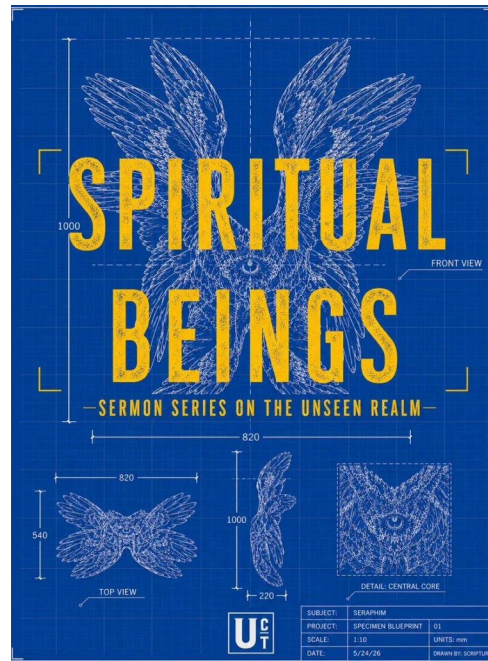


SPIRITUAL BEINGS

A Sermon Series on the Unseen Realm



WEEK 2

The Three Rebellions

The Garden · The Sons of God · Babel

Home Study & Sermon Notes

Teaching Pastor Frank · with Pastor Sabas Jimenez

Anchor Text: Genesis 3:15 & Deuteronomy 32:8-9 (ESV)

A NOTE ON SOURCES

Many of the ideas, frameworks, and theological categories in this study are drawn from the work of **Dr. Michael S. Heiser** — especially *The Unseen Realm* (Lexham Press, 2015), Parts 3-4, with his companion volume *Demons*.

Ancient sources such as *1 Enoch* are cited only as background to how Second Temple Jews read Genesis 6 — never as Scripture, and never as a foundation for doctrine. We teach this with gratitude and in the spirit of academic honesty; any errors of application are our own. Scripture is quoted from the ESV unless otherwise noted (LEB where indicated).

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How to Use These Notes

These notes follow Sunday's teaching movement by movement, so you can review what we covered, study ahead, or walk a home group through the material. Read with your Bible open. Where you see a Scripture block, look the passage up and read it in context. The recap boxes at the end of each movement gather the main points in one place, and the discussion questions at the back are built for groups.

A word on method: we read Scripture *for* us, but it was not written directly *to* us. To hear it rightly, we first ask what it meant to its original, ancient audience — and we hold interpretive details humbly while holding the main point firmly.

1. Why Is the World So Broken?

Ask a modern American Christian why humanity is so depraved and the world so dark, and you'll usually get one answer: *the Fall*. That's where the story ends for most of us — Adam and Eve ate the fruit, and everything broke.

Ask a Jew from the Second Temple world the same question, and the Fall would only be *part* of the answer. He would point to **three** rebellions — three distinct acts of treason that together explain how a good creation became contested ground:

- **The Garden** (Genesis 3) — one council member reaches *up* for a throne that isn't his.
- **The Sons of God** (Genesis 6:1-4) — a host of divine beings reach *down* across a boundary God set.
- **Babel** (Genesis 11; Deuteronomy 32:8-9) — humanity builds its own kingdom, and God hands the nations over.

READ IT RIGHT

The Flood is **not** a fourth rebellion. It is God's *judgment* on the second one. Keep the three rebellions and their judgments straight and the whole Old Testament begins to line up.

SECTION RECAP

- ✓ The world isn't broken by one rebellion, but by three.
- ✓ Garden → Sons of God → Babel — up, down, and out.
- ✓ This is a cosmic war, and we are reading the opening campaigns.

2. The First Rebellion — Treason in the Garden

When we picture the fall, we see a garden, a woman, and a piece of fruit. The first audience saw something far larger: a coup inside God's own household.

Eden was sacred space

"You were in Eden, the garden of God... You were on the holy mountain of God."
EZEKIEL 28:13-14 (ESV)

Throughout Scripture, Eden is described as a mountain and a temple. In the ancient Near East, mountains were where heaven and earth overlapped — the place of divine presence, divine rule, and divine-council activity. Eden was God's earthly headquarters, where two households met under one rule:

- **His heavenly household** — the sons of God, the divine council.
- **His earthly household** — humanity, made in God's image to represent Him on the earth.

Adam and Eve weren't made merely to enjoy paradise. They were given a mission — to extend sacred space until the whole earth looked like Eden: to image God, fill the earth, subdue it (*kābaš*), extend Eden's borders, and partner with God in His administration of creation.

The pride behind the rebellion

We met the *nachash* at the end of Week 1 — not a garden snake, but a luminous, throne-guarding *elohim* from God's own council. The prophets look back at this figure and describe the cosmic pride already brewing in his heart — the five "I wills" of Isaiah 14:

- "I will ascend to heaven."
- "I will raise my throne above the stars of God" — above the council itself.
- "I will sit on the mountain of assembly" — the seat of the council's authority.
- "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds."
- "I will make myself like the Most High."

He wasn't lacking anything God meant him to have. He already stood in a place of tremendous privilege — and became discontent with his assigned role. That is the heart of rebellion: the refusal to be content with the place God gave you. Autonomy is the religion of our age, and it is the same ancient pride from Genesis 3.

The temptation of Eve

The poison that corrupted the *nachash* is the poison he hands to humanity. He doesn't attack God directly — he attacks God's Word: "Did God really say?"

- **Question God's Word** — "Did God really say...?"
- **Question God's character** — "You will not surely die."
- **Question God's motives** — "God knows you will be like God."

His genius is that he never offers obvious evil — he offers **independence**. He reframes God's protective boundary as a stingy restriction and presents autonomy

as enlightenment. The true battle was never about a piece of fruit. It was a war over **who gets to define good and evil**.

The cosmic fracture

They buy the lie, and what began as silent treason in God's heavenly household spreads into His earthly one. Adam and Eve are driven from the one place where heaven and earth overlapped. The loss of Eden was about access: no more walking with God in the cool of the day, no more Tree of Life, no more unhindered proximity to the Lord. Death wasn't a poison God invented — it was the natural result of separation from the Source of life (Genesis 3:22).

MOST HIGH → MOST LOW

The serpent's curse — “on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat” — isn't biology. The Hebrew for the ground he's cast to, *'erets*, can mean both the dirt *and* the underworld, the realm of the dead. Watch the inversion: the one who said “I will ascend... I will be like the Most High” is made the most *low*. And only the serpent (3:14) and the soil (3:17) receive the curse word — Adam and Eve's roles are disrupted; their persons are never cursed.

The Seed War begins

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

GENESIS 3:15 (ESV)

Christians have long read this as the first promise of Christ — and rightly so. But it also opens a much broader conflict: two lineages now run through history. Understanding the Seed War unlocks the plotline of Scripture the way the divine council unlocks its worldview.

THE SEED WAR	SEED OF THE WOMAN	SEED OF THE SERPENT
Core identity	Aligned with Yahweh and His purposes	Aligned with rebellion against God
Motivation	Trust in God's wisdom; faithful worship	Autonomy and self-rule
Trajectory	Patriarchs → Israel → Christ	Watchers → giants → the Antichrist
Ultimate destiny	Reclaiming the Kingdom, ruling with the King	Defeated — the serpent's head crushed

SECTION RECAP

- ✓ Eden wasn't just a garden — it was sacred space, where both of God's households overlapped.
- ✓ The nachash wasn't a snake — a throne-guardian cherub from God's own council.
- ✓ The root sin was pride: “I will make myself like the Most High.”

- ✓ Most High → Most Low — the would-be highest was cast down to the dust and the dead.
- ✓ The temptation was never about fruit — it was about who defines good and evil.
- ✓ Only the serpent and the soil were cursed; Adam and Eve's roles were disrupted.
- ✓ Two lineages now run through history — the Seed War, narrowing all the way to Jesus.

3. The Second Rebellion — The Sons of God

This is the passage your church probably trained you to read right past. It isn't mythology and it isn't conspiracy — it is sitting in plain text in Genesis 6.

“When man began to multiply... the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose... The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward... These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.”

GENESIS 6:1-4 (ESV)

The sons of God — *bene elohim* in Hebrew — are the same divine-council members we met in Week 1. The phrase points to spiritual beings, not humans, every time it appears (Job 1:6; Job 38:7; Psalm 29:1). These are the ones who launch the second rebellion.

The New Testament confirms it

“God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment.”

2 PETER 2:4 (ESV)

“And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness.”

JUDE 6 (ESV)

Peter and Jude tell us plainly what kind of beings these were: angels who *sinned*, who abandoned their assigned realm. If the first rebellion was one being reaching **up** for a throne, this is a host of divine beings reaching **down** — the same pride and autonomy that ruined Eden.

The Watchers

GUARDRAIL

Second Temple Jews retold Genesis 6 in detail in a book called *1 Enoch*. It is **not** canonical Scripture — it does not belong in your Bible, and we do not build doctrine on it. We use it only to understand how the world of Peter and Jude already read Genesis 6 — in fact, both apostles echo that tradition.

In that tradition the sons of God are given a name: the **Watchers**. The account runs in three beats — the Pact (a binding oath to descend together), the Descent (onto Mount Hermon, crossing the cosmic boundary), and the Infection (flooding humanity with forbidden, weaponized knowledge). The tradition lists what they taught:

- **Warfare & violence** — metalworking and weaponry, accelerating bloodshed.
- **Sorcery & occult** — magic arts, potions, power sought apart from Yahweh.
- **Corruption of desire** — seduction and manipulation, twisting God's design.
- **Forbidden mysteries** — knowledge detached from wisdom and obedience.
- **Celestial divination** — reading the stars for guidance instead of the Creator.

WE ARE NOT SAYING / WE ARE SAYING

NOT: that 1 Enoch is inspired Scripture, that we build doctrine on it, or that every detail in it is historical fact.

ARE: that it shows how Second Temple Jews understood Genesis 6, and that Peter and Jude were clearly familiar with this tradition.

The Nephilim

The union of divine beings and human women produced the *Nephilim* — “the mighty men of old, the men of renown.” The Greek translation simply called them “giants.” The pagan world called them heroes and built temples to them; the Bible exposes them as the corrupted offspring of rebel spirits. Genesis says they were on the earth “in those days, *and also afterward*” — the bloodline resurfaces, and Scripture names the post-Flood giants:

CLAN	WHERE SCRIPTURE NAMES THEM
Nephilim	The original offspring (Genesis 6:4; Numbers 13:33)
Rephaim	Broad term for the giant peoples; also a word for the dead (Deut. 2:11; 3:11)
Anakim	The sons of Anak who terrified the spies (Numbers 13:33; Joshua 11:21–22)
Emim	The Rephaim of Moab (Deuteronomy 2:10–11)
Zamzummim	The Rephaim of Ammon (Deuteronomy 2:20–21)
Gath	Goliath and his kin — the last survivors (2 Samuel 21:15–22)

King Og’s kingdom (Deuteronomy 3:11) sat in Bashan, at the foot of Mount Hermon — the same mountain where the tradition says the Watchers descended. The giant bloodline didn’t just survive the Flood; it set up its capital on the Watchers’ own mountain. But the point was never their height — it’s that they were the visible result of divine rebellion invading human history. From there the Old Testament records a deliberate campaign to clear the bloodline off the earth:

GOD’S CAMPAIGN	THE GIANT CLANS CONFRONTED
Moses	Defeats Og of Bashan, at the foot of Hermon
Joshua	Drives the Anakim out of the Promised Land
David	Strikes down Goliath and the giants of Gath
Christ	The final and total defeat of the rebel seed

Where demons come from

Most of us assume demons are simply fallen angels. But the Jewish literature that shaped the world of Jesus and the apostles circulated a different explanation: that demons are the disembodied spirits of the dead Nephilim — homeless, restless, hostile, since heaven won’t house them and the grave won’t hold them. Through that lens the Gospels sharpen: why are demons always hunting for a body? Why does Legion beg not to be sent away and ask to enter the pigs (Mark 5)? Why does

an unclean spirit wander “waterless places, seeking rest and finding none” (Matthew 12:43)? They are chasing the bodies they were never supposed to have.

GUARDRAIL

No verse states outright, “Demons are the spirits of dead Nephilim.” This is the Second Temple framework, not a canonical proof-text — yet the New Testament writers seem entirely comfortable with the worldview behind it. We will give this its own full Sunday in a few weeks.

SECTION RECAP

- ✓ The bene elohim committed the second rebellion — leaving their realm and crossing into ours.
- ✓ Peter and Jude confirm it: angels who sinned, who “left their proper dwelling.”
- ✓ The Watchers came down on Mount Hermon and flooded humanity with forbidden knowledge.
- ✓ Their offspring were the Nephilim — the world called them heroes; heaven called them corruption.
- ✓ The bloodline survived the Flood — and God moved to clear it: Moses → Joshua → David → Christ.
- ✓ Second Temple Jews believed demons are the disembodied spirits of the dead Nephilim.

4. The Third Rebellion — Babel & the Disinherited Nations

We can't blame this one on the serpent or the Watchers. The third rebellion is ours — and it redrew the map of the world, physically *and* spiritually.

First, the judgment: the Flood

Humanity's heart had become "only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). So God brings the Flood (Genesis 6:13-17) — judgment on the second rebellion. But spiritual beings aren't drowned by water.

TARTARUS, NOT DESTRUCTION

Peter and Jude say God cast the rebel angels into chains in "gloomy darkness" — Peter uses the Greek word *Tartarus*, the deepest abyss where pagan myth chained the "Titans." Peter isn't endorsing mythology; he is hijacking it — the real rebels weren't Titans but the sons of God of Genesis 6, and the judgment actually happened. In the same way, God has Moses retell the Flood not as a lost "golden age" but as an age of cosmic rebellion rightly judged.

God preserves one uncorrupted line in Noah, and after the waters recede He renews the Eden mission — an Edenic mandate 2.0 (Genesis 8:16-17). Then He hangs a rainbow in the sky as a covenant of mercy. The Hebrew word is *qeshet* — a war-bow. God hangs up His weapon, and it points away from the earth, toward the heavens. It is an act of divine grace.

The turn — Babel

Instead of filling the earth, humanity gathers in one place. Instead of spreading God's rule, they build their own kingdom. Instead of making God's name great, they set out to make a name for themselves.

"Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."

GENESIS 11:4 (ESV)

What Genesis 11 describes is a Mesopotamian *ziggurat* — built for a dangerous spiritual purpose. People believed the gods lived on mountains; on the flat plains of Mesopotamia they built artificial mountains, topped not with a worship space but with a bedchamber and dining room — to entice a god down where he could be hosted, bartered with, and controlled. Heiser's point: the sin of Babel was never that a tower could physically reach the sky. The sin was building a **cosmic gateway to drag God's presence down on human terms** — a counterfeit Eden, built upside-down.

FEATURE	EDEN: THE TRUE MOUNTAIN	BABEL: THE COUNTERFEIT
Direction	God comes down to dwell with man	Man builds up to seize heaven
Function	God's house, where heaven and earth meet	A portal to control spiritual powers
Core mission	Spread God's image; expand His	Make a name; rule in autonomy

FEATURE	EDEN: THE TRUE MOUNTAIN	BABEL: THE COUNTERFEIT
	Kingdom	

Did God come down? Yes — but not to sleep in their bedchamber. He came down to inspect (11:5), confuse their language (11:7), scatter them (11:8), and do something far bigger.

God disinherits the nations

“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. But the LORD’s portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage.”

DEUTERONOMY 32:8–9 (ESV)

This is the hinge. At Babel, God set the boundaries of the nations “according to the number of the sons of God” — the *bene elohim* of His council. He stepped back from ruling the rebellious nations directly and **allotted them to lesser members of His own heavenly council**. Humanity said, “We don’t want Yahweh ruling over us,” and God essentially said, “Fine” — not because He stopped loving them, but because judgment sometimes looks like God giving people over to what they’ve chosen.

But He keeps one portion for Himself: Jacob — Israel. Now you see why Israel matters so much, and why it is always Israel versus the nations. Israel is the people God reserved to carry the rescue — the line that will produce the Messiah who wins the nations back.

Corrupt gods and cosmic geography

Those assigned sons of God were meant to govern the nations under Yahweh and point them back to Him. Instead they rebelled — just like the nachash and the Watchers — accepting worship that belongs to God and drawing the nations into idolatry. They became the spiritual powers behind Baal, Asherah, Molech, Chemosh, Dagon, and the gods of Egypt and Babylon.

“They sacrificed to demons that were not God, to gods they had never known.”

DEUTERONOMY 32:17 (ESV)

We tend to think the idols of the nations were nothing — just wood and stone. The Bible doesn’t treat them that way. The statue is fake, but the spiritual power behind it is real (1 Corinthians 10:20). Idolatry was never harmless; it is allegiance — worship handed to a rebel being. Anything that turns your heart from God is an idol.

From this point on, geography becomes theological — **cosmic geography**. Borders are no longer just lines on a map; behind earthly kingdoms now stand spiritual rulers. It makes the rest of your Bible click into place: the plagues on Egypt’s gods, the conquest that evicts the giant clans of Canaan, Babylon as the headquarters of deception, and Daniel 10’s “prince of Persia” and “prince of Greece” fighting in the unseen realm.

Abraham is God’s response

So God looks at the rubble of Babel and refuses to give up on His original plan. Out of all the disinherited nations, He picks one childless old man from a pagan land — Abram — and a barren wife, Sarai. From a human standpoint it's a dead end; from God's standpoint it's a setup. When He opens a barren womb, no one can deny that Israel exists by a supernatural act of God. Through this new family, God begins the long campaign to win back every nation He set aside at Babel.

SECTION RECAP

- ✓ The Flood was judgment on the second rebellion; the Watchers were chained in Tartarus, not destroyed.
- ✓ Babel was a ziggurat — a cosmic gateway to control God on human terms, a counterfeit Eden.
- ✓ At Babel, God disinherited the nations and allotted them to lesser sons of God (Deuteronomy 32:8).
- ✓ He kept Israel as His own portion — the line that carries the rescue.
- ✓ Those sons of God rebelled too, becoming the gods behind the idols — real powers, not empty stone.
- ✓ Geography became spiritual: the whole planet is now contested ground.
- ✓ Abraham is God's answer — a new family to win the nations back.

5. The War We Are Winning

Three rebellions, and the whole map is now contested ground. But the King has already moved — and He moved straight into enemy territory.

When Satan tempts Jesus with “all the kingdoms of the world,” it isn’t an empty bluff. After Babel, the rebel powers really did hold the nations and their worship. If the Messiah would just bow, the cosmic war was over. Jesus refuses — He came to take the nations back the right way, through the cross.

Then He walks to the base of Mount Hermon — the very mountain where the Watchers came down, a place known as the “gates of hell” — and declares, “On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” He steps into the place this rebellion started to announce that it is the place it will end.

The Great Commission is no accident, then. It isn’t only a command to share good news — it is a command to enter occupied territory and turn the hearts of the nations away from their idols and back to God. Genesis 3:15 is being fulfilled: the seed of the woman is crushing the serpent’s head.

There is only one Name worthy of worship. You don’t need ancestral gods or borrowed idols; they are lies, powers already defeated. There is only One — **Jesus, Yahweh come in the flesh** — the One who made the unseen realm, owns it, and has already won. So we don’t panic, and we don’t bow. We take back our geography for the King. It is not just something we say; it is a cosmic war, and we are winning.

6. Key Terms

Bene Elohim — “sons of God”; the created spiritual beings of God’s council. The same beings rebel in Genesis 6 and again at Babel.

The Watchers — the name Second Temple tradition (1 Enoch) gives the sons of God of Genesis 6 who descended on Mount Hermon. Background only, not Scripture.

Nephilim — the offspring of the Genesis 6 union; the “mighty men of renown,” rendered “giants” in Greek.

Rephaim / Anakim — the post-Flood giant clans; the term Rephaim also names the dead in the underworld.

Mount Hermon — the mountain of the Watchers’ descent and the giant kingdom of Bashan; later the “gates of hell” where Jesus declares His church.

Ziggurat — a Mesopotamian temple-tower built as a cosmic gateway to draw a god down on human terms; the structure behind Babel.

Tartarus — the deepest abyss (2 Peter 2:4) where the rebel angels are chained until judgment.

The Seed War — the two lineages opened in Genesis 3:15: the seed of the woman versus the seed of the serpent.

Cosmic geography — the truth that, after Babel, national borders carry spiritual significance; the powers behind the nations are real.

’Erets — Hebrew for “ground”; can also denote the underworld — the realm to which the serpent is cast (Genesis 3:14).

7. Scripture Index

- Genesis 3:1-6 — the temptation and the fall
- Genesis 3:14-15 — the curse and the first promise (the Seed War)
- Genesis 3:22 — exile from the Tree of Life
- Genesis 6:1-4 — the sons of God and the Nephilim
- Genesis 6:5-17 — the wickedness of man and the Flood
- Genesis 8:16-17 — the Edenic mandate renewed
- Genesis 11:4 — the tower of Babel
- Deuteronomy 32:8-9 — the nations disinherited; Israel kept
- Deuteronomy 32:17 — sacrifices to demons behind the idols
- Ezekiel 28:13-14 — the guardian cherub in Eden
- Isaiah 14:13-14 — the five “I wills”
- Job 1:6; 38:7 — the sons of God in the divine assembly
- 2 Peter 2:4 — angels who sinned, cast into Tartarus
- Jude 6 — angels who left their proper dwelling
- Matthew 16:18 — the gates of hell at Caesarea Philippi
- 1 Corinthians 10:20 — pagan sacrifice offered to demons

8. Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. Was “the Fall” the whole story for you before this study? How does seeing three rebellions change the way you read Genesis?
2. The nachash’s sin was refusing to be content with his assigned place. Where are you tempted toward that same discontent?
3. “Did God really say?” is still the enemy’s opening move. Where do you hear God’s Word being subtly questioned today?
4. The real temptation was about who defines good and evil. How does the modern call to “live your truth” echo Genesis 3?
5. Genesis 6 is a passage many churches skip. Why do you think that is — and what do we lose by skipping it?
6. What guardrails keep us honest when we use background like 1 Enoch? Why does “not Scripture, but helpful context” matter?
7. Idolatry is allegiance, not empty superstition. What “idols” quietly compete for your worship?
8. “Cosmic geography” says the nations are contested ground. How does that reframe what a missionary — or your own neighborhood — is really doing?
9. Jesus walked toward the gates of hell, not away. Where is He asking you to step into enemy territory?
10. We don’t panic, and we don’t bow. What would change this week if you lived like the war is already won?

9. Looking Ahead to Week 3

The Adversary & the Powers. Next week we name the rebel we met in the garden. We meet the accuser, map the kingdom of darkness, and walk through the princes of Persia and Greece — and we find out why Paul says our fight is “not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness” (Ephesians 6:12).

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