and is classified as 'one of the chief princes' (Dan. 10:13) ... belonging to a group of comparable...angels. ...He is assigned by God to Daniel's people, the nation of Israel. Thus, he is...called 'Michael your prince' (Dan. 10:21). Other nations may have their angelic princes, good or evil, but Michael is the defender of Israel." [C. Fred Dickerson, Angels: Elect & Evil, pp. ]

## b. Aiding &amp;/or Punishing Israel

- "The imperial nations [Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, serve] as God's agents for punishment of Israel." [Elizabeth D. Guntrip, Op. cit., p. 85]
- "Throughout Scripture, God sends His powerful spirits to dispense justice to the wicked. An angel, for e.g., spreads disease in 2 Samuel 24:26...Indeed, the celestial [angelic] spirits seemed to some to be more... punishers than as mediators...[meting out] the just [OT] punishment for the failures of God's people...[In] the era of the Law...angels [Michael & Co.] ...preside over the people of Israel, aiding and punishing them." [David Keck, Angels & Angelology in the Middle Ages, p. 39]

## c. Not as Subordinate, but as 'Commander of the Lord's Army' (Josh. 5:13-14)

- Joshua "saw a man standing...with a drawn sword...Joshua approached him & asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" "Neither," he replied. "I've now come as commander of the Lord's army." (Joshua 5:13-14)

## a. OT: Michael –Prince of God's people; Israel isn't victorious, but rather suffers (Dan. 11)

- "Dan 11:36-45 traces the efforts of several Gentile kings to establish themselves as world rulers. Israel [is] caught in the middle of these conflicts as the pre-eminent battleground, & all of this leads to "a time of distress such as never has occurred since nations came into being..." (12:1). Thus, this section describes the climax of the persecution at the hands of a Gentile power like what Israel was experiencing in Daniel's day...The vision reveals that Israel would be under the dominion of Persia, Greece, & then Rome," [George M. Harton, "Interpretation of Daniel 11:36-45," Grace Theolog. J., Vol 4.2 (1983) p. 206]

## b. NT: Michael– Prince of National Israel; but Jesus is Lord/Head of the Church

- "The Archangel in Scripture, is associated with Israel. No Archangel has been assigned to the church in the Bible (only the [physical] descendants of Abraham witnessed the Archangel) ...Daniel's '70th week,' a future event [prophesied] in Daniel 12...describes these end-time events [where] God specifically informs Daniel that "At that time Michael, the great prince who watches over your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress...But at that time your own people...whose names are found written in the book, will escape.' (Dan. 12:1 NET) ...1 Thess 4:18 is the actual fulfillment of Dan. 12:1 concerning Michael (he will arise & perform his duties on behalf of Israel)." [Eric J. Carlson, Decoding Spacetime..., p.]
- "Significantly, none of our extant [existing] sources [from the 2nd & 3rd centuries] argue that Michael is no longer patron of the Jews." [Darrell D. Hannah, Michael & Christ, p. 165]

## c. In the NT, Michael is Subordinated to Christ

- NT "References to Michael...correspond to the mention of this angel in early Jewish writings (Daniel...) Compared to early Jewish texts, the [NT] passages referring to Michael are rather scarce...In all texts he is subordinated to Christ, who ultimately judges & will accomplish the [end-time] victory." [Michael R. Jost, "Michael (Angel)," T. Romer (ed.) Encyclopedia of the Bible & its Reception, V. 18, p. 1125]
- In Revelation, "John views Michael as the angel who leads the heavenly hosts...&...who stands for the people of God against their Accuser...But, as a Christian, he views the work of Michael as subordinated and dependent upon that of Christ. Indeed, [John] mentions Michael only once & interprets his victory ...as participating & dependent upon Christ's [victory]." [Darrell D. Hannah, Michael & Christ, p. 130]

**VI. Jesus' Victory over Supernatural Evil Forces**

## 1. Jesus' Death, Resurrection, &amp; Ascension addresses the 3 Supernatural Rebellions

- “The death, resurrection, & ascension of Christ address the three supernatural rebellions.
  - a. The curse of death brought on by the original rebellion [Gen. 3] has been overturned. All who embrace the gospel & become members of the kingdom of Jesus will overcome death in their union with Him. They will enjoy resurrection & everlasting life in God’s family.
  - b. The Spirit of God residing in believers...blunts the human depravity proliferated by the transgression of the sons of God before the flood.
  - c. The territorial authority of the rebellious sons of God, allotted to them by the Most High in the judgment at Babel, has been withdrawn and nullified by the design of the Most High in the work of Jesus. They have no authority over humanity...” [Michael Heiser, Demons, p. ]

## 2. Christ Conquered the Cosmic Powers through the Cross (Col. 2:13-15)

- ‘In his letter to the Colossians, Paul points to the death of Jesus as God’s specific means for defeating the “powers” (Col 2:13-15), “erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nail[ed the record that stood against us] to the cross. He disarmed the rulers & authorities & made a public example of them, triumphing over them in [the cross].’ (Col. 2:14-15)...For the Gospel writers...Jesus’ crucifixion, the apparent success of Jesus’ opponents in their attempt to put him to death, is instead, paradoxically...the unmistakable pointer to his ultimate victory over the ‘powers’ arrayed against him.” [Dorothy J. Weaver, “Resistance & Nonresistance...Confronting the Powers,” HTS, V. 61 (1&2) 2005 p. 635]

## 3. Rule of the Powers (Princes) Delegitimized

- “The jurisdictional [legal] authority of these ‘sons of God’ [‘gods’] has been nullified by the resurrection & ascension of Christ.” –Michael Heiser
- “The jurisdictional [legal] authority of these [fallen] ‘sons of God,’ [territorial spirits] has been nullified by the resurrection & ascension of Christ. That reality...frames the Great Commission – the call to reclaim the nations (‘go & make disciples of all nations’ Mt. 28:19). The kingdom of darkness will lose...a spiritual war of attrition, for the ‘gates of Hell will not...withstand the church’. This is why believers are never commanded to rebuke [territorial] spirits & demand their flight in the name of Jesus. It is unnecessary. Their authority has been withdrawn by the Most High... Believers... [further God’s purpose] by recruiting citizens in those territories for the kingdom of God.” [Michael S. Heiser, Demons, p. ]
- “Jesus never commanded...his [NT] followers [to] confront spiritual entities. Instead, he gave the great commission. A spiritual entity might be driven away, but that doesn’t necessarily result in a new soul entering the kingdom of God. The latter goal is the reason Jesus gave his life & rose from the dead. The work of Christ was not [merely] ...power encounters with demons. It’s much more comprehensive & enduring than that. The goal was ...fulfilling God’s desire to have a human family with Him forever. Punishing fallen spirits does not accomplish God’s original...goal. Only the Great Commission accomplishes [this].” [M. Heiser, Demons, p]
- “The powers...have a strong association with the nations of the world. [They] are ‘territorial spirits’ that rule over the gentile nations, enslaving them to idolatry & unbelief. However, because of the work of Christ, the rule of the powers over the gentile nations has been delegitimized...‘Consequently, part of the good news of the gospel to those under the gods’ dominion was that they are free to turn from those gods & embrace Jesus’ (Heiser).” [David A. Ritchie, Why Do the Nations Rage? p. 14]

## 4. Already/Not Yet: Dark Powers Delegitimized, but still active

- “At the cross, the dark powers were disarmed, but they did not dissolve. These dark powers have been stripped from their ability to blind the nations. But they can still deceive & manipulate humanity...” – Joel Muddamalle
- “Christ’s triumph over the powers: By his resurrection & ascension, Christ has delegitimized the authority the powers once held over the peoples of the world. Many of those [people] who were once under the cosmic tyranny of anti-god spiritual forces are now being included into the people of God. Because Christ has been given all authority in heaven & earth —an authority he reclaimed from the [supernatural] powers— disciples can now be made from all nations (Mt. 28:19) ...While Christ has most certainly defeated the powers through his redemptive

accomplishment, those powers are still at work in the world, and they are capable of deluding and deceiving the people of God.” [David A. Ritchie, Interview re: his book: Why Do the Nations Rage?]

- “When he rose from the dead, Jesus returned to a world still permeated with the contagion of sin. Satan’s claim on the souls of humanity and the ruling authority of the powers of darkness had been nullified. But these events were only the inauguration of a long struggle against cosmic opposition. The powers of darkness [‘princes,’ ‘gods of the nations’] refused to surrender.” [Michael S. Heiser, World Turned Upside Down, p. ]
- “Paul believed that society was controlled by angelic rulers who, though corrupt & doomed to lose their power, retained [their power] as long as the present age lasted the stamp of their original God-given authority ... Paul inherited [the view] that the angelic guardians of pagan nations exercise delegated authority...” [GB. Caird, Principalities & Powers, pp. 22-23]

#### 5. Should NT Believers’ Directly Confront Territorial Spirits?

- NT Believers’ “confrontation of the spirit world isn’t the pattern that one sees in the NT with regard to the defeat of the fallen sons of God (‘principalities’ [‘territorial spirits’]).” [Michael S. Heiser, Demons, p. ]
- “The events of Daniel 10 took place in 535 BC...The Greek Empire did not surface until...200 years later. For the next 2 centuries, the Persian Empire [was] the dominant power in the ANE... The text does not teach that Daniel, by his prayer, was able to bind, cast down, or evict the Persian prince –he remains powerfully influential for 200 years. Of course, casting down a territorial ruler was not the objective of Daniel’s prayer anyway... We...learn... the angelic powers are intimately involved with earthly kingdoms. Daniel models... earnest intercessory prayer to our Almighty Father on behalf of the people of God. This made a dramatic difference.” [Clinton Arnold, Op. cit., p. 155]
- “The biblical and historical evidence supports the idea that there are ‘territorial spirits.’ These fallen angels ...wield some kind of dominion over people groups, empires, countries, [etc.] ... [But,] the evidence does not...suggest a strategy for dealing with territorial spirits [e.g., ‘Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare’ by] naming the powers, rebuking them, or trying a cast them out of a region.” [C. Arnold, Op. cit., pp. 159-160]
- “The Bible nowhere narrates, describes, or instructs us on how, or even whether, we are to engage...high-ranking territorial spirits...The silence of Scripture on the issue of strategy is quite evident...[We] find no mention of a strategy that stresses discerning, naming, & praying down territorial spirits ...[This absence] should cause us to pause & reflect on just how important or key this new strategy is” [Arnold, Op. cit., p. 161]
- “God has not given us the responsibility of directly engaging territorial spirits. It’s...not necessary for us to discern them, name them, & try to cast them out. We are called to continue proclaiming the Word [of the Gospel] in the power of the Spirit & ministering the kingdom of God. We can have confidence that God will deal with these high-ranking spirits as he sees fit, just as he did with Daniel ...‘We should note that Daniel never engages or prays against the spiritual enemies about which the celestial beings [Daniel’s angelic messenger] speak[s]. He leaves these matters to God (T. Longman).” [Clinton Arnold, Op. cit., p. 185]
- What is “the extent of the believer’s authority to ‘cast out’ territorial spirits”? ‘We do not have the right to directly command a demon [‘prince,] to leave a city, territory or country.’” –Clinton Arnold [Simone M. Twibell, “Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare: Theological Assessment,” Mediator, Vol. 15, #1 (2020) p. 99]
- “Passages such as...2 Peter 2:10-12 seem to caution believers about speaking against angelic or fallen angels ...Peter admonishes believers who are ‘not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings’ [‘glorious ones’ which] almost certainly refers to angelic beings] (2 Pet. 2:10).” [Simone M. Twibell, Op. cit., p. 99]

## VII. How Should We Pray?

## 1. Pray &amp; Petition for All Christian Believers (Eph. 6:10-18)

- “10 Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens. 13 For this reason take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. 14 Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest, 15 and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace. 16 In every situation take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit—which is the word of God. 18 Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints [believers].” (Eph. 6:10-18 CSB)

## 2. Example: Watchman Nee’s Prayer at the 1938 Keswick Convention

- “In 1938, the year following the full-scale Japanese invasion [of China] & the Nanjing Massacre in 1937, Watchman Nee made his second trip to Europe and attended the annual Keswick convention in England.” [“Jia Yuming’s & W. Nee’s Approaches to...Spirituality,” in C. Starr (ed.) *Modern Chinese Theologies*, V. 2, p. 154]
- Watchman Nee’s prayer at the 1938 Keswick Convention’s Missionary Meeting was uttered against the backdrop of the Sino-Japanese War. Attendees “had just been hearing of the war havoc, & of the unspeakable sufferings of China.” Watchman Nee prayed:
- “The Lord reigns. He is reigning, and He is the Lord of all. Nothing can touch His authority. It is the spiritual forces that are out to destroy the interests of the Lord in China & Japan. We do not pray for Japan. We do not pray for China. But we pray for the interests of Your Son in China & Japan. We do not blame any men. They are only tools in the hand of the enemy of the Lord. Lord, we stand in Your will. Lord, shatter the Kingdom of darkness. Lord, the persecution of Your Church is persecuting You.” [David Woodbridge, *Missionary Primitivism & Chinese Modernity*, p. 66]
- Cosmic: “Prince of Persia” <-> “Prince of US”? and Michael: “Prince of Israel” JESUS Earthly: IRAN (Persia) <-> United States and Nation of Israel CHURCH