

## Michael Heiser Boundary Heresies

*A note from Jim Steel:*

*Michael Heiser is known for his [The Unseen Realm](#), the Naked Bible podcast, and his pervasive influence on the wildly popular Bible Project Videos worldview. While we certainly harbor no ill will toward Dr. Heiser personally, his errors are infecting evangelical Christianity systemically.*

*Heiser's attacks on biblical Christianity are horrific because they strike at the very roots of biblical orthodoxy. In his words, they "inform" every major doctrine of the Bible. For a fuller treatment of this issue, download [The Evangelical Neo Gnostic World View of Michael Heiser.pdf](#). The charts which are included here are excerpted from that article.*

*To understand the gravity of Heiser's errors understand that he is pushing at the boundaries of the seen and unseen realms. In a word, Heiser fits the description of a polytheist who has imported longstanding pagan traditions into biblical Christianity.*

***Each of the four major charts include three columns. Always read the first column, the middle column, and the far right, in that order. The address the issues of the Divine Council (so-called), Satan in Eden, the Nephilim at the flood, and Babel.***

*For a fuller treatment of this material consider watching the video entitled [10 90 Michael Heiser.mp4](#). Audio for this video is also available on [Podbean](#).*

*We are confronted daily regarding the postmodern tsunami which is inundating evangelicalism. That pervasive influx has conditioned us for Heiser's heresies. Proof of this is found in his rapid acceptance.*

*Please take the time to educate yourself on these errors and be a true watchman for Christ.*

*In Him,*

*Jim*

# Evangelical Boundary Breach # 1

## The Divine Council and the “Pantheon” – Psalm 82

To understand Michael Heiser’s view of the unseen realm one must start where he started, with Psalm 82 coupled with Psalm 89. This is where Heiser had his epiphany and determined that there really was a pantheon of gods, real gods. This premise will lead him, in his words, to “inform” every other biblical doctrine.

| Subject and Starter Passage  | Traditional Biblical Views  | Pagan Error Infused  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Divine Council</b></p> <p>“God standeth in the <b>congregation of the mighty</b>; He judgeth among the gods.” (Psalm 82:1, KJV 1900)</p> <p><b>“Pantheon”</b></p> <p>“I have said, <b>Ye are gods</b>; And all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men, And fall like one of the princes.” (Psalm 82:6–7, KJV 1900)</p> <p>“Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, <b>Ye are gods?</b> If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;” (John 10:34–35, KJV 1900)</p> | <p>This designation occurs some 42 times in the Bible. All but a few of these refer to the congregation of Israel. The remaining refer to animals. In this Psalm God himself is judging those earthly leaders who had abused this authority. Divine beings have never been given the authority or liberty to judge men.</p> <p>The term gods was early on associated with kings and judges because they were designated by God to speak in His name. Thus, they carried His weight. Proof of the fact that they were not deity always lies in the fact that kings and princes die like everyone else.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider doing a walk-through of Isaiah 40-50 to see how emphatic the Lord God is about His claim that there simply are no other gods.</li> <li>• Top it off with similar New Testament passages such as 1 Corinthians 8:4,5 - just for starters!</li> </ul> | <p><b>Divine Council</b></p> <p>Heiser’s divine council consists ultimately of good gods and bad gods. The pagans called these gods “Watchers” (Jubilee 15:31). Heiser will use this term throughout his literature imbuing the god-like powers of ruling and judging to them.</p> <p><b>Monolatry</b></p> <p>Heiser originally claimed to be a monolater, but has placed more emphasis on the idea that these gods are “ontologically” unique from Jehovah, and own different attributes<sup>1</sup>. They are gods nonetheless. In the end, if you believe on one true God without denying the existence of other gods, you are a polytheist. Note: Biblical idolaters were essentially monolaters.</p> <p><b>Neo-Gnosticism</b></p> <p>Gnosticism has consistently taught that our ascension is dependent upon an echelon of divine beings. These Neo-Gnostics will insist that there are no gods like Jehovah, BUT that these gods really exist. “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,” (Colossians 2:18, KJV)</p> |

*Additional Comments: 1) In Alexander’s Gordian Knot we have a perfect blurring of legend and fact. Satan will always have a counterfeit backstory ready to put into use. 2.) By constructing a class of “Watcher” gods which occupy a divine council we have blurred the lines between Jehovah, angels, and men, making God just a little more like us, and ourselves a little more like God.*

# Evangelical Boundary Breach #2

## Creation, Eden, and the Fall - Genesis 1:26-28 and Genesis 3

Having decided that there was a pantheon seated as the divine council, Dr. Heiser's foundation for the infusion of pagan error was laid. When God created the human family, members of His divine family were jealous and subsequently instigated the Fall. Heiser was susceptible to this thinking because he was a student of pagan religions.

| Subject and Starter Passage   | Traditional Biblical Views   | Pagan Error Infused   |
|---|--|---|
| <p><b>Creation</b></p> <p>“And God said, <b>Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:</b> and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man <b>in his own image</b>, in the image of God created he him; male and female created <b>he</b> them.” (Genesis 1:26–27, KJV 1900)</p> <p><b>Satan</b></p> <p>“Now the <b>serpent</b> was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (Genesis 3:1, KJV 1900)</p> <p><b>The Fall</b></p> <p>“And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is <b>become as one of us, to know good and evil:</b> and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:” (Genesis 3:22, KJV 1900)</p> <p>“For as <b>in Adam</b> all die, even so <b>in Christ</b> shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22, KJV)</p> | <p><b>Creation</b></p> <p>The Jewish people, of course, saw the “<b>us</b>” as angels as they did not see the trinity in ancient times. As they also taught that God alone is the creator, they were on the horns of a dilemma.</p> <p>New Testament believing Jews, of course, saw Elohim as the divine plurality we call the trinity. Christians have never seen men as having been created in the likeness of angels.</p> <p><b>Satan</b></p> <p>While it is true that the word Satan can be used in a broad sense, he is referred to as a person and, specifically as an angel and as the devil in both Testaments and is associated specifically with the fall. See: <i>Gospels</i> (Matt 4:1-11; Mark 3:22-26; Luke 10:18; John 13:27), <i>Pauline Epistles</i> (Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor. 5:5; 7:5; 2 Cor. 2:11; 11:14), <i>Revelation</i> (2:24; 12:9; 20:2)</p> <p><b>The Fall</b></p> <p>“<b>...become as one of us.</b>” This is a reference to the godhead, just as it is in 1:26 and 27. God simply intended us to understand that Adam and Eve would have a new knowledge of good and evil which was previously understood only by God.</p> | <p><b>Creation</b></p> <p>From pagan sources, Heiser teaches that the “<b>us</b>” are specially created members of the divine council, and that “as one of us” in 3:22 means men entered a new state of being like members of the supposed divine council<sup>2</sup>.</p> <p><b>Satan</b></p> <p>Heiser’s “The Satan” is in reference to any adversary<sup>3</sup>. The unrighteous adversary who deceived Eve is not the same as the righteous Satan who appears before God in Job who began as good and went rogue. This is all derived from pagan sources.</p> <p><b>Serpent</b></p> <p>Heiser’s non-literal serpent who exploited Eve and Adam was not an animal. This is likely because Heiser prefers to link this serpent as a “shining one”, one of the ruler gods and not an angel.</p> <p><b>The Fall</b></p> <p>Heiser rejects the doctrine that the sin nature was passed down to us through Adam and that we share any guilt for Adam’s sin. This nullifies the truth that God’s promises are made to men and their seed. See also Hebrews 7 where Levi pays tithes in Abraham.</p> |

**Additional Comments:** *How Heiser deceives us: 1.) He denies the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and Joshua’s authorship of his book; 2.) He then advances the dating of these so as to be contemporary with the pagan writings he infuses. 3.) He then suggests that we are at fault for not understanding the common “Jewish” understanding of the background of these books as recorded in the pagan Egyptian Nag Hammadi scrolls and the highly eclectic library of Dead Sea Scrolls! Heiser denies the verbal plenary inspiration of the Bible while embracing pagan writings.*

# Evangelical Boundary Breach #3

## The Sons of God and the Flood – Genesis 6

We have now embraced a pagan worldview where the battle is between two families of God, His divine family and His human family. (Angels are mere messengers.) Two cosmic families of created beings are warring it out, and thanks to Christ, we now have the power (through loving sacrifice and the resurrection) to win!

### Subject and Starter Passage

“There were **giants** in the earth in those days; and **also after that**, when the **sons of God** came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.” (Genesis 6:4–7, KJV 1900)

“The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; **for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth**. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.” (Genesis 6:11–13, KJV 1900)

### Traditional Biblical Views

#### The Nephilim (giants)

The nephilim are mere giants which existed before and after the flood. The sons of God came in after the nephilim, and there were also nephilim after the flood (Numbers 13:33).

Various view on the sons of God exist, but none of them, throughout mainline Jewish or Christian history ever suggested there is a race of demi-gods called Nephilim.

As to what the Bible means when it speaks of those fallen *angels* who left their first estate, they were just that, angels (Jude 6).

#### The Universal Flood

**All flesh** on the entire earth had corrupted themselves, and **the end of all flesh** was required, (except for those who found grace). This required a universal flood, not a local one as Heiser prefers. (2 Peter 3:5-7)

The flood was far from being specific to the sons of God/daughter’s of men issue.

### Pagan Error Infused

This entire construct of gods, imbued with free will, who are fallen Divine Council members originates in pagan Ugaritic/Mesopotamian writings.

The issues this ANR backstory belies are pregnant with consequence. Consider just one tangled web:

This opens the door to the notion that **any** of God’s creatures could have and may fall at any time, past, present, or future - redeemed or unredeemed. This is due to the pagan notion of free will which must be inherent in all of God’s creatures. **The historic Christian view is that God has allowed one fall and one contamination of the race.** Can you imagine this whole scenario repeating itself ad infinitum throughout the future? The pagan construct of this imagined Divine Council necessitates this potential.

Worse, Heiser’s pagan brand of free will demands absolute freedom. Thus, while Heiser’s God can sovereignly intervene among His creatures, He cannot determine what His subjects will do. This remanding of absolute freedom is at the heart of open theism, a pagan notion, and demolishes Bible prophecy.

**Additional Comments:** *Historically, one could entertain the idea that fallen angels could inseminate human flesh and not be seen as heretical. The idea that such flesh could then reproduce itself, thus creating a whole new race of demi-gods, is Gnostic and has never been seriously entertained inside biblical orthodoxy.*

# Evangelical Boundary Breach #4

## Babel and the Nations – Genesis 11:6-9 and Deuteronomy 32:8,9

The closer the lie is to the truth the more palpable it is. There is no pantheon of divine beings, no divine council, and no cosmological (gnostic or dualistic) war going on between two classes of created beings AND NO ASSIGNING OF THE NATIONS TO DEMONS!

### Subject and Starter Passage

“Go to, **let us** go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence **did the LORD scatter them** abroad upon the face of all the earth.” (Genesis 11:6–9, KJV)

“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.” (Deuteronomy 32:8–9, KJV 1900)

### Host of Heaven

“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. 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.” (Deuteronomy 4:19–20, KJV 1900)

• See also, Daniel 10: 12,13, 21

### Traditional Biblical Views

The Trinity conjunctively scattered the nations in the person of YHWH.

The most High divided the nations and separated the sons of Adam.

This was according to the number of the children of Israel, the families who went into bondage in Egypt, not according to the supposed number of nations already in existence at Babel (Genesis 46:27, Exodus 1:5).

### Host of Heaven

While any large group of beings or objects may be called hosts, (such as angelic hosts), the warning here is that Israel is not to worship the stars under the heaven. When we observe the stars we are not only compelled to worship God, we are to be reminded not to worship them *or the false gods who like to be represented by them* as did Babel, Egypt, and the nations.

### Pagan Error Infused

Heiser insists that the most High divided the nations according to the number of the sons of God (not Israel.) These sons of God are supposed to be fallen divine council members who conspired against men.

It was necessary for Heiser to directly alter biblical texts in order to buttress his view. In the words of Heath Henning: “Another problem with Heiser’s hermeneutic is he focuses on ambiguous text, plays fast and loose with the Hebrew language whenever he can, and when he cannot twist an interpretation of the existing grammar to fit his pre-supposition, he becomes the textual critic and changes the text itself or uses a different text to justify his position.” Heiser’s hermeneutics are notorious<sup>4</sup>. In addition to blatant mistranslation and re-definition of words, Heiser:

1. Chose some obscure texts that contributed to the Septuagint versions in preference to the Masoretic text and the majority of texts which inform the LXX. Only 2 of the 33 manuscripts in view agree with Heiser.
2. Relied heavily on ancient libraries which contained a rich mix of pagan and mythological teachings along with quality manuscripts.

**Final Comment:** By now Heiser has made it clear that his Bible is not sufficient and cannot stand alone. It is a partially inspired narrative which must be informed with a pagan backdrop of thought, thought which eventually, informs every christian doctrine. Ask yourself this final question: **Would God entrust truth, supposedly this vital, to one man of this persuasion?**

**Truth Stewards Discern and Disseminate! - Matthew 13:52**

**Typical catch phrases to listen for in Heiser’s Evangelical Gnosticism:**

- Sacred space
- Watchers
- ANR
- Divine Council

**How false teachers have always worked:**

- Knowledge, falsely so-called - Heiser will intimidate folks with his skills in ancient languages.
- Scriptures, falsely added - Heiser will alter translations and words to fit his paradigm.
- Authority, falsely presumed - Heiser’s sacred space theory re-writes the purpose of the Great Commission.
- History, falsely retold - Heiser will insist the scriptures cannot be relied upon without pagan insights.
- Fruits, falsely demonstrated - Heiser’s doctrines corrupt every major biblical doctrine including the nature of God and the Trinity, sin, salvation, angels, demons, heaven, hell, the inspiration of scriptures, the universal flood are all perverted. His willingness to altar words and meanings, his infusion of lies into the truth are all evidences of false fruit.

**No Trespassing!**

|                       | <b>It’s OK to struggle.</b>  | <b>It’s NOT OK to cross the biblical line.</b>   |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| <b>Divine Council</b> | To struggle over whether there is a permanent divine council or whether God calls assemblies of men or angels together to witness His deeds or carry out His will. | To suggest that a pantheon of gods make up a divine council, a separate created family.  |
| <b>Satan</b>          | To struggle over whether the name Satan is proper or just a title.   | To teach that Satan is an advocate as well as an adversary.  |
| <b>Nephilim</b>       | To struggle over whether Nephilim were the product of co-habitation or just giants.  | To teach Nephilim were the product of <i>gods</i> and women.   |
| <b>Babylon</b>        | Struggle over what all happened at Babylon and why and how this fits prophetic themes.   | To teach that the governance of 70 nations was remanded to fallen demons or gods.  |
| <b>Temple</b>         | Struggle over the past, present, and future biblical temples and their roles.  | To teach that temples are sacred spaces and that the goal of the gospel is to reclaim sacred space through believers who are His temple. |

## Moving Forward:

For very light reading and a broad overview - this paper and consider watching the Bible Project video expose's at StandingTrue.com. The Bible Project has done much to popularize Dr. Heiser's work.

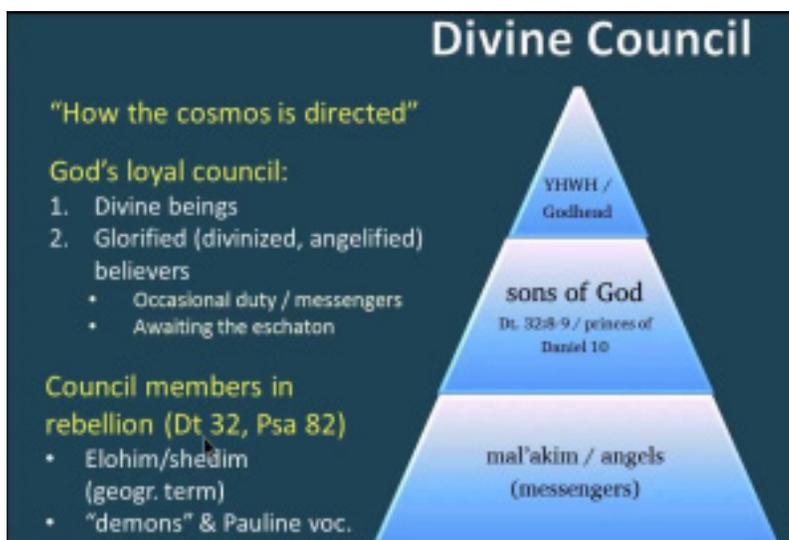
For a moderate treatment of Heiser's the Unseen Realm that you can rely upon: Gary Gilley  
<https://tottministries.org/the-unseen-realm-a-critique/>

For an advanced treatment of Heiser's the Unseen Realm that you can rely upon: Heath Henning (Keep in mind this is a pre-publication treatment which is not fully edited at this time.)  
<http://truthwatchers.com/author/ushenninhe/>

For a fine overview of the Nephilim you can rely upon: Don Vernoit  
<https://midwestoutreach.org/2019/11/21/here-be-giants/>

## Endnotes

1. For full documentation see: <http://truthwatchers.com/michael-heisers-gnostic-heresy-part-2/>
2. Michael S. Heiser, "God's Most Wonderful, Terrible Decision." The Naked Bible. <http://www.michaelsheiser.com/TheNakedBible/Chapter%204.doc>
3. For a more thorough citation and a partial treatment of this, see the following citation from Kenneth Berding's blog (<https://www.biola.edu/blogs/good-book-blog/2021/why-michael-heiser-is-probably-wrong-about-satan-in-the-book-of-job>) where he footnotes: "1. Michael S. Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the supernatural worldview of the Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015). Two other recent books that draw similar conclusions (albeit with individual nuances) are John H. Walton and J. Harvey Walton, *Demons and Spirits in Biblical Theology: Reading the Biblical Text in Its Cultural and Literary Context* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2019) and Ryan E. Stokes, *The Satan: How God's Executioner Became the Enemy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019). To find others who hold similar views, consult Stokes's footnotes. I chose to focus this post upon Heiser because of his popularity."
4. For documentation on Heiser's hermeneutics see: [read://http\\_truthwatchers.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Ftruthwatchers.com%2Fmichael-heisers-gnostic-heresy-of-a-divine-counsel-in-psalm-82-part-1%2F](http://truthwatchers.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Ftruthwatchers.com%2Fmichael-heisers-gnostic-heresy-of-a-divine-counsel-in-psalm-82-part-1%2F)



A slide from Dr. Heiser's Divine Council Presentation

*Starter sheets for discussing the errors of Michael Heiser's infusion of paganism - Steel - 7.*