WHEN HEAVEN MEETS EARTH

1. Introduction

a. Biblical cosmology

i What the bible has to say about heaven and earth and how they relate to each other.

ii We need a framework so that we can apply the principles that we learn.

iii This will challenge our 21st century Western mind-sets because the bible presents this subject from a different viewpoint.

b. The bible

i Our primary means of interpreting heaven and earth.

ii It is one complete story – one of its main themes is heaven and earth.

iii We must approach the bible differently to a normal book.

c. Preparation and ground-work

i We have to come to terms with the language of the bible

ii The bible is like visiting a foreign country for the first time – new ways of understanding

iii How do we engage with its ancient text on its own terms?

iv It can still speak to us in new ways we hadn't seen before

d. Two conclusions requiring a paradigm shift:

i **CONCLUSION 1** – The bible is an ancient text that speaks a different language than I am used to. However, some people don't treat it that way when it comes to Genesis 1.

ii **CONCLUSION 2** – Any means of communication, including God's communication in scripture, can only convey its full meaning within a particular language and historical/cultural context.

e. How the bible communicates

i Effective communication requires agreed-upon words, terms and ideas.

ii Speakers should only use words and ideas an audience will understand.

iii Audiences, if not familiar with the language/culture, may require additional explanation.

iv Genesis 1 may contain familiar words, but it is a cross-cultural experience

v Requires a different cultural world-view to understand what the author wants to communicate.

vi We must read Genesis 1 in its ancient context.

f. Limitations of translation

i Biblical texts require translation from the original language (Hebrew).

ii Not all words translate directly into another language – meanings change over time.

iii Hebrew words can change depending on context.

g. An important question

i What did Genesis 1 mean to the people it was written to?

ii How would they understand it?

iii What can we learn from what God says in this passage?

2. What are "the heavens?"

Genesis 1:1 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*

a. In the beginning…

i God split creation into two categories: heaven and earth.

ii Earth is familiar – heaven is unfamiliar.

iii "Heaven" can mean different things in English.

iv Most think of heaven as the celestial city they'll go to when they die.

v Also a synonym for paradise or bliss.

b. Heaven in Genesis 1:1

i "Heaven" literally means the sky.

ii ***Shamayim*** (Hebrew) – usually translated as heaven.

iii Can also be translated as "the skies."

iv Sometimes refers to the domain where God dwells.

v Context of Genesis 1:1 not an afterlife dimension – hence the sky above.

c. Think about it: Was God homeless before creating the heavens? No – from eternity past to eternity future the place that we call heaven always has been and always will be the dwelling place of God. So to understand this verse to mean that God created the sky and the land removes the impossible dilemma and gives us a new context for creation.

d. What did God create?

i ***Shamayim*** refers to the sky.

ii In the beginning God created the skies and the land.

iii The space where humans live is the land. The space above is the sky.

iv Each space is populated by its own kinds.

v We must not let our modern concepts impede our understanding of what God created.

e. How the ancients viewed the skies

i The sky was enchanting, beyond human reach.

ii It provided water and sunlight.

iii They could control the earthly domain (land) but not the heavenly domain (sky).

iv Because of their inaccessibility the skies became a metaphor for the transcendent domain where God reigns and dwells.

v To the biblical authors the skies were an expression of God's status and authority – he shares the same characteristics as the skies.

Psalm 113:4-5 *The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens! [5] Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high…*

f. Why are the heavens plural?

i ***Shamayim*** is a plural word = the heavens, or the skies.

ii Plural of extension – a literary device to describe something large or complex.

iii Encourages us to think about a vastness of things, not just a single thing.

Psalm 113:6 *… who looks far down on the heavens and the earth.*

g. God is seated on high

i In heaven but also far above the heavens.

ii He is not in the (visible) sky but in the heavens above the sky.

iii Hence the idea of plural heavens.

3. A three-tiered universe

a. Biblical view of the cosmos

i Biblical authors viewed the cosmos as three layers stacked on top of each other.

Genesis 1:2 *The earth [the land] was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

ii First there is only darkness and chaos.

iii ***Tohu*** (Hebrew) = chaos

iv The only feature at this stage is the waters in a state of ***tohu***.

Genesis 1:3-5 *And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. [4] And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. [5] God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.*

v God creates light – he separates it from darkness.

vi Light is not sunlight (the sun is not created until Day 4).

vii The light is called day, the darkness is called night.

viii God creates the fixed order of time.

Genesis 1:6-8 *And God said, "Let there be an expanse [dome] in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." [7] And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. [8] And God called the expanse Heaven [the sky]. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.*

ix Next God creates an expanse (firmament) – literally a dome – in the midst of the waters.

x The waters above separated from the waters below.

xi The dome is called the sky.

Genesis 1:9-13 *And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. [10] God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. [11] And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. [12] The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. [13] And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.*

xii God separates the land from the waters.

xiii He calls forth vegetation on the land.

xiv He places the sun, moon and stars in the dome, appointed for marking time.

xv Sea and sky creatures created, followed by land creatures.

xvi Man created in his image to rule on his behalf.

b. The three-tiered cosmos

i **TIER 1: THE WATERS BELOW**

(1) The land was surrounded by water on every side.

(2) There was also water underneath the land.

(3) The sea represented chaos – it was dangerous and impossible to rule.

ii **TIER 2: THE LAND**

(1) Since all the waters connected together

(2) Hence the land is a disc floating in the great sea.

(3) All human life existed on this one disc.

iii **TIER 3: THE SKIES**

(1) There was a giant dome over the land and sea

(2) There was water above this dome, rain was water leaking through the dome.

(3) The sun, moon and stars embedded into the dome itself.

c. Pillars of the earth

i God sets the land on pillars to keep it stable

1 Samuel 2:8 *He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honour. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and on them he has set the world [the land].*

Psalm 75:3 *When the earth [the land] totters, and all its inhabitants, it is I who keep steady its pillars. Selah*

d. The dome in the sky

i ***Raqia*** (Genesis 1:6) = Hebrew word – expanse/firmament or dome.

ii It holds back the waters above.

iii Genesis 7:11 – rain released through windows in the skies.

e. Three tiers according to Genesis 1

Cosmic Geography Genesis 1:1 – 2:3
Heaven
The land – fruit/trees/animals/Adam
The waters

f. Heavens above!

i Importance of symbolic meaning of heaven above in biblical texts.

ii Height/depth speaks of relative importance or rank.

iii Heaven being above indicates it is the most important dimension of creation.

iv Heaven inaccessible to humans, yet divine life and rule flow from it.

g. Cosmology of Genesis 1 found throughout scripture

i God gives us the framework in the first chapter as a guide for understanding all scripture.

ii Genesis 1 sets out the nature and purpose of creation from God's perspective.

Psalm 24:1-2 *The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,*
[2] for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

iii The land (the earth) is established on the waters below.

Psalm 104:1-5 *Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendour and majesty, [2] covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent. [3] He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind; [4] he makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire. [5] He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved.*

iv Heaven is like a tent that God stretches out.

v God lives in a beamed structure on the waters above.

vi The land sits on pillars giving it a firm foundation.

Exodus 20:3-4 *You shall have no other gods before me. [4] You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.*

vii We don't know what heavenly creatures look like to make an image of them.

viii A clear reference to the skies and its creatures, not a place of the afterlife.

ix Understanding Genesis 1 correctly helps us to interpret other scriptures properly.

4. The overlap

a. Three spaces

i Heaven/skies = God's space

ii Earth/land = Man's space

iii Waters below = "Nobody's" space

b. Overlapping spaces

i Scriptures shows us there are times when heaven and earth overlap.

ii There was overlap in the beginning – there will be complete overlap at the end.

iii We will explore how overlaps occur and what that means for us.

c. Two examples

Genesis 28:10-17 *Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. [11] And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. [12] And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! [13] And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. [14] Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. [15] Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." [16] Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it." [17] And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."*

i "Jacob's ladder" – the gate of heaven.

Exodus 3:1-6 *Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. [2] And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. [3] And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." [4] When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." [5] Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your*

feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." [6] And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

ii The burning bush – holy ground.

iii Both were temporal, partial overlaps.

d. Temples as places of overlap

i God's purpose for man is to fill the earth with the life and presence of heaven.

ii A temple is where to meet with God.

iii Heaven meets earth and God meets man in a temple.

e. The first temple – a garden in Eden

i Humans had full access to God, God had full access to man.

ii God regards the garden as a temple.

iii Statues (images) were physical embodiments of the deity the temple was dedicated to.

iv God declares humans to be in his image.

v Living, breathing humans placed in the temple to represent his rule.

vi God freed humans to use their own creative power and imagination to spread the order and beauty of the garden into the rest of creation.

vii The tree of life was central to the garden temple. It symbolised the life given by God.

f. The three-fold nature of the garden temple

i God does many things in threes – eg. the godhead; the three-tiered cosmology of Genesis 1.

ii The garden temple also has a three-fold nature: The land of Eden/the garden in Eden/The tree of life.

iii God's space and man's space completely overlap.

5. The split

a. Rebellion and banishment

i Adam's disobedience – sin enters the world.

ii Adam and mankind banished from the garden temple.

iii The overlap begins to diminish – final separation.

b. A way back and a future promise

i God provides a way to re-unite with heaven through animal sacrifice.

ii Substitutionary atonement through death of innocent animal.

iii God makes a promise of restoration through one of Adam's offspring.

iv God chooses a man > a family > a nation to make a new partial overlap.

v God's ultimate purpose is full restoration of heaven on earth.

6. Temple mk2 – the Tabernacle and the Jerusalem Temple

a. The tabernacle as a temple

i God brings heaven to a mountain-top (Sinai).

ii Moses was in heaven for 40 days learning how to construct the tabernacle.

iii A consistent overlap was created – God's presence on earth – Israel's access to God.

iv The tabernacle functioned as a mobile temple.

b. Reminders of the garden temple

i Many fittings/fixtures of the tabernacle made of gold, silver and precious stones.

ii Embroidery and metalwork depicted garden images.

iii Entering tabernacle felt like entering the garden – symbolic recreation

iv The tabernacle established divine presence on earth.

c. Layout of the tabernacle

i Outer court open to everyone

ii Inner court – the Holy Place – contained menorah, table of showbread and altar of incense (light, provision and worship).

iii Holy of holies beyond a curtain – contained ark of the covenant – physical presence of God.

iv God sat on his heavenly throne and rested his feet on his footstool – the ark.

d. The temple – a permanent tabernacle

i A temple envisaged by King David to replace the tabernacle.

ii Eventually constructed in Solomon's reign.

iii Once again many reminders of the garden temple contained in its decoration.

iv Dedication of the temple – God fills it with is presence and glory.

1 Kings 8:27 *But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!*

e. Understanding the temple

i How did temple worshipers understand space and time?

ii Our experience: the material world – three dimensional space plus time.

iii Their experience: neither spatial limitation nor time.

iv A different dimension – love/hate, obedience/rebellion – eternity.

v Outside our experience of time.

vi The temple was a microcosm of the whole world.

vii ***Mashal*** (Hebrew) – a parable telling the story of the heavens.

7. Heaven invading earth

a. The climax of the story

i Promise of a permanent, complete overlap of heaven on earth.

ii Seed promise of Genesis 3 realised in person of Jesus.

iii How does this impact on heaven and earth?

iv Jesus' favourite topic – unity of heaven and earth.

v Jesus seen as new prophet confirming age-old promises.

vi Eden, tabernacle and temple icons pointing to reality in Jesus.

b. The cry for heaven on earth

i The Lord's prayer – "let your kingdom come…"

ii Heaven on earth is Jesus' top priority.

iii Foreshadowing of the ultimate unity of heaven and earth in Jesus.

c. Jesus as the temple

John 1:14 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

John 2:18-21 *So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" [19] Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." [20] The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" [21] But he was speaking about the temple of his body.*

Colossians 1:19 *For in him [Jesus] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell…*

d. Jesus as the sacrifice

John 1:29 *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*

1 Corinthians 5:7 *Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*

1 Peter 1:18-19 *knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, [19] but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.*

e. The now and not yet kingdom

i The kingdom is here but not yet fully.

ii Jesus came to inaugurate the process of heaven invading earth.

iii Ultimate complete fulfilment still in the future.

iv God's ultimate purpose fulfilled in Jesus.

Ephesians 1:9-10 *making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ [10] as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*

8. Human temples

Ephesians 2:19-22 *So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, [20] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, [21] in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. [22] In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

a. The temple in us

i God's presence in wind and fire.

ii Now the temple no longer a single place or building – but in people.

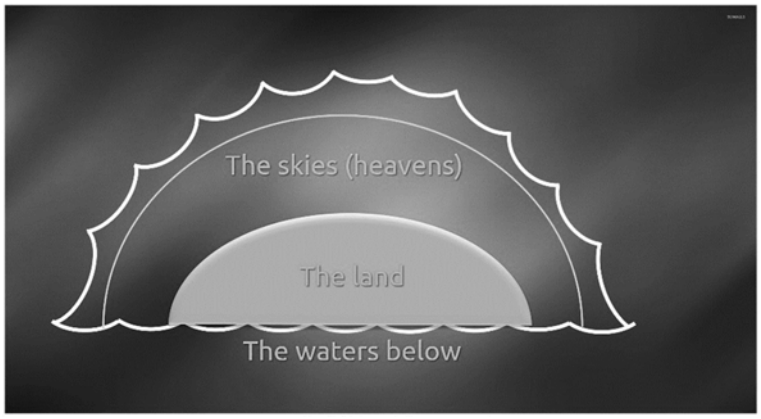
iii God's people – where heaven and earth overlap.

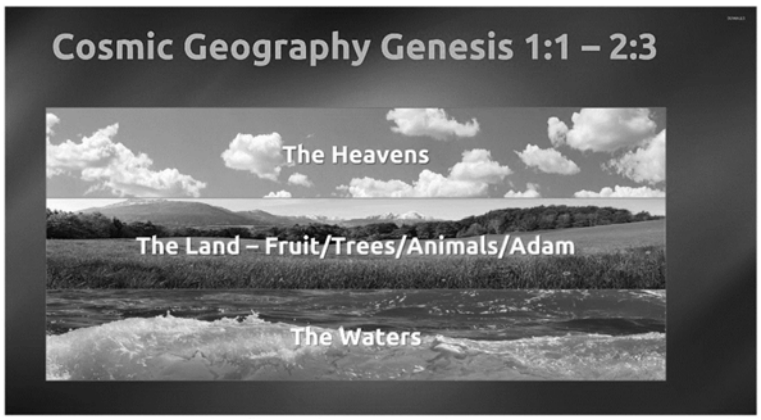
iv A body of believers bringing heaven to earth.

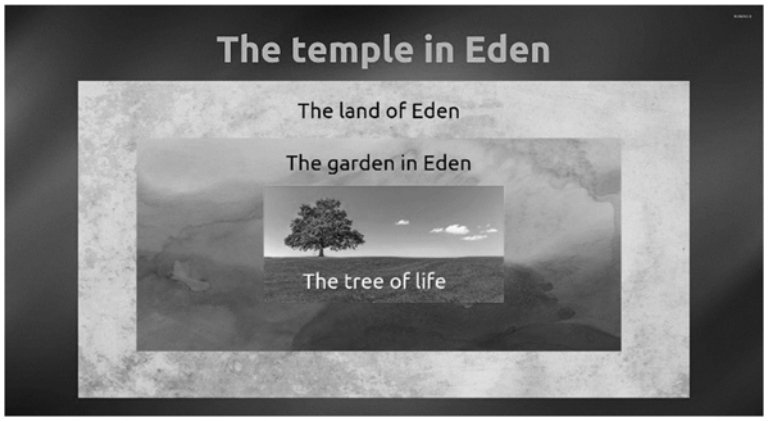
v Renewal of mandate given to Adam.

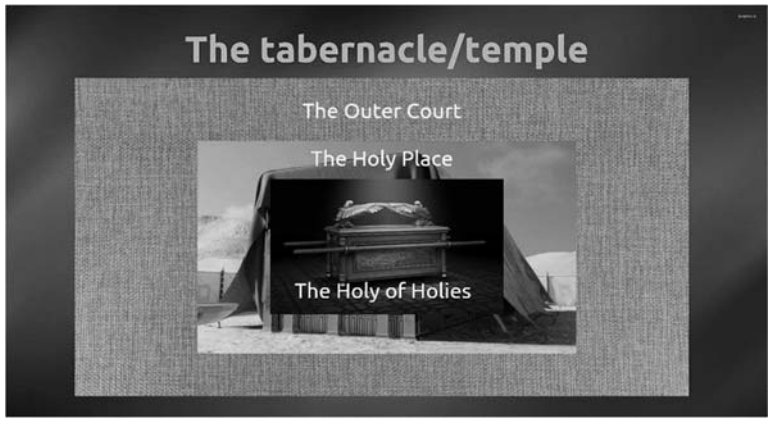
vi Prayer/worship brings heaven to earth.

vii Restoration of all things – the whole earth is the Promised Land.


The skies (heavens)
The land
The waters below


Cosmic Geography Genesis 1:1 – 2:3
The Heavens
The Land – Fruit/Trees/Animals/Adam
The Waters


The temple in Eden
The land of Eden
The garden in Eden
The tree of life


The tabernacle/temple
The Outer Court
The Holy Place
The Holy of Holies

SPIRITUAL BEINGS

1. Genesis 1

Gen.1:1-2 *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

a. The state of the universe before creation

   i *Tohu*: lacking form and purpose, unordered, desolate. The solution is to bring order to chaos in days 1-3

   ii *Va-vohu*: empty, uninhabited, wasteland. The solution is to fill the created order with inhabitants in days 4-6.

Order out of chaos	**Inhabitants**
Day 1: The order of time (light and dark/day and night)	Day 4: The lights that rule the day and night on God's behalf
Day 2: The order of space (the waters above and the waters below)	Day 5: The birds that fly in the waters above and the fish that swim in the waters below
Day 3: The order of dry land (dry land emerges from the waters, and vegetation and fruit trees emerge from the dry land)	Day 6: The animals on the dry land and the human images of God that rule the sea, land, and sky creatures

b. Since the sun and moon and stars are not on the scene on Day 1 it is evident that the light emanates from God himself forming the order of time.

c. The early chapters of Genesis accurately present accounts of cosmic and human origins in the language and conceptual categories of the ancient Israelite authors of the Bible.

   i They constitute a worldview statement about God and his relationship to the world, and about humans and their relationship to God and the world.

   ii They were not written to engage in dialogue with our present scientific age but to engage in dialogue with their near Mesopotamian cosmologies and demonstrate their God, Yahweh, is far superior than all other gods.

2. Ancient near eastern cosmology

a. "Cosmology" is an account of the origins of the universe as humans experience it. They are relational not physical.

   i In ancient near eastern cosmology the "lights in the sky" were thought of as divine. They are a sign of those who exist to serve God in the heavenly realm. They are portrayed as heavenly rulers that govern with authority delegated from God.

   ii Their status and role are parallel to the human earthly rulers that govern over the land. So first God appoints the sun, moon and stars to rule the heavenly realm and then he creates *adam* to rule the earthly realm.

3. The hosts of heaven

Gen. 2:1: *Thus the* ***heavens and the earth*** *(days 1-3) were finished, and* ***all the host of them*** *(days 4-6)*

a. The term "hosts of heaven" refers to those who inhabit heaven; the spiritual beings around the throne of God who have been created to serve God in ruling the heavens.

Psalm 148:1b-3 *Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights above. Praise him, all his angels; praise him,* ***all his heavenly hosts****. Praise him,* ***sun and moon****; praise him, all you* ***shining stars.***

Psalm 103:19-21*The LORD has established* ***his throne in heaven****, and his Kingdom rules over all. Praise the LORD,* ***you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word****. Praise the LORD,* ***all his hosts of heaven****, you* ***his servants who do his will.***

b. The authors of the bible wrote from their cultural perspective. If we understand this, then many of the passages and phrases in the bible begin to make more sense and reveal to us much more than our limited earthly view.

c. God created order out of chaos and then placed inhabitants (hosts) into that order to work with him to establish and maintain that order both heavenly and earthly.

4. Elohim

a. The biblical authors have one word that can refer to all the inhabitants of the spiritual realm. In Old Testament Hebrew the word is "elohim," and in New Testament Greek it's "theos."

   i The Hebrew word "elohim" and the Greek word "theos" are often translated as "God" in the Bible.

   ii Elohim refers to a class of spiritual beings, rather than specifically to Yahweh. However, sometimes biblical authors use the title like it's a name.

b. Yahweh is an elohim, but not the only elohim (spiritual being). He is the most powerful and authoritative, and he alone is the creator of all things, including the other elohim.

Deuteronomy 10:17*For Yahweh your Elohim, he is the Elohim of elohim, and the Lord of lords, the great and mighty and awesome.*

Deuteronomy 32:17*They [the Israelites] sacrificed to demons that are not eloah, elohim that they had not previously known.*

Psalms 97:9 *You, Yahweh, are most high (elyon) over all the land, You are exalted above all elohim.*

c. The elohim exist in a realm that is parallel to the earthly realm, where some are loyal and others have become rebels. We see this most clearly in Psalm 82.

Psalm 82:1-2 *God (Elohim) has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods (elohim) he holds judgement: "How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?*

5. The divine council

a. The "hosts of heaven" and "the hosts of earth"

   i In the heavens, the celestial lights are appointed to rule day and night, that is, the order of time (Gen. 1:14-18). On the land, humans are appointed as God's imagers to rule over land, sea, and air creatures (Gen. 1:26-30).

b. The spiritual "hosts" are portrayed as honouring the one who created and rules them, and they also are invited by God to participate in making decisions and carrying them out.

c. Psalm 89 contains various titles for these spiritual beings used throughout scripture.

Psalm 89:5-7 *The heavens will praise your wonders, Yahweh; your faithfulness also in the assembly of* ***the holy ones****. For who in the skies is comparable to Yahweh? Who among* ***the sons of God*** *is like Yahweh, A God greatly feared in the* ***council of the holy ones****, and awesome above all those who are around him? Yahweh God of hosts, who is like you, mighty Yahweh? Your faithfulness also surrounds you.*

i The sons of God

Ps.29:1-2 *Ascribe to the Lord* (Yahweh)*, O heavenly beings (*in Hebrew **sons of God***), ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.* ***2*** *Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendour of holiness.*

Job 38:4-7 *"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.* ***5*** *Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it?* ***6*** *On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone,* ***7*** *when* ***the morning stars*** *sang together and all the* ***sons of God*** *shouted for joy?*

Job 1:6-7 ***6*** *Now there was a day when* ***the sons of God*** *came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.* ***7*** *The Lord said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."*

ii The host of heaven

1 Kings 22:19-22 *And Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne,* ***and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left;*** ***20*** *and the Lord said, 'Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said one thing, and another said another.* ***21*** *Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, saying, 'I will entice him.'* ***22*** *And the Lord said to him, 'By what means?' And he said, 'I will go out, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And he said, 'You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do so.'*

iii The divine council

Psalm 82:1 *God has taken his place in* ***the divine council****; in the midst of the gods (*elohim) *he holds judgement:*

Jer.23:18; 21-22 *For who among them has stood in* ***the council of the Lord*** (Yahweh) *to see and to hear his word, or who has paid attention to his word and listened?..... "I did not send the prophets, yet they ran; I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied.* ***22*** *But if they had stood in* ***my council,*** *then they would have proclaimed my words to my people, and they would have turned them from their evil way,*

Job 15:7-8 *"Are you the first man who was born? Or were you brought forth before the hills?* ***8*** *Have you listened in the* ***council of God****? And do you limit wisdom to yourself?*

d. The divine throne room is the place from which Yahweh governs the world with his heavenly council.

i Their role is parallel to the role of humans.

ii God's representatives honour their creator and King and carry out his purposes in Heaven and Earth.

e. Why does God need a council? Michael Heiser answers this:

God doesn't need a council. But it's scripturally clear that he has one. The question is actually similar to another one: What does God need with people? The answer is the same: God doesn't need people. But he uses them. God is not dependent on humans for his plans. God doesn't need us for evangelism. He could save all the people he wanted to by merely thinking about it. God could terminate evil in the blink of an eye and bring human history to the end he desires at any moment. But he doesn't. Instead, he works his plan for all things on earth by using human beings.

Heiser, Michael S.. The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible (p. 37).

6. Free will

a. The activity of both the heavenly and human host is to make God and his ways known.

i How that will is acted out depends on the will of the imagers.

ii Free will in the hearts and hands of imperfect beings, whether human or divine means imagers can opt for their own authority instead of God's.

iii Both divine and human image bearers chose to do things their own way.

7. Rebellions

a. The biblical story is driven by this conflict which brought about a rebellion against God in both the heavenly and earthly realms.

i A rebel divine council member lures God's imagers into a rebellion thus breaching the domain boundary between the divine image bearers and the human.

ii More divine council members rebel and try to restore eternal life to humans by impregnating women (Gen. 6).

iii More divine council members rebel and lure the empire of Babylon into a rebellion, giving birth to the scattered nations who worship idol-gods (Gen. 10-11)

b. The opposition to God's plan came in both human and divine form. Cain was referenced specifically in this light.

1 John 3:12 *We should not be like Cain, who was **of the evil one** and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous*

c. Genesis 6 explicitly describes a transgression of the domain boundary between heaven and earth that God wanted observed.

Gen.6:1-4 *When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, **2** the **sons of God** saw that the **daughters of man** were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. **3** Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man for ever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years." **4** **The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterwards**, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.*

i The outcome of this act of rebellion was the coming of the Nephilim who were giants, mighty men.

ii The Nephilim were the instigators of the third rebellion described in Genesis 11.

Num.32:32,33 *So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, "The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and* ***all the people that we saw in it are of great height****.* ***33*** *And there we saw the* ***Nephilim*** *(the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them."*

iii God's response to this rebellion is the flood through which he preserves one family to continue to populate the earth.

Gen.9:1,7 *And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth….. And you, be fruitful and multiply, teem on the earth and multiply in it."*

d. Genesis 10 then summarises how the clans of the sons of Noah filled the earth introducing the detailed story of how this happened in Genesis 11.

Gen.10:32 *These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.*

i After surviving the flood, humanity journeys east but instead of spreading out and filling the land (Gen. 9:1), they band together in an effort to avoid dispersing and seek to build a tower to reach to the heavens.

ii Babylon was a human attempt to reverse humanity's exile from Eden where humans try to ascend to the skies and assert themselves over God's wisdom and authority.

iii God scatters them, resulting in the diverse languages and 70 scattered nations of Genesis 10.

iv Although clearly focused on the human actors in this story, prophets and leaders throughout the Old Testament continually refer to the rebellion in Genesis 11.

v For the biblical authors, rebellious behaviour outside of God's purpose could often be seen in both the heavenly and earthly realms

e. Deuteronomy 32 views the rebellion and scattering at Babylon as a joint human and spiritual rebellion where some sons of God were involved and are now, according to Deuteronomy 4, being worshiped by the nations.

Deut.32:8,9 *When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when* ***he divided mankind****, he* ***fixed the borders*** *of the peoples* ***according to the number of the sons of God****.* ***9*** *But* ***the Lord's portion is his people****, Jacob his allotted heritage.*

Deut.4:16-20*… beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female,* ***17*** *the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air,* ***18*** *the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth.* ***19*** *And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars,* ***all the host of heaven****, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them****, things that the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.*** ***20*** ***But the Lord has taken you*** *and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt,* ***to be a people of his own inheritance****, as you are this day.*

f. In Deuteronomy 4, Moses warns the Israelites and remarks that God has "allotted" these spiritual beings to the nations, so that the nations worship and serve them, not the creator God.

i This is a clear reference to Genesis 10-11 when Yahweh allotted the 70 nations "according to the number of the sons of God," while he kept Israel for himself as his own special portion.

8. The prophet's reference to the Babylon rebellion

a. When the prophets looked back to Babylon they compare this rebellion of human empires to a more ancient spiritual rebellion linked with rebel spiritual beings.

i Isaiah chapters 13-14 views the bigger Babylon as an image for any and all violent nations that don't acknowledge Yahweh.

Is.14:11-15 *Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, the sound of your harps; maggots are laid as a bed beneath you, and worms are your covers.* ***12*** *"How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!* ***13*** *You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north;* ***14*** *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'* ***15*** *But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.*

ii Behind the earthly empire of Babylon, Isaiah discerns a darker and more mysterious spiritual rebel that animates the earthly kingdom.

iii This spiritual rebel wanted to ascend to God's status and authority instead of living under it.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

1. Psalm 82

a. Psalm 82 is addressing the spiritual rebels whose story is told in Genesis 3, 6, and 11.

i The scene depicts God confronting rebel *elohim* who are responsible for injustice toward the poor and vulnerable.

Psalm 82 *God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of* ***the gods*** *he holds judgement:*
2 *"How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?* ***3*** *Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.* ***4*** *Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."* ***5*** *They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.*
6 *I said, "****You are gods, sons of the Most High****, all of you;* ***7*** *nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince."* ***8*** *Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations!*

ii Yahweh is confronting the rebel spiritual beings and assigning them to destruction and death linking back to Genesis 6:3, where God assigns the sons of God to a mortal fate.

iii The scattering of Babylon is when God handed over the nations to worship other elohim. In Psalm 82, we learn that these elohim led the nations into injustice and death.

iv Now the solution is for God to do for all nations what he did for Israel: to rescue them from slavery to human and earthly rebels and "possess all the nations."

b. Throughout the Old Testament the prophets portray the conflict among empires in the human realm as a mirror of conflict among their heavenly counterparts.

i Daniel 10 and Isaiah 24 are great examples. After Daniel has prayed for God's mercy upon the remnant of Israel, Daniel is visited by an angelic messenger in a dream/vision.

Dan.10 ***5*** *I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz round his waist.* ***6*** *His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude ……..* ***11*** *And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.* ***12*** *Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words.* ***13*** ***The prince of the kingdom of Persia*** *withstood me twenty-one days, but* ***Michael, one of the chief princes****, came to help me, for I was left there with* ***the kings of Persia****, …..*
20 *Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against* ***the prince of Persia****; and when I go out, behold,* ***the prince of Greece*** *will come.* ***21*** *But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except* ***Michael, your prince****.*

ii In the biblical Heaven and Earth worldview, the empires of our world are each given over to the authority of a spiritual rebel who can be called the "prince" of that nation.

iii When God is at work to redeem and rescue his people from among these nations, the earthly conflict is a mirror of a heavenly one as well.

iv Michael the prince of Israel (a loyal elohim) goes into battle with the princes of Persia and Greece (rebellious elohim). On the earth the kings of Persia are invading but in the heavens it is the prince of Persia – the rebellious elohim who has authority over the nation of Persia.

v The one who contends for Israel is Michael identified as "your prince".

c. Similarly, in Isaiah 24 we have a depiction of the culmination of history, the great Day of the Lord.

Is.24:21-23 *On that day the Lord will punish* ***the host of heaven, in heaven****, and* ***the kings of the earth, on the earth.*** ***22*** *They will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished.* ***23*** *Then the moon will be confounded and the sun ashamed, for the Lord of hosts reigns on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and his glory will be before his elders.*

i God's justice will confront both earthly and heavenly

d. The biblical authors are aware of powers of evil that work on the corporate levels of human societies and nations. They foster idolatry that distorts humans and ruins social institutions when they don't acknowledge the one true God.

2. Jesus and the forces of darkness

a. When God's Kingdom comes in power, the dark spiritual powers need to be confronted and dethroned. Jesus continually describes his treatment on earth by corrupt humans as orchestrated by dark spiritual forces.

Matt.4:8-11 *Again, the devil took him to a very* ***high mountain*** *and showed him* ***all the kingdoms of the world*** *and their glory.* ***9*** *And he said to him, "****All these I will give you****, if you will fall down and worship me."* ***10*** *Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'"* ***11*** *Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.*

i After Jesus was baptized, he went immediately into the wilderness and was tested by the ultimate spiritual rebel, who has authority over the kingdoms of the world. This same conflict with human and spiritual powers is seen in his arrest in the garden of Gethsemane.

Luke 22:52-53 *Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?* ***53*** *When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and* ***the power of darkness."***

ii Later, the apostles viewed Jesus' crucifixion as primarily the result of spiritual evil powers that had enslaved humans through idolatry of power

1 Cor.2:6-8 *Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of* ***the rulers of this age****, who are doomed to pass away.* ***7*** *But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.* ***8*** *None of* ***the rulers of this age*** *understood this,* ***for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory****.*

iii Paul has fused the spiritual and human power structures together in their guilt and accountability for the death of Jesus. Human institutions worshiped the idols of religious tradition and national security (the temple establishment and the Roman governor) that crucified Jesus but the ultimate fault lay with the "rulers of the age" to whom the human rulers give their allegiance.

iv The crucifixion of Jesus was actually his victory over the human and spiritual power structures who killed him. Jesus didn't exert his power on earth, rather, he allowed the rebellious powers to kill him so that he could expose their ultimate weakness and powerlessness in comparison to the life-creating power of the creator.

Col.2:15 *He disarmed **the rulers and authorities** (of the darkness) and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them by the cross.*

v God's love and power to generate life out of death is real power, which was demonstrated when Jesus was raised from the dead.

Matt. 28:18-19 *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority **in heaven and on earth** has been given to me. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

vi The risen Jesus' authority is over Heaven and Earth together which is precisely the rule that humanity was destined for according to Genesis 1. Jesus has been exalted to that place of divine rule with authority over the spiritual and human powers.

vii Jesus is announcing that he is the one who will repossess the nations to become part of God's Kingdom - the ultimate reversal of Genesis 11.

Eph. 1:20-21 *….. according to the working of his great might **20** that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in **the heavenly places**, **21** far above all **rule and authority and power and dominion**, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.*

3. Powers and authorities

a. In the mind of the apostle Paul, the ultimate opposition that followers of Jesus face is the spiritual powers and authorities.

Eph.6:10-17 *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. **11** Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. **12** **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.** **13** Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. **14** Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, **15** and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. **16** In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; **17** and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,*

i The idolatrous powers that animate the kingdoms of this world are the real culprit, not the humans who are enslaved to their ideologies and values.

ii Paul advocates for a subversion of normal warfare by nonviolent resistance that imitates the character traits of the messianic king from Isaiah. The divine armour listed here is all adapted from various texts in Isaiah that describe the rule of the Messiah.

Isa. 11:5 *Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.*

Isa. 59:16-17 *He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him. **17** He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak.*

iii Paul envisions the day when the new creation will come under the direct rule of its creator and the new humanity he has appointed to reign over it, namely Christ and his people.

iv This means that the rebels of the divine council, the powers and authorities, must be dethroned and removed to open the way for a new future in a renewed Heaven and Earth.

1 Cor.15:22-27 *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. **23** But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. **24** **Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.** **25** For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. **26** The last enemy to be destroyed is death. **27** For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection", it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him.*

4. Human partnership

a. Jesus is the one in whom the entire biblical story reaches its climactic goal as he announces the arrival of God's Kingdom. But his mission to Israel fits within an even larger drama, namely the cosmic rebellion of human and spiritual beings that is narrated in Genesis 1-11

b. God's purpose is to partner with humanity as his image-bearing representatives, so they can rule over creation on his behalf.

Gen.1:26-28 *Then God said, "Let us make man in our **image**, after our **likeness**. And let them **have dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." **27** So God created man in his own image, in the **image** of God he created him; **male and female** he created them. **28** And God blessed them. And God said to them, "**Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

Gen.2:7-9, 15 *then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. **8** And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and **there he put the man whom he had formed**. **9** And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The **tree of life was in the midst of the garden**, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. ……. The Lord God **took the man and put him in the garden of Eden** to work it and keep it.*

i Humans are commissioned to rule and tend the garden on God's behalf and to do so, God gives them access to the tree of life, that is, immortal life that transcends their "earthy" origins as mortal creatures.

ii Genesis 1-2 depicts God as offering mortal humanity the chance to become God's eternal partners in ruling the world together. Psalm 8 marvels at this grand calling which is so incongruent with humanity's humble origins.

Psalm 8:3-6 *When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, **4** what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?*

5 Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour.
6 You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet,

c. Humans are given a two-part command that will guide their participation in God's commission.

Gen.2:16-17 *And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely* ***eat of every tree of the garden,*** *17 but of* ***the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat****, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

i God's first command is to enjoy the garden and eat from all of the trees. But there is a warning.

ii The gift of eternal life is freely given so that the humans can rule with God forever but if they eat from the tree of good and evil, it will signify a lack of trust in God's generosity, as well as direct rebellion against their creator's command.

iii He warns them that such a rebellion will result in losing access to the tree of life and lead to exile and death.

iv This consequence represents a loss of the destiny that God wanted for the humans. Eternal life would be terrible for a humanity that has chosen to take its own knowing of good and evil. And so, in an act of severe mercy, God exiles humans from the garden, so that the gift of eternal life remains out of their reach.

d. God's mission is to restore humanity to their lost calling, to reinstall them as his image bearing partners who can rule the world in the divine power of immortal life and love.

i We need a new kind of human who will confront evil in God's good world and overcome it in a surprising way. Jesus as the one in whom Yahweh, the God of Israel, is coming among his people to accomplish this very task.

ii Three of the four Gospel accounts tell of Jesus' initial Kingdom announcement around his baptism and subsequent testing in the wilderness when he begins to demonstrate that he is the one who can confront evil.

iii Jesus overcomes the testing of the Satan, and submits himself to the road of hardship that lays ahead. From there Jesus went about announcing the arrival of God's Kingdom, and he brought God's reign to bear on the lives of Israelites and non-Israelites living around Galilee.

5. The inauguration of the Kingdom

a. In Jesus' view of the world, sickness, mental illness, and even death itself are signs of our world's captivity to the powers of spiritual evil. His announcement of God's Kingdom manifests itself in ministries of healing, generosity, and hospitality to the outsider - an act of liberation from humanity's captivity to spiritual evil.

i Jesus presented God's Kingdom as arriving, even invading Earth, in and through his own mission. He invites his followers to pray that God's will and purpose be more and more manifest on Earth.

ii Within the context of the Sermon on the Mount, this means that God's Kingdom displays itself through the behaviour of Jesus' followers as they imitate his own mission and way of life.

b. As Jesus prays in the garden before his arrest he calls himself the Son of Man, that is, the figure from Daniel chapter 7 who will have all dominion and glory.

Dan.7:13-14 *I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.* ***14*** *And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.*

i Jesus is the truly human one exercising God's rule over the world—by giving up his life. Jesus identifies the Jerusalem authorities as agents of spiritual evil.

Luke 22:52-53 *Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?* ***53*** *When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me.* ***But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."***

ii Jesus recognised that he was not actually contending with these humans but against the powers of darkness that were behind them. Only through experiencing death on behalf of rebellious Israel and humanity can Jesus become the new humanity. Jesus' resurrection is portrayed as his vindication from death and the way through which he receives divine authority over all of Heaven and Earth.

Matt.28:18-20 *And Jesus came and said to them, "****All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*** ***19*** *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in[b] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,* ***20*** *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

iii Jesus here is claiming to be the vindicated Son of Man, the figure from Daniel 7:12-14 who is installed as the divine-human ruler over all of Heaven and Earth.

6. A new humanity and a new creation

a. Paul regularly refers to Jesus as "the image of God" from Genesis 1 and to followers of Jesus as the "new humanity" who are being transformed to become like the risen Jesus.

Col.1:13-16 *He has* ***delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son****,* ***14*** *in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.* ***15*** *He is the* ***image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.*** ***16*** *For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.*

Col.2:15 *He* ***disarmed the rulers and authorities*** *and put them to open shame, by* ***triumphing over them*** *in him (by the cross)*

Col.3:9-11 *Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the* ***old self*** *with its practices* ***10*** *and have put on the* ***new self****, which is being renewed in knowledge after* ***the image of its creator.*** ***11*** *Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free;* ***but Christ is all, and in all****.*

i Jesus is the true human image of God who has defeated the spiritual powers of darkness in his death and resurrection.

ii Paul then extends Jesus' new humanity to include those who trust in Jesus and give their allegiance to him. They will find themselves being transformed into the new kind of humanity that Jesus pioneered on our behalf.

iii Paul presents Jesus as a new Adam. It was humanity's rebellion, leading to death, that prevented humans from being God's eternal partners who could rule over Heaven and Earth.

1 Cor.15:20-27 *But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.* ***21*** ***For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.*** ***22*** *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.* ***23*** *But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.* ***24*** *Then comes the end,* ***when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.*** ***25*** *For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.* ***26*** *The last enemy to be destroyed is death.* ***27*** *For* ***"God has put all things in subjection under his feet."***

iv Jesus' resurrection opens up the way for a new humanity who cannot die to be God's covenant partners in ruling creation.

v This new humanity is the future resurrection of the saints as the grand fulfilment of the storyline of Genesis 1-2.

1 Cor.15:50-57 *I tell you this, brothers:* ***flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God****, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.* ***51*** *Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we* ***shall all be changed****,* ***52*** *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we* ***shall be changed.*** ***53*** ***For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality****.* ***54*** *When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "****Death is swallowed up in victory****."* ***55*** *"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"* ***56*** *The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.* ***57*** *But thanks be to God, who gives us* ***the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

b. This new humanity will occupy a new creation - a new Jerusalem-Eden temple, which recalls Genesis 1-2 but also carries it further into new territory.

Rev.21:1-3 *Then I saw* ***a new heaven and a new earth****, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.* ***2*** *And I saw the holy city,* ***new Jerusalem****, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* ***3*** *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the* ***dwelling place (tabernacle)*** *of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.*

i The ultimate storyline of the scriptures is about how God will restore the order and nature he originally created. A new humanity, as the image of God, reigns as God's partners and children forever in creation.

ii Once all of creation joins Jesus and the new humanity in the resurrection, God's ultimate purposes for creation will be fulfilled. All that was originally intended in God's vision of a global Eden has come to pass.

iii All the imagers, human and divine, who dwell in the new Eden have chosen correctly—they have believed that Yahweh is the God of gods and that his way is best.

7. End note

a. So how does this understanding of the heavens and the earth impact on our world view and our Christian walk?

i There is a battle raging that we cannot see but is nevertheless real between Yahweh and his family and the rebellious host and his family

ii When we pray we need to recognise that we are seeking a supernatural, spiritual intervention to change men's hearts and rescue them from the kingdom of darkness and transfer them into the kingdom of light. To long for Eden not Babylon.

iii Jesus has already opened up the way to victory. The fullness of that victory will not be accomplished until the rebellious hosts and those who have come into agreement with them have been destroyed.

iv As those "in Christ" we have the authority of Christ in us and can live in the victory of the cross in our own lives.

v As those who are transformed in this way we can bring his rule to bear. To see his "will be done on earth as in heaven."

vi Ultimately, we live in the glorious hope that one day we will live with him in a restored Eden.

Rev.22:1-7 *Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb* ***2*** *through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.* ***3*** ***No longer will there be anything accursed****, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and* ***his servants will worship him****.* ***4*** *They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.* ***5*** *And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and* ***they will reign for ever and ever.***

And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel ***to show his servants what must soon take place****."*

7 *"And behold,* ***I am coming soon****. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."*