

# **A Catechetical Discussion Guide for Exploring the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible**

By

Marc Wilson, pastor of St. Patrick's Anglican Church, Las Cruces, New Mexico

1. **Question:** Why is understanding the supernatural worldview of the Bible important?

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**Answer:** *While our world is ordered and conducive to studying it scientifically, there are also well-documented paranormal or preternatural occurrences that remain either unexplained or misunderstood when a purely materialistic or naturalistic paradigm is applied. Furthermore, there are a number of people who worship deities from ancient pantheons, engage in pagan practices employing the occult, and investigate a myriad of paranormal phenomena. The Bible contains the reliable supernatural paradigm from which we can formulate an understanding of the world in which we live whereby we may then intelligently and productively interact with those involved in the aforementioned activities.*

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2. **Questions:** "What was there before God made the world?" Who is God addressing in **Genesis 1:26-28** (cf. **3:22, 11:7**)? (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" pp. 23, 38-40)

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**Read & Discuss: Job 38:4-7**

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3. **Question:** What does it mean to be an "imager of God"? Is this designation appropriate for both heavenly and earthly beings?

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**Read & Discuss: Genesis 3:5** Consider "G[g]od" translated as "elohim" and implications of this in relation to #2 above and **Genesis 1:26 & 3:22**

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4. **Question:** What is the best way to understand the first part of **Deuteronomy 32:17**?

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**Answer:** *"They sacrificed to the demons [who were] not God" (NASB, LEB, NLT). Discuss other translations such as the NIV's use of "false gods".*

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5. **Question:** What is a 'demon' in **Deuteronomy 32:17**?

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**Answer:** Before we begin to explore this, we must first put aside the popular Hollywood depiction of both angels and demons, so we can let the Bible formulate our perceptions. The English word "demon" in the Old Testament context refers to a national deity/god. "Paul uses the [Greek] word 'daimonion', [in **1 Corinthians 10:18-22**] ...used frequently in the New Testament for evil spiritual beings, to translate 'shedim' [Hebrew] in **Deuteronomy 32:17**. Paul...didn't deny the reality of the 'shedim', who are 'elohim' [Hebrew for 'gods']." (cf. **Psalm 106:36-38**). (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" p. 34)

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6. **Question:** Where did these 'demons' come from?

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**Answer:** At the Tower of Babel judgment, Yahweh disinherited the people and divided them into 70 nations under the authority of these spiritual beings from his divine council who are also called "sons of God" (**Genesis 10-11; Deuteronomy 32:8-9 ESV & 2 Kings 17:27-33**).

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7. **Question:** Are 'demons' such as those in **Deuteronomy 32:17** mentioned elsewhere in the Bible?

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**Answers:**

Yes. They are also celestial objects, "the host of heaven" / "starry host", "sons of God" (**Deuteronomy 4:19-20; 32:8-9 ESV; 2 Chronicles 33:5**); "multitudes", "spirit[s]" (**1 Kings 22:19-23**); "watchers", "holy ones" (**Daniel 4:13,17,23**); "princes" (**Daniel 10:13, 20-21; Ephesians 2:2**).

Yes. They are also "angels" (**Romans 8:38; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6**; cf. 1 Enoch 6:1); "rulers/ authorities/ powers of this age/ present darkness in the heavenly places" (**1 Corinthians 2:6,8; Ephesians 2:2, 3:10, 6:12**).

Yes. They are also "thrones, dominions" (**Colossians 1:16**), "sons of the Most High" and "gods" ('elohim' in Hebrew; **Deuteronomy 29:26; Psalm 82:1,6 ESV**). These 'divine beings' are, as Michael S. Heiser has stated, the "Big Boys" when compared to the 'demons' / 'unclean spirits' that are predominate in the New Testament.

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8. **Question:** Do other gods ('elohim') in **Psalm 82** endorse polytheism?

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### **Answers:**

No. "The Hebrew Bible uses the term 'elohim' to speak of any inhabitant of the spiritual world [e.g. **Genesis 2:4-5; Deuteronomy 32:17 & 1 Samuel 28:13-20**]." (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" pp. 29-32, 323)

No. "The word itself provides no differentiation among the beings in this realm, though hierarchy is certainly present." (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" pp. 29-32, 323 – emphasis added)

No. "Yahweh, for example, is an 'elohim', but no other 'elohim' is Yahweh. Nevertheless, the term 'elohim' tells us very little about...the pecking order of the unseen realm." (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" pp. 29-32, 323)

No. "The...Greek terms [for] angels and demons...are very broad and don't shed a great deal of light on how New Testament writers thought of rank and power in the unseen world." (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" pp. 29-32, 323)

Summary: The word "god" in the Old Testament is a lot like the words "demon" and "angel" in the New Testament. They encompass different types of spiritual beings in "The Unseen Realm"

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9. **Question:** Does the "denial statement" in **Deuteronomy 4:35** prove there are no other gods?

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**Answer:** No. This statement denies that other gods / 'elohim' compare to Yahweh. It is a statement of incomparability. See **Isaiah 47:8** and **Zephaniah 2:15** regarding cities. (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" pp. 34-35)

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10. **Questions:** Why are idols made by human hands worshiped? Are the other gods in the Bible real or merely idols made by human hands?

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**Answers:** "Ancient idol worshipers believed that the objects they made were inhabited by their gods." (**Deuteronomy 4:15-18; 1 Corinthians 8:4, 10:18-22**) (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" p. 35)

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## Read & Discuss: Deuteronomy 29:26; 32:17; 1 Corinthians 10:18-22

*A means that developed by which the lesser gods of the nations where worshipped was through the creation of objects and images believed to either inhabit or channel a deity's power and presence. This is an ancient aspect of idolatry. With this background, what implications could this have for items used in various occult practices today (i.e., Ouija boards, Native American/primitive native pagan 'art' such as kachina dolls, statues/pictures of deceased relatives in many Eastern cultures, objects ceremonially used or associated with groups such as the Masons, or items/herbs/potions used for spells/conjuring/curses/healing remedies that employ ancient forbidden knowledge passed on by rebellious divine beings such as the Watchers now commonly associated with the occult)?*

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11. **Question:** What's happening in *Psalm 82*?

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**Answer:** *Yahweh is judging these lesser created gods of his divine council for their unrighteous rule over the nations allotted to them after Yahweh disinherited the people because they built the Tower of Babel to make a name for themselves. (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" p. 114)*

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12. **Question:** Is the unrighteous rule of the "sons of God" (aka: "gods" in *Psalm 82*) over the nations the only place in the Bible where these spiritual beings are unrighteous and judged by God?

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**Answer:** *No. There are also "sons of God" in Genesis 6:1-4 who produce offspring with "the daughters of men" (human women) precipitating the Flood judgment. They are the imprisoned "angels" mentioned in 2 Peter 2:1-10 and Jude 5-7. They are NOT humans from the line of Seth nor divinized human rulers. (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" pp. 93-189)*

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13. **Question:** Who are the 'Nephilim' in *Genesis 6:4* and *Numbers 13:33*?

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**Answer:** *They are giant offspring from the union between women and the "watchers"/"sons of God" that transgressed the ordered boundaries of heaven and earth. They are also associated with*

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*the Gibborim ("mighty men") and Raphaim (See **Genesis 6:4**; **Numbers 13:33** in the Septuagint; cf. *Dead Sea Scrolls*). (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" pp. 105-107)*

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14. **Question:** If according to **Jude** and **2 Peter**, these "sons of God" or "angels" were imprisoned due to this transgression in **Genesis 6:1-4**, how are Nephilim present after the Flood as in **Numbers 13:33**?

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**Answer:** *The status of heavenly beings is not necessarily static. **1 Corinthians 11:10** may support this. Therefore, other "angels" may have committed the same transgression after the flood and were also bound / imprisoned, or the Flood was regional and some Nephilim survived.*

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15. **Question:** What was one commonly perceived origin of some "unclean/impure spirits" or "demons" among Second Temple Jews, New Testament writers and some Early Church Fathers that also subordinated these spirits to the 'gods', 'sons of God' or 'watchers' in the Old Testament?

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**Answer:** *Many believed that the spirits of dead Nephilim/giants (i.e., the offspring of human women and the 'sons of God', such as those destroyed in the Flood) are demons of the air bound to roam the earth and that can cause physical and mental afflictions with social and spiritual ramifications (1 Enoch, DSS "bastard spirits", Justin Martyr's '2 Apology'). Ref. Wright's "The Origin of Evil Spirits"*

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16. **Question:** Does the understanding of "unclean spirits" / "demons" as the spirits of deceased Nephilim/giants appear in the New Testament?

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**Answer:** *Not explicitly; however, the manner people were described to be afflicted by "unclean/impure spirits" / "demons" (called "demonization" in the New Testament) along with **2 Peter 2** and **Jude's** reference to 1 Enoch (where this origin of demons is articulated) tends to support this view of some "demons" / "unclean/impure spirits" within the New Testament.*

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17. **Question:** Can Christians be tormented by evil spirits?

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**Answer:** *Yes. See **2 Corinthians 12:7-10**. Just as some faithful Christians are not healed of illness, others are not delivered from demonization.*

**Read & Discuss: **Luke 22:31-32** (cf. **Job 1-2**) and **Acts 5:3****

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18. **Question:** Does **Matthew 22:23-33** suggest that spiritual beings, such as the “sons of God” / “angels”, could not have produced Nephilim/giants with human women as supposed in **Genesis 6:1-4**?

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**Answer:** *“The text does not say that angels ‘cannot’ have sexual intercourse; it says they ‘don’t.’ The reason ought to be obvious. The context for the statement is the resurrection, which refers either broadly to the afterlife or, more precisely, to the final renewed global Eden. Consequently, there is no need for sex in the resurrection, just as there is no need for it in the nonhuman spiritual realm. But Genesis 6 doesn’t have the spiritual realm of the final Edenic world as its context. The analogy breaks down completely.” (Heiser, “The Unseen Realm” p. 186)*

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19. **Question:** Why did Yahweh command the extermination/annihilation of various peoples dispersed throughout Canaan (aka: Amorites) at the hands of the Israelites in their conquest of Canaan?

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**Answer:** *“The wars of conquest under Moses and Joshua were supposed to cleans the land of a competing bloodline [within the giant clans of the Anakim and Raphaim from the bloodline of the Nephilim] and install Yahweh’s own children [Israel], his inheritance, into the place he had allotted for them. Yahweh’s rule on earth was to be reconstituted in Canaan. Consequently, in a world governed by other gods who had become hostile rivals in the wake of Yahweh’s judgment at Babel [Genesis 10-11; Deuteronomy 32:8-9; Psalm 82], Yahweh’s presence was unwelcomed. The land had to be repossessed and made holy. Canaan would be Yahweh’s beachhead of cosmic geography from which Israel would fulfill its mission”. (Genesis 15:12-16; Numbers 13:25-33; Deuteronomy 2-3; 9:1-3; Joshua 11:21-23; 1 Samuel 17:1-7; 2 Samuel 21:15-22; Amos 2:9-10 ESV). (Heiser, “The Unseen Realm” pp. 192-201)*

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20. **Question:** What is the "serpent" in the Garden in **Genesis 3**?

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**Answer:** *"The Hebrew word translated 'serpent' is 'nachash'. The word is both plain and elastic. Since there are immediate clues in the story that the serpent is more than a mere snake, that he may be a 'divine' adversary, the term 'nachash' is a triple entendre." Therefore, we should understand the "nachash" in **Genesis 3** as a serpent (noun), using divination (verb) that is bronze / shiny (adjective). (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" pp. 75-91)*

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21. **Question:** If the "serpent" in **Genesis 3** is more than a snake of the animal kingdom, what is its relationship to the "sons of God" / "angels" and "gods" that rebelled and were judged in **Genesis 6:1-4 (2 Peter 2:4-10; Jude 5-7)** and **Psalm 82 (Deuteronomy 32:8-9)**?

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**Answer:** *The elasticity of the word "nachash" is descriptive of a heavenly being called a 'seraph.' Such beings are present in Yahweh's throne room. They would have likely been present within the Garden as the meeting place of Yahweh's divine council. This would also explain why Eve was not puzzled or surprised by a talking snake; because, she was speaking to a lesser god of Yahweh's divine council assembled in the Garden. See **Job 15:7-9** (with the implication that Adam, 'the first man' did listen in the council of God, a scene depicted earlier in **Job 1-2 [cf. Zechariah 3:1-2]** with "the sons of God" and alluded to in **Genesis 1:26; 3:1-9, 22-24** where other divine beings, including Yahweh embodied, are present). (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" pp. 75-91, 232-239)*

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22. **Question:** How are we to understand seraphim, and where are they in the Bible?

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**Answer:** *Seraphim were present when Isaiah was commissioned for his prophetic ministry by Yahweh within His divine council (**Isaiah 6:2-7**). Seraphim "are now generally conceived as winged 'serpents' with certain human attributes...generally taken as a derivative of the verb...to 'burn'...the term refers several times to some serpentine being. ...'the fiery serpents' among the people (**Num. 21:6**)...'fiery serpents' (**Deut. 8:15; Isaiah 30:6**), the abode of 'the flying serpent' (**Isaiah 30:6; cf. 14:29**)". ("Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible" [D.D.D.] pp. 742-744).*

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23. **Question:** Where are other references to the "nachash" of **Genesis 3** within the Bible?

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## Answers:

Taunts in **Isaiah 14** and **Ezekiel 28** toward the kings of Babylon and Tyre contain imagery that conceptually links their pride and punishment to that of a primordial divine rebel in the Garden of Eden. This divine rebel is described using imagery of heavenly beings (See **Ezekiel 28:11-19; Isaiah 14:12-14; Job 38:7**). Additionally, the divine rebel in the backdrop has a celestial name typical of lesser gods associated with the heavenly host (i.e., **Isaiah 14:12** "morning star, son of the dawn", "Lucifer" in Latin, "Helel ben Shachar" in Hebrew, aka: Venus). These are biblical passages that may allude to the "nachash" in **Genesis 3** and aspects of his status and activity in the unseen realm.

**Revelation 20:2** equates "Satan" with "the dragon", "the devil" and "the ancient serpent" which alludes to the "nachash". In **Luke 11:14-20** "Beelzebul, the 'prince' of demons", is analogous to "Satan". **Daniel 10** depicts heavenly "princes" as representatives of earthly nations. A case for the "nachash" as a heavenly prince of this world can be made by linking "Satan" to "Belial" in **2 Corinthians 6:15** who, in turn, is equated with "Mastema" as the prince of evil spirits in extra-biblical literature (**John 16:7-11; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Ephesians 2:1-2**). Those outside the community of Believers belong to the realm of Satan who, as the god of this age, blinds the minds of unbelievers (**John 14:30; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 Timothy 1:20; 5:15**).

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24. **Question:** Where do we see God's promise that the offspring of woman will crush the head of the serpent in **Genesis 3:15** within the New Testament?

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**Answer:** **Romans 16:20** which Christ initiated in **Luke 10:17-20** (cf. **Revelation 12:9-12**)

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25. **Question:** How does the Gospel of Jesus as Yahweh's anointed King and the divine Son of Man inaugurate the condemnation of the gods in **Psalms 82** and the reclamation of the disinherited nations in **Genesis 10-11** and **Deuteronomy 32:8-9** while also delivering us from evil and making us ruling heirs of the world as promised (ref. **Romans 4:13-17; Galatians 3:6-9, 26-29; Ephesians 1:5, 11-19; 3:1-6**)?

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## Answers:

### **Inauguration at Christ's First Coming**

**Baptism Mark 1:11 (2 Samuel 12:24-25)** "When God refers to Jesus as his 'beloved' he is affirming the kingship of Jesus – his legitimate status as heir to David's throne. Solomon is referred to as 'Jedidiah'...which also means 'beloved'" (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" p. 274). At the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, it is revealed that He is God's promised Anointed King, the Messiah ('Christ').

**Temptation Mark 1:12 (Deuteronomy 32:10-20)** The 'wilderness' "is a literal place...but it is also a metaphor for unholy ground...associated with the demonic. [After the Exodus, Israel was] eventually seduced by 'demons' whose domain was the wilderness. Jesus, the messianic son of God and royal representative of the nation, would succeed where Israel failed. The ultimate temptation comes last, and hits directly at Jesus' mission – to reclaim the nations that are rightfully Yahweh's. Satan offered Jesus the nations that had been disinherited by Yahweh at Babel. Coming from the 'ruler of this world' (**John 12:31**), the offer was not a hallow one. The 'original rebel'...was perceived...as primary authority over all other rebels and their domains. Consequently, his lordship over the gods who ruled the nations in the **Deuteronomy 32** worldview of the Old Testament was presumed. Had Jesus given in, it would have been an acknowledgment that Satan's permission was 'needed' to possess the nations. It wasn't. Yahweh will 'take' that nations back by his own means in his own time. Jesus was loyal to his Father. Since reclaiming the nations was connected with salvation and redemption from the effects of the fall in Eden, accepting Satan's offer would have undermined the necessity of the atonement of the cross" (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" pp. 277-279).

**Defeat of Demons Mark 1:21-28** "The defeat of demons, falling on the heels of Jesus' victory over Satan's temptations, marks the beginning of the reestablishment of the kingdom of God on earth. Jesus himself made this connection absolutely explicit: 'If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you' (**Luke 11:20** ESV). And since the lesser 'elohim' over the nations are cast as demons in the Old Testament, the implications for our study are clear: The ministry of Jesus marked the beginning of repossession of the nations and defeat of their 'elohim'. **Luke 10:1-18** "Jesus sent out 'seventy' disciples. The number is not an accident. Seventy is the number of nations listed in **Genesis 10** that were disposed as Babel. The seventy 'return with joy' and announce to Jesus, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!' Jesus' response is telling: 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven'. The implications are clear: Jesus' ministry is the beginning of the end for Satan and the gods of the nations. The great reversal is underway." (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" pp. 279-281). See also **Revelation 12** (cf. **Job 1-2** and **Zechariah 3:1-2**) which, in connection with **Luke 10:1-18**, reveals that Satan's role as "accuser of the Brethren" has ended; he has no legal authority in God's divine council to condemn any of His People. "The inauguration of the kingdom of God by the messiah means that

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*Satan, the lord of the dead, has no 'legal' authority in God's court (council) by which to condemn any member of that kingdom" (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" p. 281).*

Peter's Confession that Jesus is the Christ **Matthew 16:13-20** *"The location of the incident – Caesarea Philippi – and the reference to the 'gates of hell' provide the context for the 'rock' of which Jesus is speaking. The location of Caesarea Philippi was located in the northern part of the Old Testament region of Bashan, the 'place of the serpent' [a place associated with giants like 'Og of Bashan' who was a remnant of the Raphaim – see **Joshua 12:4-5**], at the foot of Mt. Hermon [which, according to 1 Ench 6, was the location where 200 'watchers' / 'sons of God' descended and begot the Nephilim/giants with human woman]. Things hadn't changed much in Jesus' day, at least in terms of spiritual control. ...Caesarea Philippi was also called 'Panias'...famous in the ancient world as a center of the worship of Pan and for a temple to the high god Zeus, considered in Jesus' day to be incarnate in Augustus Caesar. ...the 'rock' refers to the mountain location [Mt. Hermon] where Jesus makes the statement. This place was considered the 'gates of hell', the gateway to the realm of the dead, in Old Testament times. [Mt. Hermon's association with the realm of the dead is tied to the identification of Raphaim, who were former residents of this northern region, as warrior kings who inhabited the underworld along with the 'nachash' becoming the 'lord of the dead' after his rebellion in Eden in which we was cast down to 'erets' meaning both 'ground' and 'underworld' as described of the divine rebel in **Isaiah 14:9-12** and **Ezekiel 28:14-17**]. The theological messaging couldn't be more dramatic. Jesus says he will build his church - and the 'gates of hell' will not prevail against it. Gates are defensive structures not offensive weapons. The kingdom of God is the aggressor. Jesus begins at ground zero in both testaments to announce the great reversal. It is the gates of hell that are under assault – and they will not hold up against the Church. Hell will one day be Satan's tomb" (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" pp. 281-285)*

Transfiguration = **Mark 9:2-8** *"In early church tradition, the location of the mount of transfiguration was believed by many to be Mount Tabor. The earliest witness to this tradition is the fourth century AD. The gospels themselves give no name, and so the tradition has no biblical precedent. Mount Hermon is also much higher than Tabor...which would fit better with the description of a 'high mountain' by **Mark** (and **Matt 17:1**). ...the close proximity of Caesarea Philippi to Mount Hermon and the symbolic-religious association that relationship entails make Mount Hermon the logical choice for the transfiguration. Jesus picks Mount Hermon to reveal to Peter, James and John exactly who he is – the embodied glory-essence of God, the divine Name made visible by incarnation. The meaning is just as transparent: I'm putting the hostile power of the unseen world on notice. I've come to earth to take back what's mine. The kingdom of God is at hand. The enemy knows who Jesus is...but the forces of darkness do not know the plan. Jesus has baited them into action, and act they will. He has given them the rope, and they will eagerly hang themselves with it. Jesus will go to Jerusalem to drink from the cup his Father has planned for him. But the instrument of death will be the catalyst that launches the kingdom of God in full force (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" pp. 285-287).*

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Death, Resurrection and Pentecost: Matthew 27:35-46 (Psalm 22:12-13; Amos 4:1-3) "The implication is that Jesus at the moment of agony and death was surrounded by the 'bulls of Bashan' - demonic 'elohim' who had been the foes of Yahweh and his for millennia. Although it's doubtful that he was thinking of Bashan, C.S. Lewis's scene in "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe" depicting the voluntary death of Aslan on the stone table, surrounded by a horde of ghastly creatures under the command of the White Witch, is a vivid analogy to the point of Psalm 22:12" (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm PP. 288-291) **Ephesians 4:7-12 (Psalm 68:15-18)** "Located east of the Sea of Galilee, Bashan was noted for its fertility. In wider ancient Near Eastern religion, it was also known as the gateway to the underworld and its sinister inhabitants. The psalmist addresses the mountain of Bashan, accusing it of being jealous of Zion – the temple mount in Jerusalem. [Verses 18] seems to describe Yahweh as a victorious king returning to the throne after battle. Paul quotes this verse in **Ephesians** to describe Christ's victory over the powers of darkness, the catalyst to the birth and empowerment to the church" ("NIV Faithlife Study Bible" p. 886). "When Paul quotes **Psalm 68:18** in **Ephesians 4:8**, he does so thinking of Jesus. Part of the confusion over how to interpret what Paul is saying is that so many commentators have assumed that captives are being 'liberated' in **Ephesians 4**. That isn't the case. That idea would flatly contradict the well-understood Old Testament imagery. There is no liberation; there is conquest. Paul's words identify Jesus with Yahweh. In **Psalm 68** it was Yahweh who is described as the conqueror of the demonic stronghold. For Paul it is Jesus...surrounded by the demonic 'elohim', 'bulls of Bashan,' fulfilling the imagery of **Psalm 68**. Jesus puts the evil gods 'to an open shame' (ESV) by 'triumphing over them by [the cross] (LEB) (**Colossians 2:15**). What about the 'receiving' and 'giving' problem? Paul's wording doesn't deny there was conquest. What it does is point to the result of the conquest. In the ancient world the conqueror would parade the captives and demand tribute for himself. Jesus the conqueror of **Psalm 68**, and the booty does indeed rightfully belong to him. But booty was also distributed after a conquest. Paul knows that. He quotes **Psalm 68** to make the point that after Jesus conquered his demonic enemies, he distributed the benefits of the conquest to his people, believers. Specifically, those benefits are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Christ's conquest results in the dispensing of gifts to his people after ascending (in conquest) in **verse 8**. But that ascent was accompanied by a descent...[to the lower, earthly regions (NIV) or to the lower regions, the earth (ESV) which] does not refer to Jesus' time in the grave, but rather to the Holy Spirit's coming to earth after Jesus' conquering ascension on the day of Pentecost. The ascent (victory) would refer to the resurrection, and the descent would speak of the ensuing coming of the Spirit [the Spirit of Christ; the Holy Spirit] at Pentecost. They are both triumphs" (Heiser, "The Unseen Realm" pp. 292-294).

The descent, then, is associated with Pentecost, when Jesus gave, by His victory, the gifts of the Holy Spirit (also "the Spirit of Christ" and "the Spirit of God") to His People, so we may be properly equipped for spiritual warfare to grow His international New Creational Kingdom by the reclamation of the disinherited nations, which began on the day of Pentecost demonstrated in the representation of Jews from other nations present at the feast who heard the Gospel and were converted. These Jews then returned to their home countries to share the Gospel, and the Apostle Paul continued this proclamation of the Gospel to Gentiles until he reached Tarshish of Spain,

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*which was the furthestmost known region of the world in his time. This begins the defeat of the gods over the foreign nations by undoing the division at Babel. Therefore, while the principalities / sons of God of the nations are not 'bound' like that of the Watchers / sons of God in Genesis 6:1-4, the New Testament speaks of their increasing defeat in this way beginning at Pentecost and proleptically realized in totality by the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Son of Man. (**Genesis 10-11; Deuteronomy 32:8-9; Romans 16:20**).*

## **Present Discipleship to Avoid Deception**

An important means by which God delivers us from evil is by His Word that we may avoid the deceptions of the Evil One. Therefore, by the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, we must carefully and regularly read and study God's Word - the Bible. In God's grace, we must guard against any addition to and subtraction from God's Self-revelation thereby avoiding the same satanic seduction to which Eve succumbed.

***Discuss ways in which the world, including professing Christians, could be subtly deceived into believing a false Gospel or worshipping a deceptive depiction of the One True God.***

Illustrations Consider a scenario that I like to call "An Alien Eschatology." Imagine the hypothetical possibility of official government disclosure that there have been contacts and interactions with "Extraterrestrial Intelligences" (ETIs) since WWII. (It appears that our society is increasingly 'primed' for such an official disclosure through entertainment and 'educational' media which are the foundation for our prevalent post-modern Western worldview. Programs like "Ancient Aliens" on the History Channel have infiltrated and influenced widespread mishandling and misinterpretation of the Bible. As a result, many see no inconsistency between the biblical revelation of our Creator and the depiction of advanced ETI's as creators of humanity. A biblical theological approach to the supernatural worldview could provide a means for faithful Christians to employ wisdom in discerning such claims.) How would we, as Bible-based Christians, proceed to evaluate these claims based on our supernatural worldview? For example, consider the "sons of God" who rebelled prior to the Flood (**Genesis 6:1-4**). As we have considered, these "angels" were bound for this transgression that led to the Nephilim (**2 Peter 2:4-6, Jude 6-7**), yet we see Nephilim present after the Flood (**Numbers 13:33**). We mentioned that one possible reason for the presence of the Nephilim after the Flood is that such heavenly beings are not static; therefore, others could have rebelled and committed the same transgression. Could similar events resulting in hybridization precipitating the Flood occur prior to the Second Coming of Christ by different angels and lead to widespread apostasy based on deception (**Matthew 24:22-25, 37-38**)? If not a new rebellion by different angels, could the same rebellious heavenly beings be released from their bondage for a time, along with Satan himself, to mount either international persecution or worldwide deception under the guise of benevolent ETI's concerned for humanity's wellbeing – even with healing capabilities (See **Revelation 9; 20:7-10**). How could such a supernatural paradigm help us understand those who experience "alien abductions" with probing by beings

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*described as shiny and serpentine and whose experiences share striking similarities with reports of satanic ritual abuse, astral projection and mind control?*

*Consider another unseen hypothetical scenario behind the rise and spread of Islam. Could the gods of **Deuteronomy 32:8-9** that were sentenced in **Psalms 82**, while stripped of their geographical dominions as a result of Christ's saving ministry (i.e., Christ's Conquest Procession in **Ephesians 4:8; Colossians 2:15**), be the evil "princes" behind Islam, which is an evil parody of the growing peaceful Kingdom of Christ? In other words, while we begin to see the death sentence decreed on **Psalms 82** carried out a Christ's First Advent and while there may no longer be the national pagan deities and pantheons of biblical times, there still remains many countries under the influence of deceiving gods who blasphemously receive the honor and worship due to Father, Son and Holy Spirit alone. Additionally, how often may we fail to acknowledge the evil heavenly being(s) of violent totalitarian dictators behind fascist regimes? How could Nazi occultism with its human experimentation and its after-effects be more comprehensively grasped with such a biblical supernatural worldview?*

*Whether the evil spiritual beings behind the earthly tribulations we experience are engaging in new rebellion or are released (yet also constrained) by the Almighty Lord Jesus, they have been decisively defeated, and the eternal realization of this defeat will be consummated when Christ Returns as Judge.*

## **Consummation at Christ's Second Coming**

Final Defeat of Evil **Revelation 19:17-20:15** See Appendix "Final Judgment After the Millennial Church Age"

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26. **Question:** What does it mean that Satan has been 'bound' in Revelation 20:1-6?

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**Answer:** *It means that Satan, the god of this world, is bound / restricted from deceptively preventing the spread of the Gospel to all nations, which grows the international New Creational Kingdom of Christ composed of all peoples. Therefore, Satan, that "ancient serpent", fell in rebellion in the Garden when he deceived Eve (**Genesis 3**). God's People, over time, understood this divine rebel as being the chief accuser of humanity and the leader of other rebellious and impure spiritual beings; including the gods of the foreign nations. However, at the first coming of Jesus Christ, Satan was bound with the other foreign gods, and Jesus is now rescuing people from their tyranny into His Kingdom growing on earth (**Luke 10:1-24; 11:14-23**). As a result of Christ's first coming, Satan has been cast out of the divine council; because, he no longer has a case to accuse people who have been acquitted by Christ's death (**Revelation 12:7-12**), yet he and his*

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*minions, while restrained by the Lord God Most High, may continue to be deceptive and destructive (i.e. **1 Peter 4:8; 1 Thessalonians 2:18**). Nevertheless, those who are sealed with the Holy Spirit as Christ's own will share in Christ's victory and final defeat of Satan when He Returns as Judge (**Romans 16:20; Revelation 7; 20:7-15**). Then, Christians will judge the angels and rule with King Jesus (**1 Corinthians 6:3; Revelation 2:25-29; 3:21-22; 22:16**).*

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27. **Question:** What implications does the Gospel have in our lives as Christian disciples concerning spiritual warfare?

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### Answers:

*It involves the Christians' collective struggle, in God's grace, of realizing and proclaiming the objective victory of Jesus over Satan, sin, and death by His death and resurrection. Through this, the Church advances Christ's growing kingdom on earth as it is in heaven until Jesus' Return as Judge when Christians will judge the rebellious angels and assume our co-ruling reign with Christ over a New Creational Kingdom.*

*The Christian "can powerfully resist the enemy with the weapons God has provided: truth, confession and repentance, forgiveness, extending blessings for cursings, and loving our enemies. This is the core of spiritual warfare" (Moreau, "The Essentials of Spiritual Warfare" p.79)*

### Read & Discuss:

**Daniel 7; Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 6:1-3; Ephesians 1:18-23; 3:10; Colossians 1:9-14; Hebrews 1-2; Revelation 2:26-28; 3:21; 22:16 (Numbers 24:17; Psalm 2); Psalm 110:1-2**

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28. **Question:** How does the Full Armor of God in **Ephesians 6:10-20** equip us in our spiritual warfare to crush Satan under our feet as ruling heirs with King Jesus as depicted in **Romans 16:20**?

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### Answer:

*First and foremost, putting on the whole armor of God is simply putting on Christ as our Victorious Warrior – trusting in Him and what He has already accomplished for us that His Spirit may lead and empower us in our lives according to His Word. The armor in **Ephesians 6:10-20** was*

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previously described as putting on the new self in **Ephesians 4:22-24**, which is about new life in Jesus. Depicting this new self as armor graphically illustrates that the Christian possesses the very armory of Jesus' Himself that we may wage battle on His behalf knowing our victory is sure. In **Romans 13:12-14**, this is called "the armor of light" (ESV). The point is we are to "be strong in the Lord" – not in our own power. This armor of Christ enables us to "stand against the devil's schemes", to "stand our ground...and after we have done everything else, to stand. Stand firm...."

Notice that, with taking "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God", we also are to be "praying at all time in the [same] Spirit" (**Ephesians 6:17-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22; Romans 8:26-27**). Prayer is essential; because, it is simply fundamental to who the disciple is in relation to God. This touches on the importance of a believing, prayerful relationship with the Lord Jesus for the one engaging in warfare and, especially, for the one personally seeking deliverance from evil.

Without a personal saving relationship with the Lord Jesus, such deliverance is futile, even if a Christian minister successfully prays for the individual who is subsequently blessed with temporary relief. Perhaps this is the crux of the situation underlying **Mark 9:14-29** (especially Jesus' comment

in **verse 29**). It appears that the father of the boy in this Gospel passage sought out Jesus personally, yet, when left with only His disciples, they were unable to cast out the spirit. While Jesus' response, "O faithless/unbelieving generation..." was directed to the gathered crowd which included His disciples, it had particular implications for the father's unbelief (**verses 23-24**). Jesus, in this exchange, focuses on one's need for faith. Subsequently, Jesus' response to the disciples' inquiry as to why they could not cast out the spirit, seems to refer to the need for prayer on the father's part, not the disciples engaged in deliverance. It is not about Jesus' or His disciples' ability. It is about the faith of the one requesting deliverance. It is not the disciples but, rather, the family, or perhaps the individual, seeking deliverance from evil that must be engaged in "prayer [and fasting]" themselves as people completely dependent upon Jesus. Without this, what do you think the state of the boy and this family would be after this spirit was cast out? **Hint (Matthew 12:43-45)** Does this help your (un)belief?

"All of our battle gear is to be put on in a spiritual atmosphere of prayer. Prayer is certainly the power source behind all of the weapons we have been given" (Moreau, "The Essentials of Spiritual Warfare" p. 148).

Even Tom White of Frontline Ministries states, "The primary activity envisioned in strategic warfare is intercession before the throne of God, not interaction with fallen principalities. We are not called to wield laser beams of biblical authority to destroy heavenly strongholds. We are called to destroy IN the lives of people (Christians and non-Christian) 'strongholds and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God' (**2 Corinthians 10:3-6**) ("Breaking Strongholds" pp. 141-142 via Moreau p. 175). "Rather than praying against spirits, then, it is better to pray for God's Spirit to break the rebellious will in human hearts and bring people to repentance before him" (Moreau, "The Essentials of Spiritual Warfare" p. 177).

Christians enjoy a status of honor and authority at God's right hand now, and we will fully enjoy the privilege of our ruling inheritance upon Jesus' Return. Until then, we are engaged in both

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*spreading the peace and grace of His Kingdom on earth while also continuing to engage in a battle against opposing spiritual forces already defeated by Christ (**Ephesians 2:4-6**).*

*Therefore, "we exercise Christ's authority, which has been granted to us to hinder Satan and restrain Satan's work in our lives and the lives of others [by sharing the Good News and setting people free from demonic control], an authority grounded in Jesus' incarnation, life, death and resurrection. ...it is God's authority we exercise, and he will permit only that which is consistent with his will. Only his children can access his authority" (Moreau, "The Essentials of Spiritual Warfare" pp. 160-161).*

**See also: James 4:7 and 1 Peter 5:9**

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29. **Question:** How does understanding this supernatural worldview benefit us?

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## **Answers:**

*A primary means for evil spiritual beings in leading people away from the One Triune God is through deception (**2 Thessalonians 2:1-12**), and the Christian's struggle is not "against flesh and blood...but against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (**Ephesians 6:12**). Christ's healings and authority over demons were signs of the forgiveness of sins and the inauguration of God's heavenly kingdom on earth through His Anointed King. Therefore, understanding and teaching sound doctrine about the Gospel of Jesus through the ministry of the Word is a Christian priority in discipleship and pastoral care. Such teaching is accompanied with prayers and ministries for healing of which deliverance from evil spiritual influences may be a component.*

*Thus, while disease and demonization may be aspects of suffering which the Christian disciple is called to endure by God's grace (i.e., **2 Corinthians 12:1-10**), heretical teaching at the hands of false teachers who appear good and righteous divides God's People and leaves room for Satan to deceive and lead astray as he did in the Garden. Division caused by unforgiving and prideful hearts is a means by which Satan can outwit us (**2 Corinthians 2:5-11**; cf. **Ephesians 4:26-27**). False teaching is equated with the "sons of God"/ "angels" who rebelled in **Genesis 6:1-4**, and such heresy leads to lawless living (**2 Peter 2**; **Jude**). Satan himself can "masquerade as an angel of light"; therefore, the false teachers he inspires can "masquerade as servants of righteousness" (**2 Corinthians 11:12-15**).*

**See also 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Galatians 4:9; Colossians 2:8-10; 1 Thessalonians 2:18; 3:5 and 1 Peter 5:8**

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30. **Question:** What is deliverance ministry and what does it look like in practical discipleship and pastoral care?

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**Answer:**

*Individuals seeking special pastoral intervention must express a desire for deliverance from evil with the Gospel confidence that Christ Jesus is King of all things visible and invisible. As Christians, we believe in supernatural beings such as "angels" and "demons" as well as supernatural realities key to the Gospel we proclaim such as the incarnation of God, miracles unexplainable by scientific investigation, and Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Therefore, as Christian ministers, we are not limited to materialism or naturalism when pastoring and discipling others. We are able to consider various unseen spiritual realities that may affect the lives of people, and we can helpfully apply the biblical theological supernatural worldview to evaluate an individual's spiritual condition and to disciple them with prayer, Bible reading and mutual encouragement in the Gospel. Issues of concern that could require special intervention may involve deception, haunting, curses or demonization, yet often times these spiritual concerns, if indeed present, coexist with other medical or psychological issues. Therefore, networking with and referral to other qualified professionals to evaluate and address potential physical, mental and emotional considerations emphasizes a holistic understanding that humans are both physical and spiritual beings.*

*A critical sociological, political and religious examination of the Salem witch trials serves as a helpful historical phenomenon illustrating that when there is a failure to account for all possible factors regarding various afflictions of individuals, Christians can succumb to manipulation, to superstitious folklore, and to either attributing too much or too little to the role of the Devil.*

*Importantly, without the Gospel and genuine conversion for those suffering with disease / demonization, there is no long-term deliverance. Even for committed Christians, the Lord may choose, in His sovereign goodness, not to deliver his servants from such afflictions. Nevertheless, those who do not embrace the Gospel and serve Christ as King cannot be delivered from evil or benefit from this ministry of the Church intended, ultimately, for the expansion of Christ's Kingdom. The following prayers and ministries are the primary means of supporting individuals seeking deliverance, and these can generally be utilized without episcopal approval and by both clergy and laity:*

House Blessings, Healing Prayers, Renewal of Baptismal Vows with the renunciation of evil/the devil, and ongoing Discipleship that entails Bible Reading and Gospel Encouragement in Jesus' supreme authority and reign as the Son of Man over all nations and their visible and invisible rulers.

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*Ultimately, the Christian disciple must trust God's Word to do His work by His Spirit, and fellow disciples and pastors can evaluate, over time, if the LORD bears fruit in the lives of those who claim to want to be delivered from evil. Necessary maturation and growth as disciples in God's grace may be evidenced through church assembly attendance, Bible Study, prayer, and discipling others.*

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31. **Question:** What is exorcism?

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**Answers:**

*"Interestingly, the term 'exorcism' is not used in the New Testament concerning the early church's ministry. The word itself means 'to command by use of an oath [spell] or formula.' Typically, then, an exorcism involves a ritual. Jesus, as well as the early church, relied on authority rather than ritual" (Moreau, "Essentials of Spiritual Warfare" p. 62).*

*See also **Acts 19:11-20**. This form of exorcism appears to be typical of Jews in the first century, especially when looking at the Dead Sea Scrolls. In this passage, the practice of incantation, utilized by Sceva and his seven sons who evoked a name (in this case "Jesus" in place of "Solomon") to drive out an evil spirit, is contrasted to the practice of the Apostle Paul who simply commanded demons in Jesus' name. The difference? Paul had a believing, prayerful relationship with the Lord Jesus that even the spirit recognized. It is not that demons, or even Satan, can read our minds; however, due to their invisible nature, they know who we are very intimately. This is why our thoughts, demonstrated in our lives, must be "captive to the obedience of Christ" (**2 Corinthians 10:3-6**).*

*"Spiritual warfare is not a one-time ritual. It is not simply a set of techniques that we call up on command. It is not magic exercise that instantly matures us. Spiritual warfare is a lifetime battle to grow to be more like Christ and to watch him work through us to set others free so that they too might grow" (Moreau, "The Essentials of Spiritual Warfare" p. 177).*

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32. **Question:** Are all ghosts (spirits of departed dead humans) demons?

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**Answers:**

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*While some demons could deceptively disguise themselves as departed human beings, there is also biblical support for the existence of departed human spirits ("ghosts") that have interactions with the physical visible realm. There is a reason that Scripture prohibits necromancy (communication with the dead). At a minimum, departed human spirits contacted are unreliable. At worst, a more powerful entity could deceive and lead the one making contact progressively to destruction; even if initial contacts and experiences appear favorable to the individual. This may also be applied to beings encountered in astral projection and relevant to falsely perceived charismatic experiences attributed to the Holy Spirit that have more in common with characteristics of Kundalini Awakening. These experiences are stimulated by occult practices, pharmacological usage, and hypnotic states or meditative trances. It is worth noting similarities of experiences between astral projection and reports of alien abduction.*

*In **Matthew 14:26**, the disciples react in fear when they see Jesus walking on the water. They scream out, "It's a ghost!" The Greek word for "ghost" here is "phantasma".*

*In **1 Samuel 28:8-20**, Samuel, a departed human spirit, is actually referred to as an "elohim" (a "god") and is a very different entity with which the woman was familiar.*

*"The term 'the dead' refers to those things that can and do die (they are inherently mortal, having determinate lifespans, and must do certain things [like eat and breathe] to keep existing). The most notable example, of course, is human beings, and so 'metim' most often refers to human beings. The 'metim', then, are not the spirits ('ob / 'obot) that can be conjured. The 'metim' do have some sort of disembodied existence and can be contacted (hence the prohibition [against necromancy]), but don't seem to be reliable sources of information. This would mean that the 'ob / 'obot would be non-human spirits" (Michael S. Heiser, Naked Bible Blog, "Discerning the Dead" series)*

**Read & Discuss: Deuteronomy 18:9-13; 26:14; Psalm 88:5; 106:28; Ecclesiastes 9:3-5; Isaiah 8:19; 19:3; 26:13-19 (LEB); Mark 6:49-50**

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33. **Question:** Is there any biblical evidence of guardian angels?

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### **Answers:**

*Yes, at both national and personal levels. **Read & Discuss: Job 5:1; Daniel 10:13; Matthew 18:10; Acts 12:15; Hebrews 1:14** - NOTE: Because of the saving work of Christ and His present role as our Mediator and Advocate, we no longer need "holy ones" (aka: angels) as mediators interceding on our behalf. "Ministering spirits [angels] are sent to serve those who will inherit salvation."*

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DRAFT

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