

Lesson 1

How many of you have come out of the church formerly known as Mormon?

Oftentimes there comes a feeling that you have been betrayed. That you have not been taught the truth. That you were only being taught what others wanted to you to learn to keep you under their influence. Overall, there is a feeling of disappointment, largely from those who have been in a position of love and influence in your life.

I experienced something slightly similar after I read the *Unseen Realm* toward the teachings of the evangelical church at large. Not so much that one was being lied to or not taught the proper theology, but instead, that one was taught an incomplete theology; that there was almost a deliberate and universal motivation toward not teaching that complete theology. The evangelical church seemed to have a motivation to bypass certain aspects of the Bible in order to appease their established filters.

The essentials were there; who God is, what it takes to get saved, the message of the Cross and the gospels. But in my mind, there was always an incomplete feeling as to how the entire Bible tied together. I could never put it together from my 50-plus years of being taught and studying within the modern evangelical church. The two Testaments often felt like two separate pulls; one in one direction, the other in another.

The missing link that ties the whole thing together is the Bible's supernatural underpinnings. To the modern church's discredit, the spiritual underpinnings have at worst been removed; at best, not emphasized.

In either case, this can leave a Bible student with a void that there is something greater going on in this Bible that they cannot put their finger on. There is this great feeling of incompleteness. "I guess I will just have to wait until I get to heaven to fill in the blanks."

That is not a good feeling, and when one finally discovers the blanks, it honestly can leave one a bit angry and frustrated at the incomplete teaching of the modern church; especially when it looks like it is at worst deliberate or at best naïve.

For example, we are taught that the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross was to undo the consequence of the fall of Adam upon humanity. That is correct. But did you know the work of Christ was also intended to do two other major Biblical healings or reversals? If you did, then tell me what they are?

The other two reversals are: (1) to counter the consequence of the sins of the rebellious angels associated with the time of Genesis 6; and (2) to take back control of the nations that God ceded to other gods at the time of the Tower of Babel.

I said two things that should have gotten your attention because neither is taught or emphasized by modern church teaching; and they may have gotten your attention in a negative way.

The first is that there is another set of sins characterized in the Bible other than the fall of Adam, namely, the sins of the rebellious angels. And the other is that there are other gods.

What do you mean there are “other gods?” That is a powerful no-no within the teaching of the modern evangelical church, especially here in this town. And therein lies an example of the sad part of the teachings of the modern evangelical church. In the Bible, God says there are other gods. We will soon put them in their proper context so don’t panic, but the Bible does say there are other gods.

Once you eventually see that, and then you go back and read your Bible again, the prevalence of the mention of these other gods will smack you in the face. How could I have not seen that? You didn’t see it because of the filters the modern church has put in your way.

This study’s goal is to get us past the filters of the modern church. The goal is to jump over the 2,000 years of the Church Era Bible interpretation and instead get us back to its roots; to get us back to the influences and the culture of the people who wrote the Bible. They wrote the Bible to their contemporaries. They did not write the Bible to the future cultures throughout the Church Era. Instead, they wrote them through their own filters. And since all scripture is written by the inspiration of God, then obviously those writers’ filters are also God’s filters.

The Bible was written across roughly 1,500 years. We are largely talking about 1,400 BC to about 100 AD. That will take you from the latter years of Moses’ life up to the Apostle John when he wrote Revelation around 90 AD.

Between us and them is 2000 years of the Christian Church era, and if you believe the seven churches of Revelation are, among other representations, a picture of the Christian church across those 2000 years, they reveal we are looking through a distorted filter. We need to jump back over the Church Age and try and place ourselves in the shoes of the people who wrote the Bible; ancient Jews. We need to learn to let the Bible say what it says without letting our filters get in the way.

Christian Church Age history is not the context of the biblical writers. The proper context for Bible interpretation is not the Reformation or the Puritans. It is not Luther or Calvin. It is not Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. It is not the Catholic Church. It is not rabbinic movements of the Middle Ages. It is not Augustine or Justin or any other church father. It is instead an understanding of the life, times, culture, and literature of the Biblical writer’s own time.

How do we do that? How do we get back to the times and culture of the Biblical writers?

Some of the shortcomings of those Church-era filters can be forgiven. They did not have as much information about the ancient Israelite culture as we do today. We are fortunate to have modern archeology and modern discoveries to help us understand the ancient near eastern cultures. We are fortunate to have the Dead Sea Scrolls – a collection of texts and manuscripts that go beyond just the books of the Old Testament.

We also have the discoveries at Ugarit.

(Google Ugarit and become familiar with this archeological discovery).

The foundational archeological discovery for our education and understanding of the mind of an ancient Israelite was the founding of the city/state of Ugarit.

“The site of Ugarit was discovered in 1928 and excavated in the decades that followed. One of the major finds was a library containing thousands of clay tablets, roughly 1,400 of which were in an alphabetic language (now called Ugaritic) that was closer to biblical Hebrew than any other ancient language. The vocabulary and grammar are in many instances virtually identical. Scholars have learned a lot from this library, about both Ugarit and the content of the Old Testament.” *Unseen Realm*, pages 45-46.

Terry recently switched from the New King James version of the Bible to the English Standard Version. The reason he did such is that the ESV does a better job within its language and presentation of capturing and emphasizing the Bible’s supernatural currents.

The ESV uses the Septuagint as its translation text, whereas the King James uses the Masoretic Text as its translation foundation.

(Google the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text).

Anchor Bible Dictionary – The Septuagint was the Bible of the early Christian Church. It was not secondary to any other scripture; it was Scripture. When a NT writer allegedly urged his audience to consider that all scripture given by “divine” inspiration” is also profitable for doctrine, it was to the Septuagint and not the Hebrew that attention was being called.

Angels, Michael Heiser – Studies have determined that New Testament writers quote the Old Testament in places where the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint are in agreement with each other about 20 percent of the time. Of the 80 percent where some disagreement between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint is evident, the New Testament reading agrees with the Masoretic Text less than 5 percent of the time.

Probably because of additional Jewish writings during the Jewish Second Temple period with some of them emphasizing and expounding upon traditional Torah stories, the Septuagint, which was translated during this Second Temple period (basically the period between the Old and New Testaments), was more sensitive to the Torah’s supernatural underpinnings and therefore states some aspects more clearly and emphatically.

Let’s explore the concept of “God.”

[Deu 32:39 ESV] “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.

[Isa 43:10 ESV] “You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.

[Isa 45:5-6 ESV] I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; ... 6 ...there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other.

[Isa 45:21-22 ESV]? ...And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me. 22 “Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.

[Isa 46:5, 9 ESV] 5 "To whom will you liken me and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be alike? ... 9 remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.

Read Psalm 82.

How can the prior verses imply that there is no other God, yet in Psalm 82 God says he has made other gods? So, what is it?

When verses seem to be in conflict, one has to take in the whole council of God. The prior verses could read that there are no other gods, but they can also read that there are no other gods like the creator God. The incorporation of Psalm 82 shows that the answer is the latter, not the former.

The use of the word "besides" means "there is none like me," or "there is none equal to me." God alone is divine. He alone has the power to create. He alone has the power to make a decree that nothing can stop or undo. That is what God is saying. Not that there are not other gods, but instead, that none of those gods even come close to the power and supremacy that He has as a god.

Reference other verses to establish "other gods."

Psalm 138:1, Deut. 8:19, Deut. 10:17; Deut. 17:2-5; Deut. 28:14; Deut. 30:17; Deut. 32:17;

Deut. 32:21 This verse speaks to idols as being "no gods." What is being referenced in the above verses are not idols. God says idols are not gods. Yet he says there are other gods, and the ultimate sin of the Israelites as a nation was worshipping these other gods.

Deut. 29:26; Josh. 24:2; Josh. 24:14; Judg. 2:12, 17; **Judg. 6:10**; Judg. 10:6; 1 Kings 11:4; 2 Kings 17:35, 37-38; 2 Kings 18:33-35; **Ps. 95:3**; Ps. 97:9; **Ps. 135:5**; **Ps. 136:2**; Jer. 10:11; Jer. 25:6; Dan. 2:11; 2 Chr. 33:3.

The point of separation between God and his created gods is divinity. Divinity is characterized by certain attributes. Foreknowledge, predestination, omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, creative power, ultimate supremacy. Only the creator God has these attributes. No other being has such attributes. Therefore, only Yahweh is divine.

Explain Elohim. (the word means a judge; one with authority over).

When speaking to Israel, He always said "your God." Read the repetition of such in Deuteronomy 12.

If you do not see or won't acknowledge these other gods, then you risk robbing God of His glory.

[Psa 97:9 ESV] 9 For you, O LORD, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods.

[Psa 135:5 ESV] 5 For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.

That Psalm is just empty rhetoric if there are really no other gods.

"How is it coherent to say that verses extolling the superiority of Yahweh above all *elohim* are really telling us Yahweh is greater than beings that don't exist?" *Unseen Realm*, pg. 35.