



Biblaridion

Sons of God

*"Deuteronomistic theology as an interpretive model for the 'Sons of God' in
Genesis 6:1-4"*

Introduction

The 'Sons of God' passages and the descriptions of the 'divine council' offer some of the most problematic hermeneutical challenges to Old Testament exegetes. Many of the Biblical themes find their counterpart in ancient Canaanite and Ugaritic mythopoetic texts, where the 'Sons of God' form a pantheon of 'gods' under the auspices of a 'high god.' However, unless one redefines monotheism [\[1\]](#) exercises in comparative philology leave the Old Testament open to the charge of polytheism, even if it is only a "hidden polytheism." [\[2\]](#) The Hebrew Bible circumvents this problem by understanding the '*elohim*' as angels; as the 'divine council' motif is not encountered in second temple Judaism, many scholars regard this as a natural evolution of Biblical theology from polytheism to a more monotheistic faith. This solution leads to different theological problems, for if the '*elohim*' are angels, how can they rebel against God? Rebellion may have been a common enough occurrence among the pantheon of gods in Canaanite mythology but the Hebrew God is omnipotent and his angels are

ministering spirits. In order to resolve this conundrum it is implicit that '*elohim*' sometimes refers to angels and sometimes to humans, but is this a valid theological position – and more importantly does it survive the scrutiny of textual criticism?

While this article acknowledges that much of the metaphor used in the Old Testament is drawn from the A.N.E. [3] it will seek to demonstrate that the passages in question are of a uniquely monotheistic character. The validity (or otherwise) of applying '*elohim*' (and "Sons of God") to humans (as well as angels) will also be examined – and an attempt will be made to establish the hermeneutical warrant for doing so.

He shall be my son (2 Sam.7:14)

There can be no doubt that the Deuteronomist envisaged the fulfilment of the covenant promises in a 'human' descendant of David. In the first instance this descendant or 'Son of God' was Solomon:

"I will be his father, and he shall be my son." (2 Sam.7: 14)

There is of course a qualitative *and* quantitative difference between the 'sonship' of Jesus and that of Solomon, nevertheless, the Davidic covenant model (with Solomon as the first realization) [4] functions as an important insight **into the Deuteronomist's understanding of Genesis**. A tabular comparison of the corresponding Genesis motifs, demonstrates an undeniable connection:

Genesis	Solomon in Deuteronomistic literature
Let us make man in our image, after our likeness (Gen.1:26)	I will be his father and he shall be my son (2 Sam. 7: 14)
Tree of the knowledge of Good and evil. Ye shall be as Elohim knowing good and evil (Gen.3: 5)	Wisdom— Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil.... (1 Kgs.3: 9)
The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. (Gen.6:2)	Solomon loved many strange women (1Kgs.11:1)
Namaah (Gen.4:22)	Namaah [the mother of Rehoboam](1 Kgs.14: 21)

It is apparent from the above that the Deuteronomist understood the Genesis account as referring to 'divine' kingship, where the king acts as God's agent. Of particular interest are the 'knowledge of good and evil' motif, and the mention of Namaah (which is not a coincidence). The acquisition of the 'knowledge of good and evil' is initially what made Adam god-like (like the *elohim*). This "knowledge" is associated in the Old Testament with passing judgement [5] and therefore also has correspondences with the 'divine council' whose primary function is to implement righteous judgement. David was likened to the angel [6] of God in his function as judge – his insight was recognised as the product of divine guidance not of human reasoning:

“For as an [the] angel [*mal’âk*] of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad: therefore the Lord thy **God will be with thee** [*cf.* Emmanuel]” (2 Sam.14: 17)

The Genesis account (4:23-25) has Lamech usurping the prerogative of ‘discerning good and evil’ and boasting that his own judgement on wrongdoers will be 77 (**LXX** 70x7) times more severe (without mercy) than God’s. The insertion of the Lamech poem at this point in the narrative and his boast **to his wives** comes directly after the mention (v.22) of Lamech’s **daughter** Naamah (**pleasant one**):

“The Sons of God saw the daughters of men that they **were fair**; [*towb*] and they **took** [*laqach*] **them** wives of all which they chose” (Gen.6: 2) [\[7\]](#)

The Lamech poem is not an independent literary unit inserted randomly in the narrative - nor is the mention of Naamah coincidental, rather it is imperative to understanding the ‘Sons of God’ incident. Lamech was the first polygamist, thus breaking the divine wish for man to be a monogamous creature. He is also found boasting to his wives of passing judgment and avenging himself because a young man had hurt (dishonoured) him. He was proud of his disproportionate response. What had this young man done? The context implies that he had dishonoured Lamech by **taking his daughter** – which explains the mention of her name (the mention of females in a generation list is a very unusual feature) [\[8\]](#) and also why he addressed his warning poem **to his wives**. The forcible recruitment of female concubines to the royal harem was a common practice in the A.N.E. witness the problem that Abraham had with Sarah and Isaac with Rebecca. David J. A. Clines discusses this option in his article on the Sons of God Episode: “The ‘sons of

God' are dynastic rulers who, as oriental despots, established royal harems by force or practised indiscriminate rape. This view has the merit of taking seriously the phrase 'and they took for themselves wives from all whom they chose'. It also makes intelligible the divine punishment upon humanity as a whole because of the sin of these despots; for in oriental ideology it is not uncommon for the fate of the people at large bound up with the fate of the king." [9]

This domination and self-assertion of the strong over the weak probably forms the basis of the vision in Daniel 2:43; *"iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men (cf. daughters of men): but they shall not cleave one to another"* and most definitely forms the background to the warning in Luke 17:27, for ordinary marriage was sanctified by God; *"They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all."*

Of course, we cannot discount that we are dealing with hierogamy, for hierodules were common in ancient Sumeria. The priestesses of Inanna were known to be hierodules. [10] Mitigating against this is the likelihood that the hierodules were voluntary, and a measure of force is present in our scenario. The A.N.E. sex-cults were an act of self-divinization, joining oneself to the 'god' and therefore perpetuating the fertility of the agricultural cycle.

A remarkable parallelism can be observed between the poetic boast of Lamech and the humiliation of Dinah in Genesis 34, when Shechem **took her** (v.2) as his wife (cf. Gen.6: 2) and her brothers

(Simeon and Levi) exacted a disproportionate revenge. Their father Jacob cursed them for their treachery:

"Simeon and Levi are brethren! Instruments of violence—their espousals! Into their secret, come not, O my soul! Unto their assembly be not united, O my honour; for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self will eradicate a prince" (Gen.49: 5-7). [Youngs Literal Translation]

It seems that Jacob is using Lamech's poem as the basis for his curse as both poems use a similar parallelism:

"For **a man I have slain** for my wound,
even a **young man** for my hurt" (Gen.4:23b YLT)

"For in their anger they **slew a man**,
and in their self-will eradicated **a prince.**" (Gen.49:7b YLT)

Our initial tentative conclusion is that the Deuteronomist modelled the downfall of Solomon on the 'Sons of God' apostasy in Genesis 4 and that for the Deuteronomist this apostasy was **characterised by the rebellion of the recipients of "divine knowledge."**

The acquisition of divine knowledge

It is the acquisition of divine knowledge (the knowledge of good and evil) that made man *'like the elohim'*:

"And the Lord God said, 'Behold, **the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil**, now lest he put forth

his hand, and also eat of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever'....." (Gen.3: 22).

In some way man became 'like the elohim' through the acquisition of his newly acquired knowledge. However, God set limits to human knowledge by limiting his lifespan. **[11]** Only God is outside the space-time continuum and 'declares the end from the beginning' (Isa.46: 10) and is therefore the font of all knowledge. The Genesis account narrates how man sought to circumvent these boundaries through means of civilisation (Gen.4: 20-22) and cooperation (Genesis 11:1-9), thereby passing on accumulated knowledge. But the 'knowledge of good and evil' is not just scientific and technical knowledge but is specifically concerned with morality and judgement.

The divine council (gathering of the 'Sons of God') is portrayed in the Old Testament as operating in the sphere of morality and jurisprudence, ('knowledge of good and evil') whether that is allowing Job to be tested (Job 1: 6-12) or allowing a false prophet to test Israel (1 Kgs.22: 19-23) or even prosecuting Joshua in the 'heavenly court' (Zech.3: 1-3).

Sons of God or Sons of Israel?

The 'divine council' (Sons of God) in scripture virtually always refers to a gathering of God and his *elohim* (we will leave the question as to whether or not they are angels to one side for the moment). If this is the case, do we have a hermeneutical warrant

for applying the pericope in Genesis 6 to humans? It is again to the Deuteronomist that we turn for clarification, for Deuteronomy 32:8-9 relates that the bounds of the nations were pre-determined according to the 'Sons of Israel.' The language used in these verses is reminiscent of the 'divine council' – the 'bounds of the people' were set in Genesis 10-11 where 70 nations are enumerated. Thus, God seemingly allocates 70 units of nations for the 70 'Sons of Israel' who had entered Egypt some 400 years earlier (Gen.46: 27). Michael S. Heiser comments: In Ugaritic mythology there were 70 sons of El (*KTU* 1.4: VI 46). El was "the highest king of a series of kings over various aspects of the universe," while Asherah was a "Queen Mother" figure. The second tier included the "royal children," the seventy sons of Athirat and El. These offspring (*bn 'il / 'ilm*) were recognised as gods (*'ilm*) but their authority was granted them by the level of highest authority. [\[12\]](#)

Michael Heiser produces a convincing argument in his article on Deuteronomy that the LXX reading 'Sons of God' (in Deut.32:8) is to be preferred above the MT reading 'Sons of Israel.' [\[13\]](#) While we might agree with his text critical methodology, we do not agree with the conclusions drawn from this textual variant, namely that the redactors of Deuteronomy 'sanitised' the text and removed any pluralistic tendencies to make the text exclusivist monotheistic. The exchangeability between the phrases 'Sons of God' and 'Sons of Israel' points us in another direction – namely, that Israel was meant to be the manifestation of divine governance on earth, a theme that pervades the Old Testament and is adopted by Christ in the New Testament.

Cosmonogy in the Old Testament

As we have highlighted in previous Biblaridion articles, [\[14\]](#) Israel functioned as a microcosm of the heavenly sanctuary with Yahweh enthroned in the midst of the nation. The Tabernacle was modelled on the Garden of Eden, which itself was symbolic of the 'heavenly sanctuary.' Israel becomes a nation of 'kings and priests' with **70 spirit endowed 'judges.'** The nation *effectively becomes the 'divine council' on earth* with God dwelling in the midst. The legendary 70 elders of Israel were the forerunners of the Jewish ruling council or **Sanhedrin** (=the seventy).

There is no doubt that A.N.E. mythology and metaphor is used as a vehicle to express profound realities, but how else were these ideas to be communicated to the ancients? [\[15\]](#) Even after the death of Joshua the Canaanites were enacting a corruption of the 'divine council':

Then Adoni-Bezek said, "**Seventy kings** with their thumbs and big toes cut off have picked up scraps under my table. Now God has paid me back for what I did to them."
(Judges 1:7 NIV)

This demonstrates that 'divine council' metaphor was enduring and pervasive in the A.N.E. - God commanded the Israelites to make a Tabernacle in symbolism that was readily recognisable to the surrounding peoples and used the currency of common metaphor to sanctify seventy 'elohim.' The 'seventy' received an outpouring of the spirit thus enabling them to operate in the sphere of morality and jurisprudence (the knowledge of good and evil) and act as

divine agents in judging the people of Israel (with the intention of eventually judging the surrounding nations).

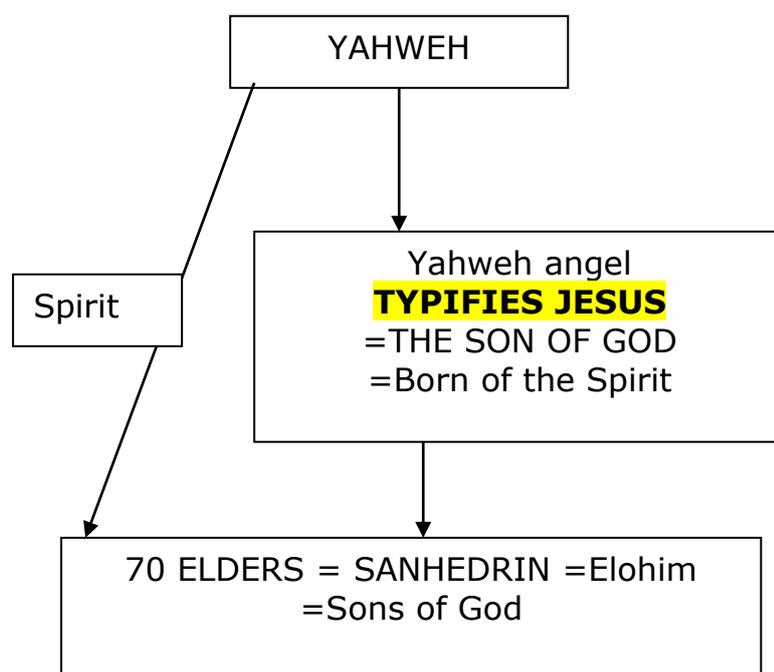
Divine council terminology in the N.T.

Jesus also appointed **70 disciples** and endowed them with the spirit (Luke 10:1-18). The parallels with the Exodus account are obvious – Jesus had just descended the mount where he had communed with Moses and Elijah. When his disciples reported on the success of their mission it was in the language of the divine council (this time Isa.14: 12), that Jesus described their victory, "*I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven*" (more on this anon). Jesus' ministry was perceived as a threat to the authority of the Sanhedrin. Surely, they were the seventy appointed to judge Israel. This explains why Jesus responds to the charge of equality with God by using the 'divine council' language of Psalm 82 –which in Jewish midrashim [\[16\]](#) is associated with the reception of the law at Sinai. It is perhaps useful to quote Psalm 82 in full (KJV):

¹God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.²How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah. ³Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. ⁴Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.⁵They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. ⁶I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.⁷But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. ⁸Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.

Michael Heiser comments as follows: " Jesus does not view the plural elohim of Psalm 82:1 as mere humans, and there's a reason this is so. The reason he quotes this verse is NOT to claim he's just a man who can call himself a god like other men –it's to claim deity as a son of the Most High, and to DISTINGUISH himself from the other sons." [17] Heiser understands this as Jesus claiming to be equal with God (and logically superior to the sons of God) i.e. Jesus was not just another "god" but entirely unique amongst the "gods" (Heiser does not necessarily view elohim as the same as angels).

It is a pity that Trinitarian bias influences his otherwise forensic analysis; unfortunately he is not alone in allowing presuppositions to lead his conclusions. Heiser is entirely correct that Jesus was emphasizing his unique status – for Jesus bore the YAHWEH NAME in the same manner that the wilderness angel did. We might represent this diagrammatically as follows:



This is not the language of incarnation but of **manifestation** or *phanerosis*. [18] Jesus had come to lead a new Exodus – out of sin and death and he bore the Yahweh name. [19] He did not pre-exist [an oxymoron] in some mystical way as the wilderness angel; rather the *Yahweh* angel (Ex.23: 21) **typified** Jesus. When Moses spoke to the angel face to face it was the same as speaking to God (Ex.33: 11), **yet no one can see God and live** (Ex.33: 20). In the same way Jesus was the manifestation of God in action (John 14: 8, 9) – anyone who saw Jesus had seen God (this is the language of agency). The Sonship of Jesus was therefore both unique and superior to that of the Sanhedrin in the same way that the wilderness angel was to the seventy elders. The elders may well have received the spirit thereby making them *elohim*, but Jesus was **born of the spirit**. He was still subordinate to God (in the same way that the wilderness angel was) but he was the fullest manifestation of Yahweh in human form that it is possible to have. The Sanhedrin claimed that God was their Father, yet they failed to recognise the status of the one who was sent. During his trial Jesus again uses ‘divine council’ language to emphasise the superior status of his Sonship over the sonship of the Sanhedrin (Dan 7:13). Their failure to acknowledge his unique relationship to the Father parallels the Korah rebellion, which was ultimately not a challenge to the authority of Moses but to Yahweh himself.

Divine Council language is also appropriated by the apostle Paul in Romans 8 to demonstrate that the saints are now also ‘Sons of God’; note his use of **manifestation** (*apokalupsis*) in this context:

¹⁴For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. ¹⁵For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. ¹⁶The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: ¹⁷And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. ¹⁸For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. ¹⁹For the earnest expectation of the creature (*ktisis* = creation) waiteth for the manifestation (*apokalupsis*) of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creature (creation) was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, ²¹Because the creature (creation) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

For the apostle the 'Sons of God' are led by the Spirit, but this Spirit does not lead to slavery and fear (as it did at Sinai when they received the law and they feared [cf. Heb.12: 21] and the 70 elders' appointment as judges [elohim] was sanctified by the Spirit), but they received the Spirit of adoption (*huiiothesia*). [20] They were no longer slaves but sons. The Pauline use of the term creation (*ktisis*) is probably a metaphor for the nation of Israel that God had "created" through the Exodus experience. Paul uses more 'divine council' language when he refers to Zechariah 3, where Joshua (the first post-exilic priest) is prosecuted in the heavenly court in order to determine his fitness to function as mediator. Surely the Babylonian captivity had made him unclean and rendered him unfit for office?

Romans 8	Zechariah 3
³³ Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.	¹ And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.
³⁴ Who is he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.	² And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?

The scene is set in the heavenly court with the angel for the defence and the angel for the prosecution (Satan) and Yahweh presiding as the judge. Can anyone lay anything to the charge Joshua-Jesus? Note that in verse 34 **[It is]** is not in the original Greek – the verse should read: *Who is he that condemneth Christ that died? Yea, rather, that is risen again.....* Paul concludes the chapter with a reference to the 'divine council':

³⁸For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, **nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers,** nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

For Paul the angels, principalities and powers are his description of the 'divine council' or 'heavenly court' scene in Zechariah 3. Satan is possibly the 'power' elsewhere called "a ruler of this world"

(Eph.6: 2) – the “angel of death” or destroyer who amongst other tasks destroyed the first born in Egypt (Ephesians 6 is shot through with Passover allusions). As the Talmud explains (Bava Basra 16a) the Satan, the evil inclination, and the angel of death are all one and the same. He first comes to test and challenge the person. If the person fails and does wrong, he will be the accuser in the heavenly court and eventually will be the punishing angel of death to meet out the punishment. Principalities are probably “archangels” who had particular “dominions” such as Michael who was responsible for Israel (1Thess. 4:16; Jude 1:9; 2 Esdr. 4:36 *cf.* ‘chief prince’ in Dan 10:13)

Textual absurdities?

In his article Divine Council 101: The *elohim* of Psalm 82 – gods or men? Michael Heiser considers the following passages under the heading: *Logical Considerations – Avoiding Textual Absurdities Created by the “human” view of elohim*:

Psalm 8:4-5

What is man, that you (God) art mindful of him? And the son of man, that you visit him? For you (God) have made him (humanity) a little lower than the elohim and have crowned him with glory and honor.

Absurdity #1- God made humanity a little lower than humans? Huh?

The “Son of man” is a self-designation appropriated by Jesus, to denote his solidarity with, and representation of man. Adam was a “Son of God”; indeed, he could not be a “Son of man” as he was the *first* man. In being a “Son of God” Adam was already in a position of elevated status, yet he was lower in status than the other “Sons of God” – but uniquely he possessed freewill, which he exercised in

an act of rebellious self-divinisation – to become like the *elohim* (something Jesus refused to do). Adam (the “Son of God”) was made slightly inferior to the other “Sons of God.” Dunn comments: “Insofar as ‘son of God’ contains some affirmation of divinity or relation to deity it obviously overlaps with two other words of similar connotation – the adjective ‘*divine*’ and the noun ‘*god*’.....In broad terms ‘*divine*’ evidently meant something or someone related in some way to God or the gods; and where the heavenly was thought to be in continued interaction with the earthly its application to human beings covered the full range of this interaction.” [\[21\]](#) We would posit that the word ‘*elohim*’ functions in the same way, and contains “some affirmation of divinity or relation to deity” – this does not mean that when man is referred to as ‘*elohim*’, that he is God with a capital G, but as Dunn remarks- “Rather more striking is that the king or judges in Israel seem on one or two occasions to be called ‘*gods*’ even within the OT itself (Ps.45.6; 82.6; cf. Ex.21.6; 22.8; Isa.9.6f.) a significant factor when we recall how these Psalms passages are used in reference to Jesus in Heb 1.8 and John 10.34f.” In Psalm 8:4-5 the context clearly demands that ‘*elohim*’ applies to angels – but does this mean that we can extrapolate this usage and *always* apply it to angels?

Psalm 86:6

Among the *elohim* [there is] none like unto you, O Lord; neither [are there any works] like unto thy works.

Absurdity #2 – Among humans there is none like Yahweh, the Lord- now there’s a revelation. Again, why muddy the waters and use *elohim* if the comparison was to humans.

Again, the context demands reference to angels – no one is arguing that ‘*elohim*’ always refers to humans (in fact it only refers to

humans in very specific cases). This is a *reductio ad absurdum* – and does no justice to proper investigation. It is perhaps opportune that this example (along with the others) allows us to clarify another of Heiser’s misconceptions; namely that ‘*elohim*’ refers to minor ‘gods’ (as it does in Ugaritic literature) rather than angels. The formula – **none is like unto you** (Ps.89: 6 above) **who is like unto you?** (Ex.15: 11 below) **Who among the sons of the *elim*/gods can be likened to the Lord?** (Ps.89: 6 further below) are a play on the name of the **angel** Michael (who is like God?). This demonstrates that although the ‘divine council’ metaphor may be from the A.N.E. we should not fall into the trap of absolute correspondences – the Jews certainly did not understand ‘*elohim*’ as minor gods, but as ministering spirits.

Exodus 15:11

Who [is] like unto you, O Lord, among the *elim*/gods? Who [is] like you, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

Absurdity #3 – Can you see Moses crying and saying this after crossing the Red Sea? That Yahweh is greater than other men? The whole point is that Yahweh had defeated the gods of Egypt and was incomparable.

Exodus 15 is a victory song celebrating Yahweh’s defeat of the Egyptians. **Elim** is therefore a reference to the ‘gods’ of Egypt, Pharaoh himself was considered a ‘god’ (wasn’t he human?). [\[22\]](#) It is the context that determines the meaning. In the same chapter we have the following unusual verse: “*And they came to **Elim**, where there were **twelve springs** of water and **seventy palm trees...**” (v.27). This clearly anticipates the gathering of the twelve tribes to Sinai, where the seventy elders were appointed as ‘Elim’.*

In the previous verses we twice had reference to bitterness (Miriam v.21) and (Marah v.23, 24) in relation to the Egyptian experience which is described as bitter (Ex.1: 14), but Yahweh has now sweetened the experience and the redactor anticipates the outpouring of the Spirit (water of life) onto the seventy elders (*elim*) at Sinai. Yahweh will establish a new hierarchy – a ‘divine council’ on earth and will dwell amongst his people in the Tabernacle. It is therefore the context that determines the meaning – this is the first principle of hermeneutics.

Psalm 89:6

For who in the heavens can be compared to the Lord? [who] among the sons of the *elim*/gods can be likened to the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones, and to be revered by all [them that are] around him.

Absurdity #4 – So, Yahweh cannot be compared to humans in heaven? He’s superior to humans in heaven? No kidding. The context is clearly beings in the heavens (those “around God” – that place where the gods were thought to live). Again why muddy the waters and use *elim* if the comparison was to humans. The waters aren’t muddied here – the scene is in heaven, and God is being shown superior to other gods (many of whom fell and had to be judged in Psalm 82).

The *Sitz im Leben* of this Psalm is the installation of the ark at Jerusalem under king David; “*The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fullness thereof, thou hast founded them.*” (v.11). The expression, “the world and the fullness thereof” is always associated with the cherubim throne, representative of divine glory **manifested in creation.** [23] Even a casual reading demonstrates that the Psalmist is contrasting two distinct groups –

the saints and the 'divine council'; "*And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints*" (v.5). In other words, God's cherubim throne does not exclude any part of his creation from manifesting his glory—either in the heavens or on earth (or under the earth for that matter; for God raises the dead). Once again this is a *reductio ad absurdum* – the text itself is clear in differentiating when it speaks about humans and when it speaks about heavenly beings.

Lucifer in the divine council?

Elsewhere Michael Heiser refers to the "shining one" in Isaiah 14 and believes that this is the correct interpretation for "one of the princes" in Psalm 82:7. Beneath we collate material from two different papers:

Isaiah 14:12-15 refers to a divine being (*hêbel ben shahar*; "Shining One, son of Dawn"). Since Isaiah 14:12-15 is considered conceptually parallel to Ezek.28:1-19, where a description of the well-watered garden, Eden, is also referred to as the cosmic mountain (see below), it may be presumed that those beings which reside or meet at the cosmic mountain were considered luminous. [Introduction to Divine Council Scholarship and Terminology] ".....It is quite telling that the notion above in Psalm 82:7 of the elohim "falling" like "one of the Shining Ones" is found "in a specific episode of Canaanite mythology, in which the fall of the bn srm ("sons of the shining ones") of the heavenly congregation was depicted." Third, the fact that the psalm speaks of rendering justice to the poor and needy does not argue for human judges, since the council terminology from Sumer, Akkad, and Ugarit "referred originally to the political organ of primitive democracy, a phenomenon which can be discerned in the pantheons

of various non-Israelite cultures” Lastly, verses such as Isaiah 24: 21 (“In the day the Lord will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below”) clearly distinguish between the divine beings of Yahweh’s host and earthly rulers.” [note 47] Like “one of the princes” as like “one of the shining ones.” While there may be some question that the verbal *sararu* may not be used with shine as its meaning, the adjective *sarūru* certainly does mean “shining”, as evidenced by its use to describe the planet Venus in astronomical texts. [Deut.32:8 and the Sons of God]

Once again, context is everything. The “shining one” (or Lucifer) is indeed the planet Venus – and represented the goddess of war Ishtar who had a centre of worship E-mash-mash, “house of offerings” in Nineveh the capital of Assyria (The meaning of Ishtar is not known, though it is possible that the underlying stem is the same as that of Assur, which would thus make her the “leading one” or “chief”). She was invoked as a goddess of war, battles, and the chase, particularly among the warlike Assyrians. Before the battle Ishtar would appear to the Assyrian army, clad in battle array and armed with bow and arrow. [24] The *Sitz im Leben* of this chapter (and much of the Isaiah prophecy) is the invasion – and declaration of “holy war” (*cf.* Jihad) by the Assyrian king Sennacherib. [25] This was a direct competition between Yahweh and the gods of Assyria. The narrative recounts how the Assyrian army was destroyed overnight by Yahweh and how Sennacherib was assassinated by his sons when worshipping in his temple (contrast Hezekiah saved after his act of worship). Therefore, Yahweh punished both the “god (s)” of Assyria = “the powers in the heavens” and the “kings on the earth below” = Sennacherib and Rabshakeh etc. Does this mean that the Bible is preaching polytheism (did Yahweh really dethrone Ishtar in heaven?) or is it the language of accommodation? After all Elijah used the same

technique against the prophets of Baal – he taunted them – Is Baal taking a nap? Perhaps he is on a long journey? It is not unusual to find the prophet Isaiah communicating with the invading enemy in language that they understood. [26] Psalm 82 should be understood against this background (the reign of Hezekiah and the Assyrian invasion). Hezekiah was on his sickbed during the invasion and was a prototype for the “suffering servant” – God raised him up on the third day! Hezekiah’s pro-Assyrian enemies (Shebna? Isa.22: 15-19 cf. 30: 16,17) [27] took advantage of his illness and undermined him by buying off the Assyrians. Isaiah 28 is instructive, for some of the rulers had made a covenant with the Assyrians:

“Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.” (Isa.28: 15,18)

These men were reprimanded for their lack of judgement:

“But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.” (28:7)

Psalm 82 reflects all these Isianic motif's:

Psalm 82	Isaiah
Elohim standeth in the congregation of El; he judgeth amongst the Elohim.	The Lord standeth to plead, and standeth to judge the people. The Lord will enter into judgement with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof. What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord GOD of hosts. (3:12-15)
How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked?	None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. (59:4) (cf. Mic. 3:11)
They know not, neither do they understand: they walk on in darkness..	Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. (59:9)
All the foundations of the earth are out of course	This is idiom for an earthquake (Isa.29:6; 24:18-20 cf. Joel 3:16) all with reference to the great theophany that destroyed the Assyrian army during Hezekiah's reign.
I said, Ye are Elohim. And all of you are children of the most High (Elyon)	The Lord will enter into judgement with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof. (3:12-15)
But ye shall die like Adam, and fall like one of the princes (or like the shining one?).	How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. (14:12-15)
Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.	This is a purely Messianic phrase, yet also appropriate to Hezekiah who rose on the third day. It is reminiscent of the battle cry, when the ark went forth (Num.10: 35) –Hezekiah asserted his authority over some of his Gentile neighbours (18:7; 49:23; 55:5; 60:1-13, 62:2) "And many brought gifts (tribute) unto the Lord to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth" (2 Chron.32: 23).

The Psalm is clear – Yahweh and his agent king Hezekiah (the suffering servant) would render correct judgement against the

Assyrian enemy and the traitors - who would also fall like the "shining one." They (like Adam) had outreached themselves in an act of self-divinisation and rebellion; negotiating positions of importance for themselves as a reward for betraying their King (Yahweh *and* Hezekiah). They had made an agreement with the Assyrians (an agreement with hell) and were celebrating in a drunken orgy, but God would judge both them and the Assyrians - their agreement with hell would not stand, for he would cast all of them into the pit. Psalm 82 also has resonance with the Korah rebellion in the time of Moses and was possibly adapted by Hezekiah's men to suit the current situation.

When Jesus appointed his own "divine council" (the seventy) in a direct challenge to the authority of the Sanhedrin, [\[28\]](#) he responded to their report of success in similar terms to Isa.14:12. The enemy (Satan) had been defeated by the missionary work of the seventy. His enemy was however not a supernatural being (like Venus/Lucifer/Ishtar), but the hubris of the religious elite dwelling in cities that had refused his healing ministry: *"And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths"* (Lk.10: 15 NIV). It was in Capernaum that Jesus had first healed a man with an unclean spirit: *"And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out"* (Mk.1:23). This man, who typified the unclean nation, acknowledged Jesus as the **"Holy one of God"** - the angel who bore the divine *Yahweh* name and guided them in the wilderness; the people realised that this was not just an exorcism, but that Jesus taught a new doctrine (v.27). The religious elite are not charged with idol worship (unclean spirits are associated with idol worship or the worship of false gods in the OT) but with self-

divinisation (pursuing righteousness through the law) and all the while neglecting their primary duty: *"The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach"* (Matt.23: 3). They exalted themselves (like Sennacherib) and had turned the law into a false god (like Lucifer/Venus/Ishtar) – and would therefore be humbled: *"For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted"* (v.12). Their function as judges was utterly distorted: *"But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness"* (v.23). Finally, they betrayed him to the enemy, just as Hezekiah's contemporaries had done (*"Woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously"*: Isa. 24:16). It is fitting then, that Jesus should cite Psalm 82 to the judges of Israel, to remind them that he was superior to Moses –he was in fact the 'Holy One of God': *"Elohim standing in the congregation of El."*

Conclusion

Many scholars believe that before true monotheism was common among Israelites that they were henotheists. The 'Sons of God' pericope in Genesis and 'divine council' language used throughout the OT (cf. Ps.82) is seen as evidence of this. It is undeniable that the OT uses the metaphor of the A.N.E. but it is adapted to a uniquely monotheistic theology.

An example of how this occurred is the selection of the 70 elders – which is related in two different accounts. Usually, the discrepancies are attributed to different sources. In Exodus 18 it is at the instigation of Jethro the Midianite priest that Moses appoints judges, yet the Numbers account (11:14-18) it is *Yahweh* that instructs Moses to sanctify seventy elders. Both accounts can be legitimately harmonised once we recognise that the idea of appointing 70 elders (a ‘divine council’) was typically oriental (and therefore a natural suggestion from Jethro) – but that the venture was unsuccessful until *Yahweh* imparted divine wisdom (his Spirit) on the 70 recipients. The OT makes it clear that Abraham’s ancestors worshipped ‘other gods’ and although the transition to monotheism was abrupt (with the calling of Abraham) the legacy of ANE metaphor and the surrounding Canaanite practices must have made the movement towards syncretism almost irresistible.

It is against this background that the Deuteronomist produced his fiercely monotheistic statements, characterised by the “Shema” – “*she.ma yis.ra.el Yahweh e.lo.hei.nu Yahweh e.khad*”: (Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.) Whatever Israelite monotheism entailed is still debated by scholars but for the Deuteronomist it certainly meant the essential “oneness” (unity) of *Yahweh* and exclusivity of worship due to him alone. [29] Unlike pagan religion the Deuteronomist did not envisage a heavenly pantheon of “sons of god” acting independently (or rebelling) against a “high god” (a house divided against itself falls – Lk.11: 17).

For the Deuteronomist, the “Sons of God” although united with, and agents of *Yahweh*, were still subordinate. In

Deuteronomic theology it was possible for humans to be adopted into a covenant relationship of sonship; to be gifted divine wisdom and to become *elohim*. This sonship was however conditional, such was the sonship of Solomon and that of the nation of Israel. The Israelites were promoted from 'slaves' to 'sons' and their ritual and worship was modelled on that of the "heavenly sanctuary" with *Yahweh* in their midst.

The hermeneutical warrant for sometimes applying "Sons of God" language to humans is obtained from the Deuteronomist, who based the Davidide covenant theology (partially realised in Solomon) on the Genesis pericope. D. A. Clines believes that the "Sons of God" episode in Genesis is based on categories that were not entirely 'closed'; after all, the antediluvian kings were regarded as almost legendary semi-divine figures by the post-diluvian's - witness the Babylonian Gilgamesh epic: "That Gilgamesh was regarded in the epic as a historical human personage is beyond question; the belief in his divine or semi-divine origins explains his significance and the survival of the story of his deeds from ancient times, as well as his titles and entitlements; it does not mean that the epic poet conceives of him as any more than a human, and a mortal human at that. The same outlook is credible in the biblical pericope: that the 'sons of God' were both regarded as rulers of ancient times, and traditionally ascribed divine or semi-divine origins. On this interpretation, the 'sons of God' pericope is no alien intrusion into the story of *primaeval* humanity, since it concerns - from first to last - humans; but neither is it simply an episode in the catalogue of human sinfulness, since it also concerns the relationship between the divine and the human world that is displayed in the actions of these 'sons of God'."

Further reading

Lyle Eslinger: *An investigation of the purposes of Genesis 6:1-4 'son of God' - 'daughter of man'* [A Contextual Identification of the *bene ha'elohim* and the *banüth ha'adam* in Genesis 6:1-4](#)

Sons of God and Giants Cultural and Historical Context in Genesis 6:1-4, Dennis Bratcher <http://www.cresourcei.org/giants.html>

See also the blue letter bible QA session:

<http://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/nbi/724.html>

Elohim in Context, by Paul Sumner

<http://www.hebrew-streams.org/works/monotheism/context-elohim.html>

Visions of the Heavenly Council in the Hebrew Bible, by Paul Sumner

See in particular his comments on official reactions to Council Concepts – how “catholic theologians joined rabbinic theologians in a common effort to abandon a central cosmological symbol of the OT and a central christological symbol of the New”

<http://www.hebrew-streams.org/works/monotheism/council.html>

Notes

[1] Michael S. Heiser offers a new definition, but few OT scholars would find this acceptable: “My own view is that monotheism is based not on a denial of the existence of other gods, but on the incomparability of the God of Israel, the idea that there is only one

“true” God.” [Deuteronomy 32, the Sons of God, and Alleged Denials of the Existence of Other Gods in the Old Testament.]

[2] “Although Israel is officially monotheistic, polytheistic texts come back in the Hebrew Bible like undigested lumps in a monotheistic structure.” David Penchansky, University of St. Thomas St. Paul, MN, *TWILIGHT OF THE GODS: THE DECLINE OF THE DIVINE COUNCIL IN PSALMS 82 AND 58*

<http://www.cwru.edu/affil/GAIR/cba/penchansky.html>

[3] Dennis Bratcher sums it up as follows; “Biblical historians tell us that we should not assume that the uniqueness of the Hebrews or Israelites lay in their distinctiveness from surrounding Middle Eastern peoples *on the level of culture*. While the Israelites came to a radically new understanding of God, His relationship to the world, and human beings' place in that world, the Israelites shared much of their culture and cultural heritage with surrounding peoples. There was a large common “pool” of culture and cultural metaphors.” Dennis Bratcher, **Speaking the Language of Canaan**, *The Old Testament and the Israelite Perception of the Physical World*, (How the Scriptures Appropriate Non-Hebraic World Views) Consultation on the Relationship Between the Wesleyan Tradition and the Natural Sciences, Kansas City, Missouri - October 19, 1991 <http://www.cresourcei.org/langcaan.html>

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[4] There follow many ‘realizations’ of the ideal by descendants of David; among the best of them were Hezekiah (the prototype for the suffering servant) and Josiah. However, the ‘true fulfilment’ was Jesus Christ; all others (no matter how faithful) are mere shadows by comparison.

[5] W.J. Dumbrell comments: "The phrase 'knowledge of good and evil' is better taken, following W.M. Clark [A Legal Background to the Yahwist's Use of "Good and Evil" in Gen.2-3 *JBL* 88 (1969), pp. 266- On the general relationship of Gen.2:4-3:24 and the view that sin was an attack upon and a breach of the harmony of the created order cf. also Jerome T. Walsh, 'Gen.2:4b-3:24 A Synchronic Approach', *JBL* 96 (1977) PP. 161 - 177.], as referring to the exercise of absolute moral autonomy, a prerogative which the Bible reserves to God alone. Clark is able to illustrate the point from a wide range of Old Testament contexts. Solomon, for example, prays (1 Kgs.3:9) for an understanding heart to govern his people that he 'may discern between good and evil'. This is an absolute for the task before which he is placed, since he continues in the text "for who is able to govern this thy great people?" The latter half of the same chapter offers a parade example of Solomon's judicial wisdom, and when Israel acknowledges the astuteness with which the matter of disputed motherhood of the child has been resolved, they perceive that 'the wisdom of God was in him, to render justice' (1 Kgs.3:28). What is clear from this passage is that final authoritative decisions of this nature, which affect the whole shape of life, require the mind of God. For the human being, wisdom of this character is derivative, not natural. It must be sought from God and its source must be acknowledged. The regulation of the decision-making processes for life on all levels will not proceed satisfactorily unless the limitations of human knowledge are recognised. Clark's point that the determination of what was good and what was evil was ultimately a divine one is important and elucidates the context of Genesis 3, for it permits us to note what was the essential character of the fall. By eating of the fruit man was intruding into an area reserved for God alone, and the violation of the command is tantamount to an assertion of equality with God, a snatching at deity. [A counterpart of Adam's action is clearly the attitude of Jesus referred to in Philippians 2:6] The decision of Adam to be self-

legislating brought with it diverse consequences. Although thereafter he was the possessor by use of tremendous determinative power, and thus 'like God', yet he was 'unlike God' in that he would constantly be uncertain of the nature of the issues before which he was placed. He would never be able to foresee the consequences of the choices which he would make. Having power to choose, he would continue throughout life and history to be the captive of his choices. Putting himself in a position of moral defiance to his Creator, he plunged himself into a life of tension and absolute moral uncertainty. Thus the command of Gen.2:17 was not merely probative. In refusing to submit to the moral government of God, he refused to know God (Rom.1:28). A reprobate mind resulted and as a consequence of the fall man became assertive, but was unable to control himself or his world." [W.J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, Paternoster Press, 1984, pp. 36 - 39]

[6] The text refers to an angel [*mal'âk*] and not to *elohim* but the Hebrews (unlike the Canaanites) did not differentiate the terms (or the functions) as they are interchangeable. There is a heavenly hierarchy, but it is not one of 'gods' and 'angels.' The hierarchy is one of the chief angel (who bore the Yahweh name and is referred to as 'Yahweh') and his subordinates who had specific administrations (such as Michael). The Cherubim (and Seraphim) are depictions of the divine throne and stand as a metaphor for the manifestation of God's glory in his creation. [*Ibid*, note 23].

[7] The Hebrew *towb* [translated as 'fair' in Gen.6: 2] carries a similar meaning to the name of Lamech's daughter Naamah. It is used 6 times in the creation narrative of chapter one in the formulaic "God saw that it was good (*towb*)" it is also used for the

“tree of the knowledge of good (*towb*) and evil” and for Eve’s temptation; “the woman saw that it was good (*towb*) for food.” It is fitting that the same formulaic expression is used by the “Sons of God”; “[they] saw the daughters of men that they were good (*towb*).” God had declared that it was “not good (*towb*)” that man should be alone and that he should have a partner –but now the “Sons of God” are using coercion to fulfil their lusts. The use of the formulaic expression suggests that this is an inversion of the creative act.

[8] Robert Alter comments as follows: “Naamah – One might expect an identification that would align Naamah with her siblings as a founder of some basic activity of human culture, but if such an identification was part of the original epic role call, it has either been lost or deleted. The Midrash recognized that the root of her name can refer to song: perhaps Naamah is meant to be associated with her half brother Jubal, the founder of instrumental music –he as accompanist, she as singer.” [Robert Alter, *Genesis*, Translation and commentary, (New York London,1996)] The Midrashic explanation is unlikely and probably owes its existence to the root carrying the general meaning of ‘pleasant’ (in a sensory sense) and therefore apt to describe musical instruments. Samuel Meier explains: “The term that focuses on the intrinsic appeal of an object to observers surfaces in personal names for males and females, both Israelite and non-Israelite (Naomi in Ruth 1:2, Naaman in 2 Kgs.5: 1, Naam in 1 Chron. 4:15, Naamah in 1 Kgs. 14:21). It is difficult to determine in such names where a divine element is lacking whether the pleasant quality refers to a deity or to the individual who bears the name....But also sounds that are pleasing to hear: the lyre is described as *nā ’îm* and so particularly appropriate to praising Yahweh.” [NIDOTTE 5838 p.121 Samuel A. Meier]

[9] In his enlightening article, Clines gives the following footnote references in support of this view [note 10]: "So Kline, 'Divine Kingship and Genesis 6:1-4', pp. 187-204; followed by A.R. Millard, 'A New Babylonian "Genesis" Story (Epic of Atrahasis)', *TynBul* 18 (1967), pp. 3-18 (12). Similarly, also Ferdinand Dexinger, *Sturz der Göttersöhne oder Engel vor der Sintput? Versuch eines Neuverständnisses von Genesis 6,2-4 unter Berücksichtigung der religionsvergleichenden und exegetischen Methode* (Wiener Beiträge zur Theologie, 13; Vienna: Herder, 1966). This view was adumbrated by some Jewish interpreters who saw in the 'sons of God' rulers and in the 'daughters of men' women of lower rank (see Dexinger, *Göttersöhne*, pp. 122-24, 129-20; Alexander, 'Targumim and Early Exegesis', pp. 61, 64-66)."

David J. A. Clines, The Significance of the 'Sons of God' Episode (Genesis 6.1-4) in the Context of the 'Primaeval History' (Genesis 11): *On the Way to the Postmodern: Old Testament Essays 1967-1998*, Volume 1 (JSOTSup, 292; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 88-94

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/uni/academic/A-C/biblst/DJACcurrres/Postmodern1/Sons.html>

[10] <http://www.ancientsites.com/aw/Post/6589&authorid=109>

Source: Frymer-Kensky, Tikva, *In the Wake of the Goddesses: women, culture and biblical transformations of pagan myth*, (1992) Fawcett Columbine, New York. © All rights reserved to author.

[11] On the significance of the 120-year limit Clines observes the following:

"One specific point, however, needs to be dealt with separately in order to clarify the connection between the pericope and the succeeding narrative of the Flood. The question is whether the 120 years of 6.3 has a specific reference to the coming of the Flood. In other words, is the 120-year period intended as the normal life-span of

humans, or as a period of respite before the Flood descends? In favour of the view that 120 years represents the maximum span of life, it may be argued first, negatively, that the figure 120 has no necessary or symbolic connection with a period of grace or respite, whereas, positively, there is some evidence that 120 years was considered the ideal lifetime. Moses lives the full 120 years (Deut. 31.2; 34.7), while Herodotus reports that the Ethiopians habitually lived to the age of 120. In Egypt, 110 years was apparently regarded as the ideal span of life; Joseph and Joshua, significantly, each live to 110 (Gen. 50.22; Jos. 24.29). Elsewhere in the Old Testament, it is true, 80 years is regarded as a normal maximum lifetime (Ps. 90.10; cf. 2 Sam. 19.34-35). It is true, moreover, that the ages of the post-diluvians are not immediately reduced to 120 years; but that could be accounted for as a mitigation of the penalty, just as the sentence 'in the day you eat of it you shall surely die' (2.17) only slowly begins to take effect."

To Cline's observations we might add that the Deuteronomist wished to parallel the death of the flood generation (after 120 years) with that of Moses – whose name means "*my son*" and was made an "*elohim*" to Pharaoh. The rebellion of Moses is viewed as similar to the rebellion of the 'Sons of God' by the Deuteronomist, who expresses his theology by using the title "*Father of spirits*" or "*God of the spirits of all flesh*" which is used only twice outside of the Deuteronomist's writings (Num 16:22; 27:16), both times by Moses in the context of rebellion and impending judgement. (Once by Moses in the context of his *own rebellion* against God! (27: 12, 13) This title must be referring back to Gen 6:3; "*And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive (abide in) with man, for that*

he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years". Again, the context in Num 27 is the death of Moses (at 120 years old - Deut 34:7) for his striving against God. (v. 14 strife - a different word than that of Gen 6:3).

[12] Michael S. Heiser, *Introduction to Divine Council Scholarship and Terminology* [see footnotes 54, 55]

[13] Michael S. Heiser, *Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God*
See also: For a full listing of the PDF's referred to see:
<http://www.thedivinecouncil.com/>

[14] See the Biblaridion article on Wisdom (under the heading, "What the Elders saw"):
http://www.biblaridion-online.net/pdf_archive/2005q1/wisdom.pdf

[15] *Ibid*, Dennis Bratcher: "I contend that the Israelites borrowed the cultural language of Canaan because that language was the best, perhaps the only, means available to them in their cultural context to articulate observations about the physical world and how God related to that world. There were no other thought categories available to them to describe what we call "natural" processes. In fact, there is no equivalent word in the Hebrew language for what we mean by "nature." The Israelites could not speak of "nature" as a collection of natural forces. They could only speak of God."

[16] "I SAID: YOU ARE GODS": PSALM 82:6 AND JOHN 10
JEROME H. NEYREY, SJ.
<http://www.nd.edu/~jneyrey1/Gods.html>

[17] Michael S. Heiser, *The Unique Son of the Most High: The place of Jesus in the divine council, Part 1 of 4*. [see note 13]

[18] See the Biblaridion article on *Phanerosis*:

http://www.biblaridion-online.net/pdf_archive/2005q4/phanerosis.pdf

[19] The "name" theme is integral to the Genesis account – the men of old (Gen.6: 4) where "men of renown" it literally means, "men of name" [shem]. Before the flood narrative (at the end of the 'Sons of God' chapter) the redactor informs us that; "*Then men began to call on Yahweh's name.*" (Gen.4: 26); this is interpreted as the commencement of worshipping (or preaching) Yahweh: When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. "*It was during his lifetime that people first began to worship the LORD*" (NLT), **or**; "*And to Seth, to him also a son hath been born, and he calleth his name Enos; then a beginning was made of preaching in the name of Jehovah*" (Young). The RV margin offers a textual variant that is contextually more fitting: "men began to call themselves by the name of Yahweh" This parallels the first verse of the chapter where Eve believes here firstborn son (Cain) is the manifestation of the promised seed and she calls him Yahweh (See the Biblaridion article on Phanerosis note 16 http://www.biblaridion-online.net/pdf_archive/2005q4/phanerosis.pdf). On the importance of the name theme see the article by D.J. A. Clines.

[20] Adoption is a term that does not occur in the OT (or the LXX) and it is therefore often assumed that Greco-Roman practices form the background but J.M. Scott summarises the argument for an OT Jewish background as follows: "It can be shown that 2 Samuel 7: 14 ("I will be to him [the Davidide] a Father, and he will be to me a son") contains an adoption formula (cf. Ex 2:10; Esther 2:7; Gen 48: 5), which subsequent Judaism applied not only to the Davidic

Messiah but, under influence of New Covenant theology (cf. Hos 2:1 cited in Rom 9:26), also to the eschatological people of God. In accordance with the Deuteronomic framework of Sin-Exile-Restoration (see esp. O.H. Steck), this 2 Samuel 7: 14 tradition expects that at the advent of Messiah, God would redeem his people from Exile in a second Exodus; he would restore them to a covenantal relationship; and he would adopt them, with the Messiah, as his sons (cf. *Jub* 1:24; *T. Judah* 24:3; 4QFlor 1:11).” [Dictionary of Paul and his Letters, (IVP, 1993), p.17]

[21] James D.G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, (SCM Press, 1989), p.15-16

[22] The Plagues as a Challenge to Pharaoh's Divinity @ <http://farms.byu.edu/display.php?table=insights&id=167>

Was Pharaoh Divine? by Ken Humphries@

<http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/divinepharaoh.htm>

[23] See the *Biblaridion* article on the Cherubim apostasy (Under the heading: The cherubim and divine sovereignty over the natural creation): http://www.biblaridion-online.net/pdf_archive/2005q1/cherubim.pdf

[24] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ishtar>

[25] He is styled the “king of Babylon” in Isaiah 14 – this is either an interpolation (or more likely) a title that Sennacherib had appropriated to himself after conquering Babylon.

“There is a good deal of critical debate about this chapter, which you may read at your pleasure. On the surface the passage is clearly a taunt of proud Babylon. That would put a Babylonian

message in the first half of the book, a real problem for some critical scholars who strictly put Babylonian material into the second half of the book, and attribute it to a second Isaiah. So this section is often classified by them as a later insertion from Deutero-Isaiah of Babylon. Other scholars see it as a taunt of the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, and not Babylon at all, since Assyria is mentioned in verse 25. But Babylon is very clearly the focus of chapter 13; and whereas verses 24-27 may be about Assyria, the section in chapter 14 that we are addressing seems to follow clearly on the oracle against Babylon in chapter 13, and claims to be against Babylon. There is no reason why "Babylon" here should be replaced by "Assyria" in the text. It is possible that Babylon is mentioned but Assyria meant if at the time of the oracle Babylon was a subject state to the Assyrian Empire. Of course, all these kings of Assyria and Babylon were proud and ruthless, and so it would fit either setting. But in this context the passage is part of the oracle on the end of the Babylonian empire that would rise again and capture Judah." *The Burdens Upon The Nations Isaiah 13:1—23:18* By: [Allen Ross , Th.D., Ph.D. http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=2091](http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=2091)

[26] It is obvious from 2 Kgs. 18 that the Assyrians were aware of the Isaiah prophecies and attempted to undermine them for propaganda purposes. Rabshakeh deliberately misinterpreted Hezekiah's reformation (v.22) and his intelligence was also aware of Micah and Isaiah's prophecies (v.31 *cf.* Mic.4: 4); his challenge was aimed directly at the supremacy of Yahweh (v.33-35) and was therefore a 'holy war' (*cf.* Joel 3:9 'Sanctify a war' YLT).
<http://bible-history.com/isbe/R/RABSHAKEH/>

[27] **The Saga of Shebna** by Wayne Jackson, M.A.

<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/434>

[28] Sanhedrin – also known as "the assembly of the Ancients"

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13444a.htm>

[29] Hurtado discusses the current state of the debate and rather than offering a definition and approaching the problem with a priori assumptions he suggests that we accept the statement of monotheists at face value, and that monotheism is characterized by liturgical practice –worship of “one God” (i.e. no matter how many angels, principalities, powers etc are present), this contrasts with pagan liturgical practice: “But in religious practice, this pagan "monotheism" amounted to the recognition of all gods as expressions of one common divine essence or as valid second-order gods under a (often unknowable) high god, and, as such, as worthy of worship. This was categorically different from the exclusivist monotheism of Jews who rejected the worship of beings other than the one God of the Bible.” [L. W. Hurtado, *What Do We Mean by "First-Century Jewish monotheism"?* University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada @ <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Academy/5490/Seminar1/Hurtado.htm>]

The “oneness” of Yahweh does not necessarily rule out a plurality; the Johannine gospel recognizes this when Jesus declares that he is “one” with the Father and that in turn the believers are “one” with him (and therefore also with the Father: John 17:21-26). This does not however imply Trinitarianism or equality with the Father (who alone is worthy of worship) but rather the manifestation of divine attributes in a people (“Sons of God”) called out for **his name** (cf. John 17:26; ‘I have declared unto them **thy name**’ – see the Biblaridion article on Phanerosis). The prophet Zechariah produces

an equivalent of the 'Shema' in 14:9 (NIV): "The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be **one LORD**, and his name **the only name**." When all the "Sons of God" exercise sovereignty over the earth on God's behalf (as his agents); *then* the earth will be filled with his glory and there will be **one Yahweh**. They will be named with his name (*cf.* Rev.3: 12). This was the original divine intention for creation before it was frustrated by human rebellion. After examining the evidence the Christian Think Tank comes to the right conclusion: "There seems to be an abundance of 'stubborn' data that there are **multiple agents** who can be appropriately called 'YHWH', and although there are STRONG prohibitions against idolatry in the OT, NOT ONCE is there any indication in the text that ascribing deity to the Angel of YHWH or Spirit of YHWH is considered blasphemous. Indeed, the grammatical and lexical data gives reasonable indication that plurality may be a basic aspect of the One God of Israel." However, although their conclusion is correct they believe that this lends support to the Trinity (and probably also to the pre-existence of Christ). It is a pity that they do not understand their own conclusions about agency.

<http://www.christian-thinktank.com/trin02.html>