Omni and Intra: God’s Personal, Temporal, Locative Presence in the Divine Council

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Omni and Intra: God’s Personal, Temporal, Locative Presence in the Divine Council

Following the discovery of Ugaritic, comparative studies of the Old Testament have illuminated the biblical theme of the “divine council.”

Various authors have contributed to a more full-orbed understanding of how Yahweh’s divine council reflects and contrasts with those of the surrounding region. Others have also attempted to understand the Bible’s

1 “The term divine council is used by Hebrew and Semitics scholars to refer to the heavenly host, the pantheon of divine beings who administer the affairs of the cosmos. All ancient Mediterranean cultures had some conception of a divine council. The divine council of Israelite religion, known primarily through the psalms, was distinct in important ways.” Heiser, Michael S. “Divine Council,” in Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings (ed. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns; Downers Grove, IL; Nottingham, England: IVP Academic; Inter-Varsity Press, 2008), 112. Robinson was one of the first to trace this theme through the Old Testament. His work is an excellent primer on the subject. Robinson, H. Wheeler. “The Council of Yahweh,” JTS 45 (1944): 151-157.


portrayal of the divine council on its own terms, as well as exegetical studies of specific divine council passages. This research has made great strides in comparative studies and biblical theology, but these findings have not been integrated into systematic theology, except for their obvious implications for angelology.

Currently, Theology Proper is a topic under considerable debate among Reformed theologians, particularly the doctrine of divine simplicity. The doctrine of divine simplicity has great implications for our understanding of God’s interaction in time and space. The biblical data surrounding the divine council also has implications for this aspect of Theology Proper, as it indicates that God exists personally, spatially, and chronologically.


7 “Timeless eternity also follows from the doctrine of simplicity and its denial that God is composed of parts. If God should be in time, then the full actuality of His life would be built up out of temporal parts—that is, of really distinct before-and-after moments... in a simple God there can be no real distinction between before and after. Thus, there can be no temporality, no mediating movement between anterior and posterior states of being.” James E. Dolezal, All That Is in God: Evangelical Theology and the Challenge of Classical Christian Theism. (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017), 89.
throughout history. This paper will examine the biblical passages that prove this and synthesize these findings with Theology Proper.

**God’s Personal Presence in the Divine Council**

God is personally present in the divine council. Whenever the council appears, God presides over it. In Psalm 82, God “places himself”\(^8\) in the divine council. God is said to be “among” the “gods” or “divine beings.”\(^9\) In Job 2:6 the sons of God come “to present themselves” (בֶּן-יָהֵウェָה) before Yahweh. In 1 Kings 22, Micaiah records a vivid divine council scene. Yahweh is “sitting on his throne” with the “host of heaven” on either side of him. This makes Yahweh personally present alongside the other members of the council. The fact that he has some personal manifestation there is corroborated by one of the spirits coming forward and standing before him (יָהָウェָה נִי אֲרָ.uk). Isaiah 6 also pictures the Lord “sitting upon a throne” surrounding by divine creatures. Ezekiel sees Yahweh as “the likeness as the appearance of mankind” (יְהֹウェָה מַפֶּרֶן נְכוֹניָק מַמְשִׁיק) seated on “the likeness of a throne” (יְהוֹウェָה מַפֶּרֶן נַבְּלִיק), surrounded by supernatural creatures. God then personally charges Ezekiel

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\(^8\) The verb נָצַב is translated various ways. If it is taken as “stand” perhaps it refers to God’s standing to “take the floor” of the court, so to speak. Based on the Psalm’s following material, the word seems in this case to be referring to God’s positioning Himself in some sense of presiding or judging.

\(^9\) Oddly, the NASB diverges from its usual formal equivalence and translates מָלִים as “rulers.” The evidence for this view is a few parallel passages in which מָלִים is used when a human intermediary is in view (Is 3:13, Chr. 19:6; Ps. 58:11, Ex. 21:6; 22:8, 28). It is a fair point that this reference to מָלִים may refer to a human judge acting in God’s place, but that usage does not work in Psalm 82. Verses 6-7 contrast between being “gods” and dying “as men” (כְּאָם). The contrast makes little sense if humans are in view. It also does not work well with the emphatic first-person pronoun (נִי אֲרָ.uk). Cf. J. Morgenstern, "The Mythological Background of Psalm 82," HUCA 14 (1939): 29-126, especially 112; James S. Ackerman, "An Exegetical Study of Psalm 82" (Th.D. diss., Harvard University, 1966).
with his prophetic calling. Similarly, Yahweh personally interacts with Jeremiah by calling him and reaching out his hand to place His word in Jeremiah’s mouth. Each of these divine council scenes depicts God as a personal presence in them. In fact, His rule over the council makes Yahweh an intrinsic character in it.\(^\text{10}\) No divine council scene excludes Him.

**God’s Locative Presence in the Divine Council**

To understand the implications of God’s personal presence in the divine council, we need to establish a bit of ancient cosmology. Meredith Kline posits a “two register cosmogony” to explain the spiritual and material realms. He holds that the visible and invisible realms\(^\text{11}\) are not in distinct places, but overlapping dimensions. Occasionally, the “curtain is pulled back,” and those in the lower register get a glimpse into the upper register that surrounds them.\(^\text{12}\) Kline argues that the lower register, the visible realm from a human perspective, is a replica of the upper register, the spiritual realm. In creation week, Kline identifies various ectypal forms that mirror the spiritual archetypes they replicate. The most notable being man’s creation and the Sabbath pattern, each directly related to God’s image and rest respectively.\(^\text{13}\)

\(^{10}\) Ps 89:5-8

\(^{11}\) Col 1:16

\(^{12}\) An example of this would be 2 Kings 6:17: “Then Elisha prayed and said, ‘O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see.’ So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.”

The ectypal Eden mirrors Heaven. Eden and Heaven often parallel each other as places of rest, “arboreal delight,” and sources of water to the surrounding region. Eden is a land of Sabbath rest, as God rests after its completion. God’s enthronement is associated with His Sabbath rest, and Eden was to be a place of rest for Adam and Eve. Topography plays a key role in Eden’s ectypal nature. Eden is “the mountain of the Lord.” God’s holy mountain, most recognized by the name “Mount Zion,” appears throughout Scripture. A parallel lost in many translations is between Mount Zion and Mount Zaphon. Zaphon, often translated “north,” is the name of Baal’s residence, the mountain on which his pantheon would meet. In the biblical text, Zaphon is used to describe God’s abode. Eden is also the mountain of God. Ezekiel 28:13-14 parallels “Eden, the garden of God” and “on the holy mountain of God.” Genesis 2:10 also indicates the topographical heights of Eden, as four rivers flow out of it. The parallels with Ezekiel 47:1-12 emphasize that Eden is a source of water, and necessitates its need to be

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14 An ectype is “a copy from an original: an imitation or reproduction (such as an impression of a seal)” or, more precisely in this instance, “something in the world of external reality as distinguished from its eternal and ideal archetype or prototype.” Mirriam-Webster, 2018.


16 Isa 11:10, 66:1


18 Isa 14:13; Ps 48:1-2; Ez 38:15, 39:2

19 Though debated, אֵד could be translated “spring” due to Akkadian parallels. “Mist” is frequently chosen due to the only other biblical occurrence (Job 36:27). See
topographically higher than the places it is watering. Also, the presence of gold and jewels (Gen 2:11-12) parallels the “high mountain” that the New Jerusalem is built on with a foundation of precious metals and stones (Rev 21:10-21). These parallels make Eden in “terms of cosmographic symbolism” the “heaven-earth axis” of the two registers. The upper register and the lower register coalesce at this mountain of assembly. This theme of a mountain of meeting occurs elsewhere in Scripture. Jacob’s ziggurat, mount Sinai, Jerusalem, Horeb—the mountain is the place where one gains access to God. David asks, “Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?”

But what does this two-register understanding of biblical cosmology imply for God’s personal presence in the Divine Council? First, the upper

the NET’s note for a brief discussion. Kline argues that this word actually refers to a “mountain that rises up from the earth.” Kline, 46.

Sometimes—erroneously in my view—called, “Jacob’s ladder.” “The Jewish interpretative literature on the passage extends through the centuries. Linguistically it notes that the Hebrew term ‘sullam,’ which has come down to us in English (through the Greek) as ‘ladder,’ is related to an Akkadian term and may signify something more like a ramp, of the kind describing the links between the levels on a Babylonian ziggurat like the Tower of Babel.” Roger B. Stein, “Searching for Jacob’s Ladder.” Colby Quarterly, Volume 39, no.1, 2003, 34-54. Gen 28:10-17 demonstrates that the mountain is not simply a part of the dream as Jacob awakens and says, “surely the Lord is in this place” (םוֹקַמְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּلַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּלַבְּล

Ex 3:1-12 refers to Horeb as the “mountain of God” (שֶׁמֶן הַגֵּדַע), a place where Moses must take off his shoes because it is “holy ground” (שְׁדַר הַגָּדוֹל). The sign that God will deliver the Israelites will be that Moses will worship God “on this mountain” (שֶׁמֶן הַגֵּדַע).

Ps 24:3; All of the Psalms of Ascent hint at this theme. Ultimately, Jesus points to himself as the fulfillment of Jacob’s vision, and the axis between Heaven and earth (Jn 1:51).
register is a reality. Though invisible from man’s perspective, angelic creatures exist there. Angelic creatures are not metaphors, but are handled in narratives as real persons.\(^23\) Angels appear in dreams, but this does not mean they are imaginary.\(^24\) Second, the upper register is locative. Angelic creatures are said to go from one place to another,\(^25\) and Scripture gives no indication that angels are omnipresent. Third, metaphysically speaking, that which can change location must also change in time. There are no scriptural texts that would indicate that the spiritual realm is atemporal, but there are texts that indicates that angels are time bound.\(^26\) The existence of fallen angels implies this truth as well.\(^27\) For a being to go from a state of perfection to a state of fallen rebellion, it must exist in time. Angels are spirits,\(^28\) but that does not mean that they do not have locativity, temporality, and even non-corporeal, bodily form. 1 Corinthians 15:42-49 indicates that believers shall be raised with heavenly, “spiritual bodies.” In sum, the upper register is a real, spiritual location that is temporally bound.

\(^{23}\) Gen 19:1; Num 22:22-24; 2 Sam 24:17; Matt 28:1-5; “The angels are represented as personal beings. They can be interacted with. They have intelligence and will (2 Sam. 14:20; Rev. 22:9). They are moral creatures, some being characterized as holy (Matt. 25:31; Mark 8:38; Luke 1:26; Acts 10:22; Rev. 14:10), while others, who have fallen away, are described as lying and sinning (John 8:44; 1 John 3:8-10).” Erickson, Millard. *Christian Theology*, 2nd edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006. 465.

\(^{24}\) God also appears in dreams (Num 12:6), and this does not make Him an imagined character.

\(^{25}\) Dan 9:21, 10:13; Job 1:7; Luke 1:26

\(^{26}\) Dan 10:13

\(^{27}\) Jude 6

\(^{28}\) Heb 1:13-14
God’s presence in the divine council means that He, in some sense, is locatively present with them. While God is not bound by location, He manifests His presence in special ways throughout Scripture. The location of the divine council seems to be a special place of His personal presence. He may not be present there corporeally, but He is truly and visibly present.

The language surrounding the divine council corroborates this locative understanding. In Job 1:6-12, Satan is said to “enter in their midst” (וַיָּאָבוּ) and “go out from the presence of Yahweh” (וַיֵּצֵא הַשָּׂטָן מִפְּיֵנַי הַיָּהוּ). Chapter 2:1-7 mirrors this language. In 1 Kings 22:21, a spirit “came forward” (אֲרֻצָּה) and “stood before Yahweh” (וַיַּעֲמֹד), more locative language within the council. Jeremiah 1:9, which some take as a divine council scene, records Yahweh’s physical interaction with Jeremiah: “Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth.” These references use language that imply that God is present in the divine council, and interacts in space there.

**God’s Chronological Presence in the Divine Council**

We have answered the “who,” “what,” and “where?” of our inquiry. God is personally and locatively present in the divine council. The next question to consider is “when?” Is God always in this council? Or is it a rare extraterrestrial theophany? To answer this question, we need to see when the

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29 This is not technically a word, but I find it carries better connotative weight than the term “spatial,” which is roughly synonymous.

30 Ps 139

31 Heiser, 237.

32 I am using the term “chronological” instead of “temporal.” While “temporal” would be accurate, it is a word that emphasizes the synchronic, whereas the word “chronological” emphasizes the diachronic, which is the emphasis of this study.
divine council appears in the narrative of Scripture.

The Formation of the Divine Council

The formation of the divine council is not explicit in Scripture. The spiritual realm’s terminus a quo is the end of creation week.\(^{33}\) Likely, the spiritual realm preceded the physical. Job 38:4-7 refers to the “morning stars” and “sons of God”\(^ {34}\) singing together points to God creating the spiritual world before the foundations of the earth were laid. It is likely that the divine council was formed concurrently or soon after the spiritual realm was created.

The Divine Council in Genesis

The first instance where the divine council is referenced is in Genesis 1:26. While the plural is often taken as a reference to the trinity, a better reading would be to understand this as a reference to the divine council.\(^ {35}\)

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33 Gen 2:1 refers to the “hosts” of heaven (וְכָל־צְבָּאָם). This is a frequent image of the angelic host in Scripture (1 Kgs 22:19; 2 Chr 18:18; Neh 9:6). In ancient cosmology, the stars were considered alive due to their movement. Worship of the stars appears throughout the Old Testament (Deut 17:3; 2 Kgs 17:16; Jer 8:2), but the stars are simultaneously pictured as God’s supernatural army.

34 “Sons of God,” though debated in some instances, refers here to some divine or angelic beings. Cooke, Gerald. "The Sons of (the) God(s)," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 76 (1964): 76(1), pp. 22-47

35 “Both in Ugaritic literature and also in biblical literature, the use of the first person plural is characteristic of address in the heavenly council. The familiar "we" of Gen. 1:26, ... Gen. 3:22, ... and Gen. 11:7, ... has long been recognized as the plural address used by Yahweh in his council. Compare in Asherah's speech to the assembly of El in Ugaritic Text 49:I ... and El's decree to the assembly in Text 51:IV:43.” Frank M. Cross, The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah. Journal of Near Eastern Studies, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Oct., 1953), pp. 274-277; Published by: The University of Chicago Press. “The explanation that better satisfies all such uses of the pronoun is that God is addressing the angels or heavenly court (cf. 1 Kings 22:19–22; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Ps. 29:1–3; 89:5–6; Isa. 6:8; 40:1–6; Dan. 10:12–13; Luke 2:8–14). It seems that in the four occurrences of the pronoun “us” for God, God refers
This places God in the divine council very early in the narrative. It can be inferred from this instance that the divine council existed before Genesis 1:26. This is more evidence that the spiritual realm was created pre-matter, and that the divine council was likely an intrinsic part of its creation. Just as God created the lower register with structure and hierarchy as a part of each creature’s identity, He created the upper register with hierarchy from the outset.36


plural “us.”  

37 A guardian cherub is then sent to protect the tree of life.  

38 A similar occurrence is Genesis 11:6-7, where God says “Come, let us go down (נֵֽרְדָ֔ה) and there confuse their language.”  

39 The Divine Council in Job

Job 1 and 2 contain famous divine council scenes. A noteworthy aspect of these scenes is their reference to time. Job 1:6 reads, “Now there was a day (וֹם) when the sons of God came to present themselves (ב֖צּלְהִתְיַ) before the LORD.” The initial reference to time is mirrored in Job 2:1 (י֣הַיְיִוֹם). While the length of time between these days is not specified, clearly this is a regular event. The council convenes iteratively. There is no reason to think that this is a unique event during Job’s lifetime. Also, the upper-register timeframe correlates to earthly time in some sense, as lower-register events

37 “The phrase ‘one of us’ informs us that, as in Genesis 1:26, God is speaking to his council members—the elohim.” Heiser, Michael. The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible. Lexham: Bellingham, WA. 2015. page 62.

38 Another possible supernatural creature in Genesis three is the serpent (נָחָשׁ). Some identify this creature as a divine cherubim, which would be another indication of a divine council setting. Gonzales, Robert. Where Sin Abounds: The Spread of Sin and the Curse in Genesis with Special Focus on the Patriarchal Narratives. Wipf and Stock: Eugene, OR. 2009. 24-28.


40 This is the same word used of God’s standing in the divine council in Ps 82:1.
occur during the intervening time. It can be inferred from this passage, that the council has convened on a regular basis throughout history, and interacts with the events of history.

The Divine Council in 1 Kings

Another example of the divine council interacting in human history is 1 Kings 22. Ahab and Jehoshaphat are creating a military alliance, and Jehoshaphat requests that they inquire of the Lord before proceeding. After an unconvincing performance by Ahab’s four-hundred false prophets, which Jehoshaphat objects to, Micaiah is called. He is instructed to give Ahab a favorable answer, but he replies, “that which Yahweh says to me, it I will speak” (רִבְּרֶכֶת אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי אָשֶׁר אִקְרָא אֵלֵי). After Micaiah’s unconvincing performance, which Ahab objects to, Micaiah tells the truth. The truth is not only that Ahab will not succeed, but that the Micaiah had seen a behind-the-scenes view of Ahab’s false prophets. Micaiah’s vision is one of a Yahweh seated on His throne surrounded by “the host of heaven” on either side of Him (vs 19). Yahweh asks a question to His council and deliberate over various solutions (vs 20). Eventually, a spirit “came forward” (אֳפִיזֶד עָלָיו), “stood before Yahweh” (וַיְעָמוּד), and offered a solution which Yahweh accepted (21-22). Micaiah ascribes the action to Yahweh, showing that Yahweh is the ultimate agent of all of the council’s actions. This is a clear example of the divine council interacting in history.

A possible objection to this example may be that Micaiah is speaking

41 As noted above, this language confirms an understanding of spirits that have form, time, and locativity.
metaphorically or poetically. Prophets sometimes use parables, could this be one of those instances? Also, Micaiah’s first prophecy to Ahab uses a metaphor. Is this second prophecy following suit? To take Micaiah’s words this way creates more problems than it solves. First, Micaiah’s first prophecy does use a brief simile, but it is a common figure of speech. Second, if this is a parable, what is the referent? What could a vision of Yahweh and His council deliberating and sending a lying spirit be a symbol for? Third, Micaiah’s application of the “parable” would be to confirm the accurate details of the parable (vs 23). When prophets use parables their applications of them would show the true meaning behind the metaphor. The clearest meaning within the historical narrative framework of this text is to understand this as something that Micaiah has seen and believes to be a real event.

An interesting phrase from this narrative is Micaiah’s words, “that which Yahweh says to me, it I will speak” (וְאָדָרָבָּה יָאָרֵיה יָאֵה אָבֹת אֵלַה יָהֹּה). It seems that Micaiah is repeating words that Yahweh has told him in a personal way. Just as Moses was the intermediary for Israel, Micaiah is hearing and repeating God’s message. The question: is Micaiah’s first-hand experience with God simply a vision that God placed in his head, or something more?

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42 2 Sam 12:1-4


44 2 Sam 12:7
The Divine Council and the Prophets

In Jeremiah 23:16-18, Yahweh of hosts (יָוֵה וֹתָא) warns against false prophet who “speak visions of their own hearts (רְפֵּבָּה וֹתָא), not from the mouth of the Lord. ... For who among them has stood in the council of the Yahweh (יֵהוָה וֹתָא) to see and to hear his word, or who has paid attention to his word and listened?” Yahweh of hosts concludes, “But if they had stood in my council (יֵהוָה וֹתָא), then they would have proclaimed my words to my people.” This contrast highlights what is at the core of the prophetic office. In Heiser's words, “true prophets have stood and listened in Yahweh's divine council; false prophets have not.” This “litmus test” of prophetic office is suggested throughout the Bible. Noah and Enoch both acted as prophets, and both are said to “walk with God.” Moses spoke with God “face to face as a man speaks to his friend” (וּהָאָרְכֵּנּוּם וֹתָאֵר רֹפַח לְאַלְרֵהֶנָא) and Israel witnessed these interactions as a means of confirming his prophetic status. Yahweh also commanded that Moses take Joshua go to the tent of meeting to confirm his role. These examples certainly do not prove that standing in Yahweh’s council is the litmus test of the prophetic office, but the key examples of this come in the major prophets.

Isaiah 6 open with a divine council scene. Angelic creatures, God upon

45 I take this as a locative בְּ. Cf. Williams, Williams’ Hebrew Syntax, 97.
46 Heiser, 238. See Chapter 27 for a more thorough handling.
47 Jude 14-15; 2 Pet 2:5
48 Gen 5:22-24, 6:9
49 Ex 33:9-11
50 Deut 31:14-23
his throne, Isaiah’s exclamation that he has seen the “Lord of hosts,”51 and Yahweh’s wording, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” are details that portray this scene as taking place in the divine council. Isaiah is commissioned as he is present in the council.52 Ezekiel opens with a similar scene, except that the council comes to him. Ezekiel 1:1-28 references heavens opening to the upper register, the mountain Zaphon, supernatural creatures, God on His throne presiding over all, and interacting with Ezekiel.53 This is the setting of Ezekiel’s commissioning. Daniel is also ushered into a divine council scene.54 Amos 3:7 says, “For the Lord GOD does nothing without revealing his secret (סוֹד֔וֹ) to his servants the prophets.” The word sod (סוֹד֔וֹ) is a word frequently translated “council.” The secrets God reveals are “the secrets revealed at the council meeting that the prophet is to make known to the people.”55

51 Miller notes the overlap between the divine council and the heavenly hosts. The council is not simply a group of advisors, but also a part of the heavenly army which Yahweh leads as the Divine Warrior. This army is sometimes depicted as the stars, or “hosts,” of heaven. Miller, Patrick D. "The Divine Council and the Prophetic Call to War," VT 18 (1968): 100-107; idem, The Divine Warrior in Early Israel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973). Eusebius discusses this terminology in Chapters 7-9 of Praeparatio Evangelica et Demonstratio Evangelica. Cf. Deut 17:3; 2 Kings 17:16, 23:4; 1 Kings 22:19; 2 Chron 18:18.

52 There are several clues to Isaiah’s actual presence. He references his physical eyes (6:5), he has location while he is there (6:6), and he takes part in the conversation (6:8).

53 “…the hand of the Lord was upon him there.” In Ezekiel 1:3, the text emphasizes the location and physical interaction between Ezekiel and Yahweh.

54 Dan 7:9-12

Polley believes that the prophetic formula, “thus saith the Lord,” “provides a body of material that should be related to the council of meeting.” Yahweh “sends” (שלח) and gives the prophet something to “speak” (אמר). This finds many parallels in other Ancient Near Eastern literature, such as the Mari texts, Ras Shamra Tablets, and Amarna Letters. If this is the case, the divine council is referenced frequently throughout the prophets.

In Job 15:8, Eliphaz asks, “Have you listened in the council of God?” (וֹסְבֵּה). A true prophet must be able to answer, “yes.” Polley says, “The heart of the prophetic credentials is to have stood within the council of Yahweh.” Based on the prophet’s frequent interactions with the divine council, we can infer that the council is not a rare occurrence within Scripture’s narrative, but a consistent feature behind much of the Old Testament.

The Divine Council in Revelation

In Revelation 4, John is beckoned into a divine council scene. The elements that have been previously noted are all here. God is on His throne, he is surrounded by divine beings, angels, and a seating arrangement that is similar to other passages concerning the divine council. The elders here are

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58 Polley, 148.

59 Cf. 1 Kgs 22:13-23
best taken as members of the council.\textsuperscript{60} This places God in his council at the very end of the biblical narrative as well.

\textit{Application to Theology Proper}

If God is personally, locatively, and chronologically present in the divine council consistently from Genesis to Revelation, how does this inform Theology Proper? I will not endeavor to tease out all the implications of this synthesis, but will provide a brief summary.

God is Lord of place\textsuperscript{61} and Lord of time.\textsuperscript{62} But, while God is sovereign over space and time, He can enter into them. God also manifests Himself through various theophanies in the Old Testament, taking a form and interacting in time and place. God’s ability to be sovereign over time and place and partake in them is the paradox that lies at the center of Christ’s incarnation: the hypostatic union of God and man, finite flesh and infinite essence. For Jesus to be fully man, He must be limited in place. For Him to


\textsuperscript{61} Psalm 139

\textsuperscript{62} 1 Tim 1:17; Ps 90:2-4, 102:27; 2 Tim 1:9; Tit 1:2; Rev 1:8; I prefer the term, “Lord of time,” to atemporal. In Frame’s words, “it is better to say that God is Lord of time and Lord of space than to say merely that God is atemporal and nonspatial. Although he does have atemporal and nonspatial existence, he is also temporally and spatially omnipresent. His sovereignty does not mean that he is excluded from time and space; rather, it means that he acts toward them as Lord, not as one who is limited by them.” Frame, John. \textit{The Doctrine of God}. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 587. Another possible term would be “paratemporal,” meaning “alongside of time,” which my friend Nathan Majewski suggested to me.
be God, He must be limitless in space. To be God, Jesus is Lord of time. To be man, Jesus is born in time. While these Christological truths have been affirmed by orthodox Christendom since the Council of Chalcedon in 451, they may need to be extended to a more central part of God’s person throughout history. In the divine council, God consistently inhabits a specific location and time. While the incarnation is certainly unique, the parallels are similar: the omnipresent inhabits space; the atemporal exists in time. God willingly exists in our timeline, not just in occasional theophanies, but as a modus operandi throughout history. Perhaps, in the incarnation God condescends to man’s status, but in the divine council He condescends to the status of the Elohim. Perhaps God’s inhabiting space and time is purely a means to relationally interact with His council. While more implications could be drawn from this study, it is clear that in the future theologians need to integrate a biblical theology of God’s personal, locative, chronological presence in the divine council when they approach Theology Proper. We need to add to God’s omnipresence His intrapresence: His unbounded presence within time. That God is the Lord of time and space who interacts in time and space has been affirmed for centuries. However, the extent to which he does interact in history may be greater than previously thought.

63 “But God cannot be God, as we have seen, without his attributes. If the incarnate Christ lacked any essential divine attribute, then he was not God in the flesh.” Frame, 587.

64 Ps 8:5: “You have made him a little lower than the Elohim” (םיִּהְּמ).
Bibliography


Williams, Williams’ Hebrew Syntax, 97.

