

*Bible Study*

# THE 'LORD OF HOSTS' and the 'ELEMENTAL SPIRITS OF THE UNIVERSE'

(being further research into the angelic and demonic realm)

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Satan was cast down like a bolt of lightning

## Version 2.1

What does the term 'Lord of Hosts' mean? Paul's letters are replete of warnings about demons, spirits and the elements. What are these creatures?

What are *elements* – a term he uses? History and research assists us in identifying their meaning. Let us undertake a quest to understand these issues by delving into God's Word.

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“How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?  
and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?”  
(Proverbs 1:22)

“The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the heart of the foolish *doeth* not so”  
(Proverbs 15:7)

## Introductory Remarks

In this study I wish to briefly explore the meaning behind the Biblical term **Host of Heaven** and Paul's use of the word **elements** in Gal. 4:3,9 and Col. 2:8,20. Were they just casual 'throw away' words, or do they carry substance and deep meaning? What sort of angels are they?

First of all, we should understand what the spirit world is. The *Online Bible Hebrew Lexicon* explains:

"32 *aggelos* (ang'-el-os)  
AV-angel 179, messenger 7; 186  
1) a messenger, envoy, one who is sent {#Mt 11:10, Lu 7:27, 9:52, Mr 1:2, Jas 2:25}  
2) an angel  
2a) sent from God  
2a1) to execute his purposes {#Mt 4:6,11 28:2, Mr 1:13, Lu 16:22 22:43, Ac 7:35 12:23, Ga 3:19 Heb 1:14}  
2a1) to make his purposes known to men {#Lu 1:11,26 2:9-14, Ac 10:3 27:23, Mt 1:20 2:13 28:5, Joh 20:12-13}  
2b) they are subject not only to God the Father but also to Christ {#Heb 1:4-7, 1 Pe 3:22, Eph 1:21, Gal 4:14} who is described to have returned to judgment surrounded by a multitude of them as servants and attendants {#Mt 13:41,49 16:27 24:31 25:31, 2 Th 1:7, Jude 14}  
2c) single angels have charge of separate elements: as fire {#Re 14:18} waters {#Re 16:5 7:1-3}  
2d) some angels are mentioned as guardian angels of individuals {#Mt 18:10, Ac 12:15}  
2e) some angels are over churches {#Re 1:20 2:1,8,12,18 3:1,7,14} 2f) some angels have proven faithless to the trust committed to them by God, and have given themselves over to sin {#Jude 6, 2 Pe 2:4} and now obey the devil {#Mt 25:41, Re 12:7, 1 Co 6:3, 2 Co 12:7}."

So, in most cases, angels are The *Online Bible Greek Lexicon*:

"04397 *mal'ak* (mal-awk')  
AV-angel 111, messenger 98, ambassadors 4, variant 1; 214  
1) messenger, representative  
1a) messenger  
1b) angel  
1c) the theophanic angel" [ie the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament]

Even pagan religions contain references to angels and demons, probably a recollection of what happened in ancient times. For instance Buddhist scriptures refer to deities (devata) and sons of god While the ancient Greeks and Romans, Hindis, Taoists, Islamics and others all contain information on spirit beings (refer to the appendix on this subject at the rear of this paper).

Reference such as *The New Bible Dictionary* provides background information to the Biblical terms *host of heaven* and *elements*:

“This phrase (*tzeva' hashamayim*) occurs about 15 times, in most cases implying the object of heathen worship (Dt. 4:19, *etc.*). The two meanings '**celestial bodies**' and '**angelic beings**' are **inextricably intertwined**. The LXX translation, using *kosmos*, *stratia*, or *dynamis*, does not help to resolve this. No doubt to the Heb mind the distinction was superficial, and the celestial bodies were thought to be closely associated with heavenly beings ... The Bible certainly suggests that angels of different ranks have charge of individuals and of nations; no doubt, in the light of modern cosmology this concept, if retained at all (as biblically it must be), ought properly to be extended, as the dual sense of the phrase '**host of heaven**' suggests, to the oversight of the **elements** of the physical universe--planets, stars and nebulae.”<sup>1</sup> (emphasis mine)

Not only would an understanding of these terms possibly provide us with a little insight into the world that both the Old Testament Paul refers to, but also easily discount the common position that he was anti-nomian.

This study examines Paul's usage of the word in accordance the Biblical context, with the Greek, the historical context and understanding by early 'Christians'. From that we might deduce what he meant and gain appropriate Biblical insights.



**Jacob wrestling with an angel (Gen 32)**

But, it should be noted by the reader, that this is not an exhaustive study of the subject of the *host* or the *elements*; nor the angelic or demonic realm. Rather, it is an exploration of the subject matter; attempts to raise an interest in these topics; and may be viewed as filling in gaps.

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<sup>1</sup> *New Bible Dictionary*, "Host, Host of Heaven", 1996: 495

However, I do recommend one book: *Angels. Elect and Evil* by C Frederick Dickason (Moody Press, Chicago). It is the most detailed and readable book that I have seen on the subject. In addition it is thorough, conservative and most accurate.<sup>2</sup>

Dickason carefully analyses each scriptural text on the spirit realm: their origin, the different types and personalities, classification and service they provide. With the exception of one part, the entire book would be agreed with by the Church of God.

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<sup>2</sup> For further reading on this subject see Appendix XIII in Edersheim's *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (pp748-63)

## Paul's 'Elemental Spirits'

In his pastoral epistles to the gentile congregation at Galatia, Paul uses the word **elements** in relation to spirit beings:

“Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;  
But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the **elements** of the world:

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons ...

But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly **elements**, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

Brethren, I beseech you, be as I *am*; for I *am* as ye *are*: ye have not injured me at all.” (Gal 4:1-5, 9-12)

The context of Paul's letter to the Galatians reveals problems in a gentile congregation that was sliding away from God's Law and truths. It was returning to pagan days and customs, the “weak and beggarly **elements**” which were “bondage” – hardly a reference to God's Laws, although many would argue so. The Biblical and local context strongly suggests otherwise.

Notice in particular Paul's mention of the “**elements** of the world” – carnal behaviours that originally extend from the god of this world.

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the **rudiments** [= elements] of the world, and not after Christ

Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the **rudiments** [= elements] of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

(Touch not; taste not; handle not;

Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?” (Col 2:8,20-22)

The *Revised Standard Version* translates the term as “elemental spirits of the universe.” Peter likewise uses the term:

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which

the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the **elements** shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

*Seeing then that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of *persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness,

Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the **elements** shall melt with fervent heat?

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”  
(II Pet 3:10-14)<sup>3</sup>

What does Peter mean by this?

### The meaning of 'elements'

*Strong's Concordance* explains the Greek for **elements**:

“**4747 στοιχείον** stoicheion {stoy-khi'-on}

**Meaning:** 1) any first thing, from which the others belonging to some series or composite whole take their rise, an element, first principal 1a) the letters of the alphabet as the elements of speech, not however the written characters, but the spoken sounds 1b) the elements from which all things have come, **the material causes of the universe** 1c) the heavenly bodies, either as parts of the heavens or (as others think) because in them the elements of man, life and destiny were supposed to reside 1d) the elements, rudiments, primary and **fundamental principles** of any art, science, or discipline 1d1) i.e. of mathematics, Euclid's geometry

**Origin:** from a presumed derivative of the base of 4748; TDNT - 7:670,1087; n n

**Usage:** AV - element 4, rudiment 2, principle 1; 7. ”

“**4748 στοιχέω** stoicheo {stoy-kheh'-o}

**Meaning:** 1) to proceed in a row as the march of a soldier, go in order 1a) metaph. to go on prosperously, to turn out well 2) to walk 2a) to direct one's life, to live

**Origin:** from a derivative of steicho (to range in regular line); TDNT - 7:666,1087; v

**Usage:** AV - walk 4, walk orderly 1; 5” (emphasis mine)

It would seem, therefore, that this word has something to do with the fundamentals or basic structures of the universe itself. Peter, in context of what he has written, is referring to the physical universe, not the spirit realm.

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<sup>3</sup> For a good explanation of what Peter is discussing see Richard Traver's article "The Heavens shall dissolve and the Elements shall Melt with Fervent Heat"

The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* provides further insights:

"Element; Elements

<el'-e-ment>, (Grk: *ta stoicheia*, "the letters of the alphabet," "**the elements out of which all things are formed**," "the heavenly bodies," "the fundamental principles of any art or science"):

(1) In 2 Pet 3:10, the constituent parts of the physical universe ("elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat," the American Revised Version, margin "the heavenly bodies").

(2) In Gal 4:3,1, the Revised Version (British and American) has "rudiments," as in the King James Version margin, and in Col 2:8,20, where the reference is to imperfect Jewish ordinances."

So, from the above we can deduce that the **elements** may convey a meaning of the very foundation blocks or basis of the cosmos. *Easton's Bible Dictionary* explains similarly:

"Elements, In its primary sense, as denoting the first principles or constituents of things, it is used in 2Pe 3:10 "The elements shall be dissolved." In a secondary sense it denotes the first principles of any art or science."

From the above quotes we might say that the phrase portrays a reference to a series of basic structures in similitude to the letters of the alphabet to words; which in turn may be assembled into a sentence; thence a meaningful conversation and even a language with all of its complexities.

So Peter seems to be saying that the entire universe may be transformed into the very energies from which it was created – which infers a degeneration that was caused by fallen spirits.



**Christians are in a battle with Satan and the demons.  
Therefore wear God's armour (Eph 6:11-14)**

## Historical Information – the four elements and 'the god of this world'

Some early 'Christian' writers made reference to these elemental spirits:

In reference to Galatians, Augustine wrote that although this letter was written by Paul to (supposedly) contend with Law abiders, "in this place alone he seems to speak to those who were attempting to return to Gentile superstitions." Augustine did have something right!

Marius Victorinus states that some "who make gods for themselves even from the elements of this world" thereby linking the concept to star worship and the influence that stars have on earthly human affairs.

Jerome wrote that these **elements** of the world refers to Judaizers, he makes reference to a "minority opinion" that links these elements to angels: "Some hold that these are angels that preside over the four elements"

By "four **elements**" he means Air, earth, fire, and water. Thousands of years ago man identified these elements as the basic constitutive of the world. In fact it was Empedocles who lives in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC (495-435BC) who wrote that these four elements were the cause of origin and cessation of everything and the basis of the universe.<sup>4</sup>

In ancient India a similar concept arose but with one addition: a fifth element known as *Aksa*, which, together with the others, composed the five inter-related elements that compose our world. This element was the ether or space.

Similarly, in the ancient south Asian religious writings known as the *Puranas*, air or wind was likened to breath and by extension to God whom they named Vayu. To them Vayu permeates the world and thus God is represented everywhere. And when Vayu is dwelling within a human, it becomes the life-giver and the essence of all parts of one's body.

From this one may deduce that the ancients had a little knowledge of the elements.

So, the spirit realm therefor has influence on these basic elements. But Paul seems to indicate that they may have even a greater control to include, perhaps, some aspects of the building blocks of the universe – or at least our planet and surrounds.

These spirit creatures, because they have such influence on the foundations of the cosmos – the four basic **elements**, may generate their moods and evils through "the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2).

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<sup>4</sup> See for example <http://www.webwinds.com/thalassa/elemental.htm>

And the chief of these evil creatures is Satan.

### **The 'god of this world'**

Satan (= the Adversary) is revealed in the Bible under various names, titles and descriptions:

- A liar
- A murderer
- A roaring lion
- A sinner from the beginning
- Abbadon
- Angel of the bottomless pit
- Beelzebub
- Belial
- Day Star
- Devil (= Accuser)
- Father of Lies
- god of this world
- King of Tyre
- Lucifer<sup>5</sup>
- Prince of Darkness
- Prince of the power of the air
- Prince of the world
- Serpent
- The accuser
- The tempter
- The Thief
- The tormentor

In addition, Rabbinic tradition calls him Leviathan and Asmodeus or Ashmedai (leader of all the demons of darkness).

It seems that Asmodeus or Ashmedai is another term for Abaddon or Apollyon – the Destroyer.

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<sup>5</sup> Eissfeldt 1966:96-97: "In 28:12-19, the subject is the king of Tyre [possibly typifying world trade and commerce; Babylon more strongly typifies world government and religion, and all these elements are combined in a final Babylon in Rev 13 and 17], who is thought of as a divine being dwelling in the mountain of the gods—clearly in dependence upon a myth similar to what is utilised in Isa. 14—and he is cast down to the earth by the High God because of his pride. ... makes use of a myth similar to that in Ezek. 28:12-19, comparing the tyrant with 'Lucifer, son of the dawn' fallen from heaven." It is interesting information, but a shame it is called a myth.

The description of Asmodeus has evolved over time to include a creature with three heads (man, ram, bull), goose legs and a snake's tail that spits fire. He is the king of the demons and sows discord and mischief wherever he goes. He promotes vanity and self-centredness. The name likely derives from the Hebrew root "to destroy".

The ancient world seems to hold some historical memory of ancient events, within the mythology of the region.

But the most famous reference is that found in Is. 14:11-19:

Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, *and* the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

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! {O Lucifer: or, O day star}

For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: **I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:**

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, *and* consider thee, *saying*, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

*That* made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; *that* opened not the house of his prisoners? {opened...: or, did not let his prisoners loose homeward?} [compare Matt 25:36-44]

All the kings of the nations, *even* all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house.

But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, *and as* the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.

Notice Lucifer's attempts to invade heaven and the term used "mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north". Modern scholars see similarities in Near Eastern mythology, but, alas, they ascribe the Biblical narrative similarly to mythology. Nevertheless, the following quotes are both interesting and helpful:

"The use in these verses of material derived from Canaanite myths is unmistakable, and the point is made that the meaning of what the tyrant has done is set forth in the myth of Helal, the *Day Star* or "Lightgiver" (cf. Vulg. "Lucifer"), son of Shahar, *Dawn*. ... We know that there was a god Shahar in Canaanite (Ugaritic) mythology, **the god of dawn or of the morning star** and "Helal, son of Shahar, is mentioned apparently in one of the texts from Ugarit. Another clearly mythological element is **the mount of assembly in the far north {Zaphon}**, the point around which the constellations turned, where was located the summit of the heavenly mountain and the throne of *the Most High* (cf. Ezek. 28:14; Pss. 48:2 {*Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion on the sides of the North (Zaphon), the City of the Great King*}; 82:1,6). The passage before us preserves the Canaanite

form of the nature myth, telling of the attempt of the morning star to scale the heights of heaven, surpassing all other stars only to be cast down to earth by the victorious sun." (*The Interpreter's Bible*<sup>6</sup>) (emphasis mine)

"Behind the phrase *the mount of assembly* lies the mythological idea that **the gods lived on mountains**. The *assembly* is the gathered pantheon [ie the angels]. On *sacred mountain (yarkete zaphon)* see the NIV mg". (*The Prophecy of Isaiah*<sup>7</sup>) (emphasis mine)

"In Isa 14:12-15 there is a Canaanite version of the Greek Phaethon myth as mediated and influenced by Phoenician culture during the "heroic age." The development of the Canaanite version is complex and has affinities with **the Ugaritic myth involving Athar, son of Athirat, who was unable to occupy the throne of Baal**. It was Phaethon who attempted to scale the heights of heaven and as the dawn star was ever condemned to be cast down into Hades (*sheol*). Even if one does not accept McKay's argument, it is important to note the following philological oddities" (*The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*<sup>8</sup>) (emphasis mine)

"Many scholars have noted striking similarities between the creation story in the Enûma Elish and the first creation story in the Book of Genesis (see Creation according to Genesis). For example, Genesis 1 describes six days of creation, followed by a day of rest; **the Enûma Elish describes six generations of gods, whose creations parallel the days in Genesis, followed by a divine rest**. In both stories, creation begins with light and ends with humankind, created for "the service of the gods" from the blood and bone of Kingu according to the Enûma Elish. Also, the goddess Tiamat parallels the primordial ocean in Genesis; the Hebrew word used in Genesis for the primordial ocean is "t<sup>e</sup>hôm" which has the same etymological root as "Tiamat". This has led many to conclude that the two accounts are related, perhaps sharing a common origin or that possibly one of the accounts is a modified form of the other. Though, in the Enûma Elish, Tiamat controlled saltwater seeping into the water table, so some scholars think there is just a mutual root in the concept of saltwater.

The same parallel mythology can be found in the Baal cycle recovered in Canaanite Ugarit." (*Wikipedia*<sup>9</sup>) (emphasis mine)

"Yam is the name of the Ugaritic god of Rivers and Sea, and in some myths he is one of the 'ilhm (Elohim) or sons of El, the name given to the Levantine pantheon. Despite linguistic overlap, theologically this god is not a part of the subregional monotheistic theology, but rather is part of a broader and archaic Levantine polytheism. The name Yam means "sea" and he is also called Nahar meaning "river".

Yam is the deity of the primordial chaos and represents the power of

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<sup>6</sup> *The Interpreter's Bible* 1956; Vol 5: 261-262

<sup>7</sup> Moyter 1993: 145

<sup>8</sup> *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* :499.

<sup>9</sup> *Wikipedia*, article "Enûma Elish"

the sea untamed and raging; he is seen as ruling tempests and the disasters they wreak. **Yam shares many characteristics with Greco-Roman Ophion, the serpentine Titan of the sea whom Kronos cast out of the heavenly Mt. Olympus. Likewise, the gods cast out Yam from the heavenly mountain Sappan** (modern Jebel Aqra; "Sappan" is cognate to Tsephon (Tzion). The seven-headed dragon Lotan is associated closely with him and the serpent is frequently used to describe him.

Of all the gods, Yam holds special enmity with Hadad, THE LORD over the divine assembly. **Yam is a deity of the sea and his palace is in the abyss associated with the depths, or Biblical tehom, of the oceans.** (This is not to be confused with the abode of Mot, the ruler of the netherworlds.) In Ugaritic texts, Yam's special enemy Hadad is also known as the "king of heaven" and the "first born son" of El, whom ancient Greeks identified with their god Kronos. Yam wished to become the Lord god in his place. In turns the two beings kill each other, yet Hadad is resurrected and Yam also returns.

Since Yam wishes to raise himself to the lofty heights of the gods whom he hates, and since he is the lord of chaos and destruction, the nearest equivalent to Yam in modern religions is the Christian Satan. Moreover, a comparison with the evil Jörmungandr (Norse world-serpent and deity of the sea) is accurate, given his description. Like Yam and Hadad, he and Thor slay each other at the end of the world (Ragnarök or Twilight of the Gods). **There are also many similarities with the Egyptian chaos serpent, Apep.** A relevant passage in the Christian book of Revelation reads: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." (Revelations 12:9, KJV)"

In a further Babylonian tale, the god Shamash rose from the mountains with rays zipping forth from his shoulders.<sup>10</sup> The underworld is a place that he enters and exits at will through the gates in the mountains. **The associated scorpion-men were custodians of this underworld bringing into remembrance Rev 9:1-11.**

Historical investigation into the god Shamash may enlighten us further to the Devil's other names and attributes of Abaddon and Apollyon revealed in Revelation 9. Recall verse 1:

"They have over them as king the angel of the abyss: his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek *tongue* he hath the name Apollyon".

In the last days, Satan will be allowed to unleash scorpion-men upon the earth. A European fascist military force with weaponry we can hardly imagine. Woe be to those that stand in the way of the conquering ambition of this soon-to-arise world superpower.

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<sup>10</sup> Compare Mal 4:2; Dan 10:6; Zech 9:14

By way of background, before we delve deeper into the “power of the air” concept, we should turn to a mysterious reference in the Old Testament to bull sacrifices and consider how these bulls tie into our overall study.

## Mysterious Bull Symbols – ‘power of the air’

Why bulls? What do they symbolise?

We find typological bulls sacrificed during the Feast of Tabernacles (Numbers 29:12-38) in reduced numbers each day, viz:

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Day 6</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Day 7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>

Another is counted for the Last Great Day, but of the 70 sacrificed during the Feast of Tabernacles, the Jewish *Talmud* asks: “To what do these seventy bullocks correspond? To the seventy nations” listed in the mysterious Table of Nations.

A footnote reads: “Seventy is the traditional number of Gentile nations, and the seventy bullocks are offered to make atonement for them”.

In Israel, the priests were the ruling class. In God’s sacrificial system, bullocks were offered to make atonement for them (Lev 4:3) while Israel as a nation were also to sacrifice a bullock for national sins (Lev 4:13-14). In contrast a leader was to sacrifice a male goat (Lev 4:22-23) while the common people sacrificed a female kid or female lamb (Lev 4: 27-28, 32). Therefore the Jewish interpretation of the 70 bulls seems appropriate as they relate to rulers, leaders and nations. In Genesis 10 where we find the Table of Nations, we find, beside the name of Noah, 70 other names, representing the 70 nations.



**Bulls – symbols of strength and power**

Several other scriptures bear this out: in Ps 68:30 gentile kings are likened to bulls; as is the arrogance of Assyria (Is 10:13); the rulers and leaders of Edom (Is 34:7)

and Babylon as well (Jer 50:27). We know from the Scriptures that there is organisation in Satan's Kingdom (Eph 6:12; Col 1:16) which he uses to manipulate and control this world's nations. One such evil spiritual leader over a nation is described by Daniel as the "prince of the kingdom of Persia", a very powerful and senior demon who has been granted such rulership over a nation or even empire (Dan 10:13, 20) – so nations have demonic princes ruling over them.

These spirit rulers of nations may well be the bull demons of ancient mythology – very powerful gods in the religious belief systems of these civilisations. David himself may have been surrounded and attacked by these vile bull forces – very senior prince demons that influence nations - when he cried out to God to deliver him from them (Ps 22:12):

"Be not far from me; for trouble *is* near; for *there is* none to help.  
{none...: Heb. not a helper}

Many bulls have compassed me: **strong bulls** of Bashan have beset me round.

They gaped upon me *with* their mouths, *as* a ravening and a roaring lion. {gaped...: Heb. opened their mouths against me}

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. {out of...: or, sundered}" (Ps 22:11-14).

If David was beset by immensely powerful bull demons (ie princely creatures that are near the top of Satan's brutal chain of command and which influence national leaders), then are also Christians? Because of his senior position as a national leader, it may be that senior demons were unleashed upon him. It follows that Christians are possibly assailed by lesser demons. Well, that is just a thought.

Regardless, these princes are terribly powerful and influential. They spread moods and negative 'vibes' to humans and Christians are not completely free of their influences. They have to struggle with them, developing spiritual strength and growing close to God.

We cannot fight the influences of these creatures on our own – we need God's protection through His **host** of heaven to deliver us, strengthen us and assist us. It follows that Christians must pray for God's protection including the shield of the holy, upright angels.

Continuing with the bull theme: All over the ancient Middle East we find reference to the bull which is used as a symbol of strength and fertility as well as to bull gods. El, the supreme deity of the decadent Canaanite pantheon, was often called "the Bull El" (he was a fertility god). Baal, the god of fertility, storms, rain and vegetation is also called the Bull. Also among the Hittites, Aramaeans and Babylonians, the bull gods were a dominant feature of their religions, not to mention the many bull and calf-cults linked closely to the Egyptian god Horus.

Cattle cults among the Cushitic peoples of Ethiopia and India may be found to this day! In Mithraism, bull worship was an important aspect of their beliefs.

In Babylonia, figures of bull gods guarded the entrance into temples, houses and gardens (in contrast the lion of Judah was utilised extensively in the British Empire). During the Assyrian period a human face was added: at Khorsabad colossal human-headed winged bulls were found at the palace of Sargon II.



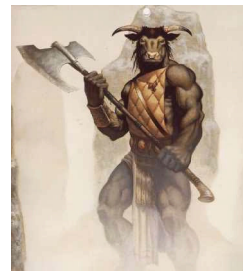
**Bull demons in China**



**Bull in Ur**



**Bull man in Mesopotamia**



**Minotaur (= 'bull of Minos') in Crete.**

Now notice:

To the Babylonians these bulls were actually spirits which brought both good and evil upon mankind (demons sometimes bring good upon someone to deceive and to lead astray) and **which filled the air** to produce storms and thunderbolts. In other words they could negatively control the weather and they somehow dwelt within the atmosphere.

Demons may indeed bring some good to deceive and entice folk to follow another way. Then these wicked creatures reveal their terrible intent and the evil fruits of their influences follow. Their practices and ministers may appear to be of the light, but in reality they represent the darkness (II Cor 11:13-15).

Note also that these bull gods or extremely powerful demons, filled the air which is one of the thoughts Paul seems to have had in mind when he condemned the "prince of **the power of the air**" and "spiritual wickedness in high places" (Gr *the heavenlies*) in the letter to the Ephesians (Eph 2:2; 6:12). There may also be another connection to the heavenlies: the bull was in reality the constellation of Taurus of the star Gud-ana – the bull of heaven.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> As an aside, such **bull**-worshipping practices were condemned and outlawed in the Bible: Ex 32:1-20; Josh 24:2; I Kings 12:28; Hos 8:5; 13:2. The sexual perversions, false doctrines and weird practices were such a stench to God that Israel was to wipe out these religions from their land. Unfortunately this was never successfully accomplished.

In pagan Rome, a **bull** was killed for the baptism of blood at the Roman Taurobolium in honour of the deities such as Mithra. In a trench, the blood of the **bull** dripped over (or 'baptised') the initiate and drenched his body. The initiate even drank the warm blood! Afterwards he came from this literally bloody baptism, believing that he was purified from sins and 'born again for eternity'. In contrast, a Christian is covered in water at his or her baptism, washed clean metaphorically by the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, and must then absorb Christ's flesh and blood by symbolically eating and drinking of it (John 6:53-56), undertaking a process of spiritual growth until finally being born again at the resurrection.



Many 'living creatures' have four faces, including that of a bull

### Comments by Herbert Armstrong

Herbert W Armstrong wrote about this "power of the air" in several places:

"The natural-born human has only the human spirit -- imparting the power of intellect. Yet all such human minds are confined to knowledge of the physical and material. And by the fact that **Satan is prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2), he broadcasts -- surcharges the air with his ATTITUDE of SELF -- vanity and love only toward self. We call this attitude Satan instills human nature.** We acquire it from earliest childhood gradually.

Repentance is change from that attitude. Through God's Holy Spirit joining with our spirit, we acquire -- become partakers of (II Peter 1:4) - - the divine nature." (*Plain Truth about Healing*, chapter 6) (emphasis mine)

In *Human Nature – did God create it?*, Herbert Armstrong similarly wrote, but in greater length:

"To the church at Ephesus, God said through the apostle Paul (Ephesians 2:1-2): "And you [who] ... in time past ... walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience ...." GRASP IT! Satan is here called "the prince of the power of the AIR!" I could not have understood that 60 years ago. I did not then realize how communication by sound and by picture can be broadcast instantaneously through the air.

I have stressed the point that Satan, the former great archangel cherub Lucifer, was the most perfect and powerful being that God could create as an individual being. He was perfect as originally created. But he is composed of spirit, and thus he is invisible to human eyes.

**This great and powerful being, even though evil, has power literally to surcharge the air around this earth. HE BROADCASTS!**

Wherever you are as you read these words, chances are there are voices and perhaps music in the air around you. A radio or television set tuned to the right wavelength would make them audible to you.

The spirit in every human being is automatically tuned in on Satan's wavelength. You don't hear anything because he does not broadcast in words -- nor in sounds, whether music or otherwise. **He broadcasts in ATTITUDES. He broadcasts in attitudes of SELF-centeredness, lust, greed, vanity, jealousy, envy, resentment, competition, strife, bitterness, and hate.**

In a word, the selfishness, hostility, deceitfulness, wickedness, rebellion, etc. that we call "Human NATURE" is actually SATAN'S NATURE. It is Satan's ATTITUDE. **And broadcasting it, surcharging the air with it, Satan actually NOW WORKS IN the unsuspecting all over the world today!** That is HOW Satan deceives the whole world today (Rev. 12:9; 20:3). Being invisible, Satan is not seen by people.

This prince of the power of the air -- this god of this world -- IS THE REAL SOURCE OF WHAT WE HAVE COME TO CALL "HUMAN Nature"!

Here is the real CAUSE of all the world's evils!

But it seems nobody understands it, and therefore the world does nothing about it -- except to go along with it, blaming human nature and supposing it was GOD who created us with an evil nature. Actually, it is Satan's nature."

Herbert Armstrong continues with his amazing insights:

#### **"Spirit Communication**

Let me give you an illustration of how **we can be swayed, influenced, and driven Satan's wrong way by his broadcasting through the air.** When God wanted to cause captive Jews in ancient Babylon to return to Jerusalem to build the second temple, He put it in the mind of Cyrus, king of Persia. The Persian Empire had taken over the rule of empire from Babylon. Following is the explanation of how God moved Cyrus to do what God wanted.

"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia ... the Eternal stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom ..." (Ezra 1:1) that a contingent of Jews return to Jerusalem.

God did not speak to Cyrus in words or direct communication, as He talked with Moses and God's prophets. God reached Cyrus through Cyrus' spirit. God stirred up his spirit, causing him to want to do it. God did cause King Cyrus to know that in issuing this proclamation he was doing it according to the will of God.

Utilizing this same principle, Satan, prince of THE POWER OF THE AIR, stirs the spirits of humans, injecting into them attitudes, moods, and impulses of selfishness, vanity, lust, and greed, attitudes of resentment against authority, of jealousy and envy, of competition and strife, of resentment and bitterness, of violence, murder, and war. **People do not recognize the source of these attitudes, feelings, motives, and impulses.** As I said, they do not SEE the invisible Satan. They hear no audible voice. They do not know the attitude comes from Satan (Rev. 12:9). But they come to FEEL such attitudes, impulses, and desires. That is how Satan DECEIVES THE WHOLE WORLD.

### **Self-Centered Attitude**

People will feel depressed and won't realize why. But those unaware of this phenomenon, with this self-centered attitude being broadcast and injected into their unsuspecting minds from earliest childhood, do, to a greater or lesser degree, absorb it until it becomes their normal attitude. It becomes habitual. It does not, of course, exhibit the same degree of effect in all minds -- one person will become more evil than another. But the natural tendency is there. They come to have it naturally. It becomes their very NATURE. And we call it "human nature."

All this is an outstanding example of just how subtle Satan is! **The finest and most brilliant human minds have been deceived by it.** Thus the WHOLE WORLD has been swayed by Satan into what I often term, simply, the "GET" way of life -- the way that has become HABITUAL and NATURAL which we term "HUMAN NATURE." ...

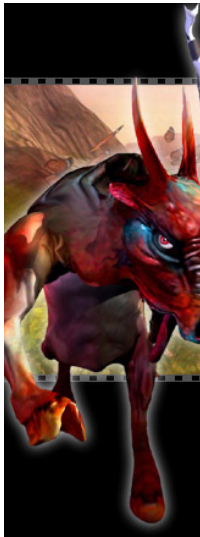
### **Power of the Air**

Now the highlights of chapter 2: You Christians at Ephesus were spiritually dead, but Christ has given you the impregnation of eternal life. You are now spiritually alive. In the past you lived according to the way of this world (the SELF centered way), according to the PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR. In II Corinthians 4:4 Satan is called the god of this world, who has blinded the minds of those who do not believe Christ and His truth. NOT that they inherited this spiritual blindness -- but that Satan blinded those living in that generation directly.

But here in Ephesians 2 Satan is referred to as the PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR! Notice the word POWER -- the POWER of the air. Then it calls him the SPIRIT (being) that NOW -- the time when they were living -- actually was WORKING IN those of the world who were not obedient -- that is, the world in general. The *Phillips*

translation in modern English renders this: "You [then] drifted along in the stream of this world's ideas of living, and obeyed its unseen ruler [who is still operating in those who do not respond to the truth of God]."

Emphatically this shows Satan is the UNSEEN one who, unrealized by the people, is actually swaying their minds, leading them in what I term the "GET" way." (emphasis mine)



**Demons come in all shapes, sizes, personalities and looks. Some are openly evil, others pretend to be bringers of light.**

So, one aspect of the **elements**, seems to have been to do with controlling the air. But not just the weather, but actually to be able to generate impulses as Armstrong explains - currents of energies for a negative outcome upon human minds. To cause them to sin. Or to influence ideologies and governments.

An example would be the Devil's influence upon Judas

“And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray Him” (John 13:2)

Now turn to Daniel 7:3-4:

And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

The first *was* like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it”.



**The first beast of Daniel 7**

This presents us with a prophetic clue: the wings of a divinity symbolizes protection for the people that follow that particular god. This motif is found all over the Middle East. When the wings are found upon a human form it is the god Assur that is represented; without it is the sun god Shamash that is represented.

The winged gods also appear in other different forms including a winged disc or winged eagle. The latter because the eagle was obviously the most powerful and terrible creature of the air.

In Nimrud for example, statues and inscriptions of a bull's body with man's head and eagle's wings are portrayed. These huge statues stand near the entrance to royal palaces – they symbolized the sovereign's terrible power of life and death.

It would appear that these were the princely demons operating behind the scenes, influencing the gentile leaders.



**The Assyrian statue**

Similarly Anzu, the Babylonian demi-god, has eagle's wings and talons with a lion's paws and face. The powerful god Ellil appointed Anzu to guard the bath chamber, but instead, out of jealousy, stole Ellil's *Tablet of Destinies*. Such treachery! This Tablet provided power to bring into reality that which is uttered – so Anzu wanted the power of Ellil – the power of creative capacity – to be able to bring into being that which is thought. To be able to generate something out of nothing.



**Winged bull figure with a human head from the Temple of Sargon II of Assyria (c. 700 BC)**

One wonders if there is a very vague recollection of Lucifer's treachery toward God Almighty in this legend? No doubt Satan wish to take over the creative power of God Himself! "The wicked, in the **pride** of his countenance, *saith*, He will not require *it*. All his thoughts are, There is no God." (Ps 10:4)

"By **pride** cometh only contention; But with the well-advised is wisdom." (Prov 13:10)

"**Pride** *goeth* before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall." (Prov 16:18)

How art thou **fallen** from heaven, **O day-star, son of the morning!**  
how art thou cut down to the ground, that didst lay low the nations!  
And thou saidst in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the **stars** of God; and I will sit upon the mount of congregation, in the uttermost parts of the north;  
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." (Is 14:12-14)

And so Satan fell as a bolt of lightning – excommunicated from God's holy presence (Luke 10:18). And he will be finally dealt with at the end of the millennium (Rev 20:1-3; Is 26:21; 27:1)

In an interesting article on *How God Uses Angels to Govern the Universe*, Ernest Martin wrote:

"Those "elements" in Greek philosophical teaching (and also understood by those apostles who lived within the environment of the New Testament world) were recognized as being infinitely small faculties that represent the foundational and substantial characteristics (or the building blocks) of our cosmos. But they also referred to an expansion of those building blocks almost to infinity. The term "elements" could refer to material things that extend upward and outward from the earth to embrace all major substances comprising the universe. As the Greek philosopher Aristotle explained in his first

three chapters of his work titled "Meteorology," the meaning of the term "elements" refers to all of the material and spiritual characteristics that comprise the earth and the universe (from the smallest atom — or even subatomic substances or what we might call wave actions — up to and including the largest of the heavenly bodies, even the Milky Way and beyond). They were reckoned to be "elements" or to be "elemental" in composition. **What is important for us Christians to realize is the fact that the apostle Paul said that it was various angels (called principalities and powers) who controlled these "elemental factors" that are the fundamental building blocks of the material cosmos. Because of this, those angels themselves were referred to as the "elements."**

Martin continues:

The ancients conceived of these "elemental" faculties as being able to be reduced (in human terms) to four prime *elements*: fire, air, water and earth. There were many ramifications of these four factors that were further divided by cold and heat (or, even further by the addition of negative and positive principles). These "elements" comprised various physical and spiritual attributes (and even embracing psychological matters) that blended together to form all phases of animal life (terrestrial, aquatic and aerial), and all phases of vegetable life (from trees down to the smallest bacteria), and to all phases of inanimate life in which there was believed to be "elemental" motion. The "elements" were acknowledged to provide those particular traits of nature that made humans to be what they are. And importantly, angels were included in overseeing these factors of creation. Let us notice those angels, or the principalities and powers. Just where do they fit into the scheme of things that keep the cosmos operating in a harmonious and sustainable fashion? **What the apostle Paul indicates is that angels are very prominent in these affairs. They are the ones in charge of the functions of all these various and multitudinous items called the "elements."** And some angels are in charge of individual and collective "elements." They perform their respective responsibilities just as God designed at the creation. Let us look at some examples." (emphasis mine)

That seems to cap it off – these spirit creatures have control over this world – the cosmos – and this age.

Their control extends beyond the weather and forces of nature, for it includes political and religious powers. They can even directly possess people or animals. They can cause sickness or generate a hurricane. And they can influence humans to sin and they induce Christians to destruction. Indeed, they can infect a Church of God or local congregation to slide into apostasy.

Their power is enormous without God's protection for Satan is the 'god of this world' – this time period of human history and therefore society. But he is also the god of this world's religious systems and the one who controls planet earth.

## The 'Lord of Hosts' and the 'Host of Heaven'

In connection with spirit beings that influence the **elements**, scripture reveals God as 'the Lord of hosts' and it also mentions "the **host** of heaven." Sometimes we tend to overlook some of these scriptures or to view the '**host**' as only Israel or a general term for angels.

The '**host**' appears to be an assembly of very senior spirit beings which the scriptures have not fully revealed the details. They could be:

- Senior Princes ruling vast realms of the universe (they could be ordered under the Archangels or the 24 Elders)
- A combination of these Princes together with the 24 Elders

Herbert W Armstrong noted:

"Who are the 24 elders mentioned several times in the book of Revelation?"

"The 24 elders rule with God in Heaven.

"These 24 elders...are spirits, a part of the created **heavenly host of beings**. They have been given positions of responsibility as advisers in the Government of God through which He rules the universe."

("Short Questions from Our Readers," *Plain Truth*, September 1961. [emphasis mine])

Biblical references to this fascinating subject include: Ps 82:1; 89:5-7; Job 1:6; Neh 9:6.

Perhaps these are myriads of angels under each of the 24 Elders. Or these Elders are established as the most high assembly (perhaps roughly like a senate) while the rest of the princely hosts comprise the 'lower house of assembly'.

It seems that the archangels Michael and Lucifer may not be a part of this assembly, but instead comprise the head of God's armies and serve directly under Him as Princes.

Turn to Ephesians 6:12:

"Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil.

For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the **principalities [ie princely rulers or princes over territories under a king]**, with the **powers**, with the **world rulers [senior demons]** of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens.

Therefore, put on the armor of God, that you may be able to resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold your ground."

Here Paul discusses the evil powers of the demonic realm that are organised as principalities (ie principalities are the rule of princes) – leading governing bodies under their supreme master – Satan! They have their hierarchical structure with offices and ranks. We are not revealed what they are, but we can have a good guess given that some clues as to the heavenly structure is revealed. The Devil would want to emulate that structure given his own desire to play God.

So what *is* revealed in the Bible on this fascinating and important subject of the spirit realm?



**Satan – the Dragon - is the god of this age, exuding his influences across the world**

### **Just what are the 'hosts' of Scripture?**

In Deut. 4:19 we read:

“And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, *even* all the **host of heaven**, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, **which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations** under the whole heaven. {divided: or, imparted}”

According to Strong's *Concordance*, the Hebrew for **host** is *tsaba*:

“6635 **צְבָא** *tsaba*' {tsaw-baw'} or (fem.) **צְבָאָה**. *tseba'ah* {tseb-aw-aw'}

**Meaning:** 1) that which goes forth, army, war, warfare, host 1a) army, host 1a1) host (of organised army) 1a2) host (of angels) 1a3) of sun, moon, and stars 1a4) of whole creation 1b) war, warfare, service, go out to war 1c) service

**Origin:** from 06633; TWOT - 1865a,1865b; n m

**Usage:** AV - host 393, war 41, army 29, battle 5, service 5, appointed

time 3, warfare 2, soldiers 1, company 1, misc 5; 485.”

Other relevant scriptures include Deut 17:3; IKings 17:16; 21:3, 5; 23:4-5; IIChron 23:3, 5; Jer 8:2; 19:13; Zeph 1:5; Acts 7:42. Here we see that in most cases the term **host of heaven** refers to fallen spirits.

They were previously part of the Godly heavenly **host**, but were now part of an ungodly **host**, joined with Satan in rebellion.

Reference to the heavenly **host** still under the command of God may be found in the following verses:

“And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the **host of heaven** standing by him on his right hand and on his left.” (IKings 22:19. see IIChron 18:18)

“Thou, *even* thou, *art* LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their **host**, the earth, and all *things* that *are* therein, the seas, and all that *is* therein, and thou preservest them all; and the **host of heaven** worshippeth thee.” (Neh 9:6)

“As the **host of heaven** cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.” (Jer 33:22)

The reference in Neh 9:6 seems to refer to the stars and planets and by extension the angels that hold certain responsibility for them, no doubt structured into offices and positions of responsibility.

While in Is 34:4 the **host** refers to the physical universe. So the term has several meanings dependant upon context – which is typical of any language.

A further scripture is puzzling - Dan 8:9-11:

“And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant *land*.

And it waxed great, *even* to the **host of heaven**; and it cast down *some* of the **host** and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. {to the **host**: or, against the **host**}

Yea, he magnified *himself* even to the prince of the **host**, and by him the daily *sacrifice* was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. {to: or, against} {by him: or, from him}”<sup>12</sup>

A casual reading of this would perhaps provide an impression that this end-time

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<sup>12</sup> In its context (Dan 8:6-9) may indicate that the future leader of the Beast power would arise from the eastern leg of the Roman Empire revivals – the Byzantium Empire. This included parts of south-east Europe and later evolved into the lands controlled by the Hapsburg's in Eastern Europe and later still the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Beast power has some control over the spirit realm and can actually overpower angels.

Is this feasible?

We have three choices in attempting to understand this:

1. the Beast can indeed possess such overwhelming power;
2. the demonic realm works with and through the Beast and it is they that actually undertake such awesome tasks; or
3. this is a reference to the saints (Christians) who are typed as stars in Dan 12:3.

The **host** is an army or company in similitude to the other references in the Old Testament such as Is 14:13; Jer 23:18; Job 5:1; 15:8, 15; IKings 19:22:19-23.

The Hebrew for *stars* is likewise explained by Strong:

“3556 כֹּכַב kowkab {ko-kawb’}

**Meaning:** 1) star 1a) of Messiah, brothers, youth, numerous progeny, personification, God's omniscience (fig.)

**Origin:** probably from the same as 03522 (in the sense of rolling) or 03554 (in the sense of blazing); TWOT - 942a; n m

**Usage:** AV - star 36, stargazers + 02374 1; 37”

That this word may refer to stars is not under dispute. But it could refer to the people of God is just as likely, given the context.

More is revealed in Moses' farewell song located in Deut. 32:7-9:

“Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations:  
ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.  
{many...: Heb. generation and generation}

When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.

For the LORD'S portion *is* his people; Jacob *is* the lot of his inheritance.” {lot: Heb. cord} (cp. Gen 10:32)

The *Septuagint* has it as “the number of the angels of God” which places a different slant on this matter. Of course, it could be a dual reference to Israel who would be world rulers and the angels standing behind them providing them with the necessary assistance in a predatory world – a world containing beast-like nations that wish to war.

It is of further interest that an ancient Aramaic text<sup>13</sup>:

“When the Most High made allotment of the world unto the nations which proceeded from the sons of Noach, in the separation of the writings and languages of the children of men at the time of the division, He cast the lot among **the seventy angels, the princes of the nations** with whom is the revelation to oversee the city, even at that time He established the limits of the nations according to the sum of the number of the seventy souls of Israel who went down into Mizraim.” (see also Gen. 10:32)<sup>14</sup>

Compare Deut 4:19-20:

“And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, *even* all **the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.** {divided: or, imparted}

But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, *even* out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as *ye are* this day.”

So here we clearly have a fallen **host** of heaven which has control over the non-Israelitish (gentile) nations of which there are 70. So there must be 70 Princes or bull demons (recall that a bull represents a prince or nation).



**Satan's minions influence this world's governments and corporations**

If this theory be correct, then there could be 70 powerful fallen angels of very high rank (Princes) – perhaps known as ‘sons of God’<sup>15</sup> who followed Satan in rebellion. Under them would be ranks of evil and twisted demons undertaking all sorts of weird

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<sup>13</sup> The Targum is the translations of the Old Testament into Aramaic. This quote is a text of the Old Testament found quoted in Jerusalem Targum (also known as Jonathan Targum)

<sup>14</sup> One wonders if Luke 10:1-2, 17-19 could represent a physical anti-type to the role of these 70 senior demonic princes?

<sup>15</sup> In Ugaritic mythology the god supreme El fathered 70 sons who were known as the ‘sons of El’ (Heiser 2001:3). This may be a vague recollection of ancient knowledge.

roles in service to their overlord – Satan.

So it seems likely that the host refers to princely beings and not an overall designation of all spirits, for many would be undertaking God's will throughout the universe and not necessarily gathered before Him collectively at one time.

This brings us to another matter - dealing with Christian destiny.

## Christian Destiny

Herbert Armstrong initially believed that the destiny of true believers was to replace the fallen high level angels. Upon further study he changed this view.

Dr Roderick Meredith wrote about the true origin of the God Family doctrine that Armstrong began to understand in the early 1950s showing how it came about from deep thought and study without much or any reference to any other group as far as we are aware (see *Global Church News*, Aug-Sept 1993: 11-12). Armstrong and the Radio Church of God at that time were of the view that Christian destiny was to become a sort of 'super archangel' – replacements for the fallen stars of heaven.

But as Armstrong later wrote, there were only three archangels revealed in the scriptures:

- Lucifer (= "light-bearer", "shining one" or "morning star"<sup>16</sup>),
- Michael (= "who is like God") and
- Gabriel (= "warrior of God" or "man of God").

Lucifer was therefore very close to God Himself and ruled one third of the angels. Presumably so did Michael and Gabriel. Indeed, Michael clearly has responsibility for caring or guardianship for Israel; while Gabriel has responsibility for the Church.

Lucifer was one of two great spirit beings that covered God's throne (see Ex. 25:19-20; Ezek. 28: 14-16). It seems that Michael may be the other and both may have functioned as secretaries to Christ Himself. When Lucifer rebelled, another took his place, and that took his place – this was possibly Gabriel.

It follows that there may be 12 senior Princes under Michael's command, over each of the tribes<sup>17</sup>. Similarly (and it follows logically), there are 7 angels over each Church of God era or phase (Rev 2 & 3) under the leadership of Gabriel.

The above view is included in the following chart. I trust that this chart will be of some assistance in presenting a structure to our knowledge of the angelic order. In other words, by taking what we understand of the angelic realm revealed in divine revelation – Scripture – we may be able to ascertain its order – even if it is only a cursory overview of what must be incredible detail and organisation involving billions of spirits.

But at least it provides some insights in this strange but fascinating realm so involved with human affairs.

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<sup>16</sup> Heiser in "The Nachash and His Seed" explains well what others before him have tried to do: the Hebrew for serpent in Genesis 3 can also be translated as bright or brazen. "Eve was not talking to a snake. She was speaking to an bright, shining upright being who as serpentine in appearance, and who was trying to bewitch her with lies." (p. 2)

<sup>17</sup> Josh 5:14 may refer to him

Turn now to the Apostle Paul who offers a revelation about Christian destiny:

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope,

Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. {the...: or, every creature}

And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.” (Rom 8:18-23)

The “creature” here means the creation or the entire universe. In other words, Christians born into God’s Kingdom will be elevated above angels (Heb 1:14) and be granted creative powers to work with the elements to fix a degenerating universe and create new life.

This seems to be what Paul is alluding to.

### **Two Powers in Heaven**

Alas, there is a rapidly expanding belief that Christ did not have pre-existence. This is taught by the Christadelphians, Church of God (Abrahamic Faith), Ken Westby (ACD) and Ron Weinland (Church of God – PKG).<sup>18</sup>

Some CoG7 affiliates have readopted this belief in recent years, reviving what was a doctrine almost dead within the CoGs (it had some life in the 1930s, but was still very much a minority belief in those days).

Even Messianics are going to war over it. On one end some Messianics are compromising more and more with Protestantism. On the other extreme others are becoming so ‘Old Testament only’ as to minimise Christ - the war is over Christ’s true identity and I wonder where it will all end?

This variation of Unitarianism is known as Socinianism after Laelius Socinus and Faustus Socinus. The latter formed the Unitarian Church in Poland in the 1500s. Although this extreme form of Unitarianism predated them by centuries. Some are even trying to attribute this belief to Dr Arius. Although I have seen quotes by him which are clearly Unitarian. But at other times seem Binitarian.

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<sup>18</sup> It was therefore refreshing to read the section on 'Were the First-Century Jews Strict Monotheists?' in UCG's latest paper. Indeed, a minority of Jews did believe in a second Divine Being.

My recommended references to people are:

- Margaret Barker - *The Great Angel, A Study of Israel's Second God*
- Alan Segal - *Two Powers in Heaven*
- Matthew Alfs - *Concepts of Father, Son and Holy Spirit*
- Daniel Boyarin - "The Gospel of the Memra: Jewish Binitarianism and the Prologue to John," *Harvard Theological Review* 94:3 (July, 2001), 243-284
- Brian Fulton - "Two Powers in Heaven. The Nature of God Controversy in First-Century Judaism"
- James McGrath and Jerry Truex – "'Two Powers' and Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism"

*The Great Angel, A Study of Israel's Second God* is a remarkable work that I somehow came across in the early or mid-1990s. It is highly recommended reading. The *Two Powers in Heaven* is another excellent work I stumbled across in the University of Sydney library, around the early or mid-1990s. And *Concepts of Father, Son and Holy Spirit* is one I found advertised somewhere and ordered it around 1987 or 1988. While the article "The Gospel of the Memra: Jewish Binitarianism and the Prologue to John" I came across last year (2005).<sup>19</sup>

Here are quotes from *Two Powers in Heaven* which demonstrates that Binitarianism was a belief, although a minority belief, amongst the Jews:

"Though it was difficult to date the rabbinic traditions accurately in many cases, the results showed that the earliest heretics believed in two complementary powers in heaven ... At its beginning, Christianity was rather more "Binitarianism" than Trinitarian, emphasizing only Christ and the Father as God ... There is warrant to believe that "two powers" heresy was manifested in some kinds of Christianity in the first century. The evidence seems to show that Johannine Christianity, at least, was condemned by Jews as "ditheism" and would have considered itself to be "Binitarian" " (pp. x, 7, 218).

Some trinitarians even accept that the early Church was Binitarian and not Trinitarian:

"The **binitarian formulas are found** in Rom. 8:11, 2 Cor. 4:14, Gal. 1:1, Eph. 1:20, 1 Tim 1:2, 1 Pet. 1:21, and 2 John 1:13 ... No doctrine of the Trinity in the Nicene sense is present in the New Testament ... There is no doctrine of the Trinity in the strict sense in the Apostolic Fathers ..." <sup>20</sup> (emphasis mine)

Now, I just hope we don't over-react to Socianism so that we put greater emphasis on Christ than the Father. For instance, some have said that the sabbath-observing groups over the ages chiefly proclaimed Christological connections to the holy days - this is inaccurate:

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<sup>19</sup> I could not find a copy in Australia. However, a kind member in the USA found the article in a library and scanned it for me.

<sup>20</sup> Rusch 1980: 1-2

1. The onus is on those making such claims to prove it;
2. What we know of what was taught was more on they are a ceremonial requirement and prophetic connections;
3. IF they taught mainly Christological connections in the past, why should we go back? We must go forward with deeper understanding because during this century we have witnessed an explosion in Biblical knowledge.

The Scriptures indicate that knowledge shall increase in the end time (Dan. 12:4). This is often accomplished by building on the understanding, knowledge and research of predecessors. Not only is raw knowledge increased, but so is qualitative value-adding to doctrine with deeper and more meaningful insights.

4. Finally, it is the few Protestants that take an interest in feast day typology who chiefly see Christ in them. Not us! And it is those within our various fellowships that have watered-down so many of our beliefs that want to preach Christ. He is indeed in the Holy Days, but that is not the Biblical emphasis: He is the agent for the Father to guide His Plan which is outlined in the Holy Days.

That is the chief emphasis for these days. Diminishing the Father is not an option – yet it is being pushed from certain quarters. Why? What is their agenda? Who has authorized such a change in doctrinal emphasis anyway?

The first spirit beings on the following chart are those that comprise the Godhead. It may surprise some to learn that two YHVH's (Jehovah's) are revealed in the Old Testament. Prominent researcher, Michael Heiser, investigated this possibility:

“The *Memra* actually became a well-known character in the Old Testament for Jewish readers of the Aramaic Bible. Throughout the Aramaic Bible, the *Memra* is introduced or used in passages where it looked like there was more than one Yahweh in a passage, or where there was a second god figure who seemed to be interchanged with Yahweh.”<sup>21</sup>

And it was this second Divine Being Who became Jesus Christ.

In John 10 Christ claims to be a member of the Godly realm. This was considered blasphemous by the religious leaders of the day. And so this statement has been used as an argument by the Church of God demonstrating Christ's claim to pre-existence and God membership. Note that Christ refers to Ps 82:6 which connects back to Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7.

“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

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<sup>21</sup> Heiser “The Word of the Lord Came to Me”: 4

No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. **I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.**

There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.

And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?

Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.

And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.

Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. {make...: or, hold us in suspense}

Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

**And I give unto them eternal life;** and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.

My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

**I and my Father are one.**

Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because **that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.**

**Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? [reference is to Ps 82:6]**

**If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;**

**Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?**

If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." (John 10:17-37)

He claimed to be a Divine Being with pre-existence – and they knew it. Notice also John 19:5-7:

"Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* saith unto them, Behold the man!

When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*. *Pilate* saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify *him*: for I find no fault in him.

The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, **because he made himself the Son of God.**"

These leaders knew what Christ was claiming – to be a Divine entity that pre-existed and pre-dated his human life. Sons of God were considered senior spirit-beings by the Jews.

Even the pagans had a rough recollection of the spirit realm:

“Among the religious texts found at Ugarit there is a ‘Pantheon [ie a ‘family’] of Ugarit’ (found in three texts, two Ugaritic and one Akkadian) in which the chief gods of Ugarit are listed. The first item in the Akkadian version (lines 1-2) is *DINGIR* (the determinative for god [*elohim*]), followed by *a-bi ilum*; the fragmentary Ugaritic probably reads *il ib*. The word *il*, *ilu* (*m*), or *el* is common to all the Semitic languages; in the broadest sense it can have the general appellative meaning of ‘god,’ but it can also be the proper name of a specific deity. **The word *ib* or *ab* means ‘father.’ Here the text can be read as a reference to ‘the god of the [or, my] father’ and be reminiscent of the concept of ‘the god of the fathers’** noted in chapter 1 (p.30); or the reading can be, ‘god the father,’ referring to the god *El*, one of whose titles is Father, or to a god so designated but distinct from *El*.

“At any rate, as known throughout the religious texts of Ugarit, *El* is the first of the major gods and the head of the pantheon. In the epithets that are applied to him, he is seen as the father of the gods and human beings, and as the creator of heaven and earth. The totality of the gods constitutes his family, and he presides over the assembly of the gods [E. Theodore Mullen, Jr., *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature*]. **The title ‘Bull’ is frequently given to him**, presumably to signify his power and/or procreative ability, and he is called king, wise, holy, and everlasting or eternal (*olam*) [Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, pp. 27, 35, 42-43].<sup>22</sup> (Finegan, *Myth & Mystery. An Introduction to the Pagan Religions of the Biblical World*, p. 138). [emphasis mine]

It is interesting that the god *El* was likened to a **bull** and that he had offspring. Perhaps this mythology is an ancient memory of the true God mixed up with Satanic concepts. That is, Satan, who tried to overthrow God, is portrayed as *El* and his ‘family’ members are the chief demons. While this is speculative, let us at least give some thought to it.

This is rather different to the notion of family held to by holy scripture.

It seems inappropriate to take ancient traditions and myths and superimpose that upon Biblical teaching. However, one might look at ancient traditions and, upon careful consideration, ascertain whether it might throw further light upon Biblical teaching. Is it helpful?

Or is it so filled with error that it should be avoided?

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<sup>22</sup> Finegan 1992: 138

# Speculative angelic order chart

By C White

<b>GOD</b>	<b>Elders</b>	<b>Archangels</b>	<b>Assembly of senior angels</b>	<b>Other senior angelic beings</b>	<b>Other Angels</b>	<b>Supporting Scriptures</b>
<b>Most High God (the Father) - (first Jehovah)</b> 						
<b>Jehovah (Christ) (second Jehovah)</b> 			70 senior 'sons of God' or Princes			Deut 33:1-3; Ps 68:16-17
	24 Elders					Rev 4:4 10; 5:5-14; &7-13: 11:16; 14:3; 19: 4
		Lucifer (fallen)			Demons	Is 24:21; Ps 89:6-7; Dan 10:13, 20-21
		Michael (= "who is like God")		12 Angels over the tribes of Israel?		Josh 5:14?; Dan 10:13, 20-21
		Gabriel (= "warrior of God" or "man of God").		7 Angels over the 7 Church phases?		Dan 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19; 26; Rev 2 & 3

					Four headed living creatures	Ezek 1:4-21; 3:12-14
					Cherubs (have 2 faces)	Ezek 41:18
					Seraphim	Is 6:1-6
					Zoa (living creatures)	Rev 4:8; 5:6; 7:11; 14:3; 15:7
					Messengers	Heb 1:7, 14; 12:9; IKings 22:19-23; IIChron 18:18-22); Gen 28:16-17
					Others	Job 38:7; Is 14:13; Zech 14:5; Jude 14
					Watchers (the 7 spirits or eyes for God)	IIChron 16:9; Zech 4:10; Rev 5:6
					Christ's Angel (= His personal secretary?) <sup>23</sup>	Rev 1:1

<sup>23</sup> Thanks to Geoff Robertson for providing the suggestion that Christ may have His own personal secretary. This may be Michael.

## Concluding Remarks

It is apparent from the above that the elemental spirits to which Paul refers are fallen angels or demons. They control this world and its moods and often affect human thoughts and emotions because they influence the **elements** or basic foundations of creation. These are forces that are assembled to generate power such as hurricanes or other negatives. It does not refer to the angels being given creative ability or that they were involved in some way with the creation. They may have been, but at this stage I cannot see it.

But that does not preclude them from influencing the creation to cause degeneration. They have clearly done this to the galaxies, the pre-Adamic world and the pre-Noahic world. And they are very much involved in causing human degenerate behaviour, culture, political philosophies, false religions and so on.

They are also very interested in causing Christians to degenerate spiritually. They would love to cause an entire church era to degenerate and water-down God's truths and doctrines to the point the Church is struggling to survive the influences of the world such as political correctness. They would delight in the 'dumbing down' of the Church of God for this is a precursor to compromise followed by the next step in Satan's strategy to destroy us – apostasy.

Regardless, our God and Father reserves ultimate control over the **elements** which is revealed in scriptures such as in Ps 103:19-22:<sup>24</sup>

“The LORD'S throne is established in heaven; God's royal power rules over all.

Bless the LORD, all you angels, mighty in strength and attentive, obedient to every command.

Bless the LORD, **all you hosts, ministers who do God's will.**

Bless the LORD, all creatures, everywhere in God's domain. Bless the LORD, my soul!”

### **Spirit involvement with the 'elements'**

But how involved are spirits in the basic foundation blocks of the universe? Do they have creative powers? We simply do not know at all. Some speculate that they were jointly involved with creation and therefore the fallen angels corrupted creation. They corrupted it by causing degeneration that resulted in certain dinosaurs or they directly created such.

Nothing like this can be proved from either the scriptures or science and must be

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<sup>24</sup> See also Rev 4:1; Ps 47:10; 135:5-6; Ex 9:23-25, 29; 1Chron 29:11; Prov 19:21; Is 46:9-11; Dan 4:34

considered to be speculation.

It would appear, however, that only God is a Creator – and that the angels were over-awed with His immense creative capacity. See Job 38:1-7:

“Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,  
Who *is* this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?  
Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and  
answer thou me. {answer...: Heb. make me know}  
**Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?**  
declare, if thou hast understanding. {hast...: Heb. knowest  
understanding}  
Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath  
stretched the line upon it?  
Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the  
corner stone thereof; {foundations: Heb. sockets} {fastened: Heb.  
made to sink?}  
**When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of  
God shouted for joy?”**

Here is reference to angelic beings spontaneously singing with absolute fascination for God's overwhelming power and energy that surged forth to create the earth. There is no mention or inference here of their involvement with the creation.<sup>25</sup>



**The Divine Throne Room with 24 Elders, Seraphim, Zoa and billions of other spirits**

A question one might pose is whether evil spirits have control over the **elements** upon and around the earth or other parts of the universe as well? Nothing may be

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<sup>25</sup> Although some think that there is a 'heavenly divine council' comprising God and His sons, the angels, who were involved in creation itself. It is not a council as we understand it today. Rather, it seems to be a general gathering of senior princes under God. Nor can any credence be given to God cloning Himself to produce 24 elders which in turn cloned themselves to produce the princes; and that they in turn cloned themselves to produce other spirits and so on down the line (this is an old idea extending back decades). Some call this a 'family' – but this is not a family in the Biblical sense. It is, instead, a collection of holy spirits which were created of God and comprise of a different spirit substance. They are not family sons, but son-like and holy like God.

determine completely at this time – but it seems that they have been assigned to the earth and are limited to its sphere all or most of the time.

But could they corrupt creation? This is possible given that they have a certain amount of control over the basic foundational building blocks. Only by having influence over the energies that are assembled to generate physical products may they influence human thoughts and thus ideologies, governments and human civilisations. Or affect the weather or the overall climate.

So, somehow they can cause the degeneration of creation by their destructive power or persuading scientists to interfere in areas they are not fit to enter into. See for example the degeneration of humankind in Genesis 6.

Thankfully – and all glory to God - Christians can be protected from Satanic forces – the elemental spirits – by keeping close to God and asking Him for angelic assistance. For the angels are also able to influence the elements for our good until Satan and his fallen host be removed as ruler of the world and the being negatively influencing the **elements**.

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## Appendix

# Angels and Demons in Pagan Religions

### **Sumerians:**

“Sumerian society is the oldest society that has left us clear evidence of the use of a winged human motif. This evidence is in the form of stone carvings, either in the form of three-D statues or relief carvings that provide the illusion of three-dimensionality. Sumerian culture flourished around 3,000 BC between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in present-day Iraq (see map showing the geographical extent of Sumerian culture). The religion of these people was complex, embracing a wide variety of spirits and gods, but of particular interest was their belief in ‘messengers of the gods’, angelic forces who ran errands between gods and humans.

“The Sumerians also believed that each person had a ‘ghost’ of some sort (that we would now probably label as ‘guardian angel’) with this entity remaining a constant companion for a person throughout their life. Altars that appear to be dedicated to guardian angels have been found in the excavations of ancient Sumerian homes, along with stone engravings and temple wall paintings of human figures with wings. After the polytheistic Semitic tribes had conquered the Sumerians around 1900 BC their mythical cosmology borrowed the notion of angels from the vanquished Sumerians. These Semitic peoples developed the idea of a corpus of angels split into groupings answerable to each of the many Semitic gods, further subdividing these groups into vertical ‘ranked’ hierarchies, a notion which persisted into Zoroastrianism and monotheistic Judaism and beyond, as we shall see. Sumerian ideas probably set the scene for the development of Egyptian theology as well, although it is difficult to be clear about the detail of such cross-cultural influences.”<sup>26</sup>

### **Hinduism:**

“In Hinduism, the Asura are a group of power-seeking deities, sometimes referred to as demons. They were opposed to the devas. Both groups are children of Kashyapa. The name is cognate to Ahura – indeed, the Oxford English Dictionary recognizes the use of the term in reference to Zoroastrianism, where “Ahura” would perhaps be more appropriate—and AEsir, which implies a common Proto-Indo-European origin for the Asura and the AEsir.

“The negative character of the asura in Hinduism seems to have evolved over time. In general, the earliest texts have the asuras presiding over moral and social

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.feedback.nildram.co.uk/richardebbs/essays/angels.htm>

phenomena (e.g. Varuna, the guardian of Rta, or Bhaga, the patron of marriages) and the devas presiding over natural phenomena (e.g. Ushas, whose name means "dawn", or Indra, a weather god)."<sup>27</sup>

### **Buddhism:**

"Powers of the devas: From a human perspective, devas share the characteristic of being invisible to the physical human eye. The presence of a deva can be detected by those humans who have opened the divyacakshu (Pali: dibbacakkhu), an extrasensory power by which one can see beings from other planes. Their voices can also be heard by those who have cultivated a similar power of the ear.

"Most devas are also capable of constructing illusory forms by which they can manifest themselves to the beings of lower worlds; higher and lower devas even have to do this between each other.

"Devas do not require the same kind of sustenance as humans do, although the lower kinds do eat and drink. The higher sorts of deva shine with their own intrinsic luminosity.

"Devas are also capable of moving great distances speedily and of flying through the air, although the lower devas sometimes accomplish this through magical aids such as a flying chariot.

"Types of deva: The term deva does not refer to a natural class of beings, but is defined anthropocentrically to include all those beings more powerful or more blissful than humans. It includes some very different types of being; these types can be ranked hierarchically. The lowest classes of these beings are closer in their nature to human beings than to the higher classes of deva.

"The devas fall into three classes depending upon which of the three dhatus, or 'realms' of the universe they are born in".<sup>28</sup>

### **Mithraism:**

"Mithras was a light-bringer god [sound familiar?], whose cult flourished between 1500 BC and the time of Christ, in lands as far apart as India and Great Britain, with a basis in what was then known as Persia (see map of the Persian empire around 500 BC). Although in his own cult Mithras does not fully conform to the image of 'angel' that we are particularly interested in here, nevertheless Mithraism was the most prevalent religion in Persia when Zoroaster (qv section below) was

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<sup>27</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asura>

<sup>28</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deva\\_\(Buddhism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deva_(Buddhism))

alive, and in Zoroastrianism Mithras was considered to be an angel who mediated between heaven and earth, later becoming judge and preserver of the created world. In Vedic cosmology also (where in the Rig Veda, Mitra is mentioned over 200 times), Mitra appears often to be more angel than god. The 'Mithras-cult' images of Mithras that we see here are typical close variations on the same scene, where Mithras fights the sacred bull, with his cloak billowing out behind him in a way that seems meant to suggest wings. Over and over again we find Mithras depicted in this way."<sup>29</sup>

### **Greece and Rome:**

"The root of the idea of Mercury lies in Greek mythology with the messenger god, Hermes. The Romans, whose culture was in many ways derivative of the Greeks, borrowed the old stories and myths from the Greek God Hermes and laid them on top of their own similar god, Mercury. The process by which this was done is now shrouded somewhat by the mists of time, suffice it to say that these two names came to be recognized as designating one and the same mythical being."

"Mercury was one of the most popular of the ancient deities and was featured in many stories. He is supposed to have killed Argus on the orders of Zeus, by lulling him to sleep and then chopping off his head. He assisted Odysseus in his travels as that wanderer returned from the siege of Troy. It is interesting to note that Mercury generally does not act on his own, but at the behest of some other god. He acts for his brother Apollo in saving the life of his child. Zeus often sends him to deliver dreams or to travel with a mortal to help keep him or her safe. This keeps him in accord with his mythical function as messenger."<sup>30</sup>

"In Roman mythology, every man had a genius and every woman a juno (Juno was also the name of the queen of the gods)".

"Originally, the genii and junones were ancestors who guarded over their descendants. Over time, they turned into personal guardian spirits, granting intellectual prowess. Sacrifices were made to one's genius or juno on one's birthday".

"The juno was worshipped under many titles: Iugalis, protected marriage; Matronalis, protected married women; Pronuba, protected the bride; Virginalis, protected virginity".

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.feedback.nildram.co.uk/richardebbs/essays/angels.htm>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.indepthinfo.com/mercury/messenger-god.shtml>

“In addition to the genius or juno of each individual, regions, families, households and cities had a genius. The genius of the Romans was a cat . The genii dedicated to places were usually depicted as snakes.”<sup>31</sup>

### **Islam:**

“In Islam, Allah created Angels, Jinns and Humans—the latter two of which have ‘free choice’ between good and evil.

“Iblis was of the jinn race and was supposedly a devoted servant of Allah. He attained a very high status and was brought close with the Angels. Allah knew Iblis harboured ill intentions, however, and therefore the Shaytan was named Iblis (meaning “desperate”).

“The Angels do not have free will and do not sin because they do not know how. When Allah created Adam, He commanded all the Angels to prostrate to him. All the Angels did so, except Iblis, who refused to obey.”<sup>32</sup>

### **Zoroastrianism:**

“Zoroastrianism identifies six main archangels: the Archangel of Good Thought, the Archangel of Right, the Archangel of Dominion, the Archangel of Piety, the Archangel of Prosperity and the Archangel of Immortality, along with at least 40 lesser angels called Adorable Ones. Some of these angels/archangels were considered to be male, some were considered to be female, and each one was associated with some particular attribute or quality. On a lower level again the third rank of angels in Zoroastrian cosmology were the Guardian Angels, each one assigned as guide, conscience, protector and helpmate throughout the life of one single human being. All of the various hierarchies of angels were considered to be divine gifts, all of them aspects or manifestations of the one ‘Lord of Light’. Zoroastrians also believed that corresponding to the Lord of Light there was also a Lord of Darkness, with complementary demons and evil spirits, and it was felt that in the battle between light and darkness the forces of light would eventually win. To demonstrate the lengths to which one must go in an attempt to put together any sort of ‘complete’ history of angels, one need only look at some of the terminology: for instance the demons of Zoroastrianism, that are referred to as daevas, exist in opposition to ‘angelic’ forces that are referred to as ahuras. In the ancient Hinduism of the Vedas, however, we find demons referred to as asuras, existing in opposition to ‘divine’ forces known as devas.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genius\\_\(mythology\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genius_(mythology))

<sup>32</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaitan>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.feedback.nildram.co.uk/richardebbs/essays/angels.htm>

## **Appendix**

# **The Nature of God and Christ**

*Doctrinal Study Paper*  
*Approved by the Council of Elders*  
*August 2005*

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*September 2005*

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### **Appendix E**

#### **Were the First-Century Jews Strict Monotheists?**

One of the arguments against the deity of Christ is the argument from silence. This argument assumes that the Jews of Christ's day were strictly monotheistic and if Christ had professed to being God in the flesh this would have been a big issue at that time. But is it true that the Jews of the first century believed in "strict" monotheism?

There is no question but that the Jews were monotheistic, but how were they monotheistic? In the past 30 years much new information has come to light that sheds doubt on the traditional view of Jewish belief about the Godhead. More and more evidence shows that the Jews did struggle with the issue of plurality in the Godhead.

*The Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament: Second Commonwealth Judaism in Recent Study* by J. Julius Scott, Jr. of the Wheaton College Graduate School shows clearly that it is a mistake to believe that the Jews of the New Testament period were "strict monotheists" and they would never have accepted Jesus as God. Scott shows that the idea of "strict monotheism" did not develop until the Middle Ages and was an attempt to stop the encroachment by Christianity. Here are some quotes from Scott:

The immediate Jewish background of the New Testament was shaped by three cataclysmic events and their results as various groups of Jews reacted to them differently.

First came the destruction of the Jewish state by the Babylonians in 587/6 BCE. The Hebrews lost their land, monarchy, holy city and temple and were scattered throughout the world. Consequently, they faced a theological crisis involving the nature, power, and goodness of God. They were also threatened culturally, racially, and ceremonially as they were thrown into proximity with other peoples and religious groups. In addition, the absence of recognized prophets left the

Hebrews without divine guidance at a time when they felt most in need of support and direction.

Debate and disagreement continue about many facts and interpretations of the remains of Second Temple Judaism. Yet, something of a general agreement on a number of significant points has emerged. This includes new understandings, recognitions of previously obscure facts and emphases, and changed opinions. Some of the more important elements in this "new consensus" may be described as follows.

1. Intertestamental Judaism is a descendant of the Old Testament Hebrew faith and culture but is not identical with it... [Also we] must distinguish it from Rabbinic Judaism, which developed after the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple, and the Jewish state. This distinction must be carefully noted in, among other things, attempting to use certain types of source materials, especially the Old Testament and Rabbinic writings, as witnesses to the faith and practices of this period.

2. Although Second Commonwealth Judaism had cardinal tenets, such as monotheism [which was not clearly defined], covenant, Torah, and the implications of these, it was essentially a religion of orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy. Behavior and practice, not precise theological subscription, demonstrated faithfulness to the national or sectarian commitment.

3. The society, culture, faith and practice of Intertestamental Judaism were far from a monolithic whole. As we have already mentioned diversity was a major characteristic of the society and period; accordingly it is folly to seek a mainline or correct position or to assume that one particular group or trajectory can be identified as the "normative Judaism" of the period. The diverse elements which made up the fabric of Intertestamental Jewish society must be taken into account, both individually and together, in attempting to understand the period.

4. Our "new consensus" sees Second Temple Judaism, not as a "holding pattern" between the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, but as a dynamic civilization which faced and was given form by its response(s) to genuine tensions arising from political, cultural, sociological, existential, and religious situations and issues. This challenge took place within the context of commitment, on the one hand, to the abiding relevance of Jewish socio-nationalistic-religious heritage, as it was then understood, and, on the other hand, to the need to face realistically the changing circumstances of life in the world in which they lived.<sup>34[64]</sup>

Samson H. Levey, in *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation: The Messianic Exegesis of the Targum* published by Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati in 1974, further confirms this diversity in Jewish thought in the time of the first century when it came to the Messiah. There is evidence that would include the Messiah being "divine" or God.

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<sup>34[64]</sup> J. Julius Scott, Jr., *The Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament: Second Commonwealth Judaism in Recent Study*.

The diversity of this period is probably no where more evident than in eschatological expectations. Would the Consummation be simultaneous with or subsequent to the arrival of the Final Age? Would there be a divine agent (a Messiah), or would God personally intervene? If the former, would the Messiah be human, spiritual-angelic, or divine? Is the "Messiah" a personal, corporate, or idealized figure? Would there be a single Messianic figure or several? Would the role or task of the Messiah or Messiahs be primarily political, military, social, or religious? Would he be concerned solely for the affairs of the Hebrews or would he also benefit Gentiles and the natural order? What would be the status of Temple and Torah during the Final Age, of various Jewish groups, of the Gentiles? Although the majority of common people in The Land of Israel (the "Am Ha-Eretz" or "Average Jews") seem to have held to some loosely defined hope of an essentially military-political-nationalistic Messiah(s) who would both deliver from enemies and enable God's people to "serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness," it is impossible to speak categorically about "*the single pre-Christian Jewish belief*" of almost anything [emphasis added].<sup>35[65]</sup>

*Survey of the New Testament—Intertestamental Judaisms* by Thomas L. Long has this to say about Judaism of the first century and just prior:

The period between the second century BCE and the second century CE is known to biblical historians as the "Intertestamental Period," that is it marked the closure of the canon of the Hebrew scriptures and the formation of the canon of the Christian scriptures.

This period is important to Jews because it includes the devastating Jewish revolt against the Roman empire, which resulted in the destruction of the Second Temple and the end of sacrificial worship, and it is important to Christians because it represents the matrix in which Jesus of Nazareth and his earliest disciples were formed. Because it was a period of tremendous theological diversity within Jewish practice, recent scholars of religion have tended to characterize it in the plural—Judaisms—rather than representing it as a single monolithic religious orthodoxy. What we know about this period comes from several sources: the Christian scriptures (not a particularly reliable historical document because they were often hostile to Jewish authorities), the first-century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus and the philosopher Philo of Alexandria, the Dead Sea Scrolls, archeological remains, and inscriptions.<sup>36[66]</sup>

In "Monotheism—A Misused Word in Jewish Studies?" Peter Hayman states:

In the academic world of twenty or thirty years ago it was conventional to hold that the story of Judaism was one of a gradual, but inexorable, evolution from a Canaanite/Israelite pagan and mythological environment into the pure light of an

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<sup>35[65]</sup> Samson H. Levey, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation: The Messianic Exegesis of the Targum, Cincinnati*: Hebrew Union College, 1974.

<sup>36[66]</sup> Thomas L. Long, *Survey of the New Testament—Intertestamental Judaisms*.

unsullied monotheism. It is hardly ever appropriate to use the term monotheism to describe the Jewish idea of God, that no progress beyond the simple formulas of the Book of Deuteronomy can be discerned in Judaism before the philosophers of the Middle Ages, and that Judaism never escapes from the legacy of the battles for supremacy between Yahweh, Ba'al and El from which it emerged.<sup>37[67]</sup>

It is also quite revealing to read the writings of the early writers as to how they viewed Christ. Ignatius (A.D. 110 to 117) wrote in his epistle to the Ephesians: "By the will of the Father and of Jesus Christ, our God... God Himself being manifested in human form." In his epistle to the Trallians he writes: "Jesus our God." In his epistle to the Romans: "Jesus Christ our God." In *Magnesians 6*, Ignatius writes: "Jesus was with the Father before the beginning of time..."

Polycarp was another early writer. In his epistle to the Philippians he wrote about Jesus Christ as "God and our Lord." This is further proof that the Jews and the Christians of the first century did have a grasp of the concept of plurality in the Godhead. While they were monotheistic, one needs to explain exactly what is meant by the term. There was clearly room in their theology for Christ to be God.

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<sup>37[67]</sup> Peter Hayman, "Monotheism—A Misused Word in Jewish Studies?" *Journal of Jewish Studies*, Vol. 42, 1991.

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**"In a world of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act."**

**-- George Orwell**

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