

“The Great Assembly” (Psalm 82)(1.26.20)

Psalm 82 (NIV84)

A psalm of Asaph.

1 God presides in the great assembly;
he gives judgment among the “gods”:

2 “How long will you defend the unjust
and show partiality to the wicked? Selah

3 Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless;
maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.

4 Rescue the weak and needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

5 “They know nothing, they understand nothing.
They walk about in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

6 “I said, ‘You are “gods”;
you are all sons of the Most High.’

7 But you will die like mere men;
you will fall like every other ruler.”

8 Rise up, O God, judge the earth,
for all the nations are your inheritance.
The word of God for the people of God.

Title: The Great Assembly

LET US PRAY.

INTRODUCTION:

Why bother to learn about The Great Assembly of God? We have a natural resistance to believing in what we do not see and cannot understand. We try not to think about all the implications of angels, demons, the Angel of the Lord, archangels, heavenly creatures, sons of God, and Satan. We say we believe our Bibles; but, our Bibles undeniably describe an unseen realm.

Okay; let’s suppose I am able to demonstrate to you that this reality is in fact verified by scripture. What are the implications? How does your worldview change? Is your daily life impacted?

Our opening hymn, A Mighty Fortress is Our God, is a testament to the unseen realm and the corresponding battle. Why do we need a Mighty Fortress? Our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe; his craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate, on earth is not his equal.

Verse two tells us that Jesus must win the battle. Verse three tells us that this world is filled with devils that strive against us. The Prince of Darkness threatens us; but, his doom is SURE! We have the power of the name

of Jesus. We have the Holy Spirit and our spiritual gifts. We may lose everything that we have in this world, but we are secure in God's kingdom.

The thing is, we cannot win a battle we do not acknowledge. An ostrich that hides its head in the sand will gain no victory. Evil and the Evil One are a reality that will not retreat just because we don't want to think about it.

Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 10:3–5 (NRSV),

3 Indeed, we live as human beings, but we do not wage war according to human standards; 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not merely human, but they have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments 5 and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ.

In his book, *21 Days of Breakthrough Prayer (The Power of Agreement)*, Jim Maxim says, "Paul is admonishing us to be on the offense as we use our spiritual weapons to pull down strongholds in our lives and in the lives of those we love! Our weapons are prayer, faith, and the Word of God."

BODY:

Let us look at what the Bible reveals of the heavenly realm and heavenly happenings.

The "gods" are the divine beings who function as his counselors and agents.

"heavenly beings" – Hebrew: sons of God, or sons of might:

We have many visions of God's heavenly court in the Bible. For example, here we have a depiction of Ezekiel's first visional creature.

Ezekiel 1:25–28 (NIV84)

25 Then there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. 26 Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. 27 I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. 28 Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him.

This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

Elohim; some English translations use God instead of heavenly beings. This cannot be correct because "man" is WAY LOWER than Yahweh.

Genesis 11:8–9 (NIV84)

So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

Here we have the corresponding scripture that puts “sons of God” (Elohim) in charge of the nations.
[Deuteronomy 32:8-9]

Because of the failures of the “sons of God,” and their promotion of wickedness, we find them in the courtroom of Psalm 82.

Over and over again, scripture warns against abusing power. To whom much is given, much is expected. Darkness and wickedness are tied together. Worshiping gods instead of God, Yahweh, the Most High is idolatry and therefore sin. When the wicked are left unchecked, when the weak are exploited, then the foundation and structure of creation is shaken. When God’s will is ignored there are significant consequences. Psalm 82:7 tells us, even though they are heavenly creatures, the disobedient gods will die as does mortal man.

Sometimes, there is a little vigilante in my heart when I see the weak oppressed. The Lord tells us that vengeance is to be left to him. Most of us have a sense of justice. We WANT the wicked to be punished. The psalmist’s sentiment in Psalm 82:8 is ours: Rise up, O God, judge the earth, for all the nations are your inheritance.

From today’s responsive reading in the bulletin.
[Psalm 89:5-7]

Heavenly beings and angels are not to be worshipped. Only the Lord our God.
Exodus 20:2–3 (NIV84)

2 “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3 “You shall have no other gods before me.

Daniel 7:9–14 (NIV84)

9 “As I looked,

“thrones were set in place,

and the Ancient of Days took his seat.

His clothing was as white as snow;

the hair of his head was white like wool.

His throne was flaming with fire,

and its wheels were all ablaze.

10 A river of fire was flowing,

coming out from before him.

Thousands upon thousands attended him;

ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.

The court was seated,

and the books were opened.

11 “Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. 12 (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.)

13 “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

1 Kings 22:19–23 (NIV84)

19 Micaiah continued, “Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. 20 And the Lord said, ‘Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?’

“One suggested this, and another that. 21 Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the Lord and said, ‘I will entice him.’

22 “‘By what means?’ the Lord asked.

“‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,’ he said.

“‘You will succeed in enticing him,’ said the Lord. ‘Go and do it.’

23 “So now the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The Lord has decreed disaster for you.”

Here are four more of the most well known biblical accounts of what happens in The Great Assembly.

[Job 1:6-12; Job 2:1-6; Zechariah 3:1-5; Isaiah 6:1-7]

The king of Aram was at war with Israel. Elisha kept warning the king of Israel of the plans of the king of Aram. This enraged the king and he sent his army to surround the city of Dothan where Elisha was staying. There seemed to be no escape.

2 Kings 6:17 (NIV84)

17 And Elisha prayed, “O LORD, open his eyes so he may see.” Then the LORD opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Again this shows the intersection of the heavenly and earthly realms; if only, we have eyes opened by the Lord.

On Friday, I went to Mister Cuts for a haircut. The barber is a young man, who is not particularly religious. In our conversation, he said, “People today just want cheap entertainment. They are entertaining themselves to death.” I told him that he is exactly right, “People are anesthetized.” My prayer is that all of you have eyes to see the Lord working.

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CONCLUSION:

Dr. Michael Heiser, in the opening of the 35th chapter of the Unseen Realm says:

"We've devoted a lot of space to describing God's plan to reclaim the disinherited nations and restore his rule. Let's review: Yahweh's original intention was that all humankind would be his earthly family, ruling in cooperation with him and his heavenly family. The Old Testament describes the ruin of Yahweh's desire through a series of primeval rebellions. But the original objective was not defeated, only delayed. After the rebellion at Babel, Yahweh set aside the nations and called Abraham to begin anew.

Even as Yahweh started his kingdom plan with this one man and his wife, there were hints that all the nations were not forgotten – in fact, God said that through Abraham all nations would be blessed (Genesis 12:3). The focal point of that blessing was to be the ultimate son of Abraham, the messiah. After his resurrection, the Spirit promised by Jesus – and by the prophets of old – came at Pentecost and began the great reversal. The gospel was carried to all the nations of the known world, transforming men and women held hostage to other gods into sons and daughters of Yahweh."

It is my hope that your eyes have been opened these last two weeks and that you are able to look at the scriptures in a different and more holistic way. The connections between the testaments are stronger than I once understood. More importantly, my understanding of God's Word gives me a more discerning worldview. May I say also, a more discerning heavenly view. I pray that the same is happening for you.

It is our Lord Jesus that connects the Old and New Testaments. It is our Lord Jesus that connects the heavenly and earthly realms. Jesus said in John 1:51 (NIV84), "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." And, it is our faith in the work of Jesus that gives us access to our Father.

In the weeks to come we will continue to learn and equip ourselves for the retaking of the kingdom of God.

Soldiers of Christ arise,
and put your armor on,
strong in the strength which God supplies
thru his eternal Son;
strong in the Lord of Hosts,
and in his mighty power,
who in the strength of Jesus trusts
is more than conqueror.
Still let the Spirit cry

in all his soldiers, "Come!"
till Christ the Lord, descends from high
and takes the conquerors home.
Amen and amen. Let us pray.

Jeremiah 23:18 (NIV84)

But which of them has stood in the council of the LORD
to see or to hear his word?
Who has listened and heard his word?

Job 15:8 (NIV84)

Do you listen in on God's council?
Do you limit wisdom to yourself?

Jeremiah 23:22 (NIV84)

But if they had stood in my council,
they would have proclaimed my words to my people
and would have turned them from their evil ways
and from their evil deeds.