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## Lesson 4 — THE SONS of GOD



*“You alone are the LORD. You created the heavens, the highest heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to all things, and the host of heaven worships You. ”*

*[Nehemiah 9:6]*

We have established that our Creator God is the only necessary being who exists. Everything else in all of creation is contingent upon God, including things both visible and invisible. The Bible is a supernatural book that reveals supernatural realities to mankind that we otherwise would not know. While mankind remains bound to the physical limitations and laws of the material universe, the Scriptures provide fascinating insight into another realm — the spiritual realm.

God — *Elohim* — created the earth to be man’s permanent home, yet the “heavens” also are home to a host of spiritual beings created by God. As we will see, these spiritual beings also are in the “*elohim*” category and play a significant role in God’s purposes. They are not limited by the physical laws of the natural world. These spiritual beings may operate in the invisible realm, yet they are no less real than what we can see with the naked eye.

*“As we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are temporary, but the things that are unseen are eternal.” [2 Corinthians 4:18]*

The reason this lesson on the heavenly realm precedes the creation of man is because the Bible implies that God first created the host of heaven before creating mankind on earth. In other words, God evidently created a divine family of spiritual “sons” to participate with Him in ruling the heavens, in the same way He would create human “sons” to have dominion over the earth. God is quite capable of ruling the universe alone, yet in His infinite wisdom and grace, He has created autonomous beings to share and participate with Him in the execution of His sovereign will both on earth and in heaven.

As we will discover, the “sons of God” — *bene Elohim* — play a critical role in the Biblical narrative and provide keen insights into the cosmic scope of God’s redemptive plan. After all, the central character in all of Scripture is the One and Only Son of God, Jesus Christ.

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## Introducing the sons of God — *Bene Ha' Elohim*

In the beginning God created the heavens (*plural*) and the earth (*singular*). The Hebrew word used for heavens in Genesis 1 is the plural noun, "*shamayim*," which implies that there are more than one heaven. The Bible can use the word heaven to describe the sky and the earth's atmosphere and even the expanse of outer space, which all include the visible universe, but the Scriptures also speak of the "highest heavens" as God's unique dwelling place. The highest heavens refer to that invisible/spiritual dimension beyond the material universe where God and the host of heaven commune.

From reading Genesis 1:1, the creation of the heavens precedes the creation of the earth. The spiritual was created before the physical, but we aren't supplied with the details. That's where the book of Job comes in. As the LORD answers Job, He provides some key details about who was present to witness the creation of the earth.

*"Now brace yourself like a man;  
I will question you, and you shall inform Me!  
**Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?**  
Tell Me, if you have understanding.  
Who fixed its measurements? Surely you know!  
Or who stretched a measuring line across it?  
On what were its foundations set,  
or who laid its cornerstone,  
**while the morning stars sang together  
and all the sons of God shouted for joy?** [Job 38:3-7]*

Notice what the LORD is communicating here. As Creator, God is the only legitimate eye witness to the creation, so any details we get must come from God Himself. Yet it appears that as God laid down the very foundations of the earth [Genesis 1:1] there were other heavenly eye witnesses singing and shouting for joy at the work of His hands!

Logically, if the "*morning stars*" and "*the sons of God*" were present to witness the creation of the earth in the beginning, then God must have created them before both the earth and mankind. Even more significant is how the "*sons of God*" are portrayed responding to God at creation. They are seen singing and shouting for joy, which means that the host of heaven was created exclusively to worship and glorify God [Nehemiah 9:6].

Some theologians have attempted to propose theories about **when** God created the heavenly beings, and more specifically about how much time elapsed between the creation of the spiritual and physical realms. For example, some introduced the **Gap Theory**, which

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suggests that there was an indefinite amount of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 — or a gap — to account for the creation and backstory of the heavenly host and even the fall of Satan. While we will look more closely at the **Gap Theory** and other such theories in a later lesson, it should be noted that there are many significant theological problems with every single man-made attempt to insert vast amounts of time into the narrative of Biblical creation.

The amount of time that elapsed between the creation of the spiritual realm and the physical realm is in many ways irrelevant because time itself is a physical property and therefore is a relative construct, meaning time speeds up and slows down relative to other properties. After all, a day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day [2 Peter 3:8]. The more important conclusion is that the heavenly host was created prior to mankind.

## The Divine Council

We have established that Jesus — the unique Son of God — is the uncreated Creator of the entire universe — including things both visible and invisible. We also have established that He created the heavenly host at some point prior to the creation of the earth and mankind. These spiritual beings that reside with God in the heavens are known as “*morning stars*” and “*the sons of God.*” They were eye witnesses to the creation and the original worshipers of the Most High God, but do these heavenly beings have another purpose?

Scripture clearly indicates that along with ascribing glory and praise to the LORD, the “*sons of God*” also participate with God as members of the divine council. God is the Sovereign King over the universe, and like every good and wise king, He has chosen to surround Himself with a royal council, to assist Him in making decisions and administering His will.

Again, it is not that the Omniscient, Omnipotent God needs help ruling the universe. That’s not the point. The point is that He desires to share His rule and authority with other beings made in His image. If we rightly understand God’s purpose in creating Adam and giving him dominion over the earth, we also understand the great commission of the Lord Jesus, as he has transferred His authority to all believers and invited us to operate in His kingdom as ambassadors and priests. If God has invited mankind to share in the governance of His earthly kingdom, then we should not be surprised that the Sovereign LORD also has chosen to share his authority with spiritual beings in the heavenly realm.

*Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones! For who in the skies can be compared to the LORD? Who among the heavenly beings [sons of God] is like the LORD, a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all who are around him? [Psalm 89:5-7]*

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## Q & A

- ❖ Read Psalm 29:1-2. What is the primary role of the heavenly beings created by God?
  
- ❖ Read Psalm 148:1-6. What can learn from this passage? How does the language here compare to Job 38:7?
  
- ❖ Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-4. How does Paul speak about the heavenly realm? Read Daniel 7:9-10. What details does Daniel's vision provide about the heavenly throne-room scene?
  
- ❖ Read Job 1:6 and 2:1. Where is this scene taking place? Who all is taking part in this meeting? Is Job aware of what is happening "behind the scenes?" What can we learn from this glimpse into the heavenly realm?
  
- ❖ Read Genesis 1:26-27, 3:22. What are the possible meanings behind the plural pronouns "us" used in verse 26? What is the most obvious difference between Gen. 1:26 and 1:27? Based on what we have discussed in this lesson, do you think the divine council is in view in these passage? Why or why not?