

Episode #11 - The Mysterious Primordial Waters

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Music

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You're listening to The Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production. Music provided by Joseph McDade. He is your host, Dr. Jack Logan.

00:30

Welcome to the program. I'm your host, Jack Logan. So happy to have you back and welcome to all of our new listeners. So glad to have you with us as well. We have a great program today. I'm anxious to jump right in and get started. I want to start with a brief recap from last episode. We started with the creation. Why? Because that's where the ancients started by addressing the greatest mystery in the world, how life came to be. The ancients assigned X-

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extraordinary importance to the creation which in scholar speak is known as the Cosmogony the story of the origin of the universe and in this episode We'll delve a little more into why they started with the creation and why they felt it was so important to begin there We also established that the ancients didn't tell radically different creation stories

01:24

From Vander Sluis' research, we learned that the ancients told a strikingly similar story of how the universe, the earth, and life came to be. And they told that same story all over the globe, from hemisphere to hemisphere and continent to continent, as improbable as that would seem. Which Vander Sluis contends that the uniformity of the creation story is, quote, a strong argument in favor of a homogeneous origin.

01:54

And we refer to that origin here as the ancient tradition. We also establish that the ancients began their creation story with a description of the precreative state of the universe as water or a primordial sea. And this to the modern mind might seem odd or kind of bizarre to describe the precreative state of the universe as water or milk. But this perception, like I mentioned in the bonus section is actually due

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to a modern day lack of symbolism literacy than it is to a lack of sophistication among the ancients. In fact, you'll find throughout these episodes that quite the opposite is true. The ancients used symbols in such a sophisticated way, symbols that involved entire systems of correspondences to such a degree that even today scholars with multiple academic degrees from prominent universities still struggle to unravel their complex relationships and attribute

02:53

any sort of true religious meaning to them. And this is especially apparent in Egyptology. It's important to point out here that the ancients didn't believe that their pre-creative state was made of actual milk or actual water. These descriptions are symbolic. Formal scholar of comparative religion, who you should know by now, Mursi Elayade, refers to this as quote, aquatic symbolism or aquatic cosmology. He notes, quote,

03:23

One point is essential here. The structure of aquatic cosmogonies can be completely revealed only through aquatic symbolism, which is the only system capable of integrating all of the particular revelations of innumerable hierophonies. Now, if you're not familiar with what a hierophony is, it's a manifestation of the sacred. It's a spiritual experience. This law, moreover, holds for every symbolism. It is the symbolism as a whole.

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that valorizes the various significations of hierophany. The waters reveal their deeper meaning only to the extent to which the structure of aquatic symbolism is known. In other words, modern day men and women like you and myself must increase our symbolism literacy or we're just gonna forever be in the dark. The ancients use symbols of everyday temporal objects like water and milk.

04:23

to express the inexpressible, to convey inexpressible sacred transcendent spiritual realities or spiritual truths. Symbols are a way for human beings to express things that they have a difficult time expressing, or such as the spiritual are impossible to perfectly express. For example, writers do this all the time when they use similes, when they say something like,

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We all know that Joe is not literally a bull, but the writer uses a bull as a way to express that Joe has characteristics that are similar to that of a bull. And the author is hoping that the reader knows enough about bulls to recognize characteristics of bullish behavior, power, and aggression, and fertility in the person that he's comparing to a bull. Now, the difference with sacred symbols,

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is that they can never perfectly convey sacred reality because that reality is by nature ineffable or inexpressible. A good modern day example of this might be to try and express in words the deep love that you have for another person, that almost spiritual type of love that you might have for say your mother.

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Whenever I've tried to do this, I end up looking down at the cards I've written, and thinking how the words completely lack in conveying what I deeply feel. The ancients would tell you, don't worry about this, because it's not even possible to convey with temporal words the reality of spiritual love. It's too profound, too multi-dimensional, too awesome to put into our limited vocabulary. There isn't vocabulary for it. So then how do you express it?

06:09

with a massive bouquet of roses, poetry by poets who seem to come a whole lot closer to expressing the inexpressible than the rest of us with a hug, a card. We use all of these things we can think of to convey the spiritual reality of the deep love we are feeling. But we always know inside that we haven't expressed it exactly how we are experiencing it. And...

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Everything of a spiritual reality is this way. It's not possible to fully express spiritual reality to another person. You just can't do it. The only way another person can understand it is by experiencing it for themselves. And this comes in only one way, through spiritual revelation. Spiritual reality is revealed. It doesn't come any other way.

07:04

For example, the closest we can come to conveying spiritual realities such as spiritual love is through symbolic approximations, which is why we often use roses or beautiful flowers. They convey how spiritual love is beautiful and inspiring, alive, how spiritual love blossoms and grows. And if we sit there and contemplate their beauty long enough, they can give us glimpses of the spiritual love.

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but however much those flowers approximate spiritual love, they're still only an approximation. They are not spiritual love itself. Because the only way to know what spiritual love is, is to experience it for oneself. Those flowers are really helpful, however, because they point us in the right direction. They make the inexpressible a bit more accessible. I mentioned this quote in the bonus section. I'm gonna give it to you again. It comes from French scholar,

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René Gounion, and he says it like this, quote, "One of the general functions of symbolism "is effectively to suggest the inexpressible, "to give a pre-sentiment of it, "or better said to render it accessible, "from what can be grasped immediately "to what can be grasped only with much greater difficulty." I have a whole lot I wanna add to these points on symbolism, but I'll sprinkle them throughout the episodes. What's important here is that religious symbols are tools to help.

08:31

direct our minds, to help us ponder the spiritual, to hint at the spiritual realities that are accessible to us if we're only willing to pay the price. Back to the primordial waters. Now, of course, there will always be those who claim that the ancients conceived of a pre-creative state composed of literal milk and water. And that assertion really lays bare the asserter's

09:00

or basically their lack of understanding and not the ancients lack of understanding. Gounion said it best and he says it with a bit of a sting to it. He says, quote, philosophers will never succeed in penetrating the deeper meaning of even the least important symbol because symbolism goes entirely beyond their manner of thinking and thus inevitably eludes their grasp. Gotta love Gounion.

09:29

It's popular in scholarship today to portray the ancients as primitive humans of intellectual inferiority. But I think you'll see as your symbolism literacy increases throughout these episodes that the ancients were anything but intellectual inferiors. In fact, I think you'll find that you are impressed, even inspired, by the sophisticated layers upon layers of meaning and correspondences that are concealed.

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in the symbols the ancients used to express spiritual reality. So it's one thing to describe the ancient cosmology, but it's another thing entirely to understand what the ancients meant by using the images and symbols that they did to express the creation of the universe. Religion is and always has been about meaning, spiritual meaning, not the actual temporal symbols used.

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So we have to search for the shared meaning behind the symbols of water and milk, or the ancients conception of the pre-creative state ends up looking like nothing more than a fantastical, improbable, childish description of creation. If we wanna unravel the central mystery of the world, how the universe, the earth, and life came to be, we have to start by deciphering the symbols the ancients used to describe it. And when we do, it will unlock the amazing spiritual principles

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and realities hidden behind those symbols. So let's start with water or aquatic cosmology. David Leeming, a graduate of Princeton University and a well-known expert in mythology, when describing the primordial waters, wrote in the Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion the following, quote, "All cultures naturally recognize water as a necessary source of life and survival, making it a useful symbol

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creative fertility, spiritual and psychological fertility, as well as physical fertility. An Indian text in the Vedic tradition says something quite similar. It says, quote, water thou art the source of all things and of all existence. Dr. Leeming continues, quote, at the same time large masses of water are uncontrollable and therefore aptly representative of chaos.

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the chaos that precedes creation. These two symbolic functions, source of life and chaos, lead us to the idea of potential as yet unformed reality. The waters also speak to the larger metaphor of creation as birth. We are all born of the maternal waters. And so in creation mythology, worlds are typically born of the waters.

12:21

So the ancients used water to express three very important, and there's probably a whole lot more than these three because that's how symbolism works, aspects of the precreative state. So first, they use water to express that the precreative state had the potential for life. In the temporal world, the relationship between water and life is pretty clear. It's abundant. Water is essential to the growth of plants, fields of grain, trees, and it's also essential

12:51

for the life of human beings. Our bodies require a constant replenishing of water to stay alive. All of our vital organs require water to survive. As human beings, you can't survive longer than three days without water. Water sustains every creation. The ancients selected water to describe the precreative state precisely because in the temporal world, it is essential to the fertility of the earth and the sustainment of life.

13:21

It is the source of life, the sustaining source of existence. We see water used symbolically in the Christian tradition in the New Testament in John chapter four verse 14 when Christ associates the life-giving properties of water to the life-giving properties of his doctrine, the life-giving properties of following his teachings. And in John chapter four verse 14 it reads, quote, but whosoever drinketh of the water

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that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." In this verse, Christ is using water as a symbol to teach the woman at the well a really important spiritual principle. He's teaching her that like water, which is the source of physical life, fertility and growth that he and his doctrine is the source of

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spiritual life, the life of the soul. He's teaching her that if she will drink from his doctrine, which contains the source of everlasting life, that it will nourish her spirit. It will sprout like

a seed and grow within her, enlarging her soul, enlightening her understanding and expanding her mind until symbolically the tree of life, the tree of everlasting life has taken root within her.

14:48

and reached full bloom within her soul. Christ is teaching that his living water is the source of that spiritual growth. I hope you can see here how Christ is using a temporal symbol, water, to express much, much greater spiritual realities. Second, the ancients used water to express the precreative state of the universe was just that, precreative.

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It was without creation. It was characterized as a state of disorder or chaos. The ancients used descriptions like roiling waters and churning milk to symbolize a formless, disordered, confused, chaotic, unorganized, uncontrollable, diffuse, undifferentiated, amorphous state. Basically all of the words

15:46

that are the antithesis of creation and order. You know, one way you might think of this is like Legos. And I don't know if you have any kids or anything like that where you've just had these buckets of Legos and the Legos are just spread out all over the floor and there's just Legos everywhere. It's like a sea or an ocean of Legos. There is no creation to them. There is no form to them. They have the potential for incredible.

16:14

Incredible innovations and creations the kids can make out of them, but in the state that they are, they are amorphous. They're without creation. They're undifferentiated. Now it's not a perfect analogy, but it's kind of a good one for what they're trying to do by using water to express the pre-creative state. Van der Sluis refers to it as, quote, the primordial condition of unorganized singularity.

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You know, what's really interesting about the ancient description of the precreative state is that it is not depicted as empty. The ancients don't characterize it as bare or unfilled or containing nothing. In fact, it's just the opposite. They characterize it as a precreative substance that's brimming with the potential for life. They use words like sea to convey that this substance is vast and fills the

17:10

pre-creative state for as far as the eye can see. Van der Sluis notes after cataloging thousands of ancient cosmologies the following. He says, quote, the concept of creation ex nihilo or a formation of all existing things out of nothing is largely a figment of modern speculations, foreign to archaic thought. In mythical and early cosmological traditions, the world is almost

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always stated to have been formed from some sort of pre-existent material, be it confused and disorganized, a state of chaos that possessed substance and was not preceded by an era of quote, nothing. Only a few exceptions to this pattern exist.

18:05

brimming with creative potential is quote the earliest remembered putative now putative means generally considered or understood state of the universe he hasn't found an earlier different characterization of the pre-creative state in his inventory of traditional cosmology and i think that's pretty interesting knowing a bit about the history of the notion of creation as creation x

18:35

kind of helpful. The notion of creation ex nihilo, a creation out of nothing, actually doesn't show up in the written form until the second century AD. Thousands and thousands of years after the ancients declared the pre-creative state was made up of some type of unorganized substance or matter. This notion of creation ex nihilo was first proposed in writing by Theophilus of Antioch.

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He was the patriarch of Antioch between 169 and 182 AD. You can find his write-up on ex nihilo creation in his work to Audacillius. Theophilus' ideas were later than adopted by the church fathers as a tenant of Christian theology. It's telling that Theophilus comes to creation ex nihilo on his own via reason or philosophical invention. He never makes a single claim that

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creation ex nihilo was divinely revealed to him and this is in stark contrast to the ancients who across the globe reiterate that the knowledge of the cosmogony a creation born out of pre-existent matter Was revealed to human beings in the beginning It turns out that the ancients were truly on to something what's really interesting is that both the ancient creation story and modern science have converged and they give us reason to

20:01

genuinely question the late adoption of the ex nihilo model of creation. In Latin, the ancient depiction of the pre-creative state of the universe is a universe ex nihilo nihil fit, which means nothing comes from nothing, which means that the creation of the universe wasn't formed out of nothing. It was formed out of some type of eternal, unorganized,

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real matter. And interestingly between 1824 and 1912, three scientists, Sadie Carnot, Rudolf Clasius, and William Thompson, oh and there's a fourth one, Walther Nerst, established the fundamental laws of thermodynamics of which there are three. The first law of thermodynamics states quote, the total energy of an isolated system is constant.

20:59

Energy can be transformed from one form to another, but can be neither created nor destroyed. In other words, the total amount of energy in the universe never changes. No matter what, energy can't be created or destroyed. It can only change form. It might be a little difficult to wrap our brains around this idea, but it's been confirmed again and again by science.

21:28

which is made up of matter is eternal. It can't be destroyed. Albert Einstein demonstrated this tight relationship between energy and matter in his famous equation, $E = mc^2$ or energy equals mass times the speed of light squared when he showed that energy was a property of matter. And Einstein argued that the amount of energy and matter in the universe was fixed.

21:59

And what's more, recent scientific modeling suggests that matter and energy might be one and the same thing. Larry Silverberg, a professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering out of North Carolina State University, and his colleague, Jeffrey Eysen, Silverberg wrote

in December 2020, quote, “My colleague and I have described an updated way to think about matter. We propose that matter is not made of

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particle or waves as was long thought but more fundamentally that matter is made of fragments of energy and So far their models have been stunningly accurate. So according to the first law of thermodynamics Energy can't be created or destroyed. It's eternal and if we couple this with silverberg and Ishan's work Demonstrating that matter is made up of fragments of energy

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then we can say the same thing about matter, as you can say about energy. It can't be created or destroyed. It's eternal. Just like the ancients described, the primordial ocean, a sea of materia prima, raw material or first matter, a mass of unordered matter, best visualized as water or milk. For the life, it has the potential to bring forth.

23:25

One last scientific insight. Scientists have never been able to create anything ex nihilo. Not a thing. They've never been able to create something out of nothing. They can't do it. They have, however, been able to create matter out of light, which is extremely interesting. Basically, they use the RHIC, or relativistic heavy ion collider, and they slammed photons of light together.

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and pairs of electrons and positrons of matter were created. The Brookhaven National Laboratory, which conducted the research notes this, quote, this conversion of energetic light into matter is a direct consequence of Einstein's famous $E = mc^2$ equation, which states that energy and matter are interchangeable. Nuclear reactions in the sun and at the nuclear power plants regularly convert matter into energy.

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Now scientists have converted light energy directly into matter in a single step. So yes, it does look like it is possible to make matter, but it's extremely important to point out that the scientists didn't create matter. They manufactured matter and there's a huge difference. They manufactured matter out of something else, something that existed previous to it, light photons.

24:53

just like the ancients maintained. Creation today is only possible *ex nihilo nihil fit*. You can't make something out of nothing. You could only create something out of something, and that something is eternal. The ancients were really onto something, something that we are barely beginning to understand about creation and cosmology in the 21st century. Van der Sluis reiterates, quote, traditions of nothing.

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as the earliest state of the universe are far outnumbered by creation accounts that postulate the original existence of matter in some typically disorganized, undifferentiated, or undesirable form. The presentation of scientific evidence here demands a quick intermission. You know, religious individuals don't need to reject science. I for one don't. I love so many of the things I've learned through scientific investigation.

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I might reject the assumptions that underlie the scientific method, but I do not reject that science can and has illuminated my understanding of the natural world. I don't see a need to pit one against the other. However, I would argue that science is in its infancy and limited by available evidence, whereas God, the Supreme Being, is not. I'd argue that one day, if given enough time, the two would converge. For now, I believe God, the Supreme Being, is not.

26:18

keeps some things hidden from science so that faith can and has to be developed. Living in a temporal existence we may demand a cause for the existence of this said matter. So it may be difficult for us to wrap our heads around the possibility that matter has always existed, that it's fixed and can't be created or destroyed, that it's eternal. But we don't get very far if we go down this rabbit hole.

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Let's give it a whirl. If God created matter, then who or what created God? And if God was created by a God, then who or what created that God? You get the picture, it's an infinite regress. The answer to who created God will always take one back to an uncaused cause. In this temporal world, we demand to know it's causative agent. But as mind-bending as it might be, there is the possibility

27:17

that it has always existed, that matter and God or the supreme being have always existed, that nothing quote caused them to be. Philosopher William Free argued that there are really only two options either existence always existed or it's spontaneously emerged. In either case there is not a cause as unsettling as that is to we terrestrial types.

27:45

We are socialized in our temporal experience that A must precede B in time, and therefore everything must have a cause. But this expectation of and search for a cause is not necessarily a necessity, especially for a realm outside of the terrestrial that may well be atemporal or outside of time. In such a case, a causative agent for eternal matter or a supreme being would not be a necessity. All right.

28:15

Back to how the ancients used water to express three important characteristics of the precreative state. I'm gonna unravel the mysteries behind the primordial water here. The first, sized the precreative state as a state full of potential for life. The second, emphasize the precreative state as a state of abundant, chaotic, disorganized matter. Third, water as aquatic cosmology speaks to the much more profound motif

28:45

birth. This is really important in terms of the spiritual implications of aquatic symbolism. When a woman's water breaks, the physical birth of a child takes place. Water is the precursor to birth, be it the birth of the cosmos, the birth of the earth, the birth of a child, and as we'll see throughout these episodes, the birth of the spiritual being.

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we'll see that aquatic cosmology will serve as one of the most profound expressions, if not the expression par none of spiritual birth. So a recounting of the creation of the cosmos in the earth serves as a living template for the creation of the new man, one who has sloughed off the chaotic, confused, disordered life of the profane and is born anew. He or she is spiritually born.

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We can see clear examples between water, the primordial waters of creation and birth in the ancient record. The birth motif shows up in three contexts. First, we find ancient texts that refer to the primordial birth of the king or the gods out of the primordial waters. In Egypt, the primordial waters are referred to as new, in Mesopotamia as the Apsu and in ancient Israel as Tehom.

30:08

In ancient Egypt, one of the ancient Egyptian pyramid texts inscribed on King Pepe the First Pyramid, which is dated to around 2400 BC, Pyramid Text 486 speaks of the pre-mortal birth of King Pepe out of the primordial waters of New, and it reads, quote, I was born in New while the sky had not yet come into being, while the earth had not yet come into being.

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In this text, King Pepe I is declaring that his Ka, or spirit, as we pointed out in episode number 10, was born out of the primordial waters of Nu. For our purposes here, it illustrates this connection between the birth of the king's Ba, or spirit, and the primordial waters. If you're interested in learning more about this, check out episode number 10 where we go into it in greater detail. In Pyramid Text 669, also in King Pepe I, Pyramid

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We see the connection between the waters and the birth of the king's bar soul. And it reads, quote, "The waters that are in new have been formed "at the sound of the scream "of the mother of Pepe Neferkara, Newt, "when she gave birth to him "and the head-bound crown on Pepe Neferkara." In this text, we have reference to the primordial waters and the pains of the goddess Newt at the time of the primordial birth of her son, Pepe Neferkara.

31:34

whom from this text we read she crowned a pre-mortal king, which is really intriguing. The connection between the primordial waters and birth are clear here. In Mesopotamia, in the hymn to Nana, the Mesopotamian moon god, it reads, quote, oh, son of a prince, when you come out of the holy sea, you are resplendent. In this verse, the god Nana is born out of the holy sea.

32:03

or the Apsu, the primordial waters. And it's interesting that he's referred to here as resplendent after his birth from these waters. Keep this in your mind and we'll hit on it in a

couple of minutes. It continues telling us more of his resplendent nature. It says, quote, from the underground water Apsu, carrying a terrifying splendor, a luster, you raise your head toward your happy destiny. So here we have the same three motifs, the primordial waters,

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the King. These waters are clearly understood here as the source of life. In the Hebrew Bible, we see the connection between a primordial existence and the primordial waters in Proverbs chapter 8, starting with verse 22. Here King Solomon speaks of wisdom existing in the Lord and thus the Lord before the creation of the earth at the time of the quote

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face of the deep which is Tejom or the primordial waters and it reads the Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way before his works of old I was set up from everlasting from the beginning wherever the earth was when there were no depths I was brought forth when there were no fountains abounding with water before the mountains were settled before the hills was I brought forth while as yet had not made the earth nor the fields nor the highest part of the dust of the world

33:30

When he prepared the heavens, I was there. When he set a compass upon the earth, upon the face of the depth. Here, compass or circle may refer to God as the grand architect circling out the earth for creation. Or as Job seems to indicate, it could be God placing bounds around the primordial waters so the creation can take place. But in any case, you have the Lord here declaring that he was there at the time of the creation in the pre-existence of primordial.

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existence. In each of these cases, be they from Egypt, Mesopotamia, or the ancient Israelites, we see this association between the primordial waters and the pre-mortal birth of the king or a god like the Mesopotamian Nana or the Christian son of God, Christ. Second, we find ancient texts that refer to the birth of the earth, physical creation, out of the primordial waters.

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It's from these waters, as we pointed out in episode number 10, that the Egyptians, Mesopotamians and ancient Israelites attested that the physical earth was born or created. In an ancient Egyptian hymn dated to around 200 BC, it reads, quote, thou hast stood as king on the land during its lassitude. That was taken it out of the primeval waters. In Mesopotamia, in cuneiform tablet number 13,

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It tells of the god Marduk, how he creates the earth from his raft, which is situated on the Primordial waters. And it reads, quote, Marduk constructed a raft upon the face of the water, the grass, the rush of the marsh, the reed and the forest he created, the green herb of the field he created, the lands and the marshes and the swamps, orchards and forests. So again, here we have the earth born out of the op suit.

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primordial waters. In Genesis chapter 1, it is also out of these primordial waters, referred to in Hebrew like I mentioned as Tehom, that the earth was born. Genesis chapter 1 verses 2 and 9 read, quote, darkness was on the face of the deep and God said, let the dry land appear and it was so.

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Third, we find ancient texts that refer to the spiritual rebirth of the king or God and the primordial waters of creation. In these passages, we see the lines blur between the primordial waters and the primordial birth of the Ba, the physical birth of the earth, and spiritual rebirth of the king or aspirants. In most of these cases, the latter spiritual rebirth was the

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primary theological tenet the ancients were trying to stress because spiritual rebirth was the supernal doctrine taught in each of their respective traditions and Since as we've argued that these derived from one source the ancient tradition taught by God in the beginning This implies that spiritual rebirth was the supernal doctrine taught in the ancient tradition And here are a couple of examples

36:44

In Pyramid Text 607 which is translated by James P Allen it reads quote, New has given me birth on his left hand young and not yet experienced. He has saved me from the gods of

disorder. Dr. Popielska Grysbawska says this of this text quote, Passage through new or existence in new, Agur, which means heralded evolution of a being.

37:13

a change so vividly crucial in the progressive metamorphoses of the pharaoh. It seems obvious that immersion into primordial non-existence, which simultaneously was the beginning of every element of life, was indispensable to undergo a final metamorphosis into the creator atum, and hence assume a final form.

37:38

That is why the king comes back to the age of a child, young and inexperienced, but pure. Conforming to this conception, the deceased pharaoh reaches the places of new, and there he, the child of the creator, rejuvenates and consequently comes into being continually and eternally. So according to Pauplieska-Gerzybowska, the king must be immersed in the

38:07

in the pre-creative waters of new and be reborn as a child before he can take on the quote form of the god atum the waters of new symbolically represent the maternal waters of actual physical birth the amniotic fluid out of which all babies are physically born and nobody's born in adults we are born as infants who grow into adults

38:33

So the symbolism of the king passing through the primordial waters of new implies that the king must spiritually be reborn as a child before he can take on the attributes and quote form of the gods. The theme of spiritual rebirth is a quintessential feature of the ancient Egyptian religious tradition and we'll return to it in much greater detail in a future episode. We see a similar text in King Pepe's pyramid.

39:03

And it reads, quote, welcome my one of new, welcome our senior brother, first one of his father, first born of his mother, say the gods, for it is the sky who conceived him and the morning star gave him birth. So we see the rebirth symbolism in this passage in reference to new, the primordial waters, he is the one of new, but also in reference to the rise of the morning star, the dawn star.

39:33

And you can see the rebirth symbolism in both of those. In Mesopotamia, in the hymn to Nana, which I read earlier, we see the god Nana born in the primordial waters, but the language used here seems to emphasize spiritual rebirth. It reads, quote, “From the underground water, the Apsu, “carrying a terrifying splendor, a luster, “you raise your head toward your happy destiny.” Here,

40:01

when non arises from the primordial waters, his luster and splendor or glory is terrifying, suggesting that some type of spiritual rebirth or spiritual transformation has taken place by going into the Apsu, into the waters. And this is similar to King Pepe, the first becoming like Atum after he has been immersed in the waters of new. Among the ancient Hebrews,

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The most fascinating example involves the ancient patriarch Noah and the catastrophic global deluge that we know as the flood. In the flood story, it is the flood waters that immerse the earth, ridding it of the unrighteous. This is spiritual rebirth on a global scale. Comparative religion scholar, Mersi Aliyade said this of the flood, immersion in water and spiritual rebirth.

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Immersion is the equivalent at the human level of death and at the cosmic level of the cataclysm, the flood, which periodically dissolves the world into the primeval ocean. Breaking up all forms, doing away with all the past, water possesses the power to purify, purify and regenerate and give new birth for what is immersed in it dies and rising again from the water is like a child.

41:26

without any sin or any past able to receive a new revelation and begin a new and real life. When the floodwaters receded, the earth was born anew. Take a moment here and think, how do all of these same motifs of water and rebirth show up in Christianity?

41:51

If you thought of baptism, then you are well on your way to understanding some of the profound spiritual principles implied in aquatic symbolism. In the New Testament in John chapter 3 verse 5, we get this wonderful interaction between Jesus and Nicodemus, who was

a prominent Jewish leader and a member of the Sanhedrin, who are the religious authorities who made decisions on matters of Jewish law and governance.

42:18

In other words, Nicodemus was someone as a learned Jew who should have recognized the principles of rebirth. But in this story, it completely eludes him. In John chapter 3 verses 1 to 7, it reads, quote, there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. The same came to Jesus by night and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God.

42:46

for no man can do these miracles that thou does, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus says, saith unto him, how can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee,

43:14

except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee ye must be born again." So two really interesting things are happening in this passage. First, Nick Adhimas seems to have no knowledge or comprehension of the notion of spiritual rebirth.

43:43

He has no idea what Jesus means by being quote, born again. In a way, it's quite shocking that Nicodemus doesn't understand what Jesus means by this because spiritual rebirth was a prominent tenant of the ancient Hebrew and Israelite tradition, as we just noted with the flood story. So if anyone should have understood the principle of spiritual rebirth, it should have been Nicodemus. I mean, he served on the Sanhedrin as a Jewish religious authority, one who knew the law.

44:11

And this might have been part of the problem. It seems that through the supremacy and minutia of the law of Moses, that the doctrine of spiritual rebirth was somehow lost or replaced or overlooked to the extent that it was a foreign concept at this point to Nicodemus.

Second, Nicodemus seems to have no understanding of how spiritual rebirth is tied to being quote, born of water.

44:37

Jesus tells him to marvel not. So Nicodemus must have been a little bit confused. It seems Nicodemus needed a little time to think through the presence of water or amniotic fluid in physical birth and the symbolic use of water or baptism in spiritual rebirth. In this passage, Jesus is telling Nicodemus that unless he is born of water, unless he is baptized.

45:04

unless he participates in this holy rite, he can in no wise see the kingdom of God. Spiritual rebirth is essential. That's what Jesus is telling Nicodemus. Mercia Eliade says this of the connection between the primordial waters, which are the well spring from which life emerges, and baptism in the Christian tradition. He says, quote,

45:31

Baptism becomes the chief instrument of spiritual regeneration. For immersion in the water of baptism is equivalent to being buried with Christ. Know ye not, wrote Paul, that all we who are baptized in Christ Jesus are baptized in his death? Man dies symbolically with immersion and is reborn, purified, renewed.

45:59

just as Christ rose from the tomb. As a quick aside, the adherent would need to be fully submerged in the primordial waters, the waters of baptism for the symbolism to hold true, which we see when the earth was fully immersed in the flood waters and when Jesus was fully immersed during his baptism in the River Jordan, where we read in Matthew chapter three, verse 16, that, quote, Jesus, when he was baptized,

46:29

straight way out of the water. Important symbolic connections between physical birth and spiritual rebirth are completely lost if the baptism is not a baptism of full immersion. And this seems to have constituted an important characteristic of the original rite. There's so much here, layers and layers, which we'll have to defer to future episodes, but note that this symbolism implies

46:58

that the natural man's life remains forever broken, disorganized and formless unless he or she is born out of the primordial waters until he or she is born spiritually. One who has not been born spiritually remains perpetually uncreated in a state of confusion and chaos. Every creation then,

47:26

especially the new man, has a paradigmatic model in the creation of the universe itself. And that's kind of the big kicker. There's a lot to ponder here, which is precisely what sacred symbols are supposed to do to stimulate interior reflection, to cause us to meditate on the things of the greatest import. By pondering the creation of the cosmos, as was taught in the ancient tradition, we can glean invaluable knowledge.

47:54

about what is needed to move our own lives from a state of chaos to a state of creation. In summary, let's catalog a couple of tenets of the ancient tradition. First, within the ancient tradition, the creation. The creation of the cosmos, Earth, and life was assigned extraordinary importance. It was paramount. The ancients didn't shy away from addressing the greatest mystery in the world, how life came to be. And why?

48:23

Because it, the creation, sets the stage literally and symbolically for the understanding of everything else. It's that scaffolding I talked about in the last episode. Especially the scaffolding for teaching important spiritual principles and truths, like spiritual rebirth. The ancients placed the creation front and center. It's as if they knew that if human beings didn't understand how the cosmos, the earth, and life came to be, that we wouldn't have a correct understanding of anything else.

48:53

It all begins with the cosmogony or the creation of the cosmos and life itself. Second, within the ancient tradition, the pre-creative state is consistently presented as primordial waters. The ancients used water to symbolize, at a minimum, and there are likely many more reasons, three important aspects of the pre-creative state. Number one, water expressed that the pre-creative state had the potential to bring forth life.

49:23

like we see water do in the physical world. Two, churning or roiling water expressed that the precreative state was made up of an abundant, as abundant as a sea substance, which was without form, a substance that was chaotic and unorganized. Thus, an important tenant of the ancient tradition is that the cosmos were created out of preexisting eternal matter, a description that

49:52

fully complies with modern science. The ancient tradition rejects creation ex nihilo outright. Number three, water expressed the pre-creative state of much more than the physical universe. It was used by the ancients to symbolize the profound importance of birth, all types of birth, but especially spiritual birth. Thus, we expect to see spiritual birth play an extremely important role in the doctrine taught

50:22

within the theology of the ancient tradition. To this point, if you've been an astute listener, you'll notice that I never explained how life or how the cosmos came to be yet, only that they came to be out of symbolic primordial waters. For the answer to the central mystery of the world, how the cosmos, the earth, and life came to be, you'll have to tune into our next episode where I promise to reveal the answer.

50:50

If you're interested in learning more about the evidence presented in this episode, check out theancienttradition.com and search for this episode under evidence. That wraps up this edition of The Ancient Tradition. For now, remember in the words of William Shakespeare, knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven. I'm Jack Logan. I'll see you on the next episode of The Ancient Tradition.

51:19

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Episode #12 - The Word that Changed the Universe

<https://theancienttradition.com/12-the-word-that-changed-the-universe/>

00:00

Music

00:10

You're listening to The Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production. Music provided by Joseph McDade. He is your host, Dr. Jack Logan.

00:31

Welcome to the Ancient Tradition podcast. I'm your host, Jack Logan. Today's the day, the day we reveal the answer to the greatest mystery in the world, how life came to be. In this episode, we'll dive into the ancient record and unearth the catalyst that set the creation in motion. In the previous two episodes, we established

00:57

the ancients assigned exceptional importance to the creation, the creation of the cosmos and the earth. And what's interesting is that the ancients didn't begin their accounts of the creation with a description of the creation. Instead, the ancients began their creation accounts by describing what the cosmos looked like before the creation ever took place. We pointed out that Marinus van der Sluis, the world's expert on ancient cosmologies,

01:27

found that the ancients the world over described the primordial precreative state of the universe as a dark watery substance, which scholars today refer to as the primordial waters. In the previous episode, we established that the ancients didn't believe that the precreative state of the universe was made up of actual water. The ancients used water symbolically to describe the precreative state.

01:57

and why? Because water was an excellent way to convey many of the important characteristics of what the universe was like before the creation took place. Water was used to convey that the pre-creative state of the universe was made up of some sort of substance, a substance that filled the universe like water. In ancient Egypt, in Hermopolis, the ubiquitous nature of the primordial waters was represented by the god Haya, or Haya.

02:27

Hey-oo, whose name originally meant flood, and he personified the boundless indifferentiation or infinity. Hey represented that this pre-creative substance or matter that filled the universe was not only everywhere, it was without end, it was without bounds, it was infinite. It filled the expanse much like water.

02:54

And like water, this matter was undifferentiated. There was no form to it. So the ancients used water to symbolize that the precreative universe consisted of abundant chaotic elements that were teeming with the potential for life. In their precreative form, these elements were lifeless, dark and disorganized. And this is how the ancients across the globe almost uniformly describe what the universe was like before the creation.

03:24

took place. Interestingly, Richard M. Wilkinson, who wrote a seminal book on Egyptian gods and goddesses, wrote this of the god Hê. Hê was the personification of infinity, usually in the temporal sense of eternity. In hieroglyphic writing, the figure of Hê was used to denote a million. The god was thus associated with the idea of millions of years.

03:52

and is sometimes paired with a female deity, Hauhet, representing the alternative Egyptian word for eternity, jet. I didn't mention this in the previous episode, but did you catch that? The Egyptian god He represented not only the infinite nature of the primordial waters, but he and his female counterpart, Hauhet, also represented the eternal nature of the primordial waters, the...

04:21

unorganized elements that filled the universe before the creation. It's quite astounding that the ancient Egyptians understood this thousands and thousands of years before scientists like Sadi Carnot confirmed the laws of thermodynamics, which established that energy cannot be created or destroyed, only transferred or converted from one form to another. In other words, Sadi Carnot established that energy

04:50

is eternal. Couple this with Albert Einstein's famous formula $E = mc^2$ which states that matter and energy are the same thing just in different forms and voila scientists have come to the same conclusion as the ancient Egyptian god He that the matter that made up the primordial waters before the creation was in fact eternal matter. Matter that can neither be destroyed or

05:20

just astounding. This brings us to the greatest mystery of the world. How did the primordial water, that lifeless, dark, disorganized eternal matter, go from an inert, diffuse, formless state to the gorgeous blue marble we call planet Earth, to a planet filled with life, lush forests, exotic birds,

05:47

Crystal waterfalls, herds of antelope and gazelles and human beings, you and me. Well, although modern scientists don't yet know, the ancients did. And like I just mentioned, to this point, the ancients have been highly accurate. What they claimed about the primordial waters has been in complete conformity with what scientists have only recently learned. So.

06:16

The ancients just might be onto something here too, when they describe how life came to be. What the ancients have to say about how life came to be is pretty intriguing from both a spiritual and a scientific point of view. Now, considering the number of ancient cultures, the wide geographical expanses between peoples, the centuries between the accounts, we would expect to find vastly different explanations for the emergence of life among the ancient peoples.

06:45

but we just don't find that. Van der Schluycck found that the ancients sang one song and he writes, quote, "It emerges that people of all creeds and colors have sustained surprisingly similar notions about the origin of the cosmos." So before I reveal what that song was, it's important to take a moment and think about how important the answer to this question really is.

07:13

Not only should the answer explain how the earth was created, but the answer of how can also give us insight into why the earth was created and ultimately why you and I were

created. That makes the creation of the earth a pretty important process to understand, because if we get it wrong, then we misunderstand our entire existence. So let's jump in. According to the

07:42

emerge? Well in simplified terms, van der sluess found that pretty much all of the ancients explained the transformation of eternal disorganized matter, those primordial waters, into life in pretty much the same way. Through the power of a supreme being. A supremely intelligent being who had full knowledge of how the universe worked and used his knowledge to act upon

08:10

or organize the formless matter into a beautiful creation, a world full of life. This idea is not as out there as many would have you believe. If you go back to my Lego analogy from the previous episode, you might imagine a primordial sea of Lego blocks dumped all over the living room floor. They're brimming with possibilities, but nothing is built. All of the building blocks are there, but nothing is formed. And if we use the ancients creation account,

08:40

the supreme being then acts upon the Lego blocks, organizing the blocks into a beautiful creation. And we see this same idea of acting upon or transforming materials that already exist in the ancient Egyptian Heliopolis cosmogony. Famed Egyptologist Jan Asman notes, quote, in the context of the Heliopolis cosmogony, the central term is not to create.

09:10

in Egyptian, which is JRJ, to do, to create, to produce. But kepper, to become, to shape, kepper refers to the ideas of transformation. We see this process take place every day. When the techs in China take different elements and organize them together and out of them, they produce an iPhone, or when a chef takes

09:39

a lot of different elements and mixes them together and produces a gorgeous cake. The techs and the chefs have knowledge of how to organize and mix the elements so that they will produce the desired product. A key difference between a supreme being and the techs and chefs is that the supreme being or God is light years more advanced intellectually and

spiritually than we are. The ancients contended that God acquired the knowledge necessary to create life.

10:08

used that knowledge to act upon the elements and thereby produce life. I've never quite figured out why modern scientists reject this possibility other than perhaps pure hubris. It's unfathomable to them that anybody could acquire more knowledge than they have. But all you have to do is look around and see that the acquisition of knowledge is a huge component of personal growth. We send our kids to school for years.

10:36

with the precise objective that they acquire greater and greater knowledge. And we hope that that knowledge will give them greater and greater power to create their own lives. The problem with modern scholars is that they arbitrarily cap the acquisition of knowledge. They basically contend that no human being could ever acquire knowledge to the point that they could create life or create a world. Yet, ironically,

11:05

There are scientists every day who are trying to do just that, acquire the knowledge necessary to create life, just like I pointed out in episode number 10. So although these scientists reject the notion that a supreme being created life, they themselves are seeking knowledge that would allow them to do the exact same thing, create life. The duplicity of modern scientists here should not be lost on anyone.

11:33

If these scientists think that they can create life, what makes them think a supreme being couldn't create life? Hubris is the only explanation I can think of. And I wonder sometimes if they reject the notion that God created life because God beat them to it. So how did the ancients describe the process of God acting upon the primordial elements, the primordial waters?

11:59

Well, when we dive into the ancient cosmogonies, we see that the ancients used a variety of metaphors to express God acting upon the primordial elements. These included things like their voice, name, thought, breath, wind, secretion, touch, and sometimes by co-creators or

companions. And this divine action resulted in the creation of life, the cosmos, and the earth.

12:29

didn't stray from this account. They didn't mince words. They universally attributed the creation to intentional, intelligent, powerful actions taken by a supreme being. Of the many metaphors used by the ancients to describe how God acted upon the primordial elements, transforming them from a lifeless, formless state to creation full of life, one stands out for its

12:57

really pretty intriguing implications and for the considerable frequency for which it shows up kind of all over the globe. And this is creation by divine utterance. Sometimes it's referred to as divine speech, the word, the tongue, divine fiat, the spoken word, creative utterance, creative words, all along those lines. I find this pretty fascinating. How did God do this?

13:26

How did he create the earth through words? I find this intriguing because this is not something that we would really predict that the ancients would think of if they were coming up with this stuff on their own. I could see how the ancients could conceive of a Potter type God, one who molded or fashioned man out of clay. But to create through divine utterance seems to be a concept outside of rudimentary thinking. So let's dive into the ancient record and see what we can learn.

13:54

Let's begin with some of the oldest accounts and then we'll work our way forward. This means that naturally then we're going to start in ancient Egypt. Over the 3000 year history of the ancient Egyptians, four general creation accounts developed, which were essentially different versions of the same basic mythic cycle of creation. One of these accounts is known as the Memphite creation story.

14:21

and it contains one of the earliest known references to creation by divine utterance. Most of what we know about the Memphite creation account comes from a remarkable artifact known as the Chebacca Stone. So I told you I was gonna tell you a little bit about some of

these fun artifacts. So here's a little bit of background on the Chebacca Stone. In 1836, a French Egyptologist named Francois Xavier Joseph Drose

14:49

was conducting excavations at the site of the ancient Egyptian city of Memphis, which today is located near modern-day Cairo. Memphis was once a prominent city in ancient Egypt, and it served as the capital during the Old Kingdom period. During his excavations, Drose uncovered the ruins of the Temple of Ptah, an important religious complex that had been dedicated to the god Ptah, and this god was highly revered in Memphis.

15:18

The temple had fallen into disrepair, and while he's going through the rubble, Drose stumbles upon a large slab of black basalt. It looked like a millstone. If you look at it, it looks like a millstone, but as he looked closer and closer, he noticed that it had this intricate inscription. Today, this stone is known as the Shabaka Stone, and it dates to around the 25th dynasty, to the reign of King Shabaka.

15:45

King Shabaka ruled in Egypt between 705 and 690 BC, and he ruled as the third king of the 25th dynasty. Scholars have dated the stone to 710 BC, but the stone's introduction says that it was a copy or had been copied from a worm-ridden papyrus that had been found in the great temple of Patah in Memphis. Now, Memphis was founded

16:15

at the very beginning of dynastic Egypt around 2925 BCE, so 3000 years before Christ. Because the Shabaka Stone was a copy of a record that had been kept in Memphis, there's scholars, like a scholar by the name of Homer W. Smith, who calls the Shabaka Stone, quote, the oldest written record of human thought. Not all scholars agree with him. But a lot of prominent Egyptologists have.

16:43

dated the original document from which the Shabaka stone came to sometime in the Old Kingdom because Linguistically its language is similar to the language that was used in the pyramid texts that are dated to the fifth dynasty More modern-day scholars. They don't date it quite back that far The stone was given to the British Museum in London and it's there

still today You can find it tucked away in the north end of room number four among the Egyptian artifacts

17:13

It was housed in the British Museum for nearly a hundred years before American Egyptologist James Breasted in 1901 began the painstaking process of trying to decipher it. And it took a while and a lot of other scholars had to help. The stone contains the King's Titulary, a story of the unification of upper and lower Egypt and the Memphite creation account, which is known as

17:39

the Memphite theology of which we're interested in here. If you're interested in listening to a full audio recording of the Shabbat Kaston, you can find it on our sister podcast, the Ancient Tradition Audio Rit. And you can find it any place you get your podcasts. In this creation account, Ptah, the Memphite God of creation, first thinks of what he wants to create in his heart. See, Egyptians didn't understand the brain, so thinking was assigned to the heart.

18:08

then he speaks what is thought in his heart and it comes into existence. It reads, and this is directly from the Shabaka Stone, quote, there took shape in the heart, there took shape on the tongue of the form of Atum, for the very great one is Ptah, who gave life to all the gods and their cause through his heart and through his tongue, in which Horus had taken shape as Ptah, in which Thoth had taken shape as Ptah.

18:36

So in this passage, Ptah thinks of the gods Atum, Thoris, and Thoth in his heart, and then he speaks their form into existence. And according to this passage, Ptah gives form, shape, and life to the gods. He creates the gods. In the next passage, Ptah, by way of his heart and use of his tongue to speak,

19:00

He commands into creation everything, all gods, all men, all cattle, just everything. It reads quote, Thus heart and tongue rule over all the limbs in accordance with the teaching that he, Ptah, is in every body and Ptah is in every mouth of all gods, all men, all cattle, all creeping things, whatever lives.

19:25

thinking whatever he wishes and commanding whatever he wishes. So a couple of interesting things are going on in this passage. First, as we noted, Pata has the power to bring about the creation of anything he thinks of in his heart, which suggests an intellectual creation takes place first, and then he speaks that into creation by his tongue, the physical creation.

19:52

I don't want to stop here though. We can't glaze over the other really, really important and super intriguing points that are being made in this passage about creation through divine utterance. Let me read the first line one more time to see if you can catch what the ancient Egyptians are teaching here. It says, quote, "Thus heart and tongue rule over all the limbs in accordance with the teaching that Ptah is in every body." Wow.

20:21

What does that mean? So here we learn that Patah has the ability to quote, rule over all the limbs. And rule as we know is associated with dominion and power and authority. So in this passage, we learn that Patah exerts his authority over quote, all the limbs or all matter through his heart, his mind and tongue.

20:49

through speech. He uses his heart and tongue to exercise his dominion or rule over matter. Do you get what this is saying? It's saying that matter, which from the creation myth can be organized or disorganized, responds to God's commands. Matter responds to God's authority. Okay, so wait a minute. Wait just a minute. This is a little mind blowing.

21:18

First, this suggests that matter has an ability to respond to God's rule. That's mind blowing enough, but it also suggests that it will respond to God's rule. The elements will obey God's will. But why? Why would matter respond to God's commands or voice? Well, for the answer to that question, we need to read the passage one more time and see if you can catch it. It reads, quote,

21:48

Thus heart and tongue rule over all the limbs in accordance with the teaching that Ptah is in everybody. Okay so from this passage it's apparent that the ancient Egyptians in Memphis taught that part of Ptah's essence or spirit or something was in everything. The passage here couldn't be more clear. I'll read the whole thing one more time.

22:18

heart and tongue rule over all the limbs in accordance with the teaching that Bata'a is in everybody and Bata'a is in every mouth of all gods, all men, all cattle, all creeping things, whatever lives. This passage tells us that the reason that the elements respond to God's commands, his divine utterance, is because part of God is in them, in everybody.

22:47

part of God is in everything. And I have a sneaking suspicion that whatever part of God is in all things is somehow related to light. But I'll save that for our next episode. I wanna share one more passage from the Shabbatka stone, which gives us a little more insight into creation through divine utterance or the tongue. And it reads, quote, the in need a group of nine gods is the teeth

23:15

lips in this mouth which pronounced the name of everything from which Shu and Tefnut came forth." Alright so in this passage it appears that Ptah creates at least in part by pronouncing the name of what is to be created. Keep in mind that in the ancient Near East objects and especially people were given names that captured their true essence.

23:44

It seems as though God assigns a name to match the true essence of what he's thought in his heart, then utters the name, which calls it into being. It's almost like the elements respond to God's command by organizing into the essence of the name that God utters. Dr. Abdao of Sadat City University says of Memphite creative utterance, the object becomes real with its identity when being named.

24:14

What originated in the heart is only completed by being given their names, since the names appeal their reality or their identity. We see a passage similar to this in the Coffin Texts, which read, who, which represents lips or creative command, and Sia, which represents the heart or intelligence, said to him, come then, let us go and create the names of this coil.

24:43

According to what comes from his heart and I think in this passage coil refers to a rope The understood power of the spoken word was ubiquitous in ancient Egypt The ancient Egyptian pyramid texts themselves are organized according to utterances because they needed to be spoken out loud to make them efficacious According to dr. Abdao quote the ancient Egyptians believed that uttering from the mouth had power uttering or the articulation of the word had

25:13

power. Saying it was considered like the power of doing the action. Saying it had the exact same effect as doing it. Uttering a speech achieves the action stated. We find a similar reference to creative utterance in a hymn to Amun-Rei which dates to about 1400 BC and it reads and this is speaking of Amun-Rei as a creator. Quote.

25:40

You have started to create this land to establish what has come from your mouth. We find another example from the tomb of the high priest Nebuen Eneth dating from the first half of the 13th century. And it reads quote, who created heaven and earth and gave birth to human beings who brought forth all that is through the utterance of his mouth who spoke and it happened who gave birth to what exists.

26:09

It was his tongue that formed everything he created. Let's move to ancient Mesopotamia. In ancient Mesopotamia, we don't have a lot of direct references to creation by divine utterance, but we do have some good hints, which imply a connection between creation, words, and names. For example, if we look at the very beginning of the Babylonian creation myth, the Enuma Elish, we read,

26:38

quote, when in the height heaven was not named and the earth beneath did not yet bear a name and the primeval Apsu who begat them. So here we see that in the beginning existed the primeval waters, the Apsu, but at this time that there was no name for heaven and there was no name for earth. They did not exist without a name, much like what was suggested in ancient Egypt.

27:07

The passage proceeds, quote, and chaos Tiamat, the mother of them both, their waters were mingled together and no field was formed, no marsh was to be seen. One of the gods, none had been called into being and none bore a name. So again, here during the pre-creative state of the universe, the pre-mortal waters of Tiamat and Apsu mingled, but nothing had yet been created, not even the gods.

27:37

because they had not yet been named. And it continues, quote, then were created the gods in the midst of heaven. Lamu and Lahamu were called into being. So here the gods are called into being and given names. Lamu and Lahamu seems like a pretty clear reference to creation by divine utterance.

28:04

If you're interested in listening to the full audio recording of the Babylonian creation myth, the *Enuma alish*, you can find it also on our sister podcast, the ancient tradition audio writ. Now let's turn to the ancient Hebrew tradition creation by word or divine command is the prominent creative act in the Bible. If we look at Genesis chapter one verses three, six and nine, it reads quote, and God said, let there be like.

28:33

and there was light. And God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters. And God said, let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place and let the dry land appear. And it was so. In this passage, God verbally commands the creation to appear each time uttering, let there be, let there be.

28:59

And in each instance, a feature of the creation appears and obeys his verbal command. The God of the Old Testament continues to command the waters of the deep to take shape. And the waters or the *prima materia*, the raw material of the primordial waters, abide by his commands and take shape as light or firmament, seas, grass, fruit, trees, et cetera. Just like what we saw.

29:28

ancient Egypt. In Genesis chapter 1 we also find the creation associated with naming. Verse 5 reads, quote, and God called the light day and the darkness he called night. In verse 8, and God called the firmament heaven. Verse 10, and God called the dry land earth.

29:55

Names and naming in the ancient tradition are incredibly important and we'll dedicate a couple of episodes to this down the line. Suffice it to say here that names seem to be an incredibly important facet of the creation process. The connection between the creation process and naming gets even more interesting when we read Genesis chapter 2 verses 19 and 20 where God gives Adam the privilege of naming every living creature and it reads, quote,

30:25

And out of the ground, the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them. And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle and to the fowl of the air and to every beast of the field. What's going on in these verses is quite striking because

30:54

Here we have God giving Adam the power and authority to name, which appears from all the cases we've covered to this point to be a salient feature of the creation process. In chapter one, verses five, eight and 10, it's only God who had the privilege to name the night and day and the heaven and earth. So for God to give Adam the authority to name suggests that Adam was in some way a co-creator in the creation process.

31:23

For Adam to be able to do this, he had to have had the ability to discern their true essence. Dr. Michael E. Stone, who's a professor emeritus of comparative religion at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, quotes a fifth century author, Elise, who notes, quote, Those who are without names are reckoned with the uncreated, as though the created come from the uncreated through that.

31:52

receiving names. Here the creative dimension of naming is made very explicit. Adam can name true names which is an act of creation. Adam gave names which means he created and because he created he was a companion or partner of God in creation. Consequently he was Lord of the creatures he named and had

32:23

And then Dr. Stone makes an interesting spiritual connection. He notes, quote, Adam gave names just as a priest gives names in the baptismal font. Baptism is rebirth, so here again, the theme of creation and re-creation reoccurs. Here we are back to the parallels of the birth of the earth of the primordial waters and naming and the rebirth of the spiritual.

32:51

coming out of the waters of baptism and a new name taking on the name of Christ. We can see here why the ancients placed so much importance on the creation because it served as a prototype for spiritual creation. And think of all the times in the Judeo-Christian scriptures where God calls people by name. If you look at John chapter one, verse 42, when he is first introduced to Simon Peter, and it reads, quote,

33:21

And when Jesus beheld him, he said, “Thou art Simon, the son of Jonah.” Okay, we can also find a couple more verses in the Bible, verses six and nine of Psalm 33, also attest to creation by divine utterance. We read, quote, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, “for he spake and it was done. “He commanded and it stood.’

33:50

fast. In these verses we see the same thing attested to in the Shabbakka stone, that the elements respond to and obey the authority of God, taking shape according to His command. The connection between creation and divine speech of the word is especially prominent in the Christian tradition in the New Testament in John chapters 1, 1 to 4, and maybe some of you have already thought of this before we got to it.

34:19

But John chapter one verses one to four read quote, in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life and the life was the light of men.

34:43

These verses are absolutely loaded with amazing stuff. And there’s no way I could address all of it here. But I wanna point out that the phrase, quote, in the beginning marks the beginning of the creation process, the time of creation. In this first God is directly associated

with divine utterance. He's referred to here as the word, or in the original Greek, the logos. In this passage, we have the beginning, the time of the primordial waters.

35:14

God as the Creator and the Word or divine utterance. All the same things that we see in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Here God as the Word is the agent of creation. What's really intriguing in these verses is that Word in the King James Version is capitalized. Word is used as a proper noun. It's a name. It's a name for God.

35:43

It says, and the word was God. So could it be that God used the authority of his personal name to command the elements to organize themselves into the earth? Is that what God uttered as a way to act upon the elements? Now, I don't know, but from other things I've read and things I'll bring up as the podcast continues, it sure seems to point in that direction.

36:12

Before I leave John chapter one, I also want to point out in the last line of verse four, here we have a connection to the creation of life and light. It reads, quote, In him was life and the life was the light of men. Remember earlier in this episode when I said that I thought light was connected to the creation process? Well, here's another reason to suspect that this is the case.

36:42

In the next verse, in verse five, we see how John relates the light of men back to the lighting of the dark primordial waters. And John chapter one verse five says, quote, and the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not. So it seems like John wants to emphasize how God's word initiated the creation, brought about the cosmos, brought light to the dark waters.

37:11

But then he implies that God's word, his divine utterance, does the same thing for human beings, brings us out of darkness into spiritual light. And in verses 12 and 13, John ties the creation directly to spiritual rebirth. He says this of Christ's spiritual creative power, quote, but as many as received him, to them gave he power.

37:40

to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which was born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” These verses are very interesting because John is teaching that the same mechanism, divine utterance, the word, the name, that led to the creation of life in the universe

38:10

also leads to the creation of the new man, the reborn spiritual man. All right, we’re going to switch to the Quran. Hopefully I gave you enough to really ponder and think upon there. We also find creation by divine utterance in the Quran. In Quran 2 117 reads, quote, the originator of the heavens and the earth, when he decrees a matter, he only says to it, be.

38:39

it is. In this passage God’s creative power is concentrated in a single word be and in Arabic that word is koun which means be or exist. We see divine utterance in the Hindu tradition as well among the Hindu the word om and lots of you out there probably have heard this you beat your little index finger in your thumb together and om

39:06

This is the sonic representation of the divine and is said to be the essence of the supreme absolute. It first shows up in the Upanishads, which eventually became the basis for Hindu philosophy and is connected with the cosmic sound. Om is the first sound that was produced at the time of creation. And through this sound, God created the universe. It is the most sacred of all words.

39:36

The Mandukyo Upanishad opens with quote, Aum, this syllable is this world. In the Ramayana, it reads, referring to Rama, who is a Hindu deity, it says quote, you are the mystic syllable Aum. You are higher than the highest. People neither know your end nor your origin or who you are in reality. You appear in all created beings in the cattle and in the Brahmanas.

40:04

You exist in all quarters in the sky, in mountains, and in rivers. This is very interesting. In the yoga Sutra, it says, quote, his word is Om. If we move to the Popal Vuh, which Mursi

Aliyat calls, quote, the most important surviving work of Mayan literature and contains the Mayan creation account. And it reads speaking of the primordial waters, quote,

40:32

Whatever might be is simply not there. Only murmurs, ripples in the dark in the night. Only the maker, modeler alone. Sovereign plumed serpent, the bearers, begaters are in the water, a glittering light. They are there, they are enclosed in quetzal feathers and blue-green. And then came his word. He came here to the sovereign plumed serpent, here in the blackness in the early dawn. He spoke with the sovereign plumed serpent and they talked.

41:02

than they thought. And then the earth arose because of them. It was simply their word that brought it forth. For the forming of the earth, they said, Earth. It arose suddenly, just like a cloud, like a mist, now forming now, unfolding. Pretty great stuff. Among the Maori people of New Zealand, Io is the supreme being.

41:30

And this comes from the Maori account of creation. And this is what it says. Io dwelt within the breathing space of immensity. The universe was in darkness with water everywhere. There was no glimmer of dawn, no clearness, no light. And he began by saying these words that he might cease remaining inactive. Darkness become a light possessing darkness and at once light.

42:00

He then repeated those self same words in this manner. A Maori elder noted quote, the words of Io, the supreme God became impressed on the minds of our ancestors. And by them were they transmitted down through generations. Our priest joyously referred to them as being the ancient and original sayings, the ancient and original words.

42:28

the ancient and original cosmological wisdom, way Nanga, which caused growth from the void, the birth given evolved earth. Interestingly, the Maori then use these words in their sacred rituals. And they say, quote, the words by which Io fashioned the universe, that is to say by which it was implanted and caused to produce a world of light.

42:57

The same words are used in the ritual for implanting a child in a barren womb. The words by which Io caused light to shine in the darkness are used in the rituals for cheering a gloomy and despondent heart. The words used by Io are used to overcome and dispel darkness.

43:22

I don't know about you, but I'm seeing some parallels here to John chapter one, one to four and the rest of the chapter that is saying basically the same idea that there's a light very similar to what lit for the cosmos, which also leads to spiritual rebirth. These words that are used to bring about physical birth and spiritual birth. Let me give you one last example of the Hopi Indian tradition of Northeastern Arizona. In this creation story, the birth goddess Spider Woman.

43:51

and the sun god Tawa, translate their creative thoughts into a creation song. And note how like with Pata'a in Egypt, the creation first starts with a thought and then the thought is given utterance. Quote, Spider-woman and Tawa had this sacred thought, which was of placing the world between the up and down within the four quarters in the void that was the eternal waters.

44:20

The thought became the first song. Father of all, life and light I am, sing Tawa. Mother of all, receiver of light and weaver of life I am, sing Spider Woman. My thought is of creatures that fly in the up and run in the down and swim in the eternal waters, sing the God. May the thought live, intoned Spider Woman, and she formed it of clay.

44:48

Together the first gods placed a sacred blanket over the new beings and chanted the song of life. The beings stirred into life. Now this is from, you know, Native Americans, Hopi Indians in Arizona, but you're seeing all of the same motifs. We're seeing eternal waters, we're seeing light and life coming out of these eternal waters, thought, and then a song. It's pretty mind boggling.

45:15

obvious that there are cultural variations in these sacred creation stories, but it's also clear that they share important core elements that point to a common heritage, a heritage which

we refer to here as the ancient tradition. Although we didn't fully explain in this episode how life came to be, we've definitely covered a few tantalizing clues. In our next episode, we'll continue our investigation into the ancient record and see if we can uncover the connection between the

45:45

the supreme being, divine utterance, and the creation of life, and the mechanism by which God's utterance brought about life. And you can bet it has something to do with light. That wraps up this edition of the ancient tradition. In the words of William Shakespeare, knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven. I'm Jack Logan.

46:11

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Episode #13 - The Incomprehensible Brooding Wind

<https://theancienttradition.com/13-the-incomprehensible-brooding-wind/>

00:00

Music

00:10

You're listening to The Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production. Music provided by Joseph McDade. He is your host, Dr. Jack Logan.

00:29

Welcome to The Ancient Tradition. I'm your host, Jack Logan. If you're a new listener, we welcome you to the program. Glad to have you listening in. If you're a regular listener, of course we're glad to have you back. Today's episode is the incomprehensible brooding wind. It's gonna take a bit for me to set the stage for this episode, but stick with me because there's some really great stuff towards the end. For our new listeners, the objective of this podcast, The Ancient Tradition,

00:58

is to dig around in the ancient record and to dig through the world's oldest religious texts and myths, legends, liturgies, artifacts, symbols, to see if we can't reconstruct the theology of the original religious tradition imparted to human beings in the very beginning. The religious tradition that the ancients universally claim was taught directly to human beings by God.

01:27

In this podcast, we refer to this primordial religious tradition as the ancient tradition. In the past two episodes, episode number 11 and number 12, the mysterious primordial waters and the word that changed the universe, we established that the creation played a very, very important role in the overarching theology taught in the ancient tradition. And of course, this raises a question, why? Why did the ancients place?

01:55

so much importance on the creation of the physical universe. Well, I can think of a number of reasons why. For starters, if we don't have a correct understanding of the physical creation, we won't have a correct understanding of pretty much anything else. If the creation happened by chance, then there's no real purpose to our existence. We just exist by chance. If the physical creation as the ancients attest was created by a sub...

02:25

being, well then that changes a lot of things. It suggests that God had a divine purpose in creating the physical world and a divine purpose in creating you and me, which suggests that there must be a divine purpose to our lives, a purpose for us being here. The theology of the ancient tradition tackles this purpose of life head-on and trust me, it does not disappoint.

02:51

This doctrine of the purpose of life, as I've mentioned a couple of times in the podcast, is theologically rich and it's beyond what most of us could ever imagine. But we'll have to save that for a future episode because it's not today's topic. So stay tuned. The ancients emphasize the creation of the physical world, not only for what I just mentioned, but because it provided the perfect template to teach human beings about the process of

03:21

creation but not just the process of the creation of the physical world. The ancients used the creation to teach the process of spiritual creation, the creation of the new man, the process of spiritual rebirth. And this was particularly evident in our in the previous episode, in episode number 11, the mysterious primordial waters. When we examined the symbolic parallels

03:51

the birth of the earth out of the primordial waters of creation, and the birth of the new man out of the waters of baptism in the Judeo-Christian tradition. We find similar parallels among many ancient purification rites, like the Pharaoh washing each morning in the symbolic waters of new, the primordial waters, which were represented by an artificial lake. From what we can surmise,

04:19

God used a tangible object, the creation of the physical world, something human beings could readily wrap their heads around, and used it to symbolize the process of intangible spiritual creation, something that human beings, because of its spiritual nature, couldn't readily be understood. As I've mentioned a couple of times, this is the purpose of true religious symbols, the use of a tangible object like a seed, a tree,

04:49

salt, candles, water birds, whatever, to symbolize and teach intangible spiritual principles, processes and doctrines. From the very start, it looks like symbols seem to have been used as a primary teaching tool within the ancient tradition. And this really should come as no surprise because without symbols, human beings would have really no idea what God was talking about since

05:17

spiritual things by definition are outside of the realm of empirical sensory knowledge. With symbols, however, human beings can be pointed in the right direction. We can get the gist of what spiritual reality might be like or how spiritual progress might take place until they actually do directly experience that spiritual reality for themselves. And once they do,

05:43

then they'll have to use those symbols themselves to convey that spiritual reality to others who have not yet experienced it. So as such, symbols play an absolutely critical role in the

teaching of spiritual things. In today's episode, as we examine the physical creation in further detail, see if you can't think of ways the physical creation is used to teach about or symbolize spiritual creation or spiritual rebirth.

06:12

In particular, see if you can think of ways religious rituals are used, even today, that echo the process of the physical creation. My main goal in these episodes on the physical creation is to extrapolate from the ancient record the primary themes or what I would call the doctrines of the creation that were taught in the ancient tradition. I kind of want to see if we can figure out what they taught, what was believed. So we're going to look at the doctrines that come up time and time again in the ancient record.

06:42

that we can trace all the way back to deep antiquity. So for ease of reference, I'm gonna refer to these doctrines as the pillars of creation. The first pillar of creation found in the ancient record is number one, that the doctrine that the pre-creative state of the universe was dark and literally brimming with an infinite sea of lifeless, disorganized elements, pre-creative elements that were teeming with potential for life. Egyptologist Richard H.

07:11

Wilkinson wrote, quote, these original elements were believed to be inert, yet to contain the potential for creation. The notion of an empty pre creative universe of nothingness is completely foreign to the ancient tradition. The ancients taught the pre creative universe was literally overflowing like water with materia prima, the raw materials are first matter needed for creation.

07:40

If you haven't listened to episode number 11, the mysterious primordial waters where we cover this first pillar of creation, it's really worth a listen and you can find it wherever you get your podcasts. In episode number 12, the word that changed the universe, we covered another pillar of creation, the doctrine that God initiated the physical creation by the words of his mouth through divine utterance or command.

08:09

According to the ancient record, this seems to actually be the third pillar, which means I need to kind of backtrack just a little bit because we need to talk about the second pillar. So

today I'm gonna rectify that and we're gonna cover the second pillar of creation, the brooding wind of life, or as I've coined it, the incomprehensible brooding wind. Today I'm gonna start with the Judeo-Christian tradition and then I'm gonna work backwards for a little bit.

08:37

And I'm gonna do this because I found that the original Hebrew words used in the Bible actually helped clarify for me what I was reading in the ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian records. So let's start with Genesis chapter one, verse two, which reads, quote, and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

09:07

In this verse, we have the first pillar of creation. We've got the dark primordial waters or the sea of raw materials. And then we're introduced into the second pillar, the spirit of God moving on the waters. All right, I wanna talk about the phrase, the spirit of God here. Many people interpret this as the Holy Ghost moving upon the waters. But I'm gonna respectfully challenge this interpretation.

09:35

And to do this, we need to take a look at the original Hebrew. The translators of the King James Version of the Bible translated the Hebrew word Ruah, R-U-A-H, Ruah, as the spirit. The Cambridge Bible for schools and colleges says this of the word Ruah. In this verse, it says, quote, the word for wind. Hebrew Ruah.

10:00

was accepted as the most suitable term to express the invisible agency of God. In consequence, it is sometimes difficult to decide whether the word is used literally in its meaning of wind or breath, or metaphorically in its meaning of spirit, as the symbol of the invisible operation and influence of the Almighty. Okay, a couple of things here. First, the Hebrew word Ruwah, which is one word.

10:29

can represent in English three discrete concepts, wind, breath, and spirit. So when translating the Bibles, the translators had to do the best they could to translate Ruah, depending on the context of the passage into one of these three English words. But keep in

mind that among the Hebrews, these concepts were somewhat interchangeable and ultimately represented divine power, a power similar or akin to wind.

10:58

or having the life-giving potentiality of breath. Interestingly, the Cambridge Bible commentators say this of this passage, quote, the student should be warned against identifying this expression with the Holy Ghost in Christian doctrine. In other words, the commentators were concerned that the Holy Ghost might not be the correct interpretation of what's going on in this passage. Dr. Harry M. Olenky,

11:27

who wrote an entire paper on Genesis chapter one verse two in the Jewish quarterly review He argues that the best translation of ruah here is not spirit of god but wind of god In the paper he argued that the english translators translated ruah as Spirit as the result of hellenistic influences See the problem with translating ruah as spirit

11:55

suggests to most Christians that it was the Holy Ghost that brooded upon the waters. And this just may not be the case, as you'll see in a minute. If we look at Ellicott's commentary for English readers, it says this of this passage, quote, When then creation is ascribed to the wind, as we see in Job 26.13 and Psalm 104.30, we justly see not the mere instrumental force employed, but rather the divine operative

12:24

energy which resides especially in the third person of the Holy Trinity. But we must be upon our guard against the common error of commentators who read into the text of these most ancient documents perfect doctrines which were not revealed in their fullness until the gospel was given. So here too we have the Ellicott commentators concerned that this passage might not be referring

12:53

but as some other form of divine power. And I agree, and I'll explain why in just a minute, but keep in mind here that the ancient Hebrews used only one word to link the temporal symbol, wind, to its spiritual counterpart, divine power. In the ancient Hebrew mind, which was Ruah, by the way, in the ancient Hebrew mind, the link between wind and divine power didn't need to be explained, it was one word.

13:21

Everybody understood that the wind was the temporal symbol par excellence for the characteristics of divine power. And then this is where we get into some of the symbolism. Listen to, we can see some of the symbolism between this divine power and wind, because just like the wind, the divine power was invisible. And it worked in ways that were unseen to the human eye. Like the wind, the results of the divine power could be seen or felt.

13:49

just like the ruffling of leaves when the wind blows through the trees, even though the power itself could not be seen. Like the wind, the divine power had the ability to produce life. Like when the wind spreads seeds across the field, like the wind, the divine power was a powerful force. It had the ability to destroy kind of like a hurricane or tornado. Like the wind, the divine power is not

14:16

subject to the control of human beings. It was controlled by God and it was used at will. Like the wind, the divine power could come suddenly and seemingly out of nowhere. And like the wind, the divine power could lift or ascend one up to the divine presence like a bird riding a current in the sky. See wind or Ru'ah in this passage is being used symbolically.

14:46

to represent something spiritual. So in this case, I'm arguing that the wind here represents divine power, God's power, which is sometimes referred to as priesthood power. And again, I'll explain in a couple of minutes why I've come to this interpretation, but this is not to say that the wind couldn't also serve as an apropos symbol for the spirit because it could, and it often does. And it was used by Jesus himself in John chapter three, verse eight.

15:13

when he teaches Nicodemus about how the spirit operates. Before I leave this section, I wanna highlight one other Hebrew word in Genesis chapter one, verse two. The English translation reads, and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. Okay, here the English word moved is actually the translation of the Hebrew word, merget. The Cambridge Bible commentary tells us that this Hebrew word means, quote,

15:42

was brooding upon and furnishes the picture of a bird spreading its wing over its nest. For the use of the same unusual Hebrew word cross-reference Deuteronomy chapter 32 verse 11, as an eagle that stirreth up her nest, that fluttereth over her young, he spread abroad his wings, he took them, he bare them on his pinions. By the selection of this word, the writer conveys the thought

16:12

fostering care of the Almighty was given to the welter of primeval chaos. Ellicott's commentary says, quote, in Syriac the verb is a very common one for the incubation of birds. It was a beautiful and loving energy which tenderly and gradually with fostering care called forth the latent possibilities of a nascent world.

16:39

The avian imagery used here by the writers of Genesis and Deuteronomy should not be overlooked because you'll see in just a moment ancient cosmogonies all over the globe tell creation accounts of a bird hovering over the primordial waters. And in a minute I'll explain why a bird is used but I want to point out how I just love the Genesis creation account. When translated correctly describes the divine power or

17:07

power of God as a brooding wind, a tender caring power that worked upon the inert disorganized primordial elements like a loving mother. I love the imagery because it conveys that the creation was a very loving act. Now let's go back as far as we can to the sands of ancient Egypt and see if there's anything similar in the ancient Egyptian record.

17:35

Let's start by jumping into the oldest Egyptian religious writings, the ancient Egyptian pyramid texts, and let's go to the pyramid of King Pepi II who reigned as the fifth king of the sixth dynasty, which was around 2600 BC. In King Pepi II's pyramid, we find one of the most important ancient accounts of the creation. Pyramid text 600. It's kind of a short text, but it's loaded with some great stuff.

18:05

In this text, we're told that the creator god Atum emerged from the dark, disorganized waters of Nune, the primordial waters, as a shining mythical bird, referred to in the pyramid texts as the Benu bird. The bird's name is actually derived from the Egyptian verb,

18:33

In addition, according to the Egyptologist Richard H. Wilkinson, the Benu bird was, quote, also said to be the Ba. Now the Ba was an aspect of one's soul or spirit. So this bird was also said to be the Ba of Re, who was the sun god. And by the late period, the hieroglyphic sign depicting the bird was used to write the name of the chief sun god. So we're associating this bird with this brilliant god, Re.

19:02

Now, had we not gone through the original Hebrew in Genesis 1 verse 2, we might have glazed over this ancient Egyptian creation count. We might have thought that it was nothing more than just, you know, another fanciful creation myth. But here we have a striking parallel. We have a bird, just like what's implied in the Genesis account when the author of Genesis used the Hebrew word *merahket* meaning to brood.

19:31

to convey that the power of God, like a bird, brooding over its nest, brooded over the primordial waters. So in both cases, the authors use the imagery or symbol of a bird to convey to the readers something really important about the spiritual process of what was taking place. It's here that I should probably take a moment and talk about avian or bird symbolism in the ancient world. As you're gonna see in future episodes, birds are routinely associated with, or,

20:00

depictions of divine beings because they express the ability to fly or ascend freely to the upper regions of the celestial world. And these birds are often, very often, associated with the sun or a sun god because the sun's brilliance represents the fiery light of glorified beings. So you can see the symbolism here is

20:30

Magnificent. We can see all of these symbolic motifs in the creation account that's given in the pyramid text. We have a bird, a shining brilliant bird, which the ancient Egyptians tell us represents an aspect of the creator god Atum. The wings and flight of the bird represent that Atum as a god has the freedom to travel or ascend to the highest regions of the celestial realms. His shining brilliant feather coat

20:59

represents his celestial nature as a being of supernal light. But keep in mind here in this account, the Bennu bird is symbolic. Let's not forget that the ancient gypsies didn't believe that an actual bird flew over an ocean of actual water before the creation. The bird's a symbol to convey that God hovered or as the Hebrews say, brooded over the disorganized inert elements.

21:27

that filled the expanse of the primordial universe. And through some sort of spiritual process, which I'll get to in just a minute, this brooding infused the primordial elements with something that prepared them for creation and life. So with this in mind, let's read a little bit of Pyramid Text 600. And this comes from the Samuel Mercer translation. It reads, O atum kepri.

21:56

when thou didst mount as a hill, and didst shine as Bennu of the Benben in the temple of the Bennu in Heliopolis, and didst spew out shoo. Okay, according to this passage, in the beginning, a beautiful shining bird, which we just established represents the creator, God Atum, stands on a primordial hill and begins his creation. He starts by creating another God, the God Shoo.

22:24

And this is spelled S-H-U, so that this God can assist him in the creation. Shu is the very first God to emerge out of Atum. And this is a very, very important aspect of the story, because can you guess what the God Shu was the God of? The God of wind. That's right. Shu personified the wind, which should of course conjure up in your mind thoughts of Genesis chapter one, verse two, and the Hebrew word.

22:54

Ruah which the King James translators translated as spirit, but also meant wind the James P Allen translation says that Atum quote sneezed out shoe This is interesting because sneezing Conveys the imagery of wind a powerful wind air or breath Coming out of the God Atum's nose So here like we see with the Hebrew word

23:23

Ruwah, the Egyptians are associating wind with the life-giving capacity of breath. But keep in mind that these are also symbolic. These images are symbolic. The Egyptians did not

believe that Atum actually sneezed a god out of his nostrils. The image is used here to convey that the god Atum issued out of his being some sort of powerful life-giving force.

23:53

And the closest thing that the ancients could think of to describe this powerful life-giving force to human beings was wind or breath. In the Mercer translation, it reads that Atum, quote, didst spew out as Shu. The language used here is important because it suggests as many Egyptologists have argued that Shu, although personified as a distinct God,

24:21

was in fact meant to be understood as an attribute or form of Atum. Wilkinson writes, quote, “It could be argued that in almost all cases, the various names and manifestations of deities are simply forms of the same underlying God.” Okay, so in this light, to say that Atum spews out as Shu is to say that what Atum spews from his being

24:49

not literally another God, but some aspect of his own being. He issues some part of himself over the primordial waters in a manner similar to the wind. And this process in some way prepares the primordial elements so that God can organize them into a beautiful physical earth, one that’s teeming with life. It’s here that we should take a minute and learn a little bit more about the ancient

25:19

According to R.T. Rundle Clark, who wrote myth and symbol in ancient Egypt, the god Shu was not only the personification of wind, he was also associated with air and thus quote the breath of life, the vital principle of all living things. In coffin text spell number 80, Shu says quote, my life is what is in their nostrils. Spell

25:47

75 says quote my clothing is the breath of life which issued after me from the mouth of atun so here embodied in shu we’re starting to see the same concepts we see associated with the hebrew word ruwah wind and breath but there’s more shu was also associated with light dr edward p butler

26:14

who wrote the theological encyclopedia of the goddesses and gods of the ancient Egyptians said this of Shu, quote, the link between Shu and sunlight is especially close to the extent that it's been posited that the Egyptians did not really distinguish between air in the sense represented by Shu and light itself. The rays of the sun are the Shu forms of ray.

26:40

In other words, since Shu symbolically represents air, air in all of its aspects is wind or breath. And because air is the medium through which sunlight is visible, Shu is essentially indistinguishable from light, the light that emanates from the sun god, Ray. And keep Shu's association with light in the back of your mind, because we're gonna come back to it in the next episode. And one last very important aspect of Shu.

27:10

The ancient Egyptians, as we noted in our previous episode, believed that divine words, when spoken out loud, were efficacious, they caused things to happen. In fact, the pyramid texts themselves are essentially a catalog of recitations or divine utterances that needed to be spoken out loud so that the deceased pharaoh could safely ascend to the gods. Divine utterances were believed to harness the

27:39

power of natural laws. But it was modern Egyptologists that referred to these utterances as spells or the use of magic. But these are modern interpretations and they're not necessarily a great interpretation of how the ancient Egyptians conceived of divine utterances. But we can see the parallels. When a magician says abracadabra out loud, a rabbit magically

28:09

Abracadabra is what produces the effect. In fact, I would argue that the entire modern conception of magic, just like the warlocks wand and the witch's special brew or magical potions like we discussed in previous episodes, is yet another example of the degeneration of a very important spiritual doctrine taught within the ancient tradition. And keep in mind that it was God himself.

28:38

introduced this concept of divine utterance when at the onset of the creation he commanded the earth to take shape out of the primordial waters. So when I reference Egyptian spells like I'm going to do here in a second, don't let this throw you off, when Egyptologists use the

word spell or magic they're really referring to divine utterances and the ability of those utterances to harness

29:08

Back to Shu. Dr. Butler notes in the coffin text, quote, Shu affirms in these spells that he does not obey magic, for I have already come into being. Shu's immunity from magical compulsion here is from the fact that the very breath from which magic is performed must be borrowed, in effect from Shu. The logic on this one's pretty clear.

29:34

air is required to speak and since Shu is the god of air, all who desire to speak or utter must get their air from him. So they're subordinate to him. All so-called magic, which is only efficacious through utterance, is subordinate to Shu. Shu need only take away one's air and he eliminates their ability to utter any so-called spell against him. So without that ability, the ability to utter, they can have no

30:03

power over him. It's Shu's ownership of this special air or wind that enables him to have power over all things, including power over the elements swimming in the primordial waters. Which is why if we're going to figure out how the creation took place and how life came to be, we need to figure out everything we can about this special air or wind that Atum

30:33

And keep in mind that again, Shu is really just a personified attribute of the supreme god Atum. So this is just another way of saying that nobody has greater power than Atum. All are subordinate to him. And note something very interesting here. It's only after Atum sneezes out the wind, or Shu, that Atum, as the Bennu bird, does something else. Listen closely.

31:03

quote, as an aspect of Atum the Bennu bird was said to have flown over the waters of noon before the original creation. According to this view, the bird finally came to rest on a rock, at which point its cry broke the primeval silence and was said to have determined what was and what was not to be in the unfolding creation. Okay. So if you're a regular listener, your ears should have really perked up.

31:31

After the Bennu bird flew over the waters of Nune, pyramid text 600 tells us that Atum sneezed out a wind. And then we learn in the coffin text that the Bennu bird squawked. Since we already know the bird is a symbolic representation of the god Atum, then we know this squawking is symbolic of Atum saying something. The bird squawking

31:59

is symbolic of divine utterance, creation by divine utterance. In the ancient world, when a bird squawks after gliding over the primordial waters, you know they're talking about creation by divine utterance. So next time you hear a bird caw, think of God brooding over the primordial waters and then commanding by his voice the creation to emerge.

32:26

In ancient Egypt, sometimes this bird was conceived of as a goose. The Gengen were Wilkinson writes quote, Gengen were manifested the power of creation through his honking call. The God's name is based on the goose's characteristically raucous call or cackle. Gengen means honker and were means great meaning the great honker. And he was also called the name neg egg or cackler.

32:56

According to some texts, it was the honking call of Amun in the form of this god that quote, awoke the creation. I wonder how God would feel about being called the great honker. Interestingly though, the ancient Egyptians kept a flock of sacred geese on the artificial lake that was adjacent to Amun's great temple at Karnak. And as we pointed out in episode number 11, these artificial lakes were meant to be representations of the

33:25

primordial waters. All right, let's go back to the wind. In much later ancient Egyptian texts, we see the origin of the primordial wind directly attributed to a chief deity. And most of these texts come from the Temple of Canoem, who was also considered a later creator god. And this is from the Temple of Canoem at Ezna. Let's read a couple of these texts and see what we can glean about

33:55

When there was no earth, he created yet for the gods and goddesses in his name, Tahinnon. Here we have Osiris as the one who began the wind and that this wind preceded the creation. Quote, Oh, Canoom, the great one who came forth from noon, the wind came forth from his mouth and the northern wind from his nose. So in this passage, the wind comes directly from the creator, God Canoom's mouth and

34:25

Canoom who creates you from the wind which he breathes from his mouth, he creates all the animals from the breath of his mouth. Just like Atum sneezes out the wind shoo in the pyramid text, here we are explicitly told that the breath issued from the creator God's own being, which the text refers to as wind. It's what initiated and animated the creation of human beings and animals.

34:53

In another passage, this wind is specifically referred to as the wind of life. It reads, and this is speaking of the creator God, Canoam, quote, all existences he created, the wind of life is upon his mouth. Another passage reads, oh, Canoam, who gives the wind in order to create all the existences. And another quote, this is his wind, which makes the branches.

35:23

balloon. From all of the passages I've included in this episode, we gained some really critical information about this wind, which according to Genesis, brooded over the primordial elements before the creation took place. Number one, we learned that this wind came directly out of God himself. The ancient Egyptians describe it as being either sneezed out of God's nostrils or breathed directly out of God's mouth. Either way, the imagery here conveys that

35:52

whatever it was that issued out of God, it was originally a part of him, a part of his being. We can see the transference of whatever is in God into his creations really warmly depicted in Pyramid Text 600, which we just read earlier. After Atum sneezes out Shu, the wind, the text reads, quote, "Then thou didst put thine arms about them."

36:21

as the arms of a kha that thy kha might be in them. Here we have Atum wrapping his arms around or embracing Shu, the wind, so that Atum's kha could be in the wind. In ancient

Egypt, the kha represented the concept of vital essence. And it should come as no surprise that this vital essence was what distinguished the difference between a living and a dead person. So here in this passage,

36:50

Atum embraces Shu and through this embrace God's vital essence is transferred from Atum's being into Shu the wind. Number two, we learn that God spread this vital essence across the primordial elements. The ancients describe this spreading process like an eagle spreading its wings over its nest in a brooding, incubating fashion or they describe it as wind.

37:19

ruffling the primordial waters. And we can surmise from the wind imagery that whatever God spread, we're meant to understand that it touched every single element swimming in the primordial waters. When a wind blows through a forest, every single leaf on every single tree is touched by the wind. Number three, we learned that this wind had a transformative effect on the primordial elements. Before this wind passed through,

37:49

The primordial elements were lifeless, inert, disorganized. They were without form. But after the wind passed through and touched the elements, they changed. This wind had an absolutely transformative effect on the elements. Where the elements were originally lifeless, now they were imbued with life, which is why this wind is often described as breath.

38:17

because breath in the temporal world is what gives life to human beings. Without breath, there is no life. Without the primordial wind, there was no life in the elements. And remember, a lot of this is symbolic. And this is where things get really, really interesting. First, this implies that every single element has some sort of life force in it. Something...

38:45

that we would describe as living or responsive. Normally when we think of a rock, we think of it as dead or lifeless. But according to the ancients, God imbued his life force, which was a part of him, into the primordial elements, every single one of them. And it was out of these elements that the creation was formed. Which means that everything we see

39:15

the rocks, the mountains, Mother Earth herself is in some way living, is in some way responsive. Native Americans have been telling us this for centuries, and this is why they have such a tremendous reverence and respect for Mother Earth. Jack Forbes, an American historian and also a descendant of the Lenape tribe says this,

39:42

The indigenous tendency to see the earth and other non-organic entities as being part of the bios or life or living is seen by many post 15th century Europeans as simply romantic or nonsensical. When native students enroll in many biology or chemistry classes today, they're often confronted by professors who are absolutely certain that rocks are not alive. But in reality, these professors are themselves

40:11

products of an idea system of materialism and mechanism that is relatively modern. It is true that most or perhaps all Native Americans see the entire universe as being alive. That is as having movement and an ability to act. Jack Forbes wrote that 20 years ago and today

40:36

scientists are not so easily dismissing the notion that what we consider to be inanimate objects may in fact have some level of awareness or responsiveness to them, something living. And we'll talk about this more in the next episode. Recall in the previous episode that this is what the texts inscribed on the Shabaka stone said of the creator god Ptah. It said, quote, Ptah is in

41:05

And Ptah is in every mouth of all gods, all men, all cattle, all creeping things, whatever lives. We see the same thing in the Judeo-Christian tradition in Ephesians chapter 4 verse 6, which reads, quote, one God and father over all who is above all and through all and in all. And we find the same thing taught in the Hindu tradition.

41:32

In fact, it's one of the most dominant doctrines taught in Hinduism. The Hindu scripture, the Eight Raya Upanishad 2.6.1 states, quote, He Brahman, which is God, wished, quote, Let

me be many. Let me be born. He undertook a deliberation. Having deliberated, he created all this that exists that Brahman, having created, entered into that very thing.

42:01

and having entered there, it became the formed. As a quick side note on this, I think it's interesting in this passage that we see God deliberating, which is similar to what we see in the Shabbatka stone when it says that the creation was first devised in Ptah's heart, in his mind, before it was formed. All of these religious traditions, and there's many others, attest that the creator, by virtue of the wind that came out of his being, imbued the primordial elements with life.

42:32

and it reasons that if this divine essence were removed from the elements, the elements would symbolically die and return to their inert, lifeless state. In other words, the divine essence would need remain a permanent part of each element if it were to sustain life. This implies that you and me and everything we see in the universe is at the very elemental level infused with some aspect of God.

43:00

It means we literally have some aspect of God, the creator in every cell in our body. And this is one of the reasons why I think we're not talking about the Holy Ghost in Genesis 1 verse 2. When we consider this, the creation gets even more interesting. Let me read you a fascinating passage in the Book of the Dead, the Papyrus of Annie, which is dated to 1240 BC. It reads, and this is speaking of the god Osiris, quote, The god of the celestial ocean knew the primordial waters.

43:30

draw from thee his waters, thou sendest forth the north wind at even tide, and breath from his nostrils to the satisfaction of thy heart. The stars in the celestial heights are obedient unto thee." So here we have the primordial waters and Osiris sending the wind across the waters, out of which the stars are created. But then the passage says something super intriguing. It says,

43:57

The stars in the celestial heights are obedient unto thee. Let me say that again. It says the stars in the celestial heights are obedient unto thee. Whoa, the creation has the ability to

obey. It's one thing to say the elements are living, but it's a whole different level to say that the elements can be responsive to God's will. This is a bit mind bending, but it makes perfect sense when we consider

44:25

that the elements were given life by God. His essence is in them. Thus they obey His command. The elements are like an extension of Himself. So no wonder they respond. And that's exactly what we see happen when God commands the elements through divine utterance to form the earth. They respond.

44:54

You might wonder why we as human beings don't automatically obey God like the elements since God is in us too. Well, I'll save that for another episode, but it suggests that God not only created things that automatically respond to his will, things that are acted upon, but also things that could act for themselves. Give us agency. On a cosmic level, this suggests that this divine essence within all things also operates as the law.

45:22

that governs all things. And we see this idea in many ancient texts too. If we go back to the Shabaka Stone, this principle is exactly what is being taught. Speaking of Ptah's creation of the world by thought and divine utterance, it reads, quote, thus heart and tongue rule over all the limbs in accordance with the teaching that Ptah.

45:48

is in everybody and Ptah is in every mouth of all gods all men all cattle all creepy things whatever lives Here it's saying that Ptah has the ability to rule over all things Because he is in all things We see a similar teaching in the Judeo-Christian tradition in Matthew chapter 8 verses 26 and 27 When Christ calms a tempest on the sea of Galilee it reads

46:17

Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. But the men marveled, saying, What manner of men is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" We see a similar thing when Christ walks on the water in Matthew chapter 14 verse 25 and 26 which reads, And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the

46:47

they were troubled. Taken to its logical extension, this means that God, by virtue of the teaching that He is in all things, holds through His power and authority all things in place. Holds the planets in their orbits, the stars in their places, and the mountains in their place, for they obey His command. It's through His vital essence that He brings order to the disorganized

47:15

primordial elements. It's through his vital essence that order is established in the universe. This very thing is said in Hebrews chapter 1 verse 3, which reads, and this is speaking of Christ, who being the brightness of his glory, this is comparing him to the Father, and the expressed image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his name.

47:45

power and there's divine utterance again. In this light, it's much easier to understand why when God uttered, let there be light that there was light. The elements obeyed his command. I'll have a lot more to say about this in our next episode, because as I mentioned in the previous episode, I have a sneaking suspicion that the divine wind we've been talking about is intimately connected to light.

48:16

That wraps up this edition of the ancient tradition. As always, we conclude with the words of William Shakespeare, knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven. I'm Jack Logan.

48:31

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Episode #14 - The Terrifying 2nd Law of Thermodynamics

<https://theancienttradition.com/14-the-terrifying-2nd-law-of-thermodynamics/>

00:00

Music

00:09

You're listening to The Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production. Music provided by Joseph McDade. He is your host, Dr. Jack Logan.

00:25

I'm Jack Logan. Welcome to the Ancient Tradition. Today's episode is the terrifying second law of thermodynamics. And if you know anything about the second law of thermodynamics, it can be occasionally terrifying. But there's this really special connection between the second law of thermodynamics and this incomprehensible brooding wind that we've been discussing. So I'm going to do that in this episode. We're going to connect those two concepts together.

00:54

And what you're going to find by the end of this episode is that they really converge and provide us with this simple yet elegant explanation for the creation of the earth and the origin of life in the universe. It's pretty neat. And we're going to get to all of that in this episode. Before I jump in though, I wanted to let you know that I'm going to be out of the country during most of July. So our next episode won't drop until the first part of August. Kind of keep that in mind. I haven't dropped off the face of the earth.

01:24

They're going to keep coming. I mentioned towards the end of our previous episode in episode number 13, which was the incomprehensible brooding wind, that I was going to have a lot more to say about this wind in this episode. So that's what I'm going to do. If you're a regular listener, or if you're a new listener and you're just interested in these topics but you didn't get a chance to listen to episode number 13 all the way through to the end, I highly, highly recommend that you do that. Go back, because it's in the last 15 to 20 minutes of episode number 13.

01:54

that you're going to start to gain a foundational understanding of how the creation of the universe in life really came to be. Towards the end of the episode, you're going to learn what

caused the elements to transform, why they transformed, and how the transformation of the primordial elements set the stage for law and order in the universe. The last 15 to 20 minutes of episode number 13 really is truly foundational to the entire podcast.

02:23

and it's especially important for a lot of the stuff that we're going to discuss in the next couple of episodes. So if you do that and go back and catch it up if you haven't had a chance. Okay, so let's jump in. In episode number 13, we covered a lot of different accounts of the primordial wind. We looked at the Judeo-Christian tradition, and we looked at ancient Egypt and the Vedic traditions. But there's a lot more great stuff out there in the ancient record from all over the globe that I still want to...

02:51

expose you to a little bit so you get a feel for how ubiquitous this aspect of the creation is in the ancient record. So today I want to start with ancient Mesopotamia. And for this then we're going to have to return to the famous ancient Mesopotamian creation account, the Enuma Elish, which we've talked about several times in the podcast. If you're interested in listening to an audio recording of the Enuma Elish, or you just haven't had a chance to to listen to it yet,

03:18

You can listen to a full audio recording of it on our sister podcast, The Ancient Tradition Audio Rit. Scholars date the Enuma Elish, this creation account, to between 1800 and 1600 BC, which means it's really 4,000 years ago. So it's one of the oldest creation myths that we have. If you'll recall, it starts with the primordial waters, which are personified by the god Opsu. In the story, Opsu is slain.

03:47

and his consort, Tiamat, then becomes the embodiment of chaos. At this point in the story then, a supreme being, the supreme deity of Babylon, Marduk. He's the hero in the epic. His job then is to defeat Tiamat, who represents chaos, because she's enraged, she's upset, she's seeking revenge because her spouse has been killed. You see what's going on here. The Anuma Elisha is really highly

04:17

symbolic. It's a symbolic myth. In the story, Marduk represents the supreme God who's seeking to establish order in the universe. But to do so, he's got to conquer Tiamat, who's the personification of disorder or chaos. So really, the Enuma Elish is a story of the battle or conflict between order and chaos. In tablet number four, we start, we see a lot of saber rattling going on.

04:44

Marduk's getting really ready in every way he possibly can to fight Tiamat or Chaos. And so listen very closely to how he accomplishes this. How does he actually take over and kill Chaos or Tiamat? It reads, and this is speaking of Marduk, quote, he made ready the bow. He chose his weapon. He slung a spear upon him and fastened it. He raised the club in his right hand. He grasped it.

05:13

the bow and the quiver he hung at his side. He set the lightning in front of him. With burning flame, he filled his body. He made a net to enclose the inward parts of Tiamat. The four winds he stationed so that nothing of her might escape. The south wind and the north wind and the east wind and the west wind. He brought near to the net the gift of his father Anu. He created the evil wind and the tempest and the hurricane.

05:42

and the fourfold wind and the sevenfold wind and the whirlwind and the wind which had no equal. He sent forth the winds which he had created, the seven of them, to disturb the inward parts of Tiamat. They followed after him. To the fight they came on, to the battle they drew nigh. The Lord spread out his net and caught her. And the evil wind, while as yet she had not shut her lips, the terrible winds filled her belly, and her courage

06:11

was taken from her, and her mouth was opened wide. He seized the spear and burst her belly. He severed her inward parts. He pierced her heart. He overcame her and cut off her life. He cast down her body and stood upon it." So at the end there you see, he's standing upon Tiamat's dead body, victory in every way. But did you catch how he slays her?

06:38

What does he use to bring her down, to bring chaos down? He slays her with wind. Quote, he sent forth the winds which he had created to disturb the inward parts of Tiamat. The

terrible winds filled her belly and her courage was taken from her. It's after these winds have forced Tiamat into Marduk's net, after the winds have taken her courage, then that Marduk stabs her and severs her inward parts.

07:07

cuts off her life. It's with the wind that Marduk destroys Tiamat, destroys chaos. This is very important. Just like we saw in episode number 13, it's the wind that transformed, or as we would say from the Enuma Elish, slayed disorder, slayed the disorder of the primordial water, which we learned in episode number 11 where the disorganized chaotic primordial elements.

07:37

And note too how we see some other themes here that we saw in episode number 13. We see here in the Enuma Elish that this wind is directly associated with Marduk. And it says, quote, he created the evil wind and the tempest and the hurricane. He sent forth the winds which he had created. It's also interesting in the Enuma Elish that the text refers to Marduk and four winds.

08:04

that he used these four winds to conquer Tiamat. It reads, quote, the four winds he stationed so that nothing of her might escape, the south wind and the north wind and the east wind and the west wind. So we gotta figure out what this means because it's important to understand what these four winds symbolize because we're gonna see these four winds show up all over in the ancient record. And so we gotta kind of get our, wrap our heads around a well.

08:33

you know, what does this mean? What do they symbolize? So we got to start. Do you remember what number four symbolizes in the ancient world? If you don't, we talked about it in episode number four. Did God reveal the ancient tradition in the Garden of Eden? Because we see the number four show up in this account quite a bit. And in that account, we noted that in the ancient world, the number four symbolizes geographic totality. In the Garden of Eden account, we saw that we have four rivers,

09:02

They flow out of the center of the garden, and in the center of the garden was a tree of life, and that tree of life represented God. So these rivers flow to the four cardinal points, north, south, east, and west. And they symbolize that the vitalizing, life-giving power of God flows from His throne to the totality of His creation. His vitalizing, life-giving powers cover the entire world.

09:31

Okay, so with this in mind, can you surmise what the four winds here in this Babylonian creation account symbolize? Like the four rivers in Eden, we've got the four winds and they represent geographical totality. But it's a little different because in this case, they symbolize the notion that God's vital essence covers the totality from north, south, east, and west of the entire pre-creative universe.

10:01

So not just the world, we're talking about the entire pre-creative universe, the entirety of the primordial waters. In other words, when Marduk stations the four winds at the cardinal points, this is just another way of saying that Marduk, or the wind that came out of God, like what we saw came out of Ptah, as we read in the Shabbatical Stone, blew through the entire expanse of the pre-creative universe. Not a single element went untouched.

10:30

And that's exactly what we surmised in episode number 13. And that's also exactly what the Enuma Elish says. It reads, and listen closely here, the four winds he, Marduk, stationed so that nothing of her might escape. And by her, he's talking about Tiamat, the chaotic primordial elements. So by using these four winds, which are assigned to the cardinal points,

10:58

meant to understand that the totality of the pre-creative elements were touched by the wind or God's life giving vital essence. Not a single disorganized chaotic element could escape. The triumph of Marduk over Tiamat is really meant to symbolize, just as we saw with the creator gods Ptah, Atum, Brahman, and Christ, which we've covered in the previous episode.

11:27

meant to see that the god Marduk imposed order on the inert, disorganized, primordial elements and infused them with life. Every single one of them, not a single one of them

could escape. So this is a victory indeed, a total victory of order over chaos, so much so that the enuma at least symbolizes it by Marduk standing upon the dead slain body of Tiamat.

11:55

So by now you should be noticing right there are tremendous parallels between these religious traditions. And this is a little bit mind-boggling because it really does speak to a common source, a single ancient tradition out of which these stories derive when we see wind showing up in the same way. So bear in mind that the wind here is a story about God imposing order. And in the next couple of accounts I'm going to give you here, think about how this special brooding wind that came directly from God's being

12:25

slayed chaos and imposed order in the universe. And then in a couple of minutes, I'll get to how this wind is associated with the second law of thermodynamics. If you're familiar with the second law of thermodynamics, see if you can't already think of a way that the two might be connected. All right, let's look at an ancient Greek creation myth. And this comes from the book, The Anatomies of God, the Bible and Religion. As you listen to this,

12:52

You're going to hear a lot of the same elements that we discussed in the last episode. This is a summary of a Greek creation myth and it says, quote, In the beginning there was an empty darkness. The only thing in this void was Nyx, N-Y-X, a bird with black wings. With the wind she laid a golden egg, and for ages she sat upon this egg. Finally life began.

13:22

stir. Okay, let's do a little symbolism literacy test here. In this creation myth, this Greek creation myth, what does the dark void symbolize? What does the bird and the bird's wings symbolize? What does the wind symbolize? What does the bird Nyx sitting on an egg symbolize? And we haven't talked about this yet, but what do you think the egg itself symbolizes?

13:50

So if you can answer four out of five of these questions, then you're really well on your way to deciphering the ancient tradition that's concealed in these symbols. So let's look at what we have here. In this Greek creation myth, we have a black bird, which represents the Greek

god Nix. The myth says that this bird uses the wind to lay a golden egg. And in the ancient world, this golden egg is known as the world egg.

14:19

because the egg represents the source from which all life is born, like a baby chick breaking out of an egg. But for our purposes in this episode, it's interesting that it's the wind. It's the wind that prepares the primordial waters for laying this egg. It reads, quote, With the wind she laid a golden egg, and for ages she sat upon this egg. It's the wind, we see, that transforms the primordial waters and creates elements that are suitable for life.

14:48

I don't know if you also notice this too, we can also see in this myth the connection between the primordial wind and brooding. It's pretty clear, which in this passage is clearly connected to the world egg. They sits on the egg and then we have the birth of the world come out of it. Let's look at one more here. I don't want to belabor this point, but I want you to see how this pillar of creation, the transformative effect of a primordial wind on the primordial waters shows up.

15:15

with really considerable consistency all over the globe in many ancient records. So let's look at the Gnostics. We're going to look at a faction of the Gnostics, the Scythians, and this text is dated to between 170 and 236 AD, and it speaks of the primordial waters. It reads, quote, And into all this infinity, which is under heaven, there was scattered and distributed

15:44

the fragrance of the spirit from on high. Then there came into being from the water the firstborn principle, a wind violent and turbulent in the cause of all generation. For making some agitation in the waters, it raises waves in them. So we see the exact same thing. We see the wind, but we see the wind having the same role. It is quote, the cause of all generation. That's the role of the wind to bring about all generation.

16:14

And as a quick aside, if you're a regular listener, then you might've also caught the phrase, the fragrance of the spirit. Recall in episode number eight, the fragrant dew of paradise, that this fragrance was connected to the anointing oil, which was a symbol of the spirit, and it

was fragrant like sweet smelling myrrh. So here we have the phrase, the fragrance of the spirit, connects them together.

16:39

And this is in the Judeo-Christian tradition, and this refers to the spirit that's associated with Christ, the anointed one, who wears the sweet, fragrant scent of myrrh, of the anointing oil on his being. Myrrh is the fragrance of God. So in this passage, this fragrance was scattered or distributed across the infinity at the time the wind began working on the disorganized elements. Did you catch that?

17:08

So this is symbolic and it suggests in the Judeo-Christian tradition that there's an association between Christ's atoning sacrifice, which the fragrant myrrh symbolized, and the creative ordering power of the wind. And if you haven't given episode number eight a listen, the fragrant dew of paradise, it's really worth your time. As the podcast continues, I really hope you're starting to see a lot of these things that we've been talking about, especially the symbols, because they're going to show up.

17:38

all over the globe in all kinds of different accounts. And what's even more remarkable is that these symbols usually express the same ideas like we're seeing here with the wind. Whenever we see wind in creation accounts, we see that this wind comes first directly from God and two has an ordering life-producing quality to it. And that's something. Let's look at another text from Japan. I haven't talked about Japan yet, but I love some of the stuff I've been reading in Japan. It's called the Kojiki, which means

18:07

records of ancient matters. So this text is dated to around 712 AD. In this creation myth, we have two gods, Izanami and Izanagi, and they use a jeweled spear to, quote, stir the ocean. And it reads, quote, Hereupon all the heavenly deities commanded the two deities, his Augustness, the male who invites, and her Augustness.

18:36

the female who invites, ordering them to make, consolidate, and give birth to this drifting land, granting to them an heavenly jeweled spear. They thus deigned to charge them. So the

two deities, standing upon the floating bridge of heaven, pushed down the jeweled spear and stirred with it, whereupon, when they had stiffened the brine, till it went curdle, curdle,

19:05

and drew the spear up, the brine that dripped from the end of the spear was piled up and became an island. This is the island of Onogoro. Pretty interesting myth. In this myth, the stirring motion of the spear or the stirring of the primordial elements is really akin to the wind in other myths. Izanami and Izanagi stir the elements with the spear until they stiffen.

19:33

and can form into earth. So we get the same themes. In Aztec mythology we have the wind god Ahakadal who according to worldhistory.org was quote, regarded as a manifestation of the great feathered serpent god Quetzalcoatl. He was sometimes known as Quetzalcoatl Ahakadal. In which guise he helped create humanity in the Aztec creation myth. Ahakadal means wind.

20:02

as the god was regarded as a manifestation or wind aspect of the feathered serpent god, Quetzalcoatl, one of the most important deities in the Mesoamerican pantheon. Here we have Quetzalcoatl, the creator god, described as a Quetzal bird, which are absolutely spectacular birds if you've never seen one. You gotta check one out, go Google it. They're amazingly beautiful, which is just like we saw in Egypt with the god Shu.

20:32

who personified the wind attribute of the great god Atum. We have Aheketel personifying the wind aspect of Quattal. The Codex Barbonicus, which was written by Aztec priests shortly before the Spanish conquest, and two other codices dated to the mid 16th century, we find depictions of Quattal as the god of wind. In Aztec creation myths, Aheketel played a role in the creation of the world.

21:01

and featured in these myths as Nahui Ehakidol, which translated means four winds. And because of this, he was also associated with the cardinal directions, north, south, east, and west. In the Mayan Popol Vuh, which we've talked about several times so far in the podcast, we find the Mayan creation myth. And it reads, and this comes from the Adrian Racinos translation, quote,

21:28

Nothing which could make a noise, nor anything which might move or tremble or could make noise in the sky. There was nothing standing, only the calm water, the placid sea, alone and tranquil. Nothing existed. There was only immobility and silence in the darkness, in the night, only the creator, the maker, Tepeu Guskoumatz, who is the Mayan equivalent to the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl.

21:55

The forefathers were in the water surrounded with light. They were hidden under green and blue feathers. Note how the gods here are covered with feathers. We have got that bird theme again. And were therefore called Gukumats. By nature, they were great sages and great thinkers. In this manner, the sky existed and also the heart of heaven, which is the name of God and thus he is called. Then came the word, Tepeu and Gukumats.

22:24

came together in the darkness in the night, and Tepeu and Gugumatz talked together. They talked then discussing and deliberating. They agreed, they united their words and their thoughts. Then while they meditated, it became clear to them that when dawn would break, man must appear. Then they planned the creation and the growth of the trees and the thickets and the birth of life and the creation of man. Thus it was arranged in the darkness and in the night by the heart of heaven, who was called

22:53

Okay, this is interesting because here you have the feathered bird gods meditating over what to create and the god Hurrican arranges for the creation to emerge. Can you guess what the god Hurrican is the god of? Yes, you guessed it. Hurrican is the god of wind. And yes, if you're wondering, the English word hurricane is derived from this Mayan god Hurrican.

23:22

So the next time you hear about a hurricane brewing in the Gulf Coast, think of Hurrican stirring up the primordial waters. After the god Hurrican joins the bird gods, the Popol Vuh says this, quote, together they conceived light and life. So there we have light again. The wind also plays a really important role in Native American creation myths.

23:49

So let's look at the Navajo. And amongst the Navajo, the wind was considered holy. The following creation account comes from the book, Holy Wind in Navajo Philosophy by James McNelly. And before I read this account, the author says this, nilchil, meaning wind, air, or atmosphere, as conceived by the Navajo, is endowed with powers that are not acknowledged in Western culture.

24:19

gives life, thought, speech, and the power of motion to all living things, and serves as the means of communication between all elements of the living world. Frank Goldtooth gave an account of the creation story in which Supreme Sacred Wind appeared as the supreme creator of this world. The Navajo Wind Deity is conceived to furnish the breath of life to the individual.

24:49

This obviously reflects the same ideas that we see from Egypt to Japan. Navajo creation myths speak of this holy wind as four winds, a black wind, blue wind, and a yellow wind, and a white wind. So one of the Navajo creation accounts says this of these winds, quote,

25:14

and creatures and made the lines of the fingers, toes, and heads of human beings and on the bodies of the different animals. The wind has given men and creatures strength ever since, for at the beginning they were shrunken and flabby until it inflated them and the wind was creation's first food and put motion and change into nature, giving life to everything, even to the mountains and water." I love the imagery. They were shrunken and flabby.

25:43

and this wind inflated them. You know, it's really interesting to see how there's cultural interpretations of kind of the same concepts and ideas. And Apache tells this creation story, an Apache Indian, quote, in the beginning there was nothing, no earth, no living beings, there was only darkness, water, and cyclone, the wind. A band of Apache Indians known as the Lipans tell this of the wind in the creation, quote.

26:11

When wind got to the surface, he forced himself through a mass of water which covered the earth. Then he pushed the water to one side using his strength and his tail so that some land finally appeared. With water on one side and land on the other, wind relaxed. He blew

gently over the land until it dried. All right, the last creation story I want to share, although there's really literally hundreds I could have shared.

26:40

comes from the Seminole Indians. In this creation myth, the creator puts all of his creations in a shell, which seems to be an egg shell. Inside this shell, a panther desires to come into the created world first. It reads, the panther was patient, which the creator liked. But at this particular time, panther was too patient. The wind started circling around the crack in the shell, round and round the inside.

27:08

so vigorously that the crack was made larger. The wind, however, remembered that the creator wished for the panther to be on earth first. We will fulfill the creator's wishes, says the wind, reaching down to help the panther take its place on earth. The wind was everywhere. The wind was the air we breathe. After wind helped the panther out first, the panther thanked wind for the honor. So here we have from the sands of Egypt.

27:37

right up to the modern day. Peoples of the world claiming that order was imposed on the chaotic primordial elements by a special wind which came directly out of God's being. And this wind, I remind you, is symbolic. It symbolizes some sort of divine vital essence that came directly out of God, permeated the precreative universe, and fundamentally changed the disorganized, lifeless primordial elements into elements with the ability to order.

28:06

produce life. This transformative process is very troubling from a scientific point of view. See in episode number 11, the mysterious primordial waters, we established that the primordial elements, according to the first law of thermodynamics, could neither be created nor destroyed, only altered in form. The primordial elements have always existed and will always exist. They are eternal.

28:34

even though the idea of eternal matter is a bit difficult for some of our temporal minds to comprehend. This is exactly what both the ancient record and modern scientists have been telling us about the nature of the universe. So this brings me to the second law of thermodynamics. It's a bedrock of science. And this is where things get really sticky. See, the

second law of thermodynamics states that in an isolated system, entropy will always increase with time.

29:05

To understand what this means, we must understand what is meant by entropy. Thermodynamic entropy is essentially a measure of how organized or disorganized energy is in a system of atoms or molecules. This is measured by microstates, but that's a bit beyond what I want to cover in this episode. And remarkably, Wikipedia does a really nice job of explaining this. So let me read to you what it says.

29:35

If the energy in those molecules is perfectly organized, then the molecules can do 10 units of work. However, if the energy became less organized, so the entropy increases, the molecules might only be able to do six units of work, even though they still have 10 units of energy in them. So let's stop here for just a minute. This means that the work potential of energy is directly related to how

30:05

ordered or disordered the molecules are Even though the energy itself within them never changes So they need to be more ordered for them to have work potential the less ordered they are the less work potential They have this is why order it matters here When total entropy is reached there is no more energy to spend a good example Of this is a cup of hot tea the tea has a lot of energy compared to the room the tea is in

30:35

And over time, the heat in the tea will spread into the room. The tea will become colder. This is because the energy or heat in the tea moves to the surrounding area. Once the tea becomes cold, there is no more heat that can be spread. The tea has reached total entropy. So over time, as heat energy molecules become more and more disorganized and dispersed,

31:02

they lose their ability to convert heat energy into work. And this happens until the molecules reach thermal equilibrium or the same temperature. And all work potential at that point is lost. This is known as total thermodynamic entropy. This process, as far as the scientific community has been able to establish, is totally irreversible, which is why this is referred to as the second law.

31:29

thermodynamics. We know of no process that can permanently reverse entropy. It's a law of the natural world that heat energy particles or molecules go from a state of order to disorder and this moves everything irreversibly towards decay. The implications of thermodynamic entropy are pretty widespread and really quite astounding because it means that the natural state of the universe is maximum molecular disorder.

31:59

This is why our cells degenerate and we become older and not younger. This is why when we scramble an egg, it doesn't naturally unscramble. Or when we break a glass, it doesn't return to its unbroken form. It's why cars fall apart, why fruit rots, why ice melts. This is why we die. Why everything dies. The second law of thermodynamics is the inexorable trend towards decay.

32:25

degradation, degeneration, corruption, disintegration, and death. The prospect is rather bleak and terrifying to many. And like I mentioned, there's no permanent reversal to this process. In this very moment, the universe is headed towards total thermodynamic entropy. We are literally headed towards universal death. If you listen to episode number 11, the mysterious primordial waters,

32:54

that the description of thermodynamic entropy, or maximum molecular disorder, sounds very familiar to how the ancients described the pre-creative state of the universe. A universe of dark, infinite, lifeless, disorganized elements. It seems the ancients were really onto something. And at this point, you might be thinking to yourself, okay, if entropy is the normal state of the universe, and it's this maximum molecular disorder,

33:24

and it's irreversible, then within the laws of physics, the Earth shouldn't even exist and life shouldn't exist. There shouldn't be anything in the universe except for the chaotic primordial elements. There shouldn't be plants or stars or flowers or trees or elephants or tigers, and there definitely shouldn't be any human beings. And you would be right. The normal state of the universe is a state of total entropy.

33:55

George Wald, a Nobel Prize winner and professor of physiology at Harvard University says, quote, the spontaneous generation of a living organism is impossible. See when explaining the origin of life, the scientific community can't have it both ways. They can't claim the second law of thermodynamics is a law of nature and then postulate that life originated in some way that defies the second law of thermodynamics.

34:24

then how are we here? How are there planets and puppy dogs and people? That's a really great question. And for the answer to that, we have to examine the details in the second law of thermodynamics. The law states, quote, in an isolated system, entropy will always increase with time. The emphasis here is on isolated.

34:52

An isolated system is a system that's completely closed off to outside sources of energy. In an open system, when a car breaks down, we can use some of our own energy to repair the broken down parts. We can change the oil, fix a broken valve in the engine, fill it with gas, or do whatever is needed to bring it back to, quote, life. But in an isolated system, the car would remain irreversibly broken down because it didn't have access to an energy source.

35:22

like you or me, that could counter the effects of entropy. Without an outside source of energy, over time it would continue to degrade. But in an open system, where energy can flow into the system from an outside source, infusing it with new life, so to say, the process of entropy can be momentarily stopped or slowed down. And this is why we see life flourishing on planet Earth.

35:51

Our planet is not an isolated system. We get energy 24-7 from the sun. And as long as we have access to this energy source, which comes from outside of our planetary system, we're good to go. There's an energy to fuel the existence of life, to counter thermodynamic entropy. But there's a problem here too. Although energy from the sun can sustain our system, thereby combating

36:21

planetary entropy, the Sun itself is bound by the second law of thermodynamics. It too is heading every minute towards thermodynamic doomsday. Unless of course there is another

energy source in the universe that is keeping the Sun alive. But then again, whatever that energy source might be, it too would be subject to entropy.

36:47

There's no escaping entropy as far as we know anywhere in the universe. This means that at some point, the second law of thermodynamics will lead to the end of the universe. Scholars at Boston University say it like this, quote, it implies that the universe will end in a heat death in which everything is at the same temperature. This is the ultimate level of disorder. If everything is at the same temperature,

37:17

no work can be done, and all the energy will end up as the random motion of atoms and molecules. Jim Lucas of Live Science says this, quote, In the distant future, stars will cease being born, galaxies will burn out, the black holes will evaporate until there's nothing left but subatomic particles and energy. Lucky for us, this cosmic cooling down of the universe or

37:46

thermodynamic doomsday isn't predicted to happen for millions of years. There's actually a mathematical physicist at the University of California who predicted it will take as long as 10^{26} to the power of 10 times 26, which is 1 to the 1026 power or 100 septillion zeros, which is a very, very long time. So at this point, you might be wiping your brow.

38:14

We're grateful that the terrifying prospects of the second law of thermodynamics are millions of years away. But we still have one incredibly important problem to solve. If the normal state of the universe, due to the law of entropy, is made up of random, lifeless atoms and molecules, and the universe is a closed system, then how in the world did the universe come into being?

38:44

problem here. According to the second law of thermodynamics, there's absolutely no way that a closed system can reverse entropy. So there's literally zero chance of life. A universe in thermodynamic entropy could never produce life or anything. It's against the laws of physics. Biologist Lyle Watson says this, quote, any kind of order is unnatural.

39:12

The combination of molecules into anything as highly organized as a living organism is wildly improbable. Life is an unreasonable thing. This is a problem. According to this law, there should be nothing in the universe but an ocean of chaotic primordial elements. But here we are. So how do we explain this? Well, either the second law of thermodynamics is not really a law.

39:41

which doesn't seem to be the case because everything in the universe indicates that it is a law of the natural world. Or we have another very, very, very intriguing possibility. And this is the possibility that our universe is not a closed system. I have never heard a single scientist or physicist offer up this possibility.

40:08

What this would mean is that our universe came into being with its galaxies, stars, planetary systems, its flora and fauna, and human beings because it got energy from a source outside of our system, outside of our universe. This would mean that the universe itself is an open system, meaning outside sources of energy can flow into it, thereby thwarting entropy.

40:39

And think about this, this makes perfect sense because this is where all other systems get their sustaining energy from other systems. And this idea is confirmed every day by the human body. The human body, if it were a closed system and it had no access to outside sources of energy, would quickly die. But every time we chow down on an apple, we take energy into our bodily system by drawing on energy sources outside of our own bodily system.

41:08

and this allows us for another day to slow down the process of entropy. The supposition that our universe is an open system and not a closed system is not only incredibly elegant in its simplicity, but it's also elegant in its explanatory power because it not only fully conforms to the strictures of the second law of thermodynamics, but it also provides us with an incredibly simple explanation of how the Earth was created.

41:38

and how life came to be. I hope you see where I'm going with this because this is exactly what the ancients were saying in their creation myths. They tell us that before the universe came into being, the universe looked just like we would expect it to according to the first and second laws of thermodynamics, a primordial ocean of random, unorganized lifeless elements. And it's at this point in the creation stories that the ancients are practically unanimous in declaring that a source

42:08

pre-existent to and outside of our universe initiated order and life in the universe. And what was this source? Well, in the ancient text we read in our last episode and in this episode, this source was described as wind. A wind, which I remind you is symbolic, which is described by the ancients as coming directly out of God's being.

42:38

had a profound transformative effect on them. This wind swept across the primordial elements and infused them with something, which according to the second law of thermodynamics had to be some sort of energy that could counter the thermodynamic entropy. The ancients are telling us that a source outside of our system infused our system, our universe.

43:05

with the energy needed to counter the laws of entropy and that this energy came directly from God, who in the ancient record is most often described as a being of ineffable light. And light, physical light, is a form of energy. Thus, it's plausible to suggest that the vital energy source that came out of God and was described by the ancients as wind and the breath of life

43:34

was somehow a portion of his light, that he infused some of his light energy into every single primordial atom or element, and which conforms with, quote, the teaching that Pata is in all things. According to the ancients, it was this external energy source, this wind, that ignited the inert primordial elements and initiated the creation and life.

44:02

And don't forget, as we mentioned in the previous episode, the ancient Egyptian god Shu, the god of air and wind, also represented sunlight, the beams of the sun god Re, which could

be seen by virtue of air. We see all of these ideas, creation, God, light, and life, in the Judeo-Christian tradition in John 1,

44:32

all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” In this light, and I say that in quotes, the second law of thermodynamics isn’t so terrifying.

45:02

That wraps up this edition of The Ancient Tradition. If you’re interested in learning more about the evidence I presented in this episode, visit theancienttradition.com and search for this specific episode under evidence. Near the bottom of the podcast page, there’s a button to subscribe to the podcast, as well as a running countdown to our next episode, all of which you can share with your family and friends. And a quick reminder that our next episode won’t drop until the first part of August.

45:31

as I’ll be out of the country during most of July. Hopefully the ancients have left you with a lot to ponder. With that, I’ll leave you with the words of William Shakespeare, knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven. I’m Jack Logan.

45:51

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Episode #15 - Sea Monsters, Sea Serpents & Leviathans

<https://theancienttradition.com/15-sea-monsters-sea-serpents-leviathans/>

00:00

Music

00:09

You're listening to The Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production. Music provided by Joseph McDade. He is your host, Dr. Jack Logan.

00:25

Welcome to the program. I'm Jack Logan. I'm happy to be back and I'm happy to have you back and welcome to all of our new listeners. So glad to have you with us too. Today we're gonna have a lot of fun because we're gonna talk about monsters. Sea monsters in particular, the mammoth hideous monster that lurks in the filthy sludge in the bottom of the ocean. So.

00:51

This sea creature is really important in the ancient tradition. So don't count this episode out if you aren't interested in sea dragons or sea serpents, because all of this stuff is relevant to a full understanding of the ancient tradition. And if you hang on until the end, you're going to learn about a remarkable connection between this sea creature and the clothing worn by the high priest in the ancient Hebrew tradition. It's pretty fascinating stuff.

01:21

couple of episodes, we've been talking about the creation. And I've mentioned this many times, but the ancients placed extraordinary importance on the creation because it was through the narrative of the creation that the ancients taught important spiritual doctrines. So if we want to understand the theology of the ancient tradition, then we have to understand what they taught in their creation stories, or we're going to miss a lot of great stuff. To this point in the

01:51

with a lot of help from the research that was done by Marinus van der Sloes on the ancient creation stories, that the ancients have a pretty uniform account of the creation. In fact, we can trace most of the motifs, which I call here the pillars of creation, back to the very dawn of civilization, which is of course exactly what we'd expect if the ancient tradition were revealed in the very beginning.

02:18

So, so far we've established two pillars of creation in the ancient record. And before I give you that recap, let me remind you that the account of the creation given by the ancients is highly symbolic, which is why I've given so much attention in these episodes on honing our symbolism literacy. We've got to decipher the symbols if we're ever gonna really fully understand what the ancients were trying to teach us. So these are the pillars of creation that we've discussed to this point.

02:48

the pillars of a creation that show up time and time and time again in the ancient record. Number one, the first pillar. Before the creation took place, the universe was made up of a dark infinite mass of unorganized lifeless chaotic material, which the ancients described as a primordial ocean or sea. The second pillar that we see all over the place is that God

03:18

wind into the primordial elements which prepared them for life and creation. So all of this brings me to pillar number three today. At this point in the creation account we're told by the ancients that an impressive sea creature dwelt in the depths of the primordial waters. This sea creature shows up all over in the ancient record. Oliver Crimin who is the senior curator of fish.

03:47

Yes, something like that does actually exist. At the Natural History Museum in London says, quote, sea serpent myths go back into antiquity to a point in time we can't even discern. That's how old the sea monster myths are. This sea creature shows up in almost all ancient civilizations.

04:11

As we go along, see if you can't improve upon your symbolism quotient and see if you can't figure out what is being symbolized by this sea creature. So let's start. Let's look at a couple of these sea creatures. And I'm going to start with Egypt because I always do. In Egypt, this sea monster was conceived of as a giant serpent and it was known as Apep, A-P-E-P, which translated into the Greek was Apep.

04:41

It's a serpent and we can find serpent iconography really really early in the ancient Egyptian record. We find images of it showing up in the pre-dynastic period, which dates to between

about 5,000 and 2,900 BC. So we're talking 7,000 years ago that we start to see these serpent images show up. And of course, this is not very surprising since snakes were a regular fact of life in that region of the world. So we shouldn't be surprised.

05:11

Apophis is first mentioned in ancient Egypt in the first intermediate period when he's given an actual name and this dates to between about 2134 and 2040 BC to kind of give you an idea. Scholars think the name that's given to the sea snake is a composite name. A composite word: the first part means great and also a word that means inarticulate or gibberish, so the actual translation of Apophis would mean

05:40

the great babbler or gibberish speaker. Very interesting name for a snake. Why would they use that? Well, pay special attention to this serpent's name because remember in the ancient Near East, names were meant to signify the actual essence of the being. So if you recall back in episode number 12, the word that changed the universe, we talked about how the power of the spoken word was everything in ancient Egypt.

06:09

According to Dr. Abdao, quote, the ancient Egyptians believed that uttering from the mouth had power, uttering or the articulation of the word had power. Saying it had the exact same effect as doing it. Uttering a speech achieved the action stated. And, you know, we saw this with the ancient Egyptian god Ptah. You remember in the Shabaka stone, he created the world by his tongue.

06:38

He called or spoke all things into being, and he did it through divine utterance. In other words, it was by speaking the words that Ptah brought order or creation to the universe. For the Egyptians to name the sea serpent Apophis, the great babbler or gibberish speaker, this seems to be just another way to emphasize that this sea serpent had no ability to command the elements to take shape or form. He was

07:06

powerless to bring about creation. And why? Because his tongue only spoke gibberish. He didn't have the ability to divinely utter. So he was without the power to create, which is a really powerful and important point to make about this snake. He had the power to destroy,

but not the power to create. He had the power to bring about disorder, but not the power to bring about order. And again, why? Because he was the great babbler.

07:36

His words had no creative efficacy. In the sixth hour of a text referred to as the Book of Gates, which is an ancient Egyptian text dating to the New Kingdom, which was around 1570 BC, in scene 35, we get this description of Apophis. So they're describing for us what this sea serpent is like. And listen to this, it says, quote,

08:04

One without its eyes is this snake without its nose and without its ears. It breathes its screaming. It lives on its own shouting. Very interesting description there. Dr. Ludwig Mornes who wrote about a pofus in the Journal of Near Eastern Studies says this about that very passage. He says quote, this short stanza describes a pofus as an antisocial creature.

08:31

without any proper sensory organs. Apophis is just noisy. Well, we're getting that picture here of the noisiness. But then we find something really interesting. Dr. Mornes then goes on to point out that this description of Apophis as a babbler is actually very similar to the description of the sea monster Tannin, T-A-N-N-I-N, in the Hebrew Bible. And this is what he says. The entomology of Tannin is uncertain.

09:00

but it's been suggested that it is related to the root TNH, which means recount, rehearse as in lament or howl. So we're getting the same description in the Hebrew Bible of this sea serpent here and it's howling. So if Dr. Mornes is correct, then the depiction we're getting of the sea monster is a creature who loves to wail and shout and howl.

09:26

In the Bremner rind papyrus, now this is a much later papyrus and it's dated to the fourth century BC and it gives Apophis the following epitaphs. So it's a list of epitaphs that this snake has. Apep the fallen, the mangled. Apep the fallen, the most evil. Apep the fallen, the fierce faced. Apep the fallen, the roarer. So there again we get this emphasis on wailing. Apep the fallen, the ill-disposed.

09:55

Apep the fallen, the devourer. Apep the fallen, the despoiler of the land. Apep the fallen, the enemy. Apep the fallen, the dark one. Apep the fallen, the potent of glance. Apep the fallen, the serpent. Apep the fallen, the evil-minded. Apep the fallen, the broken. So we're starting to get a much better picture of what the ancient Egyptians thought of this sea snake. It's evil and enemy.

10:24

despoiler, aroarer. And I'm wondering, however, if you caught one of the most important aspects of this serpent, it's actually mentioned in each one of the serpent's epitaphs. Because of that, we've got to conclude that this aspect of the serpent was considered by the ancient Egyptians to be one of the serpent's most important characteristics. Each epitaph begins with, apep, the fallen, the fallen.

10:54

Dr. Morninz translates this epitaph as the fallen one. Fallen from what? Well, we're gonna look into that. But for the answer, you're gonna have to keep listening to the end of this episode. But I'll give you a little clue. The answer is in the book of the holy secrets of Enoch. Interestingly, in the Bremner Rind Papyrus, Opep's epitaphs are preceded by a very intriguing statement, and it reads.

11:22

quote, the names of OPEP, which shall not be. Okay, so what does it mean by names which shall not be? If you're a regular listener, you'll recall back in episode number 12, the word that changed the universe, that part of the creation process involved naming. So to name something was to bring it into creation. So the statement here in the Bremner Rhein Papyrus that OPEP's names shall not be,

11:51

is seems to be another way of saying that spiritually the sea serpent remains perpetually uncreated. It's almost like they're saying the sea serpent is nameless. It's really without a name because it's a creature that's really never truly been spiritually created. And try and remember this because in a future episodes this is going to be really really important to not be named or to not have a name is devastating. It's akin to not being.

12:20

And listen to what Richard H. Wilkinson, who I've mentioned before, says of Apep in his book, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*. Quote, Apophis was the great adversary of the sun god, Ray, and the embodiment of the powers of dissolution, darkness, and nonbeing. The huge serpent was believed to have existed from the beginning of time in the waters of primeval chaos, which preceded creation.

12:48

and it was thought that he would continue to exist in an endlessly malevolent cycle of attack, defeat and resurgent attack. It's from Wilkinson's summary of Apophis and what we read in the Bremner Rhine Papyrus, we learned several important things about this ancient Egyptian sea serpent. All right, so the first thing that we learn is that the sea serpent actually existed before the creation took place. This serpent lived before the earth

13:18

born. So here again we see the ancient Egyptian doctrine of a pre-existence. Second, we learned that this sea serpent lived in the primordial waters of noon, the undifferentiated lifeless chaotic matter that filled the pre-creative universe. And third, you know, we assume from the epitaphs we find in the Bremner Rhine Papyrus that this sea serpent as the fallen one

13:47

had not always lived in the primordial waters. From that epitaph, we garner that it lived in some higher sphere in the pre-existence until at some point it fell, where it fell into the depths of the primordial ocean. The fourth thing we learn is that we can assume that this sea serpent wasn't very pleased about its fall because it quote, lives on in its own shouting, lamenting and howling.

14:16

in the depths of the primordial ocean. In fact, there are myths that say it was trapped in the waters because it had previously been a chief god that Ra had overthrown, which is very interesting. We also learned that this sea serpent lives in a perpetual state of uncreation. It has no creative powers. It's the embodiment of chaos, disorder, destruction, and evil, and because of that, it's the greatest threat to order creation.

14:45

life in the universe. It is the Lord of Chaos. Sixth, this sea serpent as the embodiment of chaos is the enemy of the creator God Ray who embodies the divine principle of Mott which I haven't discussed yet but I'm definitely going to in a future episode which is the ancient Egyptian principle of order control and balance. Finally number seven this sea serpent is on an

15:14

endlessly malevolent cycle of attack. So the Sun God Rey and his assembly, they have to be on a constant vigilance to guard against its demonic attacks, else kind of like a viper, it'll sting them with its venomous bite. At this point, it's probably a good idea if I had to kind of just pause for a moment and say something about symbolism again. It's kind of fun to think of these sea monsters and let our imaginations just run wild. In fact, if you get on the internet, it's just full of

15:42

really creative and fantastic descriptions of and paintings and artwork of these sea creatures. They're really fun to look at. But keep in mind that the ancient Egyptians again did not actually believe that a gigantic 120 cubit long serpent, which is about 180 feet, lurks along the bottom of a primordial ocean of water. The Egyptians were trying to convey in symbolic terms something about

16:12

So here they chose to use a temporal snake to convey to we humans something about the spiritual reality of this entity that lives in a perpetually uncreated state. So if we want to learn more about what the ancients are trying to convey to us, then we're probably going to have to learn a little bit more about snakes. I've studied a lot of these symbols and I have to tell you that snakes and serpents have got to be one of the most complex symbols in the ancient world that I've come across. So I don't really want to oversimplify it here. But.

16:40

In ancient symbolism, snakes have been used both to represent these positive, very positive, and also very negative characteristics. Here I'm going to only focus on the negative since Apophis is depicted negatively by the ancient Egyptians. So why did the ancient Egyptians use a snake to convey this demonic entity? And so when we look at the life of actual snakes, we can see some really interesting aspects of the snake that would bring out this demonic idea.

17:08

For example, they're creatures of the ground. In previous episodes, we've talked about birds and how they're often used symbolically to represent gods or celestial beings or angels, those who have the ability to ascend to the heights. But see, here we have a snake who has no wings. It's permanently relegated to the dusty floor of the earth. And that is making a point about its lack of ability to ascend.

17:34

And also remember, Apophis was referred to as the fallen one who had fallen from the heights. And, you know, snakes, they lurk in dark places and hide in rocks. Their motions are subtle and sly and stealthy. And a lot of them, their skins match their environment so they can camouflage kind of who they really are inside. And if you're not alert or watching all the time, you're at risk of being stung by their venomous bite.

18:03

And just the word slither itself kind of gives me the creeps. Their motions are subtle and smooth, but in an instant they can strike with unmatched speed and punch their fangs into your skin. And in my humble opinion, they're kind of hideous. They're ugly and scaly. There's, to me, there's no natural beauty to them. And so compare this to a Kate Salt bird. Like I mentioned, I love the Kate Salt bird. Compare Kate Salt verb to a snake and you'll kind of see what I mean.

18:33

Snakes are cunning with their motions and their behaviors. Sometimes it's really difficult to decipher if this is a friendly snake or a deadly snake and their behaviors can deceive us. And their venomous bite can be extremely harmful, even lead to death. Because of that harm, then there's also this great fear attached to them. This is one of the reasons why they're using snakes to convey this demonic entity that exists down in the.

19:00

bottom depths of the primordial ocean. And you know, Hollywood uses a lot of this stuff in their movies and in their literature. You can think of Indiana Jones, right? Snakes are Indiana's Achilles heel. And even in the Harry Potter movies, you know, Harry's archenemy is Voldemort who transforms into this massive basilisk snake. And if you don't know anything about this, the legend has it that if you look into their eyes, then it leads to immediate death.

19:28

And these are all very, very old ideas. In fact, this is one of the epitaphs mentioned of Apophis. In the Bremner, Ryan Papyrus, we read Apep, who is Apophis, the fallen, the potent of glance. The authors are drawing from a rich history of these ideas. You know, there's probably a lot more characteristics of snakes that you can think of, which is why these symbols are so great. But the characteristics I've mentioned can provide us with a good starting point.

19:57

for why the ancients used a snake to convey a spiritual entity that had the potential to really do so much harm in the universe. This brings me to the other aspect of Apophis. It brings me to the sea or marine aspect of Apophis. Why does this snake live in the sea? Why is this serpent a sea serpent? And I'm guessing that most of you have already figured this out and I've already hinted at it, but once you figure it out, you'll see how it makes complete sense.

20:26

symbolically to conceive of the notion of a sea serpent, sea monster, sea dragon or leviathan. And I'll come back to it in a couple of minutes, but think on it if you haven't figured it out. We can also see this sea monster among the Babylonians and we discussed this in our last episode. We studied the Babylonian creation myth, the Anuma Elish. There we saw the god Marduk, the first son of the high god Ea, using wind and a spear.

20:55

to slay the monster Tiamant, who personified the chaotic primordial waters. It's just like what we saw in Egypt, where Apophis is the enemy of the sun god, Ray. In Babylon, Tiamant is the principal adversary of the chief Babylonian god, Marduk. In the Enuma Elish, Tiamant is explicitly understood as the deified primordial sea. She is a god.

21:22

So the battle between she and Marduk is a battle between gods. This is known as Theomachy. Theo being God or gods and Machy being war or battle. So Theomachy refers to battle amongst gods. And a couple of things are worth noting in the Enuma Elish regarding the sea monster Tiamat. And I haven't pointed this out yet in any of our episodes, but I need to hear cause they're kind of important. So first,

21:51

Tiamat, she creates an army of monsters which are led by her consort Kingu to battle Marduk. So here we have a battle and it's not just between the gods. Tiamat comes with an army and see if you can't pick this up in the following passage from the Enuma Elisha. And this comes from tablet one and it starts with line 32. This is from the BR Foster translation. And listen to this army that she composes.

22:22

forming a host that they might start hostilities. Mother Hubber, who can form everything, added countless invincible weapons, gave birth to monster serpents, pointed a fang with merciless incisors. She filled their bodies with venom for blood. Fierce dragons she clad with glories, gave them glories, made them like gods, saying, whoever sees them shall go numb with terror.

22:50

Let their bodies keep leaping forward and never retreat. She deployed serpents, dragons, and hairy hero men, lion monsters, lion men, scorpion men, mighty demons, fishmen, bull men, bearing unsparing arms, fearless in battle. Her commands were absolute. No one opposed them. Eleven indeed on this wise she created. From among the gods, her offspring, who made up her host, she raised up Kingu. It was he she made greatest among them.

23:20

Leadership of the forces, command of the host, arming, contact, ordering the attack. This point is important because we don't see a battle between two gods. We see a war between two gods, a war that involves a host, an army that has aligned itself with Tiamat. And Tiamat has an entire legion of monster serpents helping her wage war against the god Marduk.

23:50

And pay special attention to what the text says of this legion of serpents in tablet one, line 134. It says that she quote, gave birth to monster serpents. In line 136, she filled their bodies with venom for blood. You'll see as this podcast progressed that motherhood, it's often used to convey the notion of spiritual birth, not just physical birth. And I think that's kind of what's going on here in this passage.

24:19

Motherhood is a way to convey that she is the author of these serpents thinking she's their leaders She's the one who fostered and encouraged their demonic nature So what are we to

make of this army of monster serpents? So keep in mind again that this legion of monster serpents is used here Symbolically there was not an army of monster serpents slithering around in the primordial ocean. This is symbolic

24:46

and it's supposed to teach us something about spiritual reality. And also keep in mind that everything that we're reading in the Enuma Elish takes place before the creation in a pre-existent world. This account attests that before the world was created, a God of disorder along with a Legion or army of followers waged war against order, creation, and life. In tablet two, lines one to three, we read,

25:16

quote, Tiamat assembled her creatures, drew up for battle against the gods her brood. Thereafter Tiamat more than Apsu was become an evil doer. So let's not mince words here. The god Tiamat and her army of monster serpents were evil. This account attest that evil existed in the pre-creative universe.

25:45

before the earth was ever created. And this is something that we also see in the ancient Egyptian accounts. And there's another interesting aspect of Tiamat that's worth pointing out. Sometimes she's referred to as the shining one or the glistening one. And keep this in the back of your mind because it'll be very important towards the end of today's program. I also wanna point out what Marduk does with Tiamat's carcass once he slays her.

26:11

Listen closely to what he does with her carcass. And this comes from tablet four, line 135. And it begins, the Lord calmed down. He began inspecting her carcass, that he might divide the monstrous lump and fashion artful things. He split her into like a fish for drying. Half of her he set up and made as a cover, heaven. He stretched out the hide, assigned watchman. From her eyes he let the Euphrates and Tigris flow out.

26:40

He heaped up distant mountains from her, water holes he drilled through her to flow into its pools, coiled up her tail and tied it as a great bond of heaven and earth. Having spread half of her as a cover, he established the earth. So again, keep in mind, this is symbolic. Here

Marduk takes half of Tiamat's hide and stretches it out and makes a cover, heaven. And the other half of her carcass he uses to make the earth.

27:08

From her eyes come the rivers, from the heaping of her carcass, he makes mountains, et cetera. None of this really makes sense unless we understand the symbolism. What's going on here? How come he's using the sea serpent's carcass to make the earth and to make a heavenly temple? See, Tiamat represents the antithesis of life and creation. She's the embodiment of disorder, destruction, and death. It's only when Marduk slays her

27:38

that life can flourish, that the earth can be formed. And so he uses her carcass to create the earth. And this is just another way of conveying that because of Tiamat's death, the death of chaos, the creation can take place. Tiamat must die before there can be order, creation, and life in the universe. With the other half of Tiamat's hide, then Marduk makes a covering of heaven, like I just mentioned, and keep that in the back of your mind because we're gonna come back to that in a couple of minutes.

28:08

The last point that I want to make about this account in the Anuma Elish is that the war between Marduk, the firstborn of the high god Ea, and Tiamat is in large part about kingship. It's a war over who has the right to lead, to be the king. And keep in mind again that everything in the Anuma Elish takes place in a pre-existent realm. So the argument is over who in the pre-existent realm has the right to be king.

28:36

and I'll get into this more in the next episode, but as you know, Marduk comes out victorious. The Enuma Elish ends with these four lines. Okay. The entire Enuma Elish ends with these four lines and keep in mind how they reference the conquering of Tiamat, water, which is the source of life and an emphasis on Marduk's name and kingship, this heavenly kingship. And it reads, the destiny of Marduk.

29:06

whom the Igigi gods exalted. Wherever water is the drink, his name let them invoke. Let them sound abroad the song of Marduk, how he defeated Tiamat and took kingship. If we're to look at the ancient record, every time we see sea monsters or sea serpents and the war

that ensues, it's almost always associated with either the creation of the world, the battle for kingship.

29:35

or both. And if you'd like to listen to a full recording of the enuma liege and you haven't done so yet, you can listen to a full recording of it on our sister podcast, the ancient tradition audio writ. So we see these sea monsters everywhere else in the ancient record too. We can find this sea monster among the Hittites. He was known as Uli Kumi. It was a stone monster that grew in the sea and battled Teshub who was the son of the high god, Qumarbi, over the kingship.

30:05

We can find it among the Canaanites as well. They have the sea monster Yam. Now this is the Semitic word for sea. And Yam was a tyrannical violent God of the sea, chaos and death. And in the story, the high God El gives the kingship to the Prince Yam instead of Baal. But Yam abuses his power. He becomes a tyrant and then Baal and Yam battle. So again, that one's over kingship, right? Among the Greeks,

30:35

Most of you are probably familiar with this. We have the monstrous serpentine giant Typhon. Typhon attempts to overthrow the king of the gods, Zeus. And the two fight this cosmic battle, which Zeus ends up winning. Upon his defeat, Typhon is cast into Tartarus, an infernal pit beneath the earth where the gods imprison their enemies. So keep that little tidbit in the back of your mind too. Hesiod's theogony dated to around the eighth century BC.

31:04

describes Typhon like this and note how Hesiod emphasizes the noise that this sea monster makes and it should remind you of the great babbling Egyptian sea serpent Apophis or the howling Hebrew sea monster Tannen. Quote, From his shoulders grew a hundred heads of a snake, a fearful dragon with dark flickering tongues and from under the brows of his eyes and his marvelous heads flashed fire.

31:32

and fire burned from his heads as he glared. And there were voices in all his dreadful heads which uttered every kind of sound unspeakable. For at one time they made sounds such that

the gods understood, but at another the noise of a bull bellowing aloud in proud, ungovernable fury. And at another the sound of a lion, relentless of heart. And at another sounds like whelps, wonderful to hear.

32:01

And again at another, he would hiss so that the high mountains re-echoed. There's actually a very interesting tidbit that you might've missed in there. And I wanna point this out, it reads, and there were voices in all his dreadful heads, which uttered every kind of sound unspeakable. But at one time they made sounds such that the gods understood. But now they make the noise of a bull bellowing aloud in proud, ungovernable fury.

32:30

So this is super interesting. This seems to indicate that at one time, this sea monster did not babble, did not howl, did not bellow like a bull, but spoke in a way that the gods could understand. This corresponds with what the Egyptians said of the sea serpent Apophis when he referred to him as the fallen one, which also suggests that at one time, this sea monster was perhaps not a monster at all, but something much more refined. So think on that for a minute.

32:59

When we go to the Greeks and Romans, we end up with this multi-headed serpentine water monster, Hydra. Hydra was the offspring of Typhon and lived in this mythical lake of Lerna. In this account, the king of the Tyrans sends Hercules to slay Hydra, and Hercules ultimately slays Hydra by slicing off its last head with a golden sword. Among the Norse, we have the sea serpent Jormungandr,

33:29

huge monster or great beast. It was this unfathomably large sea monster who encircles Midgard, which is the earth, biting his own tail. And Jormungandr is depicted in constant conflict with Thor, the son of Odin, the All-Father Chief of the Norse gods. And in one of the versions of the myth, Thor strikes Jormungandr on the head with his t-shaped hammer and it kills him.

33:58

In the Vedic tradition, we have the dragon Vitra who hoards the waters and serves as the chief adversary of the king of the divas, Indra. Among the Hebrews, we have the primeval

sea monster Rahab or Leviathan, who is the enemy of Yahweh. In Psalms 74, 12 to 14, it reads, and noted in these verses what God does with the carcass of the Leviathan after he slain it.

34:28

quote, for God is my King of old working salvation in the midst of the earth. That it's divide the sea by thy strength. Thou breakest the heads of the dragons in the waters. Thou breakest the heads of Leviathan in pieces and gave us him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness. So note here, just like we saw with the Enuma Elyse, that there seemed to be multiple dragons in the waters, not just one. And did you catch what God did?

34:56

with the carcass of the Leviathan. He fed it to the people. So again, this is symbolic. By killing the sea monster, the God of death and destruction, God's able to provide greater nourishment and life to his people. A dead Leviathan means a living, flourishing people. And there are clear parallels here between the use of the carcass by Yahweh to feed the people and the use of the carcass by Marduk in the Babylonian creation myth too.

35:26

create the earth. So I think you're starting to get the picture here. These sea monsters show up all over in the ancient record and they're almost always connected either to the creation of the world, a battle over kingship or both. So back to my original question I asked earlier, why sea monsters? Why do these monsters or serpents reside in the sea or in the water? Why not just a snake? Why a sea snake? If you're a regular listener, the answer is pretty simple and you probably already know the answer, but in case you don't, it's because the primordial sea

35:56

is where all the uncreated, undifferentiated, lifeless elements reside. A creature of the sort we've been discussing is a perfect match for these surroundings. As the Lord of Chaos, as the ancient Egyptians referred to Apophis, there's really no better place for his residence than in this lifeless, chaotic ocean. So now you know how and why the ancients developed the

36:26

in the collective conscious. You know if we look at some of the hints that we've already looked at so far it seems like this sea monster didn't always reside in the primordial waters.

If we look at what the Greeks say at some point earlier the sea monster used to speak a language the gods understood and according to the Egyptians this sea monster must have resided in a higher sphere because he had to fall from somewhere.

36:51

It's here I wanna pause for a moment and share with you a couple of really curious passages that are written in the Midrash. If you're not familiar with the Midrash, the Midrash is the rabbinic explanations and interpretations of biblical texts or verses. And scholars date the Midrash to sometime around between about 400 and 700 AD to kind of give you the timeframe there.

37:15

And this is what they say in commenting on Job chapter nine verse seven, which refers to the Leviathan's fins. And listen to this quote, the reflection of the Leviathan's fins makes the disc of the sun dim by comparison. So that instead of each of the fins, it telleth the sun that it shines weakly. Huh? So according to the mid rash, the fins of the Leviathan

37:44

shine brighter than the sun? This is perplexing, because I thought the sea monster was just that, a monster. Yet here the rabbis are telling us that this monster shine brighter than the sun. You know, I was envisioning this dark, lonely, murky bottom of the ocean, but now I'm seeing it with a monster down there that shines brighter than the sun. And this doesn't seem to make sense.

38:12

So let's keep reading the Midrash. It continues, and this time it's commenting on Job chapter 41 verse 22, and it reads, for the Leviathan's under parts, the reflections thereof surpass the sun. Where it lieth upon the mire, there is a shining of yellow gold. Ordinarily, there is no place more filthy than the one where a fish lies. Hence, where it lieth upon the mire, there is a shining of yellow gold.

38:42

So again, this is still perplexing. Why does this sea monster shine brighter than the sun? I mean, his underbelly shines so brightly that it makes the mire look like yellow gold. Let's keep reading. The Midrash says this of Job 41 verse seven, quote, "On account of its glory,

he God brings forth his defenders because he possesses a celestial glory. The Holy One, blessed be he,

39:09

says to the ministering angels, go down and wage war with it.” So you can see it’s some interesting things in that passage. You know, the Holy One has angels who are going to war, so he has a host as well that’s going to be in this battle. But we need to read this really slowly. It says, on account of its glory, and it’s referring to the Leviathan here. What glory? This sea serpent has glory? I continue.

39:37

because he possesses a celestial glory. So this is even more perplexing. The serpent has a celestial glory and this seems really contradictory. According to this Midrash, the Leviathan possesses a, or possessed a celestial glory, which is why it shined above the sun and why the place, though at the bottom of the ocean, shined like yellow gold. Irving Jacobs, who wrote the Midrashic Process,

40:05

writes this of this passage. Quote, the imagery and language employed in the opening lines of this passage require further evaluation, particularly the phrase celestial glory. This unusual formulation occurs apparently only in the above context from which it is difficult to determine its precise significance. We may assume, however, that our unknown agodus, which means rider, is alluding to an ancient tradition, possibly biblical in origin.

40:34

that Leviathan is endowed with a supernatural splendor. The splendor of Leviathan is comparable with that of the primordial light, which according to rabbinic tradition, emanated from the mantle donned by God at the time of creation. This Leviathan radiates a heavenly splendor. Well, this is very, very interesting. This suggests that at one time, the Leviathan in the pre-existent realm

41:03

obtained a celestial glory, a glory akin to God. And in the Psalms, for whatever reason, it says he now swam in the primordial waters as the enemy of Yahweh. So something had to have happened between the obtaining of celestial glory in the celestial realm and his now

residence in the filth in the bottom of the primordial ocean as the enemy of Yahweh. And for the answer to this,

41:32

to what happened between we need to return to the book of the Holy Secrets of Enoch. In episode chapter number five, I talked about the importance of this book. So if you haven't had a chance to give it a listen, it's worth your time. In this book, Enoch is awoken by two angels standing at the head of his bed. And they call him by name, and they tell them that they're to accompany him through the heavens to the throne of God.

41:59

In the tenth heaven, Enoch sees God's face and God teaches Enoch with his own mouth all about how he created the earth. And it's here that we learn about what happened to the sea monster. In chapter 29 it reads, and this is God speaking to Enoch, quote, for all the heavenly armies I shaped an image from the essence of fire.

42:25

So right there we learn that God has a celestial army, an army that shines like fire. I'll continue. I created the orders of the incorporeal armies. So here God is telling Enoch by the use of the word orders that not everyone in God's celestial army is of the same rank. They are different ranks. Quote, I created the orders of the incorporeal armies.

42:53

their fiery weapons and their burning flame clothes. I commanded that each one should stand in rank. It's at this point in the text that we learn what happened and it reads, quote, "One from out of the rank of archangels deviated, "along with the division that was under his authority. "He conceived an impossible thought "to place his throne higher than the clouds "above the earth."

43:23

that he might become equal in rank to my honor. Wow, the sea serpent had been an archangel. That's what this passage is saying. Arch means chief. So an archangel is a chief angel. Archangels are the highest rank of angel, at least from what we can tell. And from the ancient record, we know of very few angels who are referred to as archangels. So this means...

43:51

In the celestial hierarchy of Christianity, this sea serpent must have been very much like God, full of celestial glory. From this passage, however, it appears that he had a fatal flaw. He desired to make his throne as high as God's. And this sounds quite a bit like pride, which is really interesting because in the Hebrew Bible, the sea monster is sometimes referred to as Rahab or Rahab.

44:19

which means in Hebrew, pride or arrogance. So the name that they give to the sea monster means pride. Very fascinating. So the passage in the book of the Holy secrets of Enoch continues, it says quote, he conceived an impossible thought to places thrown higher than the clouds of the earth, that he might become equal in rank to my power. I threw him out from the height with his.

44:48

angels. Okay, so now that explains a lot. God threw this prideful archangel along with all of his angels out of heaven. And we surmise from the other accounts that he and his angels were relegated to the depths of the primordial ocean. And keep in mind that all of this happened before the earth was created. The golden glow of their skin reflects who they once were. But now in the ancient accounts,

45:17

Monsters who roam the deep wrecking havoc on the universe. So whether or not you're an archangel or a monster depends on basically your level of holiness. And apparently these sea monsters don't seem to love being outside of God's presence because they do a whole lot of wailing and howling, like I mentioned before. Or as the Egyptians said, they live on in their own shouting. I love that imagery there.

45:44

The Enoch account is corroborated in the Christian New Testament, so we can find these same ideas in chapter 12 of St. John's Revelation, where we read the following account. And this starts in verse 3, quote, And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and it cast them.

46:13

to the earth. As you're probably likely aware, the book of Revelation is just loaded with symbolism. The dragon is the archangel who was thrown out of heaven. He's depicted with a lot of horns and crowns and horns generally represent power and crowns generally represent royalty and dominion. So we're supposed to have this image convey to us that this archangel was extremely powerful, royal, and had been given extensive dominion. And stars here,

46:43

generally represent glorious beings, which indicates that a third part of the heavenly beings followed after this archangel who fell. Verse 7 continues, And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil.

47:12

and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world. He was cast out into the earth and his angels were cast out with him." So in this verse, we see that a full-on war waged in heaven before the world was created between the armies of God and the armies of this fallen archangel. And in verse 9, we learn that this fallen archangel became the devil, or who we understand today as Satan.

47:40

And Satan is sometimes referred to as Lucifer. If we read in Isaiah chapter 14 verse 12 in the King James version, it says, quote, how art thou fallen from heaven, oh, Lucifer, son of the morning. So like I mentioned, we gotta study the names, right? The name here, Lucifer means light bringer. And the son of the morning refers to the morning star or Venus, right? Which has a level of glory to it. So both of these seem to harken back to Satan's

48:09

former glory as an archangel. This brings me to one last really intriguing article that I read by Andre Orlov. He's that professor out of Marquette University who I've mentioned a couple of times and who you can find on our website theancienttradition.com under noteworthy scholars. You should read everything the man writes. Great stuff. In the article I'm referring to is titled

48:39

the article by quoting Josephus, who if you're not familiar with Josephus, he was an important Roman Jewish historian who lived from 37 to 100 AD, and he wrote Jewish antiquities. In Jewish antiquities 3.154 to 156, Josephus speaks of the vestments that were worn by the high priest in the Israelite tabernacle or the later temple. And this is what Josephus says, quote.

49:08

This robe is a tunic descending to the ankles, enveloping the body and with long sleeves, tightly laced around the arms. They girded at the breast, winding to a little above the armpits, the sash, which is of the breadth of about four fingers and has an open texture, giving it the appearance of a serpent's skin. Wound it first time at the breast, after passing around, it once again, it is tied

49:37

and then hangs at length, seeping to the ankles. When I read this for the first time, I had to do a little double-take. The sash that is worn by the high priest in the temple has the appearance of serpent's skin. Orlov then quotes an author by the name of Fletcher Lewis, who examined this description by Josephus in detail, and he says this, quote,

50:07

The sash hanging at his side evokes the image of a limp and defeated serpent in the hands of its conqueror. Very interesting. And we see in St. John's Revelation chapter 1 verse 13 that the risen Christ is depicted wearing a golden sash. And it reads, quote, one like the son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot.

50:36

and gird about the paps with a golden girdle. A girdle here is used to refer to a belt. So if these scholars are correct, then we now know why the risen Lord wears a golden sash which hangs down to his ankles. He is the great high priest. He is the one who conquers and vanquishes Satan, the sea serpent and his followers to the depths of the lifeless primordial ocean. He's the one who stands.

51:04

victorious as the conqueror of evil. And it's by slaying the Leviathan, the evil-doer, that greater life and light comes into the world. So every time you see a depiction of Christ, the King of Kings, vested in a golden sash, you can think of how he vanquished the sea serpent.

And that's worth thinking on. Now I'm going to leave you with one last insight. And this is another one of those tidbits I've come across that just kind of blows my mind. In this article, Dr.

51:34

quotes this passage from the Talmudic tractate 74A, and it reads, quote, "The Holy One, blessed be He, will in time come to make a tabernacle for the righteous from the skin of the Leviathan." So here in the Talmud, it tells us that God will use the hide or the skin of the dead Leviathan to make a tabernacle. And if you're familiar with the tabernacle in the Old Testament, then you know.

52:01

He's talking about a temple. He's gonna use the height of the Leviathan to make a temple. Now, where have we heard something similar? Where have we heard of using the skin of the Leviathan to build a temple? If you thought of the Enuma Elish, then you're absolutely correct. In that account, Marduk takes half of the carcass of the sea monster Tiamat and makes a covering, a heaven. And let's not forget that heaven, where God dwells, is a temple. So,

52:31

Here we have a nearly perfect correspondence between the account in the Babylonian Enuma Elish on tablets which scholars date to 700 BC and the account given in the Talmud which was compiled between 200 and 500 AD. But here's the kicker, where did the rabbis get the idea that the Leviathan skin would be used to make a temple? Because the Enuma Elish, which was found in the library of Asher Bonipol,

53:00

wasn't found until 1849 AD, which is some 1200 years after the Talmud was compiled. This is just stunning to me. And it all speaks to a singular religious tradition in deep antiquity, the ancient tradition. That wraps up this edition of the ancient tradition. If you've enjoyed today's episode, feel free to share it with your family and friends.

53:29

As always, I'm going to leave you with the words of William Shakespeare, knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven. I'm Jack Lohan.

53:40

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Episode #16 - The Council of the Gods

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00:29

Welcome to today's edition of the ancient tradition. I'm your host, Jack Logan. Welcome to all of you. Welcome back. If you're a new listener, we welcome you to the program. We're so glad to have you join us. We've got a great program today. It's titled the Council of the Gods. And for you new listeners on this program, we've been digging deep into the written records of the ancient world to see if we can't.

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reconstruct the original religious tradition that the ancients tell us was given to human beings by God or a Supreme Being from the very beginning from the dawn of time Now you might be asking yourself. How could we possibly do this? Well, the ancient world is brimming with ancient texts and on this program We dive into those texts and we search for themes We're looking for the themes or the motifs that we can find that show up time and time again in the ancient record

01:25

And then when we find one that we can trace all the way back to the dawn of time, then we know we have something special. Something that tells us what was taught to human beings in this original religious tradition. And I call those particular themes the stubborn bits, the bits that persist in the human record, despite centuries of alterations, variations, innovations, and even deterioration.

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For example, for the past couple of episodes, we've been discussing the creation. The ancients placed in an extraordinary amount of importance on the creation, so we decided to start there. And so far, we've identified three stubborn bits that seem to show up time and time again in the ancient record. And I've coined these motifs, the pillars of creation. And they include so far, number one, that before the creation took place, the universe was made up.

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of an infinite mass of unorganized lifeless elements, and they're described symbolically by the ancients as a primordial ocean or sea. Number two, God infused something from his essence, which is described symbolically by the ancients as a brooding wind into the unorganized lifeless primordial elements, which prepared the elements

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for life and creation. And number three, the ancient record tells us a demonic evil force dwelt in the depths of the unorganized lifeless primordial waters. And this is described symbolically by the ancients as an impressive sea monster or sea serpent. And this last pillar is actually a pretty good example. The description of a sea monster lurking in the filthy sludge at the bottom of the primordial ocean.

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is a good example of a stubborn bit. A number of ancient myths and theologies tell us of a terrible sea monster living in the waters. In fact, in our last episode, I quoted Oliver Crimin, who's the senior curator of fish at the Natural History Museum in London, and he said this, quote, "Sea serpent myths go back into antiquity to a point in time we can't even discern."

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So we can trace this idea or motif all the way back really to the dawn of time. The myths and theologies that tell us about this sea monster, okay, they vary in terms of details, like how

many heads it had or which ocean it lived in or how it was eventually slain. But they all agree that some sort of sea monster lived in the waters and that's a stubborn bit.

04:19

So today we're gonna discuss another stubborn bit, a theme that we can trace back to the earliest primeval history, the Council of the Gods. This idea actually persists into the modern age, believe it or not, but it's in a very deteriorated form and it shows up in blockbuster films. And you think about this, we can look at the Marvel universe, Thor, Love and Thunder, in there it features Zeus.

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who's played by Russell Crowe. They show him enthroned governing a council of gods. We can also see this like in the Star Wars saga, which shows the grand Jedi master presiding over a body of Jedis who govern the Jedi order, known as the Jedi High Council. So today we're gonna dive into the ancient record and learn everything that we can about this council of the gods that existed before the earth

05:17

If you've ever wondered what the heavens are like or what's going on there, this is a great place to start. We're gonna learn a great deal today from the ancients about how the heavens are organized and how God operates. So let's jump in. Paul B. Sumner, who's out of Pepperdine University, actually wrote his master's thesis on the Divine Council. So I want to start with a quote from him of what kind of is an introduction to this. He says, quote,

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Divine assemblies were a common feature of all the major ancient cultures, Israelite, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Canaan. Paternal gods sitting in council with their children, grandchildren, visors, courtiers, and numerous soldiers was the standard conception of the organization and function of the divine world. These gods held council sessions

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to debate plans of action and to vote on propositions, all to administer the cosmos. The assembly edicts were then executed by the appropriate member deities. Although the names, rituals, and myths might vary, the overall conception of the heavenly world in the ancient Near East was that a divine government existed.

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So from this we can see that the divine council is clearly one of these stubborn bits. We actually find reference to a council or an assembly of gods in the earliest ancient writings that date to the third millennium BC in Sumer in Egypt and the second millennium BC in Mesopotamia and Ugarit. So let's start with Sumer, one of the cradles of civilization and see what we can't learn.

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Thorkild Jacobson, a renowned Danish historian who specialized in Assyriology and Sumerian literature, he wrote a book on the divine council in Sumer. It's called *The Treasures of Darkness, a History of Mesopotamian Religion*. And this is what he says, quote, the highest authority in the Mesopotamian universe was the assembly of the gods. It met when occasion arose in Nippur in the corner of the forecourt of Ikor.

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Ikor was Enlil, the god Enlil's temple there, called Ubsuukina. Presiding over the assembly was the god of heaven, An. That's spelled A-N. The gods would bind themselves by oath to abide by the decisions the assembly might make. Proposals were then placed before them and voted upon, each god indicating assent by saying, *heem*, which means so be it.

08:11

can see these characteristics in a text known as the Lament for Ur and this is dated to about 2000 BC. If you're interested in seeing what it looks like it's currently housed in the Louvre in Paris. In this text the goddess Nengal pleads to the council of the gods not to destroy her city Ur. So as I read this imagine this goddess, the goddess Nengal, standing before the council of gods

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in the forecourt of the temple of Ikor, which literally means mountain house. And interestingly, it was also known, this temple is also known as the mooring rope of heaven and earth, the rope that tied heaven and earth together. And keep that little tidbit in your back pocket, because we're going to hit on that in a couple of months. It's very important. I'm going to read it all the way through once and then read it again and stop here and there to kind of explain parts of the text. Okay.

09:08

So the goddess Nengal here is talking, she's addressing the council. It reads, "Then verily to the assembly, "where the crowd had not yet risen, "while the Anunnaki binding themselves "to uphold the decision were still seated. "I dragged my feet and I stretched out my arms. "Truly I shed my tears in front of An." Okay, so we need to understand who the Anunnaki are. And to do that,

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First, we've got to understand who An is. An is the highest ranked among the gods. He's the highest ranked god. As Jacobson says, he is quote, the fountainhead of all authority and authoritative commands, whether parental, lordly or royal. He is the power that lifts existence out of chaos and anarchy and makes it an organized whole.

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Listen to this description of the god An in the Isna Larsa period. And this is this dates to around 2000 to 1800 BC. And this is the description they give of this god An. Quote, the exalted Lord, the leader, the skillful officiant, the supreme one, the one with head held high, the surpassing one, the fukund breed bull of honored name, greatly imbued with awe, whose grandly proclaimed decrees.

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no none who can quash them. Ascended step by step the pure mountain of his office, took his seat on the throne dais on king of the gods. So there's important parts of his description here. He's described as a bull, which I'll explain in just a second, but notice that he has an honored name. There's that importance of naming again that we see. He's a skillful officiant. So as a political role that he has, he's very good at it.

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that what I want to stress here is that An does not reign as king of the gods alone. He's married to the goddess Ki-K-I or Kishar, his queen. They're the parents, the father and mother of all the gods, which is one of the reasons he's envisioned as a fuchund breed bull. He's the ancestor of the gods. He's full of fertility.

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all things conform to his will. And that's that divine utterance again. He's the father of and the king over the council of the gods. Okay, so now that we have an idea who Anu is, then what is the Anunnaki? Well, the Anunnaki actually means princely offspring or the offspring

of An. So the Anunnaki are the royal offspring of the supreme god An and his wife, of course.

12:03

They are on and keys children, their grandchildren, and their great grandchildren. These are the gods. The same text I just read to you from the Isna'l-Arsa period continues by saying quote, the Anunnaki, the gods in their entirety gathered to him at the place of decision-making. So these gods are gathering together. So from this passage, it's pretty clear that the Anunnaki, An's children and posterity, made up either a formidable part of the council of the gods,

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or they were the actual council of the gods, all of his children. So back to the original text, the lament of Ur. Truly with the goddess Ningal speaking to the council, truly I shed my tears in front of An. Truly I myself mourned in front of Enlil that its inhabitants be killed. So let's take a second here and talk about who Enlil is. Enlil is one of the gods and he's next in rank to An.

13:02

to the supreme God on. And interestingly, considering the episode that we did on the incomprehensible brooding wind, episode number 13, and Lil means Lord of Wind. In particular, he represents the moist winds that bring about the fertility of life of spring. And all of that corresponds really nicely to everything that we said in episode number 13 of the power of the wind to transform the primordial elements.

13:29

from a lifeless state to one of life and creation. So we're getting those same motifs here in the god Enlil. Enlil is the firstborn princely son of An. And listen to this hymn, the hymn to Enlil, and it's dated to the late third millennium. And listen to how they describe the god Enlil. When he shines on the throne dais in his temple Imhersog.

13:56

Like the rainbow, he too circles the heavens. Like a floating cloud, he goes his own way. He is the one prince of heaven, the only great one of earth. He is the exalted tutelary, which is like the guardian or protector, God of the Anunnaki. Paul Sumner notes, in some texts, An's headship seems to be of past to his eldest son, and Lil.

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Sometimes we talk about An heading up the council of the gods and then it seems to be passed on to Enlil and he heads up the council of the gods. The hymn continues, you Lord Enlil who are Lord, God and King, who are the judge and decision maker of the universe, your noble word is as weighty as heaven. See, there's that divine entrance again, the noble word. You know no opposition. At your word, all the Anuna gods are hushed. So.

14:50

Anuna is Anunaki again. So let's go back to the original text, the lament of Ur, and listen to the role of the divine council in these lines. This is Ningal, the goddess speaking again. May Ur not be destroyed. So she's pleading. Don't destroy my city, Ur. I said indeed to them. And may its people not be killed. I said indeed to them. But Ah never bent towards those words. Did soothe my heart. Behold.

15:18

They gave instruction that the city be destroyed. By they, she's talking about the divine council. The divine council had decided that the city Ur was going to be destroyed. Behold, they gave instruction that Ur be destroyed, and as its destiny decreed, that its inhabitants be killed. So this council had decided together that the inhabitants in Ur, or the city of Ur, would be destroyed, and they decided this by decree.

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So we're already getting an idea of some of the functions of this divine council. We learned quite a bit about what happens in the heavens from these passages. So let's take a closer look here. First, I know there are many modern day conceptions of God as a formless divine essence that doesn't reside anywhere but resides everywhere, that God isn't anybody but everybody and that God is a concept and not a person, but

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That is just not what the ancients taught. The ancients taught that God resided in a particular place in the heavens. He had a home. In these passages, the Supreme God Anu resides in a mountain. The passage says, quote, An, the exalted Lord, the leader, ascended step by step the pure mountain of his office.

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We've pointed out several times in this podcast that mountains are symbolic representations of God's temple, be it God's temple in heaven or his temple on earth. In the ancients, wherever we find them, be they in Egypt or Mesopotamia, Cana, Japan, Cambodia, India, Central America, used mountains to symbolize God's abode. We also saw this in our very first episode when we looked at the

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Aboriginal tribes in Australia and New South Wales, if you remember that, if you haven't listened to that episode, give it a listen, where they describe Bayami living in a mountain, a floral, beautiful, floral mountain. So we're seeing this concept or motif really, literally all over the world. And we're gonna talk about this more in coming weeks. So we'll come back to it. The ancients used a physical mountain to symbolically represent the place where God abides. And they did this for...

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lot of reasons and I want to just hit on two today. Okay so the first is that the ancients like they do with most of their symbols are using something tangible from the physical world that human beings can relate with but they're doing this to teach us something about the spiritual realm. So we have to understand what this symbol of a mountain means and why they're equating it with God's temple. So in this case the ancients are using the mountain in part to emphasize its height.

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height of a mountain actually represents holiness. So to ascend or climb is to become more holy and to fall or to descend is to become less holy or unholy. To ascend the mountain symbolically represents that as one climbs one becomes holier and holier. One becomes more like God until they reach the summit of the mountain where they're actually like God. To call God the high God

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is akin to emphasizing the superlative nature of his holiness, to say that he is the high God. And of course, God resides on the summit of the mountain because he is the embodiment of holiness. The symbolism of the mountain temple was so much a part of the fabric of Mesopotamians that they actually built their temples to look like mountains. And they call their temples ziggurats. If you've never seen one before, go Google it and you'll

19:05

clearly see this mountain motif. And likewise, to descend to the depths, like where the terrible sea monster resides and in the filthy bottom of the Primordial Waters, symbolically represents that one has fallen or has become more and more unholy until he, at the depths of the sea, has become the opposite of God, has become the embodiment of unholiness, just like what is said of the hideous sea serpent,

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who the ancients describe as evil and demonic. Pretty much anytime the ancients refer to us ascending or descending to the depths, they're symbolically stressing something about the level of that individual's holiness or unholiness. Second, whether God actually lives on the summit of a celestial mountain, I really don't know. But I'm really confident.

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that what the ancients are teaching us here is that God resides in a place in the heavens that is supernally holy. This mountain symbolism implies that not everything in the heavens is supernally holy. There are places where God does not reside, like farther down the mountain where things are less and less holy. If this were not the case, then there would be no reason for the ancients to use mountain symbolism.

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to represent where God resides. Now, where God resides, where he lives, his abode is in the holiest place. All right, I've strayed a little bit from my main point here, but all of this is to say that the ancients taught that God has an actual residence in the heavens, in a temple, and that where God resides is different. It's distinct from the rest of the heavens by way of its supernal level of holiness.

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The second thing we learn from these passages is that in God's temple, in the holiest part of the heavens, he sits on a throne. The passage we read about the God on said, quote, the exalted Lord, the leader ascended step by step. The pure mountain of his office took seat on his great throne. Dias on King of the gods. Wow. There there's a lot going on here.

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the God of heaven sits on a throne dais. Now, a throne dais is a throne on a raised platform. And this throne, of course, indicates that the God of heaven is a king. It even says that right

in the passage that he is the king of the gods. So what are we to understand by this? Well, in the world that we live in, monarchy is a form of civil government.

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There are all types of civil governments in the world that we could choose from. There's oligarchies, aristocracies, democracies, republics, confederations, feudalism, socialism, tyrants. We could go on and on. There's just so many to choose from. But in this passage, it's telling us that there is a civil government in heaven. A civil government. Think on that for a minute. I'd never really given much thought to the need for a civil government in the heavens.

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You know, why would God need to form a government in the heavens? And the only thing I can surmise is that, like here on earth, not everybody is on board with God's principles of righteousness. So there would be some need to exercise civil governance to establish order even in the heavens. And here, the ancients are telling us that that form of civil government in the heavens isn't a democratic republic. It's not a socialist government.

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It's not a confederacy, it's a divine monarchy. A government headed by a divine monarch. And maybe you'd never given this a lot of thought either, but think on it for a minute, and you'll recognize that within the Judeo-Christian tradition, the heavens are often referred to as the kingdom of God. And that makes sense now. Now that we recognize that a divine monarch is in operation of the heavens.

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The third thing that we learn from these passages is that the divine monarch is somewhat different from most earthly monarchies because God, the supreme monarch, doesn't appear to operate unilaterally. So from what we see from these passages, God does not act alone and then command everyone to do what he says. Rather, we see that God holds a council. He's holding a council or assembly of the gods where God seeks out the other gods'

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and then the council votes on how the kingdom should be governed. Now this is super interesting. An all-powerful, all-knowing God seeking out the opinions and ideas and thoughts from other gods. I mean there's just so much to think about here. Why would God

do this? And how would this benefit governance? You know, I don't know all the answers to these questions, but I definitely think that they're worth thinking about.

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And let's not forget that the gods who make up the Anunnaki are An's offspring. That's literally what Anunnaki means. These are his children, his family, his children's children, his grandchildren. So An is holding a council with his children. And I think that's very interesting. The Mesopotamian text describes the council of the gods as a decision-making body.

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And the texts show how the divine council wrestles over decisions about all sorts of issues. Sometimes it's over who is responsible for which aspects of the creation. Other times like we saw in the Lament of Ur, it's over what to do with evil cities. And like we'll see in the Enuma Elish, over who is willing to fight the sea dragon Tiamat. Jacobson writes that the divine council quote,

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on wrongdoers, human and divine. And it was the authority that elected and deposed officers such as kings, human and divine. This body was the body that distributed assignments among the gods. Assignments are roles that are often referred to in these texts as destinies. Fourth, we really can't ignore the elephant in the room here. These texts speak of a council of gods.

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I've listened to some of what Michael Heiser has said. He's written and said a lot about the Council of the Gods in the biblical texts. And I'm not sure how familiar he is with the Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Ugaritic texts. And I've read several others too. These are primarily adherents of the Judeo-Christian tradition who try and use all kinds of intellectual gymnastics to try and convince us that what these texts are saying, they're not really saying. They try to tell us that these texts are not really talking about.

26:19

gods in the plural form because in traditional Christianity it's understood that there's only one god. So they try and convince us that really these texts are talking about a council of like

semi-divine gods or they're just a host of heaven or they're angels. They want to erase gods plural from these texts. And hey maybe the divine council does include angels or beings of

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but the texts, lots of them, literally say, this is a council of gods, plural. Even the texts in the biblical canon use Elohim, the plural form of God, which means gods. That's what these texts actually say. And let me remind you that we can trace these texts back to the dawn of civilization. I know this is gonna sound heretical to many of you, but.

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From what we can see in the ancient texts, strict monotheism shows up much later. We'll dive into this more in our next episode, so don't hang up the phone just yet if you don't like what you're hearing. In that episode, we'll dive into the biblical texts that refer to the council of the gods, and then we'll break it all down for you. And this brings me to the fifth thing that we learned from these texts. These texts indicate there is a rank order of some type among the gods. For starters,

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the council of the gods texts, whether in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Cana, or among the Israelites or early Christians tell us that civil government in the heavens is patriarchal. Now, don't throw bricks just yet if you don't like what you're hearing, because the Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Canaanite texts also all indicate that the supreme monarch ruled with his wife a queen. Just like we see among earthly kings, like King Charles and his wife, Queen.

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In Mesopotamia, the supreme monarch, On, ruled with his wife, Key. In Egypt, the supreme monarch, Ra, ruled with his wife, Hathor. In Cana, the supreme monarch, El, ruled with his wife, Asherah. So you get the picture. In the primary episode on the Enuma Elish, which I hope several of you had a chance to listen to, we saw how the Enuma Elish starts out with a genealogy of the generations of the gods.

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And they do this because it emphasizes the line of succession among heavenly kings, from father to firstborn son to father to firstborn son. We saw that here too, where On is the supreme monarch, but that his son, his firstborn son, and Lil is also made a king. So we kind

of surmise from these texts that there are many kings in the heavens who are either co-regents,

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with their father and are subordinate to their fathers who are kings over them. But as we just mentioned, these heavenly kings also reign with their wives who are queens. At this point you might be thinking to yourself, okay, all of this sounds too much like the way earthly kingship is ordered on earth. Among earthly kings we see kings and queens ruling together. The line of succession is kept within the family. The first line of succession goes to the firstborn son.

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There are multiple kings over different nations, states, et cetera, et cetera. And you'd be right. So you might be thinking, hey, the ancients just made up all of this stuff to legitimize their own family line of kings. And maybe you're right, maybe they did, but maybe they didn't. Remember the Sumerian king list directly says that kingship as a form of civil government, quote, descended.

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from heaven. In other words, the Sumerians are telling us that earthly kingship was modeled after the order of kingship in the heavens and not the other way around. They were expected to model this divine government that took place in the heavens here on earth. And from my research, I found the theology of kingship because there is a theology associated with kingship.

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that it's far, far more sophisticated and profound in its depth than one could ever imagine. So much so that I find it difficult to believe that a Mesopotamian made it all up just as a way to legitimize his rule. And if you were that Mesopotamian, would you have made a plan that involved sharing your power with a council? Why not make something up that legitimizes your total and complete control over the kingdom? One where you didn't have to answer to anyone.

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Like all things religious, where you come down on this is a matter of faith. And I believe knowledge can help build faith, which is why I've spent so much time studying these ancient

texts and why I've put together this podcast. If you're interested in learning more about the theology of kingship, to which I've just referred, I started going through some of it during the coronation of King Charles the third and Queen Camilla, and you can find those episodes on this podcast, but as the podcast progresses,

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we're going to get more into the theology of kingship because we are really far from done with that. The rank order of gods in these texts points more to henotheism than polytheism. Henotheism is the worship of a primary god or gods, but it also doesn't deny the existence of other gods. And you'll see as this podcast continues that within almost all pantheons, one of the gods is established as the supreme monarch. The high god or the god.

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the most high God, which is language that is much more Hinotheistic than Polytheistic. In the text we've just read, the King of the Gods presides over the Council of Gods in a post-creation context. The earth has already been created. But in the Enuma Elish, the Babylonian creation epic, the entire epic takes place before the creation. We see the Council of the Gods

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deliberating over what to do about the rebellion of the sea serpent Tiamat and her consort Kingu. In this passage, the council is looking for a god who is willing to do battle against the terrifying Tiamat. And so I'm going to be reading from tablet two and this is the Oxford translation by Stephanie Daly. In this passage, the god Ea has slain Tiamat's consort Apsu.

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He's asked by his father, the god Anshar, to go back and slay Tiamat. Ea tries, but the sea serpent Tiamat is just too much for him. In this passage, the god Ea is relaying to his grandfather, the king of the gods, god Anshar, his experience with the terrifying sea monster Tiamat, and it reads, "My father, Tiamat's actions were too much for me. I searched for her course,

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but my spell was not equal to her. Now, spell is that divine under its again. Her strength is mighty. She is completely terrifying. Her crowd is too powerful. Nobody could defy her. Her

noise never lessens. It was too loud for me. I feared her shout. I turned back. But father, you must not relax. You must send someone else to her. You must disband her regiments.

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confuse her advice before she can impose her power on us. So you can just feel his pleading, I can't beat her, but please send somebody who can. At this point in the text, the god, the king of the gods, Anshar doesn't know what to do. So he calls the council of the gods together. It reads, Anshar was speechless and stared at the ground. He gnashed his teeth and shook his head in despair at Ea. Now the Igigi,

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Now the Igigi is actually part of the council of the gods. It's the younger generation of gods and the Anunnaki are the older generation. So we have the Igigi assembled. Now the Igigi assembled all the Anuki. They sat silently for a while, tight lipped. Finally they spoke. Will no other god come forward? Is fate fixed? So they're looking for a god to challenge the sea serpent.

35:00

but nobody has come forward. It continues, then Ea from his secret dwelling called the perfect one of Anshar, father of the gods, whose heart is perfect like a fellow citizen or countryman, the mighty heir who was to be his father's companion. So here Ea has an idea. The god Ea says, what about the mighty heir, the one who's perfect? Well, who might this heir be? Well, it's the son.

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the heir in the line of succession, the God who is next in line to be the King of the Gods, his name is Marduk and it is Aes son. So note here, we're starting to see a very close connection between the slaying of the dragon and kingship. The mighty heir who was to be his father's champion, who rushes fearlessly into battle, Marduk the hero, he told him his innermost design saying,

35:58

Oh, Marduk, take my advice. Listen to your father. You are the son who sets his heart at rest. Approach Anshar, drawing near to him, and make your voice heard. Stand your ground. He will be calmed by your sight. The Lord Marduk rejoiced at the word of his father, and he

approached and stood before Anshar, which is his grandfather. Anshar looked at him, and his heart was filled with

36:28

He kissed him on the lips and put away his trepidation. So here Aya is telling Marduk, oh Marduk you're the one, you're the one that's gonna be able to slay the dragon here. You're the one we've been looking for. You will make the king of the gods so happy. At this point Marduk addresses the king of the gods, his grandfather Anshar. Father, don't stay so silent. Open your lips. Let me go.

36:57

and let me fulfill your heart's desire. Anshar, don't stay so silent. Open your lips, let me go, and let me fulfill your heart's desire. So the king of the gods, Anshar, he's not talking. My guess is he's really contemplating what's going on here. Here's his beloved grandson, who is willing to go and battle against this ferocious, hideous monster. And he's probably thinking through here of the possible wounds

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his son could incur by going to battle. Here, Anshar, the king of the gods addresses Marduk. And keep in mind that all of this is taking place in the council of the gods. So this is the king of the gods speaking. What kind of man has ordered you out to this war? My son, don't you realize that it is Tiamat who will advance against you with arms? So we see here Anshar's genuine concern for his son, grandson Marduk.

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Marduk answered, father, my creator rejoice and be glad. You shall soon set your foot upon the neck of Tiamat. Anshar replied, then go son, knowing all wisdom. Well Tiamat with your pure spell, which is that divine utterance. The Lord Marduk rejoiced at the word of his father. His heart was glad and he addressed his father, Lord of the gods, fate of the great gods.

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If indeed I am to be your champion, if I am to defeat Tiamat and save your lives, convene the council, name a special fate, sit joyfully together in Ibshu Ukenaku." All right, wow. So this assembly that we have, it looks like not everyone's there or it's not an official meeting of

the assembly. It's not quite sure. So here Marduk's saying, hey, if I'm the one that you have chosen to...

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slay the dragon, then let's convene an actual official of council here and have them assign this responsibility to me, which apparently, you know, the council must do. After that, we will all sit joyfully together. Now, the Ibushi Ukinaku is actually the name of the divine assembly hall where the council of the gods met together in the temple. So at this point, the king of the gods, Anshara, who presides over the council of the gods, calls for an official

39:23

And here he is speaking to one of his advisors. Oh, kaka, visor who pleases me, have the gods my fathers brought before me. Let all of the gods be brought to me. Let there be conversation. Let them sit at a banquet. Let them eat grain. Let them drink choice wine. And that's kind of interesting there, where you've got bread and wine going on. And then let them decree a destiny for Marduk, their champion.

39:53

So Kaka, Anshar's advisor, goes out, calls the gods to an official meeting while all the time declaring how the vicious Tiamat has readied her terrible army for battle. And it's here that Kaka tells the gods a little more about Marduk. He's speaking here in behalf of the king of the gods, Anshar, and it reads, "I sent Anu, but he was unable to face her. "Nudimud, whose ea panicked and turned back,

40:23

then Marduk, sage of the gods, your son, came forward. He wanted of his own free will to confront Tiamat. He addressed his words to me. If indeed I am to be your champion to defeat Tiamat and save your lives, convene the council, name a special fate. So at this point, the visor Kakad petitions the gods to hurry up and get the council together.

40:52

to decree or which I think is kind of like a vote, decree Marduk's assignment or role as the one that's gonna take the battle to Tiamat. He says, hurry and decree your destiny for him quickly so that he may go and face your formidable enemy. At this point then the council of gods assembled together. It reads, they milled around and then came all the great gods who fixed the fates, entered into Anshar's presence.

41:21

and was filled with joy. So recall here that the king of the gods, Anshar is seated on a throne. So the council enters into the presence of the king of the gods. It's interesting the words they use there entered into Anshar's presence. Each kissed the other in the assembly. There was conversation, they sat at the banquet and they ate grain and they drank choice wine. And they decreed.

41:50

destiny for Marduk their champion and he took up residence as ruler before his fathers. It's clear from the text here that at this point that the council of the gods decree Marduk's destiny or agree that yes Marduk is the one chosen to battle against Tiamat and then he's taken up residence as ruler. So we're starting to see a connection between that kingship.

42:18

and the conquering of the Leviathan or of chaos. The council says of Marduk, your destiny is unequalled. Your word has the power of Anu. Oh Marduk, you are honored among the great gods. Your destiny is unequalled. Your word has the power of Anu. See we're getting the word here again. You see that in the divine utterance that Marduk's ability to command the elements and to enact his

42:47

impressive and from this day onwards your command shall not be altered. Yours is the power to exalt and abase. May your utterance be law. So we're getting that civil order here too. Your word never be falsified. Omar Duke you are our champion. We hereby give you sovereignty over all of the whole universe. Sit in the

43:17

preeminent. At this point in the epic something very interesting happens. The council of the gods having just applauded Marduk's ability to divinely utter challenge him to demonstrate his ability by causing something to form. So we're getting some cosmogony things going on here about his ability to create. They want him to create something via divine utterance.

43:42

They're sort of testing him to see if he can take the primordial waters, the chaotic lifeless elements, which are personified by Tiamat, and command the elements to take form, to

impose order on them, to create something. This is fascinating, listen to this. And then they addressed Farduk, their son. May you decree, O Lord, impress the gods. May your decree, O Lord, impress the gods.

44:09

Command to destroy and to recreate and let it be so. Speak and let the constellation vanish. Speak it again and let the constellation reappear. He spoke and at his word, the constellation vanished. He spoke to it again and the constellation was recreated. The council of the gods having just witnessed Marduk's ability to command the lifeless elements.

44:39

then do something very interesting. Listen to what they do. When the gods, his fathers, saw how effective his utterance was, they rejoiced. They proclaimed, Marduk is king. They invested him with scepter, throne, and staff of office. In these lines, it looks like the council of the gods is making Marduk a king, but that actually may not be the case because from what we see later in the text,

45:09

Marduk is officially crowned or coronated only after he has slain Tiamat the Leviathan. So here this must be some sort of preliminary preparation for his eventual kingship. It's preparing him for that kingship that will come. But notice how in this epic we're starting to see a tight connection between divine utterance, which among other things is the power to create.

45:36

conquer chaos and command the elements to obey his commander to form which is creation and kingship and at this point in the text the council of the gods then do something else really interesting they endow Marduk with weapons so that he can successfully conquer the Leviathan Tiamat it reads they give him an unfacable weapon to crush the foe go and cut off the life of Tiamat

46:04

Let the winds bear her blood to us as good news. Okay, now did you catch that? If you're a regular listener, I hope you caught that. One of the weapons that they gave Marduk to battle and destroy Tiamat was wind. The gods, his fathers, gave him wind. Okay, it continues. The gods, his fathers, thus decreed the destiny of the Lord.

46:33

and sent him on the path of peace and obedience. So here, the council then, whether they voted or stood and said, “‘Him,’ here the gods then decreed his destiny. They elected him to be the one to take on Tiamat. After Marduk successfully conquers Tiamat, the sea serpent, then the council of the gods reconvene and the text reads, and this is from tablet five, “‘Laamu and Laamu,’ these were some of the oldest gods,

47:03

and all his fathers, so we’re talking about all of his ancestors and his family, embraced him. Now this is Marduk after he’s come back victorious from slaying the Leviathan. And Anshar the king proclaimed that there should be a reception for him. Anu and Lil and Aya each presented him with gifts. Damkina, his mother, exclaimed with joy at him. I love that. I think it’s really interesting that his

47:32

Marduk’s mother is mentioned here. Here she’s exclaiming joy that he was able to slay the dragon. The Agigi assembled and all of them did obeisance to him. The Anunnaki, each and every one, kissed his feet. The whole assembly collected together to prostrate themselves. All right, and just to vision this, you can see this, this entire council of gods.

47:59

Marduk walks in, he is victorious over the horrendous Leviathan. And the entire council of gods prostrate themselves and kiss his feet. That’s pretty powerful. They took off his clothes, which were enveloped in the dust of combat. With Cyprus, they sprinkled his body. This is very interesting here. Cyprus, right, is the tree. The Cyprus is actually...

48:26

the holy tree or the tree of life. So they’re sprinkling something of this tree on his body and that doesn’t make much sense to sprinkle a tree. So I think really what they’re saying here is an anointing is taking place. They’re taking fragrance of a tree that’s been infused into the anointing oil and they’re sprinkling his body. He put on a princely garment, a royal aura, a splendid crown.

48:54

He took up a mace and grasped it in his right hand. Lamu and Laamu made their voices heard and spoke to the Igigi. And this is what they said. Previously Marduk was just our beloved son, but now he is our king. Take heed of his command. Next, they spoke and proclaimed in the unison. So this is the entire, this sounds like, I don't know if it's just Lamu and Laamu.

49:23

or it's the entire divine council. They proclaim in unison, Lugal dimmer on Kiah is his name. Trust in him. So this is pretty interesting. Having come off Victor over the Leviathan, the divine council officially coordinates Marduk, their king. They appear to anoint him. They place royal robes on him. And then they give him the emblems of kingship. And then,

49:53

Last of all, they give him a new name. His new name, Lugal Demer Ankiah, means King of the Gods of Heaven and Earth. He is the King of all things. If you're an astute listener, you may have noticed some parallels here between this account in the Mesopotamian record and the Christian account of Christ.

50:20

slaying the dragon in St. John's Revelation. Revelation chapter 13 verse 1 says, And he stood upon the sand of the sea and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. So we're seeing the Leviathan here and

50:46

Remember the name, the name is the essence of what the beast is, it's blasphemy. Verse seven, and it was given on him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. So this, there's the spiritual connotations here that this serpent, this Leviathan, this terrible monster has it on his war path to destroy the saints.

51:10

Then in Hebrews chapter two verse 14, and this is speaking of Christ's sacrifice, it reads quote, that through death, he, speaking of Christ, might destroy him, the dragon that had the power of death. That is the devil. And in the same chapter, in Hebrews chapter two, Christ is coronated a king. In the same chapter of which we talk about how his sacrifice is what led to the death of the dragon.

51:40

And then we see his coronation, it reads, and this is speaking of God the Father coronating Christ the Son as King. It says, quote, “Thou crownedest Him with glory and honor, “and didst set Him over the works of thy hands.” So just like we saw in the Enuma Elish, where Marduk slays the dragon and is then crowned a king by the gods in the divine council, here in Hebrews,

52:09

Christ destroys the dragon and is crowned a king by his father, God the Father. And don't forget, like we learned in the last episode, Christ wears the slain golden Leviathan in the form of a sash around his waist as part of his high priestly vestments, a symbolic reminder of his victory over the terrible dragon. The underlying implications here, the underlying spiritual implications here,

52:38

between vanquishing the awful dragon and the successive coronation as a king is really quite stunning if we only give it a little thought. So you might want to think on that. And if these two accounts are in any way connected, which I maintain they are by way of the ancient tradition, then we've just learned that a divine council played an intricate role in electing Marduk or Christ.

53:07

to be the one to slay the dragon and to be the one that would be king. And let's not forget that Marduk's triumph over Tiamat sets the stage for the creation of the earth. There's so much more I'd like to comment on here, but it will take us way too far afield from today's subject matter, which is.

53:30

why I started putting together an explanation and commentary series on the Enuma Elish. And I released the first episode this week. Many of you saw that. So as time permits, I'll release an explanation and commentary on the rest of the Enuma Elish tablets, but those I'm going to release on our sister podcast, the Ancient Tradition Audio Write. So you'll be able to find them there. That wraps up this edition of the Ancient Tradition. In our next episode, we'll start where we left off here.

53:59

and will examine the presence of the Council of the Gods in the biblical canon and its connection to the cosmogony. I'll leave you there. Remember in the words of William Shakespeare, knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven. I'm Jack Logan.

54:22

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Episode #17 - More Than One God

<https://theancienttradition.com/17-more-than-one-god/>

00:00

Music

00:10

You're listening to The Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production. Music provided by Joseph McDade. He is your host, Dr. Jack Logan.

00:29

Welcome to the ancient tradition. I'm your host, Jack Logan. It's great to have you along for today's episode. Today we're gonna continue our discussion on the fourth pillar of creation, the council of the gods. In our last episode, we established that divine councils were a common feature of all major ancient cultures. We find them all over in the ancient world.

00:54

The ancients taught that a civil government existed in the heavens, a government that was headed by a divine monarch. They taught that this monarch, the high god, reigned as a celestial king from the summit of his mountain home on a throne dais. But he didn't act alone. The ancients taught that the high god presided as supreme authority over a council, a council of gods, a council.

01:20

who made proposals, assigned responsibilities, delegated over important decisions and voted, and then bound themselves by oath to the decisions that were made in that assembly. If you are a first time listener or you haven't had a chance to listen to our last episode, I highly recommend giving it a listen. It'll give you some really important background. Unlike a lot of podcasts, which primarily produce standalone episodes, this podcast is

01:48

progressive, which means that each episode builds upon the previous episode. So when you get a chance, be sure to catch up on the episodes you've missed. So you're kind of up to speed before I jump into today's episode. I also wanted to let you know that if you're interested in the enuma, Elish the Babylonian Epic of creation, I dropped another explanation and commentary on the enuma Elish lines 79 to 161 of tablet one.

02:15

And I did that on, I dropped it on our sister podcast, the ancient tradition audio writ. There's a lot of fun stuff in there. In our last episode, I mentioned that today's episode

would be on the council of the gods in the biblical canon. And it will be, but before I get into that, I wanted to share a few more examples of the council of the gods in the texts that we find in the ancient world, other texts outside of the biblical canon. In our last episode, we covered a couple of Babylonian texts.

02:44

But that's, I felt like that's just not enough to give you a good idea of how prevalent this motif is in the ancient literature. So before we jump into the biblical canon, I wanna take a look at the divine council in the ancient Egyptian and Ugaritic, which is the Canaanite literature. And so let's go ahead and start with Egypt. In the ancient Egyptian pyramid texts.

03:09

which I've mentioned several times on the podcast, which is the oldest collection of religious writings anywhere in the world. It's as far back as we can go and get that big of a collection. And they're dated to 2400 BC. And in them we find mention of a divine council. And this can be found in King Pepi, who was the third king of the sixth dynasty. So this is very early on. And in these pyramid texts that were found in his tomb,

03:39

At this point, King Pepi has died. He's ascended to the heavens. This is within the text and has become divine. Pyramid text 423 reads, and this comes from the James P. Allen translation. "O Osiris Pepi, accept these your cool waters. "Your mother Neftis has made you be a god "to your opponent in your identity of

God. “Accept the outflow that comes from you.
“Horus’

04:07

has made the gods assemble for you in every place in which you have gone.” So, you know, Pepe ascends to the heavens and he there he meets this assembly of gods. In pyramid text 422, King Pepe is told that he should take his position in the heavens on a throne and it reads, quote, you take up your position, Pepe.

04:36

on thighs forwards throne, saved, provided as a god, and equipped with Osiris’s form on foremost of Westerners throne. So like I just mentioned, here Pepe joins the gods who have assembled for him, and he takes up a throne among them. It’s quite fascinating. In Pyramid Text 432, King Pepe’s told that he’s now

05:05

imperishable star among the imperishable stars, plural, in heaven. And I’ve mentioned this before too, but in ancient Egypt the imperishable stars were the circumpolar stars of the northern sky. So if you lived in the northern hemisphere and you looked up, it’s those stars that never descend below the horizon. And the Egyptians used these eternally shining stars as a symbol of the immortal or the deified dead.

05:35

one who now reigned in the heavens as a god. So to become part of the imperishable stars was another way of saying you have become a god.

And the heavens are full of these stars. And so this suggests that there are multiple gods in the heavens. The ancient Egyptians painted these imperishable stars on the ceiling of the king's tomb. So if you go onto the internet and you look at King Pepe's tomb and you look at the ceiling of his tomb, you're gonna just see hundreds and hundreds of stars,

06:05

pointed stars and they look kind of human like they're in stick form five pointed stars and that represented the King ascending to the imperishable star so we're getting this motif of multiple gods and an assembly waiting the new God who has come. Pyramid text 432 reads you have placed for yourself this Pepe as an imperishable star that is in you. In pyramid text 441 that you might go to

06:35

the Northern imperishable stars. So in that text, you can see the Egyptians equate them, gods and the imperishable stars were one in the same idea. And this is a clear expression that King Pepe upon his death is now going to join the multiple gods in the heavens. In pyramid text 437, King Pepe appears to be made one of the members of the divine assembly. And this pyramid starts with

07:03

what the divine assembly of gods has declared in it reads. Hear this which the gods have said, the son says he will occupy his Pepe so that he might receive his status as Ock at the gods for as Horus or Osiris' son, giving him his status as Ock as one of the watchers of pay and

privileging him as a god as one of the watchers of Nechon.

07:32

So a couple of things I have to clarify for you. What does Akh mean and Akhify? I've done that before, but in case you've forgotten, in ancient Egypt to become Akh or Akhified meant to become a quite effective one. And it really just represented an aspect of the Egyptian soul that was transfigured into a being of light.

07:55

necessary process the deceased king had to go through to become an immortal God in the heavens. So he's got to go through this process of aquification of his soul to become like light which of course is associated with the imperishable stars. But he does this, he's aquified and then he becomes one of the watchers of Pei. I mean he becomes like one of the watchers of Pei. So who are these watchers? The watchers of Pei and the watchers of Nechen

08:22

sometimes referred to as the souls of Pei or the gods of Pei in Nechon. These are the gods. These gods are the royal ancestors of the king, the line of kings that preceded him. And this starts with, you know, from the very first dynasty. So he's going to join with the ancestors, his ancestors who have died before him. In the ancient Egyptians, they made statues of these deceased god-kings.

08:50

known as the Royal Statuary and they placed them in the temple and they placed them in the four court of the temple. So you walk in and there's just hundreds of hundreds of these statues of the line of kings that have died and they call them the souls of Pei and Nechon. And this is really interesting because as we saw in the previous episode this is the exact same place that the council of the gods met in Mesopotamia.

09:19

in the forecourt of the temple. Thord Kull Jacobsen, the Danish expert in Assyrian Sumerian literature that we referred to in the last episode, he said this, quote, the highest authority in the Mesopotamian universe was the assembly of the gods. It met when occasion arose in Nippur in the corner of the forecourt of Ikur, Enlil's temple there, called Upsu-Ukina.

09:50

So it's my contention that this royal statuary, these statues of the gods of Pei and Eken, the royal ancestors, were meant to represent the assembly of the gods in Egypt, the assembly that the dead king would now join, the assembly that he could become a part of. In ancient Egypt, these gods were sometimes referred to as the gods who follow Horus. And we'll talk about that in a

10:18

Egyptologist notes that these gods were understood as a collective. So they're called the souls or the gods or the collective and in the other ancient literature it's the assembly. It's the council. And this is just a quick interesting

side note. In 1903 a French Egyptologist by the name of George Legrane, he was actually working and excavating in the North Court of the

10:48

massive cache of these royal statues. And they'd been relegated to kind of large pits. And this was done because over the centuries, the ancients had to make room for more and more of these statues. There was so many. And he found over a three year period, he found over 900 of these stone statues, which makes quite an assembly. And then in 1989, another statutory cache was found on the Western side of the solar court and the Luxor temple.

11:18

and it also contained a massive stockpile of statues. If my contention is correct, these statues were meant to be a stone representation of the council of the gods in Egyptian temples. In the Ugaritic literature, which is made up of about 1,500 ancient cuneiform clay tablets that were found in Ugarit, it's an ancient port city in what is now known as Northern Syria.

11:47

In ancient times, the area was known as the land of Canaan. And these tablets were found, they were found accidentally. And there's, I love all these kinds of ancient stories about how these texts were found, but they were found in 1928 by a farmer. A farmer was out plowing his field when he hit a stone. And when he got up, when he went around and he removed the stone, he found that it opened up to an underground vault. And it's sort of like right

out of national treasure. I mean, it was filled with...

12:17

all kinds of jewelry and artifacts and things and in there were all of these tablets. What he'd found was the ancient Phoenician city of Ugarit, which is known today as Rosh Shamara. Scholars date these tablets to about 1300 to 1200 BC. And these tablets are really important here because they contain numerous references to the council of the gods. In fact, it...

12:44

They contain so much council material that E Theodore Mullen while he was working on his PhD at Harvard wrote an entire book on it titled the assembly of the gods and It's pretty much basically based off of what was found in the Canaanite literature If you're interested in taking a look at it and you want to browse through it You can browse through an early version of it on the internet on internet archive and you can do that for free It goes by the title

13:14

the divine council in Canaanite and early Hebrew literature. In these texts, the divine council is referred to as Puru Mo'adu, which means the gathered assembly of holy ones, the assembly of the gods or the assembly of the sons of El. Now in Canaan, El was the high god. He was the king, the father, the progenitor of the gods in Canaanite mythology. So as such,

13:43

he stood at the head of the Canaanite pantheon. And Mullen notes, quote, El must be pictured as the aged judge who, as we shall show, sat at the head of the assembly, surrounded by the other gods. So the council here, just like we saw in Mesopotamia, served at times as a court of judgment. And keep the idea of God as a judge and the council as a

14:12

of judgment in the back of your mind, because I'm gonna share some fun insights connected to that in our next episode. I'm gonna be reading from the English translation of cuneiform tablet 2.1, and it's known as the Baal, B-A-A-L, cycle. And I don't wanna get too bogged down in the ins and outs of the myth here, because it is very similar to some of the same motifs we've seen in the Enuma Elish. Baal is actually the Marduk figure here.

14:40

I just want to focus on what we can learn about the council. In this tablet, messengers of Yam, who is the personification of the sea and the enemy of Baal, so he equates with Tiamat or Lucifer and Baal equates with Marduk or Christ. They're sent to address the council of the gods, the sons of the high god El, E-L. And I read, arise lads, do not tarry.

15:09

verily set face toward the appointed assembly to the midst of Mount Luli. Okay, so notice for right away this assembly meets on a mountain, also known as a temple, which we've pointed out Mount Luli, which is the quote Mount of El. It's the temple where the high Canaanite god El resides. To the feet of El do not fall.

15:36

Do not prostrate yourselves to the appointed assembly. Arise, constantly stare. So here, the messengers of Yam, right, who is akin to Tiamat and Satan or Lucifer, tells his messengers, when you go to this council, don't prostrate yourself, look them straight in the eye. Repeat your message and say to Bull, his father El, repeat to the appointed assembly, the lads arise, they do not tarry.

16:04

verily they set face to the midst of Mount Luley toward the appointed assembly. Now the gods were seated to eat. The sons of Kutsu do dine. Baal was standing beside El. So this is an important point to point out. So you have the high God El and right next to him is standing Baal who is similar to a Christ figure or Marduk.

16:31

So they're two separate beings here, they're two separate gods. And when the gods saw them, espied the messengers of Yam, the envoys of Judge River, the gods lowered their heads to the tops of their knees to their princely thrones. So in this council of the gods, some of them must have been enthroned. They're sitting on thrones called here princely thrones. And when they are confronted by the messengers of Yam,

17:00

They kind of look away. That's probably enough to demonstrate the significance of the divine council in the Ugaritic literature. Mullen notes, quote, "This text provides a description

of the council meeting, the place of the meeting, the reception of messengers with their request to the council, and the response of the council to that request. Also, this description clearly places El, the head of the pantheon, as the leader and judge in the council.”

17:31

And just like we saw in ancient Egypt and Babylon, the council of the gods here is tightly connected to kingship and the investiture of a new king. Now that we’ve taken a look at the evidence of the divine council in the Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Ugaritic literature, let’s take a look at it in the biblical canon. Is there any evidence of a divine council in the Bible? Is it mentioned in the New Testament? Are there?

17:59

any direct references in the biblical canon to the divine council of gods. Surprisingly, especially to a lot of Judeo-Christians who adhere to a strictly monotheistic tradition, there are a number of references and inferences to a divine council in the biblical canon.

18:23

Paul Sumner, who I mentioned in the previous episode, who wrote his master’s thesis on the divine council, he says this about how prevalent the divine council is in the biblical canon, quote, numerous biblical texts testify to the belief in a heavenly council consisting of Yahweh the King and his staff. References to God’s royal throne room and his entourage of heavenly servants occur in all three portions

18:53

of Hebrew scripture, the laws, the prophets, and the writings. In all major literary genres, including narrative, historical, prophetic, poetic, liturgical, wisdom and visionary, and in the earliest and latest dated materials, it is also found in materials spanning all of time, from the primeval moments of creation to the eschatological arrival of God's Kingdom.

19:22

it's important to see how deeply embedded this imagery and concept are in the various strata of the Hebrew Bible. Another scholar by the name of Patrick Miller, he was the Charles T. Haley Professor of Old Testament Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. And he goes even farther to argue that the Council of the Gods imagery is, quote, one of the central

19:52

cosmological symbols of the Old Testament. So here we have these two scholars that have studied this a lot, and they're saying that the biblical presentation of the divine council represents the way in which the ancient Hebrews actually understood the organization of the heavens. Paul Sumner says, quote, the divine council imagery expresses how the biblical writers

20:19

understood the machinery and systems of the universe. In other words, these gentlemen are arguing that the divine council motif was core to the theology of the Old Testament. If that's the case, then why do so few Judeo-Christians

seem to know about this? Well, one of the reasons I think is because research on the divine council is just relatively contemporary, it really hasn't taken off until about the year 2000.

20:49

I went into academia.edu, which is a database of academic articles, and I typed in divine council. I typed that into the search engine and a graph popped up of the articles that had been written on the divine council since 1938. In between 1938 and 2000, a period of about 60 years, only 565 articles had been written on some aspect of the divine council.

21:19

Between 2000 and 2023, more than 8,500 academic articles had been written on the divine council. So it's really only been recently that this subject has been taken up by scholars and it's come into the public sphere. And of course, the second reason I think that the divine council of gods is not really talked about too much in the Judeo-Christian tradition is because obviously it's problematic.

21:49

for a religious tradition that's understood by most to be strictly monotheistic. But despite this, those scholars who have really dug into it and rigorously examined the Bible have shown that the divine council is not only referenced throughout the biblical canon, but it's core. It's core to the cosmology and it's core to the theology of Judaism and Christianity.

22:15

The ancient Hebrew scriptures attest that a divine council exists in the heavens and that that council makes up the real or actual order or governing body in the heavens. It's a concept that, you know, many Judeo-Christians are only now beginning to take seriously. So let's jump in and examine a few of these passages. Some of the most notable examples can be found in Psalms.

22:42

We see specific references to the council of the gods in Psalm 82. The new revised standard version of Psalms 82 verse one reads, God has taken his place in the divine council in the midst of the gods, and that's plural, he holds judgment. The new international version of that same verse is translated, God presides in the great assembly.

23:11

he renders judgment among the gods. The council of the gods is also mentioned in Psalm 89 and Psalm 89 is fascinating and it's fascinating not only because of the references that we get to the divine council, but because of other aspects of the Psalm that correspond to the motifs we found in the enuma, Elish.

23:37

So let's go through parts of Psalm 89 and I'll draw out a few of these motifs. Psalm 89 verse five, the new revised standard version translation of this reads, quote, let the heavens praise your wonders, oh Lord, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones. The mention of the divine assembly in Psalm 89 is.

24:03

pretty significant because Psalm 89 is known as one of 11 or so royal Psalms. Royal Psalms are a set of Psalms that focus on the relationship between God and His vice-regent, the earthly King. It's in these Royal Psalms that we learn that there's a profound theology of kingship. It's embedded in those and it's all connected to the divine council and some other aspects.

24:31

I'll save that topic for another time, but I do want to point out how the content of Psalm 89 is deeply connected to the pillars of creation or the creation motifs that we've seen all over the world so far in this podcast. And let me read a little bit here starting in verse seven. The New International Version of the Bible reads, quote, in the council of the holy ones, God, and this is speaking of Yahweh or Jehovah, is greatly feared.

25:01

He is more awesome than all who surround him. This might be sounding a little bit familiar to you because this is sort of how they were talking about Marduk. Remember Marduk was double the gods and he was to be feared. We're getting the same ideas here. The context of these verses is clearly the counsel of the gods. We can see that, it's very explicit. In verse eight, O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee?

25:29

or to thy faithfulness round about thee." So here we are in the council of the gods, Jehovah

is being praised as incomparable to the other gods in the council. And then what do we find in the very next two verses? We read about Jehovah's power over the primordial waters and how he conquered the sea monster that dwelt in the depths. The King James Version reads, verse nine.

25:57

Thou rulest the raging of the sea, when the waves thereof arise thou stillest them. So Jehovah brings order to the primordial waters. And then in the very next verse, in verse 10, thou hast broken Rahab, which is the Leviathan, in pieces is one that is slain. I kind of like the New Living translation of this verse. It reads, you crushed the great sea monster.

26:27

I like that translation, it's pretty good. Okay, so we've gone through just four verses, seven, eight, nine, and 10, and we're following the very pattern that we see in the Enuma Elish. So from here, what do you think we're gonna see in the next verse? Based off of what we saw in the previous episode, what do you think is going to be mentioned next after Jehovah has conquered the Leviathan? If you guessed that the next verse is gonna mention the creation of the world,

26:57

then he'd be absolutely correct because that's exactly what we saw in the Enuma Elish. If you recall in the Enuma Elish, Marduk who was double the other gods is chosen in a primordial council of the gods to battle the awful sea monster Tiamat. Marduk successfully slays the sea monster. And then it's directly after this

that he uses her slain carcass to create the world.

27:23

which is a symbolic reference to slaying the chaotic, lifeless, primordial elements and imposing order or creation upon them. It's pretty fascinating. Let's read verse 11, the very next verse where we read of Jehovah's creation of the world. The King James version reads, quote, "The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine. "As for the world and the fullness thereof, "thou hast founded them."

27:52

The new international translation reads, quote, "The heavens are yours and yours also the earth. "You founded the world and all that is in it." So those verses clearly attest that Jehovah was the creator of the world. So let's pause here for just a second. Do you remember what happened next in the Enuma Elish? After Marduk slayed the sea monster and created the world, what did the council of the gods do?

28:21

to Marduk. Think about this for a second. After Marduk returned from slaying Timon and creating the world, what did the council of the gods do? If you guessed, coronated him a king, then again, you'd be absolutely correct. So in Psalm 89 then, we expect to see, we should see a reference to the same thing happening after Jehovah slays Rahab and creates the world. And guess what?

28:51

That's exactly what we see. In verse 18, it reads, quote, for the Lord is our defense and the Holy One of Israel, Jehovah is our King. Jehovah is established as King. And keep in mind that in both the Enuma Elish and in Psalm 89, all of this happens in the primordial realm, or as some scholars have coined it, the eternal world. And it's worth noting here that the rest of Psalm 89,

29:20

focuses on the connection between the divine king Jehovah and his earthly co-regent, the earthly king, King David, which is where in future episodes we'll get into that theology of kingship. So what does all of this mean? These indisputable striking parallels between the Mesopotamian Enuma Elish and the theology that we find in Psalm 89 of the Hebrew Bible.

29:50

For starters, the theological parallels between the two provide strong evidence that the ancient Hebrews understood the council of gods to be just that, a council of gods, plural. The ancient Egyptians, the Sumerians, Babylonians, Canaanites, and the Israelites all describe the council of the gods as a council made up of gods, plural. But as we mentioned in our previous episode, many Bible scholars, especially those who are

30:17

personally devout monotheists go to great lengths to to argue that the gods mentioned in the biblical canon are not actually gods but our messengers or servants or angels or Sometimes semi-divine or but they're they're never truly divine but let me remind you that that is just

not what the ancients taught in the cultural milieu of The ancient Near East the gods in the council of the gods were always gods

30:47

in the true full sense of the word. Speaking of the references to the council of the gods in the Hebrew Bible, Paul Sumner writes, quote, what's most striking about some titles for the council members is their unabashed affirmation of semi divinity. See, not even Paul wants to call them fully divine, yet he's going to right in the very next sentence here, listen, these beings are openly referred to as Elohim.

31:16

gods, divine beings. They are also benay elohim and benay elim and benay elion, which is sons of god or sons of the most high. Such terms are borderline dangerous because they closely mirror ancient Near Eastern pantheons where their father deity is surrounded by his children deities, the lesser gods.

31:42

But the Israelites weren't embarrassed by this. They firmly held onto the council imagery throughout their history. It apparently posed no threat to Jehovah's position. For he was Ha-Elohim, which means the God or the only real God or the true God. Sumner makes actually a really good point here. Israel does differ from the ancient Egyptian, Sumerians and Babylonians and stuff in that only one God,

32:11

in the divine council was to be worshiped and this was Jehovah. Sort of and I'll get to that in just a minute. But this difference known as monolatry, the worship of only one God, although other gods are recognized as existing, is a very very important difference and quite fundamental to the Judeo-Christian tradition even though we're going to question even that designation of

32:40

Let's take a look at evidence of the council of the gods in the New Testament. I'm not aware of any direct references to the divine council in the New Testament like we saw in the Old Testament, but there are several passages spread throughout the New Testament that point to and include divine council imagery. Sumner writes this quote, several passages in the New Testament suggest a deep and widespread awareness.

33:09

of the Hebrew divine council. Though the apocalyptic book of Revelation contains many of these tests, divine council imagery is also common in the gospels and letters. Let's start by looking at some of the divine council imagery in the gospel of John. I love the gospel of John, it's one of my favorite. In particular, John chapter eight. In this chapter, Christ testifies of his Messiahship.

33:36

to a group of Jewish scribes and Pharisees. In verse 12, it reads, quote, "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, "I am the light of the world. "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, "but shall have the light of life." In

the next verse, the Pharisees challenge Jesus. So he's just declared his Messiahship, and now the Pharisees are gonna challenge him, and it reads, quote,

34:06

The Pharisees therefore said unto him, thou bearest record of thyself. Thy record is not true. The Pharisees are basically telling Jesus that they don't believe he is the light of the world. They don't believe he is the Messiah. And why don't they believe? Well, they tell us why they don't believe them. Because quote, thou bearest record of thyself.

34:32

It's like the Pharisees are telling Jesus that just because you say you are the Messiah doesn't mean you are the Messiah. We don't have to take your word for it. We don't have to believe what you're saying is true. But there's a little bit more going on here than meets the eye. See, within a Jewish court, two witnesses were needed to establish truth. So here the Pharisees are telling Jesus that they need more than his individual witness.

34:59

of his messiahship in order to believe that he is the messiah. They need another witness. And in the Jewish court, this is established by the law, which is found in Deuteronomy chapter 19 verse 15, which says, one witness shall not arise against a man for any sin or guilt that he may commit. According to two witnesses, or according to three witnesses, a matter shall stand.

35:29

So according to Jewish law, one witness does not provide conclusive proof. Sumner says this of John chapter eight, and listen closely to this. He says, the Johannin writings seem to depict an interplay between two courts, the earthly Sanhedrin, which was the supreme council and court of the Jews that was headed up by the high priest, and the heavenly divine council.

35:57

The words and works of Jesus are being scrutinized by both and Jesus knows it. He frequently cites his heavenly witness in defense of what he's doing and who he is. So that's quite interesting. We have sort of a pseudo Sanhedrin going with these Pharisees questioning his Messiahship, yet Jesus is a member of this divine council.

36:22

and he knows he's going to have to answer to that counsel as well. And Jesus responds to the Pharisees in verse 14. The new revised standard version translation says this, even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going. I testify on my own

36:51

testifies on my behalf. These words spoken by Jesus to the Pharisees make no sense here, especially in terms of a judicial court if Jesus and the Father are understood as the same being, as one God. In this court setting, Jesus is claiming to have another witness, somebody

else besides himself that can vouch for or testify of his Messiahship, a second witness

37:21

by which they could obtain conclusive proof according to the Sanhedrin's laws. And Jesus explicitly tells the Pharisees this in verse 18. He says, even in your law, it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. So if Jesus can have two witnesses to his Messiahship, then the Pharisees should know that he is the Messiah. It is true.

37:49

Jesus meets the Jewish Sanhedrin's threshold of two witnesses only if he and the Father are separate beings, actually Father and Son. And we find Jesus make this distinction himself between Father and Son over and over and over in the New Testament. And this suggests that they may have been one in purpose and character but separate in being and such

38:17

such a statement like this, I testify on my own behalf and the father who sent me testifies on my behalf made by Jesus himself. He's the one that made this statement. It clearly indicates that Jesus understood himself and his father to be two separate beings. And that would of course mean we are talking about two separate gods or a plurality of gods.

38:45

If we turn to John chapter 17, the great intercessory prayer, we find another example of Jesus distinguishing himself from God the

Father. Scholars believe this prayer is a great high priestly prayer that Jesus gave in the temple, in the Holy of Holies. In verse one reads, quote, “These words spake Jesus and lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father,

39:15

the hour is come, glorify thy son that thy son also may glorify thee. So there are a number of things in this verse that point to Jesus and the Father as two separate gods. First, if Jesus and the Father are one being, why would Jesus need to pray? I mean, why would Jesus need to pray to himself on behalf of others? It doesn't make logical or theological sense here.

39:43

And Jesus doesn't give any indication in this verse that he is praying to himself. In fact, everything in the verse points to Jesus praying to another being, a being separate from himself. And we see this, this is pretty clear when he addresses the prayer directly to his father. Father, the hour is come. And this is clear when it says that at the beginning of the prayer, Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven.

40:10

why would Jesus lift his eyes to heaven? Why would he do this? Naturally we assume he's doing this because he is about to pray to his Father who is in heaven, which Jesus actually tells us in the Lord's prayer when he says quote, Our Father which art in heaven hallowed be thy name. So for Jesus to look up when he prays to the Father is a clear gesture by Jesus that

40:39

He understood himself as a separate being from the Father. They are literally in two different places. Jesus is on earth and the Father is in heaven. A clear indication that Jesus and the Father are separate beings, they are in separate places. And finally in this verse, Jesus says, quote, glorify thy son that thy son also may glorify thee.

41:06

And this text is incredibly difficult to make sense of theologically if Jesus and the Father are one being. Because it really would require us to believe that Jesus is praying to himself and that in that prayer to himself, he is asking himself to glorify himself. And I personally cannot conceive of a God who prays to himself and asks himself for greater glory. It seems completely incompatible with the notion of God.

41:36

everything in the my loo of the ancient Near East, in particular the theology of kingship that we see in Sumer, Egypt, Babylon, and Ugarit, along with what is actually written in these New Testament verses, strongly point to God the Father and Jesus Christ as literally separate, distinct beings, actually Father and Son, as the New Testament attests to Gods.

42:06

In Hebrews chapter one verses one to three, we're told that the father and son are virtually indistinguishable from each other in likeness and in glory. But then we're told something

very curious after that. So listen closely to the King James version of these verses. Quote, God who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets. Hath in these last days spoken unto us

42:35

by his son. So God is speaking to the Hebrews through his son, whom he hath appointed heir. So God has made the son a king. So we're getting all kinds of descriptions as the father and son being separate here. Of all things by whom also he made the worlds, who being the brightness of his glory and the expressed image of his person. So

43:03

They're practically indistinguishable, the father and son in terms of their glory that they have and what they look like. They even look the same expressed image, but those similarities may put them as one in brightness and one in image, but they don't necessarily put them as one in being. They can still be two separate gods and upholding all things by the word of his power when he had by himself purged our sins. Now listen to this part. Sat down.

43:32

on the right hand of the majesty on high. That last line is really important. God the Son sits on the right hand of God the Father in the heavens. You know, there'd be no need for God the Son to have his own throne in the heavens next to the Father's throne if they were one being. To sit down on a throne next to God the Father clearly indicates that God the Father and God the Son are two distinct beings here.

44:02

two separate gods. And there's more than just this text to support this idea. Like I mentioned, all of what we're seeing here conforms to what we've seen in Egypt, Sumer, Babylon, and Canaan where the relationship between the gods is familial. The father god, be it Ray, Anu, or Elm, literally begets a son, a separate being, who as crown prince eventually becomes a divine king.

44:31

a divine king who is enthroned in the heavens next to his father. They have separate thrones. The New Testament is literally loaded with the dual imagery of two gods. As you'll see as this podcast progresses, this understanding is absolutely critical to the theology of kingship in the Bible and to an understanding of the cosmological order of the heavens. The richest parts of Christian theology are lost.

45:00

A theology that is all over in the biblical canon when the plurality of God the Father and God the Son is suppressed. And you will see this as the podcast progresses. It's too much to go into right now, but you will definitely see how that is important. Scholars have found considerable evidence that the early Jewish followers of Jesus taught a Benetarian theology, which is the belief into God. So,

45:28

Scholars have found that there's evidence that this was the belief in the early times. If you're interested in reading more about this, check

out the book, *Two Powers in Heaven, Early Rabbinic Reports about Christian Anastasis* by A.F. Segal. Sumner notes that the image of God and a companion Lord eventually became quite problematic in both Rabbinic orthodoxy and among the early fourth century theologians who crafted the Nicene,

45:58

Chalcedonian and Athanasian creeds. He points out that the theologians who crafted the creeds gave no authoritative place to passages like the passages I've mentioned or other passages like Psalms 110 and Daniel 7 that attest to more than one God. He writes, quote, "To bolster the content of these creeds, some zealous Christian scribes altered

46:25

their Greek New Testament manuscripts and places to transform the original heavenly council imagery of God and Lord into more orthodox Trinitarian patterns. Roman Catholic orthodox and Protestant theologians joined orthodox rabbinic teachers in a common effort to abandon and suppress a central cosmological symbol in the Hebrew Bible and a central Christological symbol of the New Testament.

46:53

All of this brings me full circle to why we began discussing the council of the gods in the first place, the creation. The ancients attest that a real divine government exists in the heavens. One that's governed over by a high God who reigns a celestial king and presides over a council of gods. In the *Enuma Elish*, we learned that it was in this council before the creation

took place that a special God, Marduk or in Psalm 89,

47:23

was chosen to battle the awful sea serpent Tiamat and her consort Kingu, who represents both the chaotic pre-creative elements and the force that led to their chaos, Lucifer or the devil. After vanquishing the enemy, Marduk or Jehovah then creates the earth. We can find evidence of the divine council in the creation account in Genesis.

47:52

The Divine Council in Genesis chapters 1 to 11 by Richard J. Clifford writes, One of the most remarkable features of Genesis chapter 1 to 11 has not received the attention it deserves, the persistent presence of heavenly beings in the creation of heaven and earth. This shows up in the creation account as a plurality of gods discussing and planning creation.

48:20

For example, if we look at Genesis chapter one, verse 26, this is what it says. And God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness. Who is God referring to here when he says let us? The revised English version of the Bible commentary says this, quote, this let us is God speaking to his divine counsel, which is his counsel of spirit beings.

48:48

Note how they're afraid to say God's here. That God works with in ruling and running his creation. God's divine council is an important

but not commonly understood part of scripture. And as a quick side note, let's not forget that this council existed before the earth was created. The beings that occupy the council had been created before the earth in a pre-existence, which attests that not all things began

49:18

with the creation. Some things existed before the creation. We may also have a connection between the divine council and the creation in the New Testament in John chapter 1 verses 1 to 3. That famous scripture that reads, quote, in the beginning, which means the time before the creation, in the beginning, the time before creation, was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

49:47

The New Testament was originally written in Greek. So in the Greek, the first mention of God is Theon, T-H-E-O-N, which is one of the plural forms for God. And it depends on the verb form. And the second mention of God is Theos, which is the singular form of God. So in this verse, the word refers to Christ. So the passage could also read, quote, before the creation was Christ.

50:17

and Christ was with the gods and Christ was a God. The same was in the beginning with God. And when it's translated like that, we can easily see the ties between the creation, Jehovah and the divine council. It ties them all together very beautifully there. But Greek scholars don't usually translate it this way because of the singular form of the verb.

50:43

But even if the translation is kept how it is in the King James Version of the Bible, it still hints at a divine counsel since it specifically speaks of Christ being with God. So we have two gods here. In the beginning, that existed before the creation. Interestingly, in this verse, Jehovah is referred to as the Word, which in Greek is logos. In Greek, this word has a

51:12

double meaning. It means both thought and speech. In verse 3 John tells us that quote, all things were made by him. So all things were made by the logos, the word who is Christ. Now where have we heard of creation first by thought and then by word in the ancient world? If you thought of the Shabaka stone then you're absolutely right. It was in that text that we learned how the ancient Egyptian

51:42

created the world. In the Shabakos stone said, quote, for the very great one, Patah, who gave life to all the gods and the cause through his heart. And remember the Egyptians thought the heart was the source of thought. So heart here is used to refer to thought and through his tongue, the parallels between Patah creating by way of thought and word and the depiction of Christ in John chapter one, verse one is the logos,

52:12

create the world is pretty striking. From this passage in John we learn some really important things about Christ. Number one,

Christ existed before the earth was created in a primordial realm and this is clear by the reference in the passage two times to quote in the beginning which refers to the time before the world was created. Number two,

52:39

that Christ existed in the primordial realm with at least one other God or perhaps several other gods, depending on how the Greek is translated. This is clear in this passage when it says, quote, the word was with God or the gods, because remember that word is plural in the Greek. Number three, Christ in the primordial realm was a God.

53:05

He was one of the gods that existed in the primordial realm. And this is clear when the passage says, quote, the same, which is Christ, was in the beginning with God and was a god. From the research we've covered in the ancient Near East to this point, Christ appears to have been an extremely important member of the council of the gods. Number four, Christ appears from this passage to be the one that had been assigned in the primordial realm to create the earth.

53:35

the ancient Near East, that's what these councils did is they defined the fates or they made assignments and gave stewardship. And this is clear in this passage when it says quote, all things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made. And this makes total sense because John here is calling Christ the word, the logos, which we saw in episode number 12, the word that

changed the universe, which was how the ancients said the earth was created through divine utterance.

54:04

the word. And don't forget in the enuma, at least like I pointed out in the last episode, when Marduk is chosen by the council of the gods to take on Tiamat, the gods ask Marduk to demonstrate his ability to divinely utter his ability to create, which he does. And he does this through his word, he causes a constellation to appear. And as we see in the epic, Marduk goes on to create or fashion the world out of the primordial elements or

54:34

Tiamat's carcass. Pretty nifty stuff. Along with all of the other evidence we've examined on this podcast so far, I hope you're beginning to see the incredible correspondences in the ancient record. Correspondences that speak to an original religious tradition in deep antiquity, which we call the ancient tradition. And this is only a drop in the bucket. We're just getting started. There is so much more to come.

55:02

That wraps up this edition of the ancient tradition. I'll leave you with the words of William Shakespeare. Knowledge is the wing we're with, we fly to heaven. I'm Jack Logan.

55:16

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Episode #18 - A High Council of Twelve

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00:00

Music

00:10

You're listening to the Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production. Music provided by Joseph McDade. He is your host, Dr. Jack Logan.

00:29

Welcome to The Ancient Tradition. I'm your host, Jack Logan. It's great to have you along with me today as we parse out the religious tradition, the theology taught by the ancients in deep antiquity. On this podcast, we take the theology of the ancients seriously. We take them at their word. When the ancients attest that a religious tradition was revealed to them in deep antiquity, we take their claims seriously.

00:57

And that's what we're going to do today. We're going to take what they have to say seriously. In today's episode, we're going to dig into the ancient record and see what else the ancients can teach us about the council of the gods, especially how the council of the gods is ordered. It's really a remarkable episode in terms of its cosmic implications. And I think many of you are going to find yourself saying, ah, that makes so much sense. I had never put two and two together.

01:28

I'm not going to spell out everything for you, but if you have time to think over and study what you learn in this episode, I think you're going to find that the cosmic implications are truly remarkable. So let's jump in. For the past couple of weeks, we've been discussing the

creation. We've been delving into the ancient writings and trying to catalog the creation motifs that we find show up all over in the ancient texts. And if you've been following along closely, you'll probably notice that

01:54

As we've been discussing the creation now for quite a while that we haven't discussed the creation of a single thing yet. Not a single grain of sand has been created. And this is because the ancients taught that a whole lot went on behind the scenes before the earth was ever created. They taught that a primordial realm existed, referred to in the Enuma Elish as went on high, a realm, high in the heavens where a number of gods dwelt under the authority of a divine king.

02:23

creation of the earth was not the beginning of everything. The ancients taught that an entire heavenly realm existed prior to the birth of the earth. It's in this primordial kind of celestial abode, sometimes referred to as a mountain, the holy of holies, that we learn that God is a divine king before the earth was created, held counsel with an assembly of gods. And we know this from an array of ancient writings.

02:53

For example, in our previous episode, we talked about Mullen, who wrote a book titled the assembly of the gods. And he says this of the Ugaritic literature. He says, quote, whenever the need arose to decide an important matter relevant to order in the cosmogonic realm, the gods would journey to the dwelling of L. L's decree is connected explicitly the Purumuidu on the mount, Guru L his mountain.

03:21

The consistency of the tradition places the assembly of the gods under the leadership of the high god upon the mountain of El. If you go into the Bible, we see something very similar in Isaiah chapter 14 verse 13. And this is the New International Version Translation. It reads, You said in your heart, I will ascend to the heavens. I will raise my throne of the stars of God. I will sit enthroned on the mount.

03:51

of assembly on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphan. In another text, a tablet from Nineveh dated to sometime before 1100 BC, we see King Amaduranki. If you remember, he was the

Mesopotamian Enoch figure. He's summoned by the gods to join them in a special chamber of the temple Ibarra, which is the House of Splendor, which was the earthly temple of the high god.

04:21

In this special chamber, which appears to be something akin to the Holy of Holies, Emma Duranki meets with the Council of the Gods. The text reads, quote, Emma Duranki, the King of Sippar, the beloved of Anu, Anlil, and Ea, which are the gods, Shamash into Ibarra, which is the temple, caused him to enter.

04:45

So the gods are inviting Imadjuraki into this special divine council chamber. Shamash and Adad to their assembly called him. So we're seeing the same motifs here. In the Mesopotamian Lugal Banda epic, it's a story of a deified Sumerian king, which was believed to be composed around the 21st century BC. And it says, quote, in his convened and just assembly, in the heart of the great

05:15

quarters, which is probably referring to the temple, which resting firmly upon the earth like a great mountain. So here we get a firm connection between the heavenly temple and the mountain motif and the assembly meeting in the heart of or holy of holies in the heavenly temple. And like we covered in our last episode, the ancient Egyptians also located their royal statuary of the Council of Gods in the four quarter of their temples, the same place the

05:44

the Council of the Gods in their temples. From these texts, we can see that the ancients uniformly placed the location of the Council of Gods in the High Gods temple, either directly in the Holy of Holies in the Divine Throne Room, or in an assembly room of some sort that was designed for the council to meet in, which was referred to it by the Mesopotamians as the Ubsu-ukina, the Divine Assembly Hall. The Council of the Gods was held, we are told in the ancient texts,

06:14

in the presence of the high god. The divine king sat in the midst of them or in the center of the council members. In a text known as the Nungal in Ikor which is dated to the old

Babylonian period about 1894 to 1595 BC we read this. Nungal has taken her seat in its great and lofty

06:44

She has set her eye upon the king in the midst of the assembly. We learned in our last episode that the divine king sits on a throne dais, a raised platform, and we can see from these texts, he does so in the midst of the council of the gods. To be seated in the midst of or in the center of suggests that the divine council sits in a circle around the divine king in his royal temple palace. From his throne,

07:12

The divine king presides over his royal court, his royal council. And let's not forget that this is exactly where the tree of life stood in the Judeo-Christian garden of Eden account. The tree sat in the midst in the center of the garden. So we're getting all those connections here. A Mesopotamian text known as Sulgi D refers to the high God and it says this, may you be the life.

07:41

giving king of your assembly. So we see this kind of connection between the tree of life and the giving of life. And then here the king is the life giving king in the assembly. We learned from other ancient texts that quote, exalted council members referred to in the text as gods sit on thrones too. We see this in a Mesopotamian hymn to Inanna, which was dated to 2250 BC. And it says quote,

08:10

the exalted in the assembly sitting on the seat of honor, right and left. In the lament of Ur, line 153 it says, quote, the Anunnaki gods, which is the council, being still seated after they had given the binding promise. And then in tablet six of the Enuma Elisha says, quote, the great gods took their seats. We see something very similar in the pyramid text when the dead king ascends.

08:39

to the heavens and is placed on a throne like the other gods. Pyramid text 422 reads, quote, "Take up your position, Pepe, on Thive's forwards throne." And then he was told to do this right before Horus had assembled the gods in Pyramid text 423. In early Christianity, we see

something similar in the book of Revelation chapter 20. And verse four reads, and this is John speaking of what he sees in heaven.

09:08

says quote, and I saw thrones and they sat upon them and judgment was given unto them. Okay, so who is John seeing here? Who is sitting on these thrones that he sees? Well, according to John's vision, we find out. He tells us, let's keep reading and it's in the same verse. And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God and which had not worshiped.

09:38

the beast. Well, this is intriguing because basically Jesus is telling us that those who were sitting on these thrones used to be human beings, that these are the deified dead. That's very intriguing. And as we read in our last episode in the ball cycle, the Anunnaki, which is the council of the gods, sat on thrones. And it reads, quote, the gods lowered their heads to their princely thrones.

10:06

It's very important here to note that the thrones occupied by the gods in the council were referred to as princely thrones. The gods in the council here in Mesopotamia, just like we saw in Egypt are the princes or sons of the governing divine king who sits in the heart of the cosmos. This designation of gods who surround the throne of the high goddess, princes or sons or daughters or children is really, really important. It's one of the most important theological tenants in the ancient tradition.

10:36

And as the podcast progresses, we'll develop this theology more and more. Here are a couple of examples of the Anunnaki or the council of the gods described as sons. A Mesopotamian text known as the myth of Anzu, which dates to the old Babylonian period. We read, and this is in tablet two, the gods of the land assembled together for direction. Anu opened his mouth. He spoke to the gods, his sons.

11:04

In the book, The Assembly of the Gods, that I've mentioned a couple of times, Mullen notes the following of the Ugaritic text, and this is what he says, quote, "As creator, El stands at the head of the pantheon "as father of the gods. "As his sons, the gods are collectively

designated “as the sons of El. “Yam is designated as the beloved of El, “and Mott, hero, the beloved of El.

11:34

Anat is explicitly called Bittu, daughter by El. For example, in Cuneiform tablet 4.3.14, the council is called the assembly of the sons of El. The designation of the gods as sons, and even more intriguingly as beloved sons, actually shows up all over in the pyramid text and in the king’s royal titularies.

12:02

Let’s take a look at a couple of pyramid texts in King Eunos’s tomb. In pyramid text 219, the dead king is identified with the ancient Egyptian god Osiris. And it reads, “Athum, this Osiris here is your son whom you have made revive and live.” Pyramid text 222, “Athum, elevate him to you and circle him inside your arms. He is your son of your body forever.”

12:30

The designation as a son shows up most widely in the king’s titularity as one of the king’s new enthronement names. So after he’s been enthroned, they give him these new names. For example, Thutmose III’s nomin was son of Ra. Ramsey’s Horus name was the strong bull, beloved of Ra, and his nomin was Ramsey’s beloved of Amun. And Queen Hatshepsut’s was daughter of Amun, foremost of noble.

12:59

ladies. And of course, very interestingly, you find the same designation in the book of Revelation right after the section where John sees multiple occupied thrones in the heavens. In Revelation chapter two, verse seven, it reads, quote, he that overcome shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. And Paul says something very similar in Psalms,

13:29

I will declare the decree the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my son. This day have I begotten thee. In Psalm 89 verse 6, the New American Bible translation reads, who is like the Lord among the sons of the gods? Okay, that’s quite a bit to take in. So let’s recap briefly what we’ve learned about the council from the ancients so far. So number one, we’ve learned.

13:56

that the Council of the Gods existed before the earth was created. Number two, the Council of the Gods meets in the high gods abode in the heavens, in the heavenly temple, in the Holy of Holies, the bosom of the cosmos. And number three, God sits on a throne in the center of the council, which suggests that the council sits in a circle around him. And number four,

14:22

Exalted council members are referred to in the ancient texts as gods or princes, sons and daughters of the most high god. And quite intriguingly, in a number of cross-cultural texts, they're also referred to as beloved. And finally, number five, exalted council members sit on thrones too, but not as far as I can tell on elevated thrones like the divine king in the midst of the council. According to the ancients, the

14:49

Divine council is the order established in the heavens. It's the soci structure in the cosmos. And so at this point I have some questions. I wanna know more about how this divine government is structured. I wanna know how it's ordered. In high school, most students take a civics class where they learn how the US government is structured, how the body politic operates.

15:17

they learn that there's a specific order to the US system is structured into three branches, a judicial executive and a bicameral legislative body. But what about the divine government? How is it ordered? We know the high God presides a supreme divine monarch over a divine council of gods, but is there anything else in the ancient record that can tell us who the gods are, who sit in council, and is there anything else in the ancient record that can tell us how the divine council is structured?

15:46

the order by which it operates because right now, in everything we've read, the council just feels like this mass of people, the hosts of heaven, this amorphous mass of beings. After going through the ancient record, answering just who occupies the thrones surrounding the high god is a lot more difficult to answer than the latter question of how the council is structured.

16:09

With the exception of naming Baal, Marduk, or Jehovah, or Tiamat, Yam, or Lucifer as members of the Council of the Gods, the ancient record is pretty obscure. It's almost silent when it comes to naming the other gods who sit in council. Theodore Mullen, who wrote the *Assembly of the Gods*, writes of the Council of the Gods in the Ugaritic and Hebrew literature. In Canaanite mythology and Israelite literature, the identities of the members of the Council remain obscure.

16:39

In Cuneiform Tablet 2.1, they are simply designated as gods. No further description is offered. The other references to the council and Ugaritic literature provide little additional information. Cuneiform Tablet 4.3.14 refers to the assembly of the sons of El. Throughout the texts, the fact that the members of the council remain unnamed makes the task of identifying them more difficult.

17:09

Yeah, kind of does. Mullen does manage to find a few places in the ancient text where specific council members are mentioned, but they're pretty few and far between. And the ones who are mentioned quote, aren't gods who play a major role in the mythic cycle from Ugarit. In other words, the few gods that are mentioned by name are the names of gods who aren't really major players in Ugaritic mythology, which seems a little odd.

17:36

Mullen also looked for names in the ancient Hebrew literature and he also came up empty handed. He states, quote, their identity is once again not given. The allies of El remain unnamed in all our ancient traditions from Canaanite, Phoenician and Israelite sources. We find this same obscurity when trying to identify the names of council members in the ancient Egyptian texts. Like I mentioned in the last episode, in ancient Egypt, the council of the gods is referred to as the souls of...

18:06

and Nehken. In ancient Egyptian literature they're always referred to as a collective. They're never referred to by individual names. We aren't told why this is, but as you ponder over the rest of this episode you might come up with a good reason for why this might be. As for the second question, how many gods make up the Council of the Gods? Well that's when things get really interesting.

18:29

There are loads of hints in the ancient record as to the organizational structure and the numerical constitution of the Council of the Gods. And we find our first really good hint in an ancient Sumerian text known as Enki and the World Order. Scholars date many of the traits in the text.

18:48

clear back to 2900 BC, that's some 5000 years ago. So we're talking about a very old text, but scholars also believe that the composition was probably known in oral form even earlier than that. In lines 250 to 386 of this text, Enki, who we learned in the Enuma Elish was the father of the god Marduk, journeys to several cities and locations in the land Sumer to set up or establish world order.

19:18

In this portion of the text, which is known as the 12 cycles, Enki does this by dividing Sumer into 12 specific domains and appointing a god steward over that domain. Dr. Richard E. Everbeck, who's an expert on the Enki and world order text, says this of how Enki established order in the world. Quote.

19:42

Enki himself initiates the various forces of nature and cultural phenomena necessary to make Sumer a prosperous place, and then puts one of the Anuna gods, the Anuna gods of course being the divine council, the Anunnaki, in charge of each component. It appears that there are 12 cycles of initiation and assignment. Enki organized the whole region by establishing boundaries between the various cities of Sumer,

20:11

providing dwellings for the Anunnagods and dividing the agricultural land among them. And we see Enki assigning stewardship to one of the Anunnaki in line 267. This is just one example of the 12. Enki, the Lord of the Destinies, Enki, the King of the Apsu, placed in charge of all of this, him who holds a scepter in his right hand.

20:39

So we learned some really important things about the divine council from this text. Number one, we learned that Enki, the high god, establishes world order by dividing Sumer, which equates with the world into 12 exclusive domains. Second, we learned that after Enki divides the world into 12 domains, he assigns an individual council member stewardship.

21:05

over each domain and he appoints them steward over specific agricultural lands. He divvies up the geography of the world to individual council members. This tight relationship between the stewardship of council members and geography, be it earthly or cosmic geography, is a really important pattern connected to the divine council. And in a couple minutes we'll see this pattern all over the globe. Third, it's clear from the passage I just read where Enki quote

21:33

placed in charge of all this, him who holds a scepter in his right hand, that these 12 council members weren't angels or messengers. They were divine kings who sat on thrones in the divine council and held the scepters of kings, which we learned in episode number four was a branch of the sacred Kiskanu tree, the tree of life, and they held that in their right hand.

22:02

In this text, it appears that these council members represented Enki, the king of the heavens, as viceroys or vassal kings. In this text, we see the high god dividing his entire kingdom among 12 of his sons or princes. The fact that Enki divided up his entire kingdom, everything over which he reigned, among just 12 council members,

22:32

upper echelon of the Divine Council. It applies especially in their description of enthroned God-Kings that they made up an exalted High Council or the highest governing body within the Divine Council. You know, it's not to say that there aren't numerous beings who make up the Divine Council, just that there appear to be 12 important God-Kings who govern over the rest of the Divine Council.

22:58

And this is probably a good place for me to stop and take a minute to talk about numerical symbolism. In the ancient world, numbers often signified something more than mere quantity. And we do this today. When a soccer team waves their index fingers in the air and yells, we're number one, they aren't talking about quantity at all. They aren't saying they are the quantity of one, like we are one apple. They're saying the number one symbolically to convey that they are the...

23:26

best team in the league or in the country or in the world. The number one is used as a way to symbolize that their soccer team is athletically superior to all of the others. All ancient societies, all of them attached important meanings to numbers. And surprisingly, you would kind of expect that each society would develop their own set of meanings for the numbers, but we just don't see that.

23:52

Instead, we see significant cross-cultural consistency in how numbers are used to express specific symbolic ideas. For example, as we've discussed on the podcast already to this point, in the ancient world, the number four symbolically represents geographic totality. So where you'd expect different ancient societies to attach different meanings to the number four, we just don't see it. Instead, what we find.

24:20

all over the ancient world is that the number four symbolizes the same thing. Regardless of culture, it symbolizes geographic totality. And this, like so much in the ancient world, speaks to one fount, an ancient tradition as the source of the symbolic meanings attached to numbers. One scholar notes, quote, why certain numbers became laden with symbolic

24:49

prehistoric times. Just like the number four, we find the symbolic meaning of the number twelve to be cross-culturally consistent. It means the same thing in most cultures. In virtually all ancient cultures, the number twelve had a standard meaning. And can you guess what it symbolized? It symbolized the order of the cosmos, the divine order.

25:16

And this is super interesting because that's exactly the picture we get from the Sumerian text Enki and the World Order. We see a clear connection between the establishment of world order and the number 12. We see 12-fold governing bodies show up all over the globe and sometimes in reference to the order of the cosmos, divine high council of 12. And other times in reference to the order of the earth, the earthly council of 12, which you might imagine.

25:46

is modeled after the divine order of 12 in the heavens. The divine council of 12 in the heavens. In most cases, the ancient peoples of the world intentionally modeled their earthly

cities or civilizations after the 12-fold order in the heavens. They were trying to create the ideal image of the cosmos on earth. And why did they wanna do that? Well, because in the heavens, that order led to peace, prosperity, and fertility.

26:16

best way to achieve those same outcomes on earth would be by replicating the cosmic order on earth. For example and get ready because there are a lot of examples I'm going to show you here we see this all over the world so according to the writings of Diodorus Siculus who was an ancient Greek historian around the first century AD wrote that the Chaldeans were ruled by 12 gods. Siculus writes quote

26:44

12 of these gods, they say, hold chief authority. In Greek mythology, 12 Titans, the children of primordial parents, Uranus and Gaia, were the generation of gods that preceded the Olympians. In Greece, almost all of you know this, Zeus presided over a 12-god pantheon on Mount Olympus. And most of you are familiar with these 12 gods, but did you notice where these gods meet?

27:14

Yes, on a mountain, on Mount Olympus. There's the mountain temple motif again. Zeus reigning from the summit of the mountain. In Athens, the altar of the 12 gods was set up in the geographic center. There's that center motif. In Rome, statues of 12 Roman gods stood in the forum.

27:38

Forum was a rectangular plaza which stood at the center of day to day life in Rome. It was the site of triumphal processions, criminal trials, public speeches, and it was surrounded by a number of important government buildings. So note the location of these 12 statues stood in the very center of civic life. In Norse mythology, Odin, the All-Father, the High God, sat on a high throne.

28:07

among 12 divine counselors in Asgard. These 12 counselors were known as the Asr, the 12 gods. And interestingly, in this Norse mythology, the 12 gods were accompanied by 12 goddesses headed by Frigg, Odin's consort. These 12 gods ruled over 12 thing districts. Now things in the old Norse

28:37

which means assembly. So these 12 gods ruled over 12 assembly districts. Quote, things were where political decisions were made, laws upheld and disputes settled. I mean, this sounds exactly like the council of the gods. Odin's assembly was called the All Thing, the National Council. Note how we see the same association between the gods and the division of geography here.

29:08

The 12 gods ruled over 12 geographical districts. And note the association between the gods and the political governance of Odin's kingdom. John Michel wrote a book on 12 tribe nations, and he notes this, quote, 12 was the customary number of magistrates who sat together on Scandinavian things. So this was the traditional number.

29:35

The Hindus from the time of the Dramanas, which are sacred texts dated to between 900 and 700 BC, recognized 12 solar gods, the Adityas. The Adityas were the divine offspring of the goddess Aditi, a goddess who represented infinity or eternity. You can find a list of these in some of their other sacred texts. According to Dr. Ramesh, who worked on translating the text, he notes that the Adityas are described in the Rigveda,

30:05

one of the oldest and most important Hindu texts as quote, bright and pure as streams of water, free from all guile and falsehood, blameless, perfect, true to the eternal law. I love that description of the gods who sit on this council. In the Hindu tradition, the Hindu god Brahma, the creator employed 12 jayas to help him fashion the world.

30:33

These gods are believed to have existed at the very beginning of the kalpa, which is the name the Hindus give to the long lifetime of the universe, which they've calculated to be 4.32 billion years. Take note that these 12 gods were to take part or assist in the creation of the world. In Shinto cosmogony, 12 kami, which is the Japanese word for traditional Shinto gods in Japanese mythology corresponded

31:02

12 stages in creation, which is quite similar to what we saw in the Sumerian text Enki and the World Order. In Japanese mythology, we see 12 stages of creation and in Sumer we see 12 cycles of more or less Sumerian creation, where the gods are associated with different domains like responsibility for the rivers, marshes, rains, crops, herds, flocks, and things like that. If you remember Izanami and Izanagi.

31:30

the Japanese gods who stirred up the primordial waters until they thickened. Well, the Kami were believed to be the sons and daughters of that pair of gods. In Zoroastrianism, which is an Iranian religion based on the teachings of Zoroastrian and Iranian speaking prophet, we read in the Bundarish, which is a collection of Zoroastrian cosmogony of 12 octars, which is the Persian word for stars. So,

31:59

In their cosmogony, we have 12 stars who are led by Ahura Mazda, the creator deity, which is interesting when we think about how in ancient Egypt, the imperishable circumpolar stars represented the gods. In China, John Michel notes the Emperor Yao, who presided over a legendary golden age in China at the beginning of the third millennium BC, divided his realm first into four quarters and then into two.

32:27

12 regions governed by 12 mandarins. So what are mandarins? They're these appointed scholar officials or civil servants. So we can see here how Emperor Yao was arranging the Chinese government to match the government in the heavens. In Tibet, the Dalai Lama ruled by way of a circular council of 12 elders. In Ireland,

32:53

John Michelle notes, quote, 12 was the number of seats arranged round a king's throne in the royal halls of Ireland, as in the place of King Crooker of Ulster, and the King of Munster headed 12 lesser kings. I could go on and on. 12 Roshakrishnan adepts made up the inner circle of Agarthia, the enchanted country, in Madagascar, China, Peru.

33:18

Iceland, there are traditions of the nation's territories being divided up into 12 tribes and 12 regions. The followers of Odysseus, like those of King Arthur, were 12 in number. Charlemagne's mystical court consisted of 12 peers. Among the Mayan, 12 priests presided

over their religious initiations. The Winnebago Indians had a 12-clan society. And the Hopi Indians of the

33:48

the agricultural land was divided up amongst them. And most notably, Plato. Plato wanted to develop the ideal city. So he laid out the groundwork for a 12 tribe city, one that mirrored the cosmos. And he did that in his book, The Republic. He envisioned a cosmic order, one that was the archetypal model for the most perfectly attainable state of affairs on earth. And there are many, many more examples than this, but I'm not gonna go into them.

34:18

John Michel notes, quote, "It is impossible to say when or where this idea arose, for it occurs in the earliest traditions and histories of virtually every nation." And we, of course, argue on this program that the 12-fold pattern originated with the ancient tradition. The 12-fold order is particularly noticeable in the ancient Israelite tradition.

34:47

Many of you probably already thought of this in the Old Testament, Jacob, later named Israel as twelve sons who are collectively referred to as the twelve tribes of Israel or the Israelites. In Numbers chapter 1, we learn that twelve princes preside over the tribes. Numbers chapter 1 verse 16, after they've listed the names of the twelve princes, it says this, quote, These were the renowned of the congregation.

35:14

princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of the thousands in Israel. And then when we move on to chapter 2 of Numbers, we're told that these 12 tribes pitched their tents at specific geographical locations around the perimeter of the Israelite Tabernacle, which was a portable temple. Numbers chapter 2 verse 3 reads, And on the east side, toward the rising of the sun, shall they have the standard of the

35:44

pitch. Numbers chapter 2 verse 10, on the south side shall the standard of the camp of Reuben. Numbers chapter 2 verse 18, on the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim. And it goes on. In these verses we can clearly see an association between the 12 tribes and specific geographical assignments like we saw in Enki and the world order. The 12 tribes here

36:12

Surround the dwelling place of Jehovah, his temple. And remember, this tabernacle housed a stylized tree of life, a menorah, which symbolized the fiery glory of Jehovah in the center of the camp, all of which clearly mirrors the cosmic setting of a divine council where the high God is surrounded by 12 enthroned gods. In Joshua chapter four,

36:41

Listen to what the Lord commands Joshua to do. Starting in verse two, he tells Joshua, “Take ye twelve men out of the people. “Out of every tribe a man take twelve stones.’ Verse four, then Joshua called the twelve men “whom he had prepared of the children of Israel “out of every tribe a man.’ Verse eight, and the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded and took up twelve stones. Now listen closely to what Joshua did in verse nine.

37:10

And Joshua set up 12 stones in the midst of Jordan in the place where the feet of the priest which bear the Ark of the Covenant stood. So they set up these stones near the Ark of the Covenant. And where did the Ark of the Covenant stand in ancient Israel? In the Holy of Holies. So Joshua is setting up the 12 stones around the Ark of the Covenant, the mercy seat or God’s throne.

37:38

Again, this is a clear image of the cosmic setting of the divine council who surround the throne of the high god. In Joshua chapters 13 to 19, we see the land of Israel divided into 12 sections and given to each of the 12 tribes of Israel as their inheritance. A motif which again echoes back to what we saw in Enki and the world order. When Enki divided the Sumerian agricultural lands into sections and appointed in a Nunagad.

38:08

or divine council member as vice regent over that land. Here in Joshua chapter 13 verse six, Joshua mentions a really, really intriguing aspect of the story and listen to what Joshua says. This is him speaking of the divvying up of the land. Quote, only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance as I have commanded thee.

38:36

Dividing up the land by lot is somewhat akin in the modern day to drawing straws. It's a way to avoid preferential treatment a way to make an impartial decision. And I draw your attention to this because the casting of lot seems to have been an important administrative tool used by the gods in the divine council. An 18th century BC Akkadian epic of the Great Flood the story of Atra-Hasis the Akkadian Noah

39:05

reads speaking of the divine council. Anu, their father, was king. They took the box of lots, cast the lots, the gods made the division. In this passage, the divine council uses lots to divvy up the assignments among the gods. The parallels here to the casting of lots among the 12 tribes of Israel is pretty clear. We see echoes of the divine council in a particularly salient fashion in Christianity.

39:33

when Jesus appoints a council of 12 apostles to join him in the administration of the kingdom of God on earth. From the New Testament, we learned that the 12 apostles weren't just Jesus's friends. They occupied an ecclesiastical office. And this is evident when Jesus fills the vacancy that was left by Judas Iscariot with Matthews in Acts chapter one, verse 26. But listen to how the apostles go about choosing who.

40:01

between Matthew and Joseph called Bar-sab-us. Men who must have been of equal character should fill Judas' vacancy. Verse 26 reads, quote, "And they gave forth their lots, "and the lot fell upon Matthew, "and he was numbered with the eleven apostles." The apostles used lots, which here seems like a pretty clear echo of the use of lots by the gods and the divine council.

40:30

and the lots used by the 12 tribes of Israel. From what we've read, the casting of lots appears to make an important and unique administrative characteristic of the divine council, an administrative characteristic that is mirrored here on earth by Jesus's 12 apostles. We see other intriguing parallels between the 12 apostles and a divine council of 12 surrounding the throne of God in a text known as the Axe of John.

40:57

one of the earliest apocryphal writings dated by scholars to the third century AD. And the passage reads, and this is speaking of Jesus, quote, before he was seized by wicked men and by the wicked serpent of Jewish authorities, he called us, and that's referring to the 12 apostles, called us together and commanded us to form a circle, taking hold of each other's hand. And he himself taking up a position in the middle

41:27

uttered the amen. Then he began a hymn saying praise to the father and we standing in the circle followed him with the amen. In this text we get a mirror image of the cosmic order, the divine council surrounding the throne of God, Jesus standing in the middle surrounded by a circle of 12 apostles. And if that's not enough to get you thinking in Matthew

41:57

we read about Jesus telling the 12 apostles the following. Quote, and Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you that ye which have followed me in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel.

42:23

In this verse, Jesus promises the 12 apostles that they will inherit a throne, which sounds just like what we learned in the Mesopotamian ball cycle where we are told that the council of the gods sat on princely thrones. We also see a divine council of 12 reflected in the book of Revelation chapter 21. In this chapter, John is shown the holy city, the new Jerusalem, where he sees God seated on a throne.

42:52

One of the archangels guides John into the heavens and it reads, quote, and he, the archangel, carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain. There again's the mountain motif, and shewed me that great city, the Holy Jerusalem. Then in verse 12, he describes the city, and this is what it says, quote, and it had a wall great and high and had 12 gates.

43:22

verse 13, on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates, verse 14, and the wall of the city had 12 foundations, and in them the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb. John tells us here that the celestial city he saw had 12

gates or entrances into the city, the city where God resided. So again, we get the same divine council motif here

43:52

the throne of God. The connection between Jesus' Council of Twelve and the Divine Council is further substantiated in Luke chapter 22 verses 29 and 30 where Jesus tells the 12 apostles that they will be appointed a kingdom and will serve as judges in the heavens.

44:20

unto you a kingdom as my father hath appointed unto me." Notice here that Jesus uses the word I appoint which is something we saw all over in the Mesopotamian Ugaritic literature. Appointing is one of the chief responsibilities of the Council of the Gods. It's in the council that the fates are decided, gods are commissioned, assignments are made, charges are given and lands are distributed and that's exactly what Jesus is doing here in this

44:50

Let's read it one more time and listen to what Jesus appoints to the 12 apostles. Quote, and I appoint unto you a kingdom. Jesus is telling the 12 apostles that in the heavens, he will assign them a particular kingdom over which they will govern or reign. And of course, since we already read that Jesus told them that they would be enthroned, we assume that they will reign as vassal kings over their kingdom.

45:21

And listen to what the rest of the verse says. And I appoint unto you a kingdom as my father hath appointed unto me. This verse is loaded with divine council imagery. Jesus is essentially telling the 12 apostles that in a divine council in heaven, that his father, the high God, appointed him, Jesus, a kingdom over which he was to reign. The divine council inference here is astounding.

45:49

and the implications of the 12 apostles receiving a kingdom is nothing short of astonishing because having a kingdom like Jesus clearly suggests that the 12 apostles would become gods, just like the ancients said of the beings who made up the divine council, that it was a council of gods. Let's keep reading verse 30. Quote, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel.

46:17

We see mention of the 12 apostles receiving thrones again here, but I wanna focus on what they will be doing. They will be serving as judges. In the ancient Mesopotamian and Ugaritic literature, one of the prominent divine council themes that we see over and over again is that divine council served as a court. The members served as judges. And that's exactly what Jesus tells the apostles they will be doing in heaven. They will be serving as judges. And if this hasn't dawned on you yet,

46:46

we can see remnants of the divine council every day in our court system where a chief judge presides over a 12 person jury. All of this is to say that the ancients taught that the heavens are a heavens of order. And what does that order look like? Well, from what we can glean from the ancient record, it appears that the order of the heavens is characterized by a God who is a father

47:14

who reigns a supreme divine king, and who presides over a supreme high council of 12 princely sons who are gods. Now that is a lot to think about. I'll leave you there with the words of William Shakespeare. Knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven. I'm Jack Lobe.

47:40

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Episode #19 - The Great Primordial Theomachy

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You're listening to the Ancient Tradition. A Wonk Media Production. Music provided by Joseph McDade. He is your host, Dr. Jack Logan.

00:28

Welcome to The Ancient Tradition. I'm your host, Jack Logan. It's great to have you along with me today as we dive into the ancient tradition. If you're new to the program, you're in for the theological ride of your life. On this program, we take the writings and oral traditions of the ancients seriously, especially their claim that God revealed a pure, true religious tradition in the very beginning, from the very start of the human experience on earth, a religious tradition.

00:57

which we refer to on this program as the ancient tradition. And we do this by identifying the themes or motifs that show up time and time again all over the globe. And then we focus on those themes that we can trace all the way back to deep antiquity. And that's what we're going to do today. If you're a new listener, this podcast is progressive, which means that each new episode builds on the previous episode. You're going to get a lot out of today's episode as a standalone episode, but

01:25

When you get a chance, be sure to catch up on the episodes you've missed so that you're caught up to speed. You'll get a much fuller picture of the ancient tradition. In today's episode, we're going to talk about one of the most widespread motifs that we can find in the ancient world. In fact, this motif is not only the most widespread, it's one of the most important. Wherever we find it in the ancient world, it represents the core central theme.

01:54

around which all of the other themes revolve. It's a theme that's so ubiquitous and important that we find it in nearly all of the world's greatest texts, whether those are ancient texts or modern texts. It's the central literary motif in what are considered the world's greatest texts. We can find this in the ancient Egyptian pyramid texts, we find it in the literature of ancient Mesopotamia.

02:21

in the Epic of Gilgamesh and the Enuma Elish and so many more which we've discussed. We find it in Homer's The Iliad and The Odyssey. We find it in the great Indian epics like the Ramayana. We find it in Apollonius's Jason and the Golden Fleece. We find it in the Finnish epic, the Kalevala. We find it in Britain's national epic, Beowulf. We find it in John Milton's Paradise Lost and in Shakespeare's masterpiece.

02:50

Hamlet. We see it in the West African epic, the Bayajita. We see it in the famous Tibetan epic, the epic of King Gesar and many, many more. And this is just the tip of the iceberg. In modern times, it shows up in masterpieces like the Lord of the Rings trilogy and in famous Japanese animated films like Spirited Away. It's at the core of nearly every blockbuster film

03:20

There are those in the literary community that argue that this motif constitutes the essential ingredient in all literature. The ingredient that without which there really is no great literature. So what is this essential ingredient? And where do we first find it? The answer is found in the title of today's episode, the great primordial Theomachy. Primordial means existing from the beginning.

03:50

and theomachy which is the Greek, theo meaning gods and machy meaning battle, combat or war. So theomachy means battle against the gods. Together the great primordial theomachy refers to the great battle that took place amongst the gods in the beginning. The earliest writings we find in the human record tell us of a cosmic battle

04:18

that took place in the heavens before the earth was ever created. A battle that continues today in both the cosmic and the earthly spheres. In the ancient texts, this battle is expressed symbolically in violent war-like physical terms where we get the rebellious god or beast who's slain by a weapon like a sword or a blade or he's shot with an arrow. Keep in mind though, that this imagery is symbolic.

04:46

The ancients are using this to help us, you know, human beings, terrestrial types, understand something important about the nature of the spiritual realm. So in the ancient texts, they tell us when this battle took place, they tell us which gods in the council of the gods battled against each other. They tell us why the gods engaged in the battle in the first place. They tell us the outcome of the battle and they tell us how the battle was a necessary prerequisite.

05:17

to the creation of the earth, which is why we're talking about it here. This great primordial battle constitutes the fifth motif or the fifth pillar of creation that we find in the ancient record. This motif is widely known among historians, mythologists, authors, and screenwriters as the combat myth. Contemporary scholars like Joseph Campbell, who I'm sure most of you have heard of before, and Christopher Volger.

05:44

a veteran Hollywood story consultant, took the combat myth and then they recoinced it the hero's journey. And they argue that all great literature as far back as the Epic of Gilgamesh, which is considered the earliest surviving written literature, right up to last week's highly successful blockbuster film, follow the exact same literary template, the sequence of events outlined in ancient combat myths.

06:12

What most writers may not realize is that according to the ancients, the so-called combat myth or heroes journey represents actual events that took place in the heavens before the earth was created. Christopher Volger, the Hollywood story consultant I just mentioned doesn't seem to be aware of this. He doesn't seem to know that the hero's journey has its Genesis and events that took place in the divine world, but somehow

06:41

Through his extensive background in screenwriting, he comes to the same conclusion. In his book, *The Writer's Journey, Mythic Structure for Writers*, he says the following, quote, the hero's journey is not an invention, but an observation. It is a recognition of a beautiful design, a set of principles that govern the conduct of life and the world of storytelling, the way physics and chemistry govern the physical world.

07:12

It's difficult to avoid the sensation that the hero's journey exists somewhere, somehow as an eternal reality, a divine model. From this model, infinite and highly varied copies can be produced, each resonating with the essential spirit of the form. I love that. What he's basically arguing is that

07:40

The combat myth or the hero's journey has a divine source that our greatest stories, our greatest literature, our greatest movies resonate with the human spirit precisely because they express an eternal reality, an eternal reality that I would argue from the ancient texts not only expresses actual events that took place before the earth was created, but that is also meant to serve as a divine model.

08:09

like Volger argues, for our own lives. A divine model that represents the cosmic battle each of us face, the need for human beings to conquer the great enemy, the great sea monsters, the Leviathan, in order to reach our full potential. So in this light, the hero's journey's not just a writer's template, it's a cosmic template relevant to every single person who's ever lived. In the ancient text,

08:38

The combat myth is so widespread that it's difficult to get a handle on it. And I'm going to try by giving you a quick survey of some of the major cosmic combats that we see to just kind of give you an idea. In the ancient texts, we see the battle in the Babylonian Labu myth. A hero battles a terrible dragon. In the Canaanite myth, the god Baal battles the god Yam, the sea enemy.

09:06

In the Babylonian Enuma Elish, the god Marduk battles the god Tiamat, the sea serpent. In the Assyrian myth, the god Nunurta battles the Anso bird, a terrible thunderbird who can breathe fire like a dragon. In a parallel myth, the god Nunurta battles Azag, a hideous water demon. In ancient Egypt, the god Osiris battles the god Set, who's an unidentifiable creature.

09:33

resembles some of the features of a wild dog or hyena and jackal. He's kind of a composite creature. In ancient Egypt, the god Ra battles the god Apophis, the terrible serpent who

embodies darkness and disorder. In ancient Greece, the god Kronos battles the god Zeus, a usurper of the throne. In ancient Greece, in a massive battle, the older gods, the Titans, battle the Olympians,

10:03

dominion over the universe. In Nordic mythology, the god Thor battles Yhormungandr, the world serpent. In the Bible, the god Jehovah battles Rahab, the awful Leviathan. In Hindu mythology, the 12 Adichas, which we talked about in a previous episode, led by the god Varuna, battle the divas, malevolent beings who are led by the god Vritra. If you want to see a depiction

10:32

on the famous temple in Cambodia, Angkor Wat, that battle between the Adichas and the Divas. Among the Aztecs, the god, Tesla Kapotka, battles the crocodile-like sea demon, Sepakli, threatening the creation. In Japanese mythology, the god, Susanu, battles Yamada, the terrible eight-headed dragon. And I could go on and on and on. In ancient mythology, we see the battle between gods,

11:02

move to a battle between the earthly king, who is the royal heir of the gods, and the enemy god, who the ancients symbolize as an awful monster or a sea serpent. For example, we see this in the Epic of Gilgamesh, where King Gilgamesh battles the awful monster Humbaba, who's guarding the entrance to the cedar forest. In the Epic, Jason and the Argonauts, when Jason, the rightful heir

11:32

guarding the tree on which the golden fleece hangs. In the epic story, Beowulf, the king of the Danes, battles Grendel, a creature of darkness, a destroyer and a devourer. And then from here, the battle between the earthly king and the enemy god moves to a battle between a flawed, unknown, unremarkable person, one who's often depicted as despised, a real person.

12:01

who's called upon by Providence to battle the awful dragon. And this is where we see some pretty great stuff. We see this in Star Wars. This is the orphan Luke Skywalker who battles Darth Vader. In the Harry Potter series, this is the orphan Harry Potter who battles

Voldemort. In the Hunger Games, this is the small town girl from District 12, Katniss Everdeen, who volunteers to be tribute and who...

12:31

ultimately battles the tyrannical Corleones snow. In the Lord of the Rings, this is the unheroic hobbit of the Shriner, Frodo Baggins, whose name actually means wise by experience, who battles the One Ring that was forged by the Dark Lord Saren to gain dominion over the free peoples of Middle

13:00

of all of us. The one who tempts us to destroy, divide, demolish, and dominate. And therein lies the magic of the combat myth or the hero's journey. Although it's couched in symbolism of physical combat, it's really a story about the royalty or possible destiny within each of us if we conquer the awful dragon.

13:28

Mythologist Joseph Campbell, who I just mentioned, says it like this. The cosmogonic cycle is presented with astonishing consistency in the sacred writings of all the continents, and it gives to the adventure of the hero a new and interesting turn. For now it appears that the perilous journey was a labor not of attainment, but of re-attainment. Not discovery, but re-discovery.

13:57

the godly powers sought and dangerously won are revealed to have been within the heart of the hero all the time. He is the king's son who has come to know who he is and wherewith has entered into the exercise of his proper power, God's son. From this point of view, the hero is symbolical of that divine

14:25

creative and redemptive image which is hidden within all of us only waiting to be known and rendered into life in Other words Joseph Campbell's arguing that all of us are royal children of the high God and That somehow we know this deep down inside But it's the triumphant battle over the dragon that reveals this to us

14:54

like enthronement of Marduk in the Enuma Elish. The combat myth teaches that all who conquer the dragon will be crowned kings and queens in God's kingdom. And if you pay close attention to what's going on in most princess movies, this is the exact message that's being conveyed. In the modern fairy tale Cinderella, Cinderella is a nobody.

15:22

She's an unassuming scullery maid. Her life's relegated to the scrubbing of floors by her cruel stepmother. But as the fairy tale progresses, she's given supernatural help to battle her cruel stepmother. And in the end, she triumphs and is crowned a princess. If you watch a lot of princess movies, variations of this pattern show up in almost all of them. Sometimes they know they are princesses and sometimes they don't.

15:51

But in each of the films, the young damsel must battle someone or something before her royalty is fully realized. There's a lot going on here theologically, so we'll definitely revisit this in a future episode. You know, what Disney and J.R.R. Tolkien and Suzanne Collins don't realize is that the source of their stories is the great combat that the ancients tell us took.

16:20

place before the earth was created. So let's jump into the ancient texts and take a closer look at what the ancients tell us took place in the great primordial Theomachy. By far and away, the Babylonian epic of creation, the Enuma Elish, gives us the best account. If you're interested in listening to a full audio recording of the Enuma Elish, you can find that on our sister podcast, the ancient tradition, Audio Rit.

16:46

I've gone over the Enuma Elish quite a bit in previous episodes. I'm not going to retell the story here. Instead, I'm going to lay out the basic sequence of events, the primary motifs we find in the battle between gods, wherever we find them in the ancient record. I may draw upon a few examples from the Enuma Elish here and there, but most of the examples will come from other texts. So we can get a feel for how widespread the primordial theomachy motif is in the ancient record.

17:15

Alright, number one, the first thing that we see in the Divine Combat Accounts is that this battle takes place in the spiritual realm in the heavens. It's a battle between gods. In the Enuma Elish, this battle takes place before the earth was created. And this aspect of the accounts really intriguing because it suggests that the battle was a necessary prerequisite to the formation of the earth, as well as a few other things that I'm going to mention in a couple of minutes.

17:46

Now, not all of the ancient combat myths take place before the earth has been created. Many take place after. But I'm going to argue here that the original source for the combat myth, which we don't have, and which appears to have been an important theological tenant of the ancient tradition, was an account of an important battle that took place before the earth was formed. And I have several reasons for this supposition, much of which comes from

18:15

lingering evidence in the accounts, those stubborn bits, and I'll get to those in a minute. Mullen, who I've mentioned before, who wrote *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature*, which is not the most compelling title that you can find for a book, but man, it's a fantastic book. It's really hard to find, but you can find it on Brill.com, B-R-I-L-L.com, but you will pay a pretty penny, but it's a fantastic book. He says this, quote,

18:45

creation motifs must be seen as belonging together from the earliest time. So he too here is arguing that creation was an original context for the cosmic battle which means it had to take place before the earth was created. Number two, the second thing that we see in the divine combat accounts is that a divine government existed in the heavens before the earth was formed. A government

19:14

of a number of gods, plural. Sometimes the texts refer to seven gods or 12 gods, 50 gods or 70 gods, but whatever the number, we get the impression that the heavens before the creation of the earth was occupied by a number of divine beings, both male and female. Number three, the third thing we see in the divine combat accounts is that the divine government follows a strict order.

19:43

In particular, we learned that the heavens are governed by a high God, a God who reigns as a divine king over a council of 12 of his sons. And if you haven't given episode number 18, the high council of 12, a lesson it's worth a lesson in that episode, we cover the council in detail. And there's a lot more to the divine government and how it's structured, but I'll have to save that for future episodes.

20:10

The fourth thing that we see in the Divine Combat Accounts is that the battle that took place between gods was a battle between two gods who appear to have sat on the Divine Council of Twelve. Now I can't say this for certainty, but there are enough hints in the ancient text to suggest that this was the case. What is clear from the text, however, is that regardless of whether they both sat on the

20:39

were both understood to be gods, and they were both understood to be sons of the high god. And we see this, for example, in Cuneiform Tablet 3.3.35-36 in the Ugaritic literature. The god Yam, who is the enemy of the god Baal, is referred to as, quote, the beloved of El. As you'll see as the podcast progresses, referring to one as beloved,

21:09

is actually an epitaph for one who is known to be a son of God. It's a title given to one who is exalted. This passage clearly indicates that the God who would become the enemy of the gods was first a son of El, but even more so he was understood to be a beloved son of the high God El, a God. As beloved, he must have been a very special son. In addition, in

21:38

Cuneiform tablet 3.3.21 to 22, Yam is specifically referred to as a king. It reads, quote, indeed you are a king. And in Cuneiform tablet 2.1.17, he's called Lord. Okay, this is really interesting. This reference to Yam as a king is intriguing considering in our last episode, we discussed how the high God divided his kingdom up.

22:08

amongst 12 of his sons and he assigned each of them stewardship as a vassal king over one twelfth of his kingdom in the text Enki in the world order. Which reminds me I came across an interesting artifact this week among the Hittites who were ancient Indo-European people

who lived in Anatolia which is near present-day Turkey. In the ancient city of Hatutza, the capital of the Hittite empire, there's a carving in the temple.

22:37

Yazlilikaya of 12 gods whom the Hittites identified as the Mesopotamian Anunnaki. Neil Forsythe in his amazing book published by Princeton University titled *The Old Enemy Satan and the Combat Myth* notes the same thing. He writes, quote, Yam, who's the rebel god again, is regarded like Baal himself.

23:06

as a son of El. Now, Forsythe's insight is important because it stresses the point that in the Ugaritic account, the two gods who end up doing battle with one another are divine brothers. They are both beloved sons of the high god El. We see a similar thing to this in the ancient Egyptian account of the battle between the god Osiris and the enemy of Osiris, the god Set.

23:37

In the ancient Egyptian pantheon, Osiris and Seth are both the offspring of the Egyptian gods Geb and Nut, which makes them divine brothers, just like we see in the Ugaritic account. Now, we don't always find this characterization of the gods who do battle as divine brothers, but we do see that the hero god who does battle against the enemy god is universally depicted as the offspring of the high god.

24:04

And keep in mind that the characterization of the enemy god as a terrible monster is symbolic. It's symbolic of his profane nature. As we pointed out in our previous episode, the divine council in the Mesopotamian literature is referred to as the Anunnaki, which literally means the offspring of An, An being the chief god of the Mesopotamian pantheon.

24:30

the Anunnaki show up in all over in the Sumerian, Akkadian, Assyrian and Babylonian literature. In *Enki and the world order*, they are divine beings with immense power. According to the ancient texts, why do the gods battle each other? What provokes the battle between them? Why are they fighting each other? The answer to this leads me to number five. The fifth,

24:58

thing we see in the Divine Combat accounts is a relatively consistent motive for why the battle takes place. Now in many accounts, the ancients provide no motive for why the adversary became the enemy in the first place. He's just presented as the enemy. In some of the other accounts, we find a little bit of variation in the motive. But Dr. Forsyte, while he was doing his research for his book, *The Old Enemy*, he found that those accounts that do include a motive.

25:26

that outright rebellion is the primary motive. He writes, quote, the question of motivation of how and why the adversary rebels was a part of the plot from its earliest form. He continues, in this rebel type, a quite explicit and elaborate motivation scene is often a part of the combat narrative says the combat consists in the act of rebellion itself, or its martial consequences.

25:56

and the victory is the suppression of the rebellion. As one student put it, this rebellion is most often just a clear cut grab for power. For example, in the Assyrian text describing the battle between the god Nenurta and the god described as the Anzu bird, known as the Anzu bird myth, we read in Forsyte's words about a quote, explicit rebellion among the gods.

26:26

So let's read some of that text. And this comes from the AK Grayson translation. Now, while I read, note in this text how Anzu is portrayed before he rebels. You'll see that the high god Enlil really entrusts him by giving him really important jobs, like conveying his decrees to those in the heavens and guarding the entrance to Enlil's temple. And interestingly,

26:55

The authorial Jacobson, the Assyriologist who have mentioned in past episodes, he argues that the Anzu bird represents the earliest form of the god when the gods were represented in animal form. In terms of avian symbolism, this makes complete sense because as we've discussed on this program the gods are often portrayed as birds because birds have the ability to ascend to the highest heaven, the highest sphere of the celestial realm. So if Jacobson is correct.

27:23

Then this, like we've seen by Ansoo's epitaphs as Son of God, Beloved King and Lord, and the depiction of him as a bird tells us that Ansoo was a very trusted god of high celestial station before he rebelled, which is pretty clear in this text when we realize that Ansoo had full access to the high god Enlil and to his heavenly temple palace.

27:52

Ansu's greatest ambitions are tested. With access to the divine king Enlil and his temple palace, the emblems of Enlil's royal power, the crown, the royal robes, and the tablet of destinies are constantly before Ansu's eyes. And ultimately, the temptation to usurp power is too great for him. Let's read.

28:22

directed. To convey them, he dispatched Anzu and Lil entrusted to him the entrance to his shrine. The exercise of his Enlil ship his eyes view. So we're talking about Anzu here. He's seeing the Enlil ship, which is the kingship of Enlil. The crown of his sovereignty, the robe of his

28:53

As he views constantly the father of the gods, the god of Duranki, which is the temple, the removal of Enlil's ship, he conceives in his heart as Ansu views constantly the father of the gods, the god of the Duranki. So you can just envision this. Ansu is staring at the crown, the robes and the tablet, the emblems that represent supreme dominion over the heavens.

29:20

And that's when the text tells us that Ansu conceives a plan in his mind. Remember the heart was the mind in the ancient world. Quote, the removal of Enlil ship, he conceives in his heart. And Enlil ship is Enlil's kingship. Like I just mentioned, Ansu conceives in his heart to still Enlil's kingship so that he can have supreme dominion over the heavens. The usurpation of kingship, a clearly rebellious act.

29:49

against the established order is a core theme we see wherever the battle amongst the gods is told. Let's keep reading. The removal of enlil ship he conceives in his heart. I will take the divine tablet of destinies and the decrees of all the gods I will rule. I will make firm my throne and be the master of the norms.

30:18

I will direct the totality of the Igigi. And the Igigi is the divine assembly. Pay close attention here, the first person pronoun in this text is pretty strong. Anzu says, I will rule. I will be the master. I will direct. And from these declarations, it's pretty clear that ambition and envy and jealousy is what's driving Anzu's plan. He wants to be the one to rule the heavens and he'll do whatever he needs to to get that power.

30:47

Let's keep reading and see what he does. His heart having thus plotted aggression at the entrance of the sanctuary, which he had been viewing, he awaits the start of the day. As Enlil was washing with water, his crown having been removed and deposited on the throne, he, Ansu, seized the tablet of destinies in his hands, taking away

31:17

the Enlil ship. Wow, the high god Enlil, who is the rightful owner of the tablet of destinies, which we pointed out in a previous episode was envisioned as a clay tablet, which conferred supreme authority on its owner, lays the tablet down while he bathes. Anzu outright steals the tablet, in effect, stealing supreme authority.

31:45

As that student said, this is a clear cut grab for power. And like I mentioned earlier, we see echoes of Ansoo's rebellion today, some thousands of years later in some of our greatest literature and film. In the Star Wars series, Anakin Skywalker, before he rebelled, was the Chosen One. As a Jedi, he was devoted to the ways of the Jedi Order.

32:15

He was exceptionally strong with the force and he was prophesied to destroy the Sith. I might also remind you that he sat on the Jedi High Council of Twelve. In Mesopotamian speak, he was a member of the Divine Council. So George Lucas must have done his homework. But then something happens.

32:45

Anakin is not satisfied with his position on the Jedi Council. He wants to be made a Jedi Master, but the Council doesn't feel he's ready. Anakin misreads the Council's decision, believing that they are jealous of his power. Ultimately, Anakin feels the Jedi High Council is

holding him back. In the movie, he says, and this is a direct quote from the movie, he says, quote, I want more.

33:15

and I know I shouldn't. Ultimately, Anakin decides that the only way to get more is to rebel against the Jedi Order and turn to the dark side, which he does. Note too how like we see in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia and all over the globe, the fallen God or Jedi in this case, then turns into a hideous monster. And George Lucas does the same thing with Anakin.

33:44

When he falls into a molten pit of fire, his face burns beyond recognition. He's a hideous monster. And note something else very interesting, how George Lucas gives Anakin a new name after he rebels, a name that reflects his new profane nature. He's no longer Anakin, now he is Darth Vader, the Dark Lord.

34:12

The fall of Ansu from the divine council in the Mesopotamian literature and the fall of Anakin Skywalker from the Jedi Council in modern cinema would really be akin to one of Christ's twelve apostles rebelling or falling. Now wait a minute, that's exactly what we see happen in the New Testament. In Matthew chapter 26 we learn that one of Christ's twelve apostles, Judas Iscariot,

34:41

for a bag of silver. Starting in verse 14, it reads, quote, then one of the 12 called Judas Iscariot went unto the chief priests and said unto them, what will you give me? And I will deliver him, Jesus, unto you. And they covenanted with him for 30 pieces of silver. And from that time, he sought opportunity to betray him, which of course he does.

35:10

In Luke chapter 22, starting in verse 47, it reads, and while he, Jesus, yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the 12, went before them and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss? Things did not end well for this fallen apostle.

35:39

In Matthew chapter 27 verse 5, we learn that Judas hangs himself. What's really interesting about this story is that we're told in both Luke and John that Judas was possessed by Satan. Luke 22 verse 3 reads, quote, then entered Satan into Judas, surname Iscariot, being of the number of the 12. I find this very compelling.

36:08

because in the Judeo-Christian tradition and in books like the Book of the Holy Secrets of Enoch, Satan is the fallen one. The one that I argued earlier was probably a member of the Divine High Council of Twelve, the one who rebelled against the high god Elohim before the world was formed. And then here in the New Testament we're told that this Satan entered one of the earthly

36:38

to betray Jesus or rebel against him and the 12 apostles on earth. The parallel between Satan's rebellion in the divine high council and Judas' rebellion against Jesus and his council of 12 apostles is really striking. In biblical studies, this is called a type. In most cases, a biblical type foreshadows a future event. But in this case, it appears this type is repeating events.

37:08

that occurred among the gods in the celestial realm before the earth was created. And I find this quite stunning. In most of the divine combat accounts that depict the enemy god as a rebel, the rebel god's rebellion is directly tied to usurping the kingship from the rightful king. The rebel god is the great usurper. He wants to rule a kingdom that is not his to rule.

37:36

He wants power and dominion and status that are not his. His rebellion is an act of open rebellion against the established civil order in the heavens. In the Canaanite text, known as the Bal-Mot cycle, the rebel god is actually called the rebel. In Cuneiform Tablet 6.1.55-65, in this passage, the rebel god goes up to the mountain temple and sits on the throne.

38:06

the throne that is not his, he is sitting on the high God's throne. And of course the throne does not fit him. And this is kind of like Cinderella, where only the rightful princess fits in the shoe. The shoe both identifies the rightful heir and exposes the usurpers of the throne.

So listen to this. Aftar, the rebel, went up to the reaches of Zephon, which is the mountain temple.

38:34

He sits enthroned on the throne of Ali-Yon-Bal. His feet did not reach the footstool. His head did not reach the top. And Ahthar, the rebel, said, I will not reign on the reaches of Zephon. Ahthar, the rebel, came down. And that moving down hints at a fall. We also see the rebel god in inarguably ancient Egypt's most influential myth, the myth of Osiris.

39:04

And we find elements of this myth go way, way back to the Egyptian pyramid texts that are dated to the 24th century BC. We find it in the middle kingdom in texts like the Ramsey and Papyrus. And we find it in later texts around the 12th century BC and the contendings of Horace and Set. And in this account, Osiris inherits the kingship from his ancestors, who he can trace all the way back to the creator God Ra and Atum. Osiris reigns in righteousness.

39:33

and governs his kingdom according to the prescripts of Maat, which is justice and order and truth. Osiris' brother, the ancient Egyptian god Set, is jealous of Osiris. He's jealous of his power and his kingdom, so he designs a plot to kill him and take his throne, which according to the text, he successfully does. The rebel god Set is a god full of envy and hate and deceit.

40:02

and he wants the throne that is not his. We see this same pattern of rebellion in the Bible in Isaiah chapter 14, starting in verse 13. And this is what it says of Lucifer's motive for rebelling against God. It says, quote, "O Lucifer, son of the morning, for thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into the heaven, I.'

40:30

will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the most high. Note here are we getting the same emphasis on first person pronouns like we did in the Ansu bird account. Lucifer says, I will ascend, I will exalt my throne, I will ascend above the heights. And then in what's quite a stunning statement,

41:00

be like the Most High. In these verses, it's all about Lucifer and what he wants. And what he wants is the high God's throne. He wants the power that Elohim has to rule the heavens, even if that means he has to take it. Now that's categorical rebellion. In the Yom-baal account, the rebel Yom's desire to take El's throne is particularly transparent when he explicitly instructs his messengers

41:30

and cuneiform tablet 2.1.14-15, not to prostrate themselves or pay homage to El or to the members of the assembly. And this is what it says, and this is Yam talking to his messengers. Arise, lads, do not tarry, verily set face toward the appointed assembly, to the midst of Mount Lule, to the feet of El, do not fall. Do not fall.

41:57

prostrate yourselves to the appointed assembly. Arise! Constantly stare. Yams messengers basically walk into the divine throne room, stand before the divine king, the god of the heavens, and refuse to pay homage. There's no more clear rejection of the divine king and the established order of the heavens than this. It's a contemptuous act of unambiguous rebellion.

42:26

And imagine the temperature in the divine throne room at this point. The council of gods must have been thoroughly aghast. What did the high god do next? What did the members of the council do? Well, for the answer to those questions, unfortunately, we're gonna have to wait until our next episode. Before I close out this episode though, I wanna stress that the ancient record attests that before the world was formed,

42:54

A beloved member of the Divine Council rebelled against God and the established Order of the Heavens. And his rebellion, as we'll see, will have widespread implications for both the celestial and the earthly realms. That's a wrap for me. As always, I leave you with the words of William Shakespeare, Knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven. I'm Jack Logan.

43:27

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Music

00:10

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Welcome to The Ancient Tradition. I'm your host, Jack Logan. Today we're going to take another remarkable dive into the ancient record. Before I do that though, I want to make you aware of our companion website, thea It's the hub for the show. There you'll find links to not only this show, but also links to our sister podcast, The Ancient Tradition Audio Rit. And that's where we place

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full audio recordings of some of the ancient writings we refer to on the program. You'll also find links to our YouTube channel there. As time permits, we're working on producing some visual renditions of these episodes. And you'll also find a link to Noteworthy Scholars, which will give you kind of a brief bio and a couple of book or article recommendations for those of you who are interested in reading more, some great resources there. We make everything that we produce on the ancient tradition.

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absolutely free to anybody who wants to listen. We do this because we truly believe, just like William Shakespeare says, that knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven. And if

you've found value in the things that you've learned on this program, we encourage you today to share a link to the program on your favorite social media account, like Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat, so that the other people out there who are searching for the original religious doctrines can more easily find our program.

01:55

If you share, comment and rate this podcast, that'll make it a lot easier for them to find it. With that, let's jump into today's program. We're going to jump in right where we left off from our last episode, the primordial Theomache. In last week's episode, we started going through the ancient record to see what the ancients taught about this great battle that took place amongst the gods before the earth was formed. It's really important to understand what took place in this battle.

02:24

for a lot of reasons. But in particular, we're learning about it because of the role that it played as a precursor to the creation of the earth. So in that context of the creation account, we're still working on that. So let's start where we left off in our last episode. We ended that episode looking at the fifth thing that we can learn from the ancient record about the primordial Theomache. And the ancients tell us that the battle between gods was caused by rebellion.

02:54

They tell us that one of the sons of the high council of gods rebelled against the established order in the heavens. The ancient records tell us that this son wanted power and dominion that was not his, and he plotted a way to usurp greater power. In the Ansu bird account, the rebel son says things like, I will rule, I will be master.

03:18

In the biblical account, the rebel son says, I will exalt my throne. I will be like the most high. This exalted son from these ancient texts tells us that he openly rebelled against God's power and authority. And I want to continue for just a bit longer on this point about rebellion because in the ancient texts, the son of the high God who rebels is initially described as one of the high God's choices to sons.

03:48

yet he allows arrogance and pride and envy and ambition enter into his heart and mind and it's those emotions that drive his rebellion. A rebellious spirit is one who likes to challenge God's authority who likes to challenge the established order in the heavens. As we noted in a previous episode in the biblical account the rebellious son is actually even given the name Rahab which literally means pride or arrogance. I want to

04:16

pause here for just a moment to talk about this in terms of our own personal relationship with God because that's what these accounts are for. They're instructive to us. From these accounts it's pretty clear that pride or arrogance is one of the most catastrophic characteristics that human beings can harbor. And the reason why is because deep down those with pride think that there can be no one greater than themselves. They think they know more than God. They think they're smarter. They think they could do it better.

04:44

and they think that they deserve greater status. Those are the things they think deep down. All pride is fundamentally like the rebel son, a direct challenge to God's ultimate supreme authority as governor of the universe. Pride is rebellion. In the biblical canon, this is often referred to as a hard heart. And as we'll learn from the ancients, all such rebellion against God is doomed.

05:13

to failure. In fact, C.S. Lewis wrote it like this and he says it really well. He says, quote, a creature revolting against a creator is revolting against the source of his own powers, including even his power to revolt. It's like the scent of a flower trying to destroy the flower. Definitely something to think about there. In the past episode, we covered several examples of the rebel son in the ancient record.

05:43

but I wanna share one more. And this one comes from the Popol Vuh. And I've mentioned it before, but just as a quick reminder, the Popol Vuh is an 18th century text which preserves the ancient oral traditions of the K'iche Maya in Mesoamerica. In this text, we find an account of the demon bird, Seven Makkah. As I read a summary of the account, see if you can't identify the same themes we've seen in the Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Ugaritic and Hebrew accounts. In particular,

06:12

Note how the account takes place before human beings have been created, how Seven Macaw, the rebel son, was originally an exalted radiant being, how pride took over, how he rebelled and tried to usurp kingship over the earth, and then how this rebellion led to a battle between the gods. And this account comes from the book mythology. Quote, prior to the dawning of the present era,

06:41

a monstrous bird. Okay, stop there for a second. It's a bird again. We're talking about just like with the Anzu bird that we read in the last episode. A bird is usually a description for an exalted divine being, someone who can ascend. A monstrous bird known as Seven Makkah presumed to set himself up as the principal deity over the gloomy twilight world. This earthly pretender to power and his vain offspring had to be destroyed.

07:11

before the human race could be created. Seven Maca was characterized above all by his boastfulness and arrogance and the way he basked in his own delusions of grandeur. Chief among these was his claim to be both the sun and the moon, which is interesting because that really means he's trying to claim to be the light of the world, the chief god. In these twilight conditions, Seven Maca was far and away the brightest

07:41

being. My light is great, he crowed. I glow, I glitter, I shine. Note how it says here that Makkah was far and away the brightest being in this twilight primordial time. And indeed, his physical appearance was nothing short of spectacular. His splendid plumage was made of precious metals and gemstones. His face was framed by jewel-encrusted burnished metal plates.

08:09

while his teeth were gleaming blue sapphires. In the ancient world, precious stones and metals were used to connote this idea of majesty and glory. Even the nest he lived in was built of dazzling metal. The nest here is obviously referring to the home, the celestial abode of this bird, a spectacular home. His proud boast was that his great white beak shone into the distance like the moon.

08:39

Seven Macaws' vain glory even extended to claiming that he had dominion over time. In the very arrogance of him lay the seeds of his own destruction, for such exorbitant claims constituted a direct challenge to the authority of the founder gods. Clearly this monster would have to be done away with." All right, so you should have been able to see in that account all of the same themes that we've seen.

09:09

previously. It's pretty remarkable. From here, Seven Makah and his demon offspring battle the Mayan twins, Hanpu and Shibulenke, who are the hero offspring of the god Han Hanpu and his wife Esquai. From here, this is what we read. Quote, the first confrontation between Seven Makah and the hero twins is described in terms of a hunting expedition.

09:38

First the hero twins lay in wait beneath the fruit tree where seven Macaw habitually appeared to feed. Did you catch that? Did you notice where seven Macaw hung out? I'll read it again. First the hero twins lay in wait beneath the fruit tree where seven Macaw habitually appeared to feed. Seven Macaw hung out at the base of a fruit tree.

10:06

a very special tree, which we've pointed out in previous episodes is a representation of the tree of life. It was symbolic of God seated on his throne. If you haven't given a listen to episode number six, the King and the Tree of Life, give it a listen. It's worth a listen. You'll learn all about this association between the Tree of Life and the God's throne there. Note too how this is very similar to the account in Jason and the Argonauts, where Jason must battle the serpent dragon who lives below.

10:35

the tree, the tree of life, on which is nailed the golden fleece. And it's also similar to the account in the Epic of Gilgamesh where the awful beast Humbaba camps, Humbaba camps just outside the cedar forest, which is obviously comprised of spectacular cedar trees, which represented the glorious realm where the gods resided. So the hero twins camp out near the fruit tree and they wait for seven Makkah to appear.

11:03

Note in this section what the hero twins use to fight seven Makkah it reads At length when he came they opened fire with their blow guns Hanpu scored a direct hit and dislocated the

bird's jaw Okay, so what did they use to wound seven Makkah? Blow darts and remember this because it's important

11:32

and we'll come back to it in a minute. But note also where, this is interesting, this is so interesting to me, where they hit seven Makkah, they hit him in the jaw. Now, if you're a regular listener, you might have to dig deep into the recesses of your mind here, but if you think back, this is very interesting because we noted in previous episodes that when the rebel God fell, one of the things he lost was his ability to divinely utter, to command.

12:01

to create. His divine speech no longer had efficacy. And here we see the hero twins shoot a dart that hit seven Macaw right in the jaw or mouth. You know, it's similarities in the accounts like this that truly blow my mind. The Popal Vuh was written thousands of years after and thousands of miles away from the first accounts that we find of this in the ancient Near East. It's just incredible.

12:31

Now listen to what happens when Seven Macaw is hit by the hero twins darts. It reads quote, stunned by the surprise attack, Seven Macaw plummeted to earth behind the tree. Okay. So what happens to Seven Macaw? He plummets to the earth. He falls. He is the fallen God and note to where he falls. He falls from behind the tree.

13:00

And this is super relevant too, but I can't go into it in this episode. Just add that to your list of tidbits to remember. Before he falls, note what else happens. It reads, quote, "But as Hanpu rushed up to finish off his quarry, "the bird seized his arm in its powerful beak "and wrenched it from his shoulder. "Hanpu was left with a bleeding wound.' "Seven Makkah severely wounds Hanpu. "He rips off his arm.'

13:30

and he leaves him bleeding. The wounding of the hero god in the battle against the rebel god is an incredibly important aspect of the battle, which will develop more as we go along. If I don't get to it in this episode, we will get to it in much greater detail pretty soon. But if you can't wait, be sure to check out episode number nine, the green eye of Horus, because in that episode, we discuss a lot of different important aspects of the wounded god. In particular,

14:00

We look at the ancient Egyptian account during the battle between the god Horus and the rebel god Set. Because in that account Set rips out Horus's eye and he leaves Horus severely wounded. In that episode you'll learn how the hero god or the king or the everyday man is healed from the wounds that they receive in the battle against the rebel god or the great dragon. In this Mesoamerican account, it's clear.

14:28

that Seven Macaw and his followers are attempting a mutiny. Seven Macaw desires to dethrone God and set himself up as the high God. His goal is rebellion and revolt. Okay, so it's at this point in the ancient text, the sixth thing that we learn about the primordial Theomache is that the high God either seeks a volunteer to battle the rebel God or he appoints one to do so.

14:55

And we see this very explicitly in the Enuma Elish where Marduk volunteers to battle Tiamat. At this point in the text, we're in tablet two, the king of the gods calls the council of the gods together and he looks for one of the gods on the council to come forward and volunteer to battle the dragon Tiamat. The Stephanie Dally Oxford translation reads, quote, now the Igigi assembled all the Anuki.

15:23

which is the council of gods, they assemble together. They sat silently for a while, tight lipped. Finally they spoke. Will no other god come forward? Is fate fixed? They're concerned there's nobody standing up to take battle to Tiamat. The god Marduk then steps forward and the text reads, father, don't stay so silent. Open your lips. Let me go.

15:51

and let me fulfill your heart's desire. So this is interesting. He wants to go, but the reason he wants to go is to help his father. That's very important. The king of the gods, Anshar, seems to be a bit concerned that Marduk doesn't know what he's getting into. He seems concerned that Marduk doesn't know, doesn't truly know what it means to go up against the terrible monster Tiamat. The divine king Anshar says to Marduk, quote,

16:21

that it is Tiamat who will advance against you with arms. So you can tell that the king of the gods fears for the terrible battle that will take place between the god Marduk and the usurper god Tiamat. This account does an excellent job of stressing the point that in the primordial realm, one of the gods on the council of the gods rebelled against the high god, and that another member of the council of the gods stood and volunteered to defend the high god

16:50

the established order in the heavens, he volunteered to battle the rebel god who the ancients after his rebellion characterized as a dragon. So Marduk stands and volunteers regardless of the costs that it might incur to him personally to wage war against the rebel son, a truly selfless deed. And as we pointed out in the previous episode,

17:18

In ancient writings, the original battle takes place in the primordial world. And then later in the writings, we see the battle move to a terrestrial battle between the Royal heir of the gods, the earthly king and the rebel God. This is often referred to as Satan, the great enemy or the double. Ultimately, the battle moves to a battle between an everyday unremarkable human being and the awful dragon, the great enemy. And it's a battle that all of us must fight.

17:48

in the epic Beowulf dated to sometime between 700 and 1000 AD. We see Beowulf who's a warrior whose uncle is the king of Gítlent, a volunteer to leave the safety of his homeland sail to Denmark and assist the king of the Danes, Ræthgar battle the awful monster Grendel who was terrorizing his kingdom. This comes from the Francis B. Gummery translation. It reads,

18:17

How ceaselessly Grendel harassed Hrothgar. What hate he bore him. What murder and massacre, many a year. The evil one ambushed old and young. Death shadow dark and dogged them still. Lured or lurked in the live long night. Such heaping of horrors, the hater of men, lonely roamer, wrought unceasing harassings heavy.

18:46

So there's our description of the awful monster. Note in this next passage how the monster Grendel threatens the throne, the kingship. Quote, or Heorot he lorded, gold bright hall in

gloomy nights, and ne'er could the prince approach his throne. Note how the monster Grendel is depicted here as lording over King Rathgar's palace.

19:13

So much so that the rightful king can't even approach his throne. And this is an important theme. Beowulf gets wind of the awful Grendel's threat to the throne and the text says, quote, This heard in his home, Hale-Loch's Thane, Great among geats of Grendel's doings, He was the mightiest man of valor. In that same day of this our life, stalwart and stately, A stout wave-walker,

19:42

he bade made ready. Yon battle king said he, far over the swan road he feign would see, the noble monarch who needed men. The text here says that Beowulf in the very same day that he got wind of Grendel's murder and massacre among King Rothgar's people, he voluntarily readies his ship with 14 of the finest warriors he can find and he sets sail for Denmark to help the king.

20:12

battle Grendel. So like Marduk, Beowulf isn't forced to battle the monster. He voluntarily takes arms against the monster to save the kingdom. And we find a similar theme in the legend of Saint George. The most well-known version of this story comes from a text known as the Golden Legend, kind of a fun name, dated to 1260 AD. Scholars argue that there are several elements in this

20:42

pre-Christian origin. So listen to this. In this legend, people in Libya in a place called Selene are terrorized by an awful venom spewing dragon. And to appease the dragon, the people offer children and youth who are chosen by lottery as tribute. And on this fateful day, the lot falls to the king's daughter, the princess of Selene. She's the next maiden to be offered to the vile dragon.

21:09

And in a desperate attempt to save his daughter's life, the king offers to shower his people with gold and silver if they will spare his daughter. But the people refuse. His daughter's sent to be fed to the hideous dragon. And it's at this point in the story that St. George

happens along and he sees the faded princess. What will he do? Keep walking or voluntarily battle the dragon? It's a choice that is completely his.

21:38

And the text reads, quote, when she was there, St. George passed by. And when he saw the lady, he demanded of the lady what she did there. And she said, go ye your way fair young man, that ye perish not also. Then said he, tell to me what have ye and why ye weep and doubt ye of nothing? When she saw that he would know, she said to him,

22:06

how she was delivered to the dragon. Then said St. George, "Fair daughter, doubt ye no thing, "Kira, for I shall help thee in the name of Jesus Christ.' "She said, for God's sake, good night, "go your way and abide not with me, "for ye may not deliver me.' "Thus as they spoke together, "the dragon appeared and came running to them.

22:33

St. George was upon his horse and drew out his sword and garnished him with the sign of the cross and rode Hardily against the dragon which came towards him and smote him with his spear and hurt him sore and threw him to the ground At this point st. George binds the dragon with the princess's girdle and note how st. George even against the pleas of the princess For st. George not to fight the dragon how'd st. George?

23:02

readily volunteers telling her quote I shall help thee. This echoes King Anshar in the Enuma Leash when the king of the gods asks Marduk if he realizes what he's going up against this terrible Tiamat when he said my son don't you realize that this is Tiamat who will advance against you. In both cases they're trying to help the one who volunteers to battle the awful monster to realize what they are truly up against. In all cases

23:32

The God, the King, the warrior, the everyday man valiantly and courageously takes on the dragon. And note here too how St. George uses a spear to wound the dragon. According to ancient legend, this lance, it's known as Ascalon, is a legendary holy spear that was believed to have been forged by God to combat darkness.

24:01

like the blow darts that we just saw used by Seven Macaw. This is a supernatural weapon and it's a really, really important aspect of the legend. The last legend that I wanna mention illustrates the point that the god who battled the rebel god did so voluntarily, comes from Nordic and Germanic folklore known as the Saga of the Vulsungs or the Legend of the Dragon Fafnir. And as quick aside for all of you Lord of the Rings fans out there,

24:30

It's widely known that J.R.R. Tolkien drew heavily on this legend when he wrote the Lord of the Rings. In this legend, a dwarven king's son, Fafnir, a dwarven prince, is bewitched with greed for his father's vast treasure of gold. He wants the entire treasure for himself, so he kills his father, the Dwarven King.

24:56

He's driven mad by his greed and he goes into the wild and he returns a colossal serpent dragon. But for this legend, let's listen to Lawrence Simpson of Myth Stories, recount the legend. It's a little more fun than me. And while you give ear, listen for echoes of the themes that we've been discussing.

25:21

Fafnir.

25:27

Odin, the all-father of Norse myth, had compensated the dwarf king with treasure for the loss of a son.

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But Spectator's Myth, it came with a price.

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You see, Odin was accompanied by Loki, the trickster god, and one should always think twice when accepting gifts with Loki present. Will you see? Loki had vexed the treasure with the most horrible curse, and soon it took hold. But not on the dwarf king. The spell had bewitched his son, the dwarven prince Fafnir. The treasure was vast, spectators of myth.

26:17

There was more than enough to go around for all. But despite that, Loki's magic had all but doomed these dwarfs. Prince Fafnir soon became filled with greed and wanted the treasure for himself. And so, he took his father's life. The dwarf king was dead, and Fafnir had the loot all to himself. But as you'd expect, expect me to submit.

26:46

This tale of patricide is not without its consequences, as the treasure's curse persisted. Fafnir became obsessed with guarding his hoard of treasure. He spurned those closest to him, including his brother, the dwarven prince and blacksmith Regan. Fafnir was driven mad with paranoia.

27:11

The prince truly believed that his treasure could vanish at any moment. So one day, consumed by the curse, he traveled into the wild and returned not as a dwarven prince, but as a massive, snaking dragon. Fafnir was determined to rid the land of all of its inhabitants, and that's exactly what he did. He breathed his madness upon the land in a frenzy of dragon rage.

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The fire of Fafnir's lethal toxic breath contaminated all it touched. And so the land was empty and his people gone. Fafnir and his treasure were all alone.

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Note here again how we're dealing with royalty, the king and his princely son. It's the dwarven king's son who rebels against his father, the king. The gold treasure here is symbolic of his father's entire kingdom, which Fafnir wants for himself. Fafnir's main ambition is to usurp his father's entire kingdom, which he does by killing his father, the king. And note that although he starts out as a royal prince, Fafnir

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consumed by greed turns into an awful monster. The same themes we've seen time and time again. And note too how the dragon is now guarding a treasure, much like the dragon guarding the golden fleece and the monster Hubaba guarding the cedar forest in the realm

of the gods. The actual text says, quote, “Later on, Fafnir killed his father. “He grew so malevolent that he went off “to live in the wilds.’

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He turned into a terrible dragon and now he lies on the treasure. Okay. That’s very interesting. At this point in the legend, we’re introduced to the champion Sigurd. He’s going to ultimately battle the dragon and we’ll return to the rest of the legend in a minute. But I want to stress here that Sigurd is a royal prince too. He’s the son of the great King Sigmund, who is a descendant of the high god Odin.

29:23

which makes Sigurd the great, great, great grandson of the high god Odin the all father. Like we’ve seen in the other legends, we have a royal prince, a descendant of the high god who volunteers to take on the dragon. In this case, the dragon Fafnir. The legend tells us how the dwarf Regan, who’s Sigurd’s kind of foster father recounts to Sigurd the story of how Fafnir stole the throne.

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And after Sigurd hears the story, he volunteers to take on the dragon. The text reads, and this is Sigurd speaking to Regan the metalsmith, quote, Now use your skill to make such a fine sword that no other sword can be made to equal it. And so that I shall be able to perform great deeds if my courage serves. Should you want me to kill?

30:21

this great dragon. So here Sigurd is clearly asking Regan to make him a weapon so that he can do battle with the dragon. But note that nobody’s forcing Sigurd to battle Fafnir. He’s volunteering. This is a very important characteristic of all dragon slayers. Marduk, Beowulf, St. George and Sigurd. They all do it voluntarily. They do it of their own free will and in so doing.

30:48

They save kingdoms and peoples and treasures and themselves. Dragon slayers are courageous and selfless to their core. It’s at this point that I wanna stop and take a look at the theological implications of what we’ve learned from the ancient records so far about the primordial Theomache. Because the theological implications are considerable. Okay, for starters, these legends and myths, as we’ve mentioned several times, have elements in them.

31:17

that strongly indicate that they come from one original source, which should kind of be obvious by now by how many of them I've shared. A source that we can trace all the way back to deep antiquity. And it's this original source that we refer to on this program as the ancient tradition. The original religious tradition that ancients tell us was given to them by God in the very beginning. And if what the ancients are telling us is true, and I've mentioned this before on this program, we take their claims seriously.

31:42

then we now know some of what was taught in the world's first religious tradition. And if as the ancients claim, these theological doctrines were revealed to them by God, then what we have in our hands is some of the most unadulterated, uncorrupted teachings about God and the reality of the spiritual realm. All right, so what can we learn theologically from the ancient writings that describe the primordial Theomache? What do they either imply?

32:12

or directly say theologically. To start, these texts, among others, tell us that life didn't begin with the formation of the earth, right? We've mentioned this a million times, but these texts tell us that an entire realm of life existed before and continues to exist outside of the physical earthly realm, an eternal realm, if you will. And they describe this eternal realm as occupied by divine beings who are governed.

32:41

and they're governed according to a strict hierarchy. You know, most religious traditions today don't believe in a primordial realm or a pre-existence, but in the ancient writings, the ancients teach this theology time and time again. In addition, these texts tell us that the eternal realm before the earth was formed, that one of the high gods exalted sons rebelled. Theologically, this is very intriguing because to rebel means that this divine son had a choice.

33:11

He could either choose to rebel against God or choose not to. The theological implications here are vast. Perhaps I'll dedicate a full episode of this somewhere down the line, but I wanna point this out here because it implies that we, which you'll see as the podcast progresses, and intriguingly, the gods are forever moral agents. They attest that human beings and the gods have the ability to act.

33:39

and they attest that we have the capacity to act morally or to not act morally. It's our choice. Philosophers love to muddy these waters and claim that our moral choices are the product of antecedent causes that were determined by outside forces that we have no real ability to choose morally. They love to shift the burden of responsibility. But the ancients did not teach this. As we see in the accounts of the primordial Theomache,

34:08

the execution of moral agency, even if it's executed contrary to the will of God, appears to be both a fundamental and an essential characteristic of being human or divine. Moral agency appears to be something that God never takes away. In fact, from all accounts, it appears as though God honors moral agency. He appears to honor each individual's right to

34:37

choose. Now theologically this makes complete sense because if we didn't have the ability to make moral choices then we couldn't be held responsible for the choices we made. Now on the flip side of this is both terrifying and grand because it implies that we're the ones who get to decide what we become. With every moral choice we can choose to become more and more like God or less and less like God. Our choice. We can't shift that choice to anybody else.

35:07

in the end, will become exactly who we choose to become. It's for this reason that I don't really think that God will judge us in the end. We'll already know where we stand because we'll know that we were the ones who made the choices. He'll probably just love us, even though he can't alter the consequences of our decisions. From all accounts, moral agency appears to be a bedrock.

35:36

theological tenant of the ancient tradition. And along these same lines, the accounts we have of the primordial Theomache attest that how we use our moral agency has consequences. Kind of like the old mother's adage goes, we're free to choose our actions, but we're not free to choose the consequences. Agency and consequences imply an even greater theological doctrine. They imply that the heavens are governed by some type of universal law.

36:06

A law that even the gods seem to be bound by. A law that not even the gods can change. Now this gets into some really interesting territory. And I'll delve into this much more when we discuss the ancient Egyptian concept of Ma'at. But suffice it to say here that this universal or eternal law that exists is the standard by which one becomes like the gods or doesn't.

36:32

There's no circumventing the law or the consequences that come from violating the law. This brings me back to the accounts of the primordial Theomache. In these accounts, one of the exalted sons of the high god uses his moral agency to choose greed, power, theft, pride, and selfishness over generosity, selflessness, and humility. What were the consequences of those moral choices? Well, he became less and less

37:00

like the exalted son he once was and now he had become a profane creature. As a consequence, the high god exiled him from his presence. He was no longer allowed to dwell with god like he once had. The accounts tell us he was cast down or cast out. In chapter 29 of the book of the holy secrets of Enoch it says this of the rebel's son and this is the lord speaking here.

37:28

one from out of the order of archangels deviated along with the division that was under his authority. He conceived an impossible thought to place his throne higher than the clouds above the earth that he might become equal in rank to my power. I threw him out from the height with his angels." And like I mentioned in the previous episode, to ascend to the height is to become

37:58

or more and more like God. So to be cast down is another way of saying that he had become less and less holy or more profane. As a profane creature, he was no longer worthy to reside among the holy. The ancient accounts tell us that this exalted son was absolutely furious over his exile. The ancients tell us that he raged. We talked about this in episode number 15, sea monsters, sea serpents, and leviathans, where the root for tannin

38:27

The sea monster means lament or howl. And in ancient Egypt, in the book of the gates, we read that he quote, lives on in his own shouting. He's a creature of anger and fury and

indignation, all from his own moral choices. This fallen son was not content on leaving the presence of God himself. The ancient texts tell us he convinced a cadre of followers.

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to use their moral agency to go with him, which implies that he had a great deal of influence in the eternal realm. In the biblical canon, he's known as the devil, Satan, Belial, or Beelzebub. He's known as the enemy. He's the evil one, the old snake, the tempter, the one who constantly tempts mankind to make bad moral choices, just like he did, which will lead one farther and farther away from God. He tempts them to worship him as their God rather than the high God.

39:25

man of holiness. Theologically this is powerful stuff because here the ancients are teaching us that this fallen son along with his legions is the origin of evil on earth. This fallen son and his army of followers are constantly exerting their negative influence upon us. When one does evil abounds. As that other old adage goes, misery loves company and

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appears to be what the fallen son and his followers want, some company to join them in their misery. As you can see there's a lot going on theologically in the accounts of the Primordial Theomache which I hope you'll give some thought to because if the ancients are teaching us truths about the eternal realm, which I maintain they are, then our moral choices are of considerable importance. So let's return to the accounts of the Primordial Theomache and see what else we can learn.

40:20

We mentioned that the sixth thing that we learn is that one of the high gods exalted sons volunteered to battle the rebel son. The seventh thing we learned from these accounts is that the exalted son did not have to battle the rebel son by himself. The gods give the exalted son special weapons to help him win the battle. In every case, they are supernatural weapons that he needs to triumph over the dragon.

40:50

Without them, he's doomed to failure. And to see this, let's return to the legend of the dragon Fafnir. Listen closely to see if you can identify the special weapon that Sigurd uses to slay Fafnir.

41:08

Barthene's greed and paranoia had consumed him. Eventually, the curse had robbed him of all of his faculties and had left him with nothing but a dragon's rage. Barthene's brother, the blacksmith Ragen, still yearned after the treasure. His mad dragon sibling was a beast his smith could not best.

41:32

However, Reagent Student, the Warrior Sigurd, probably could...

41:38

Regan coaxed Sigurd into this task, but the warrior asked for only one thing. An epic sword. Yet that, the dwarf could not fashion. Seeing this, Sigurd retrieved the broken pieces of his father Sigmund's sword. Regan repaired it, and Sigurd got to work.

42:00

That blade was Gram. The legend of Fafnir is perhaps its most famous appearance. But this sword, spectators admit, has a history. In fact, the blade was broken by Odin himself. But that is another tale. But for now, it is Fafnir's turn. The warrior dug himself into a pit and waited for Fafnir to pass over.

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And when the dragon did come walking, Sigurd pierced his heart. Fafnir was slain, and Sigurd was victorious.

42:37

Did you catch the special weapon? It's pretty obvious. Yes, an epic sword. But did you catch the special details about that sword? They're pretty easy to miss, but they're critical to the story. See, the hero Sigurd needs help fighting the dragon. So he asks Regan, the dwarf smith, to make him an epic sword. But Regan, as a mortal, doesn't have the ability to make an epic sword.

43:04

So Sigurd takes the broken pieces of his father's Sigmund's sword and asks Regen to repair it, which Regen does, and produces an epic sword. Okay, so why was Regen unable to forge an epic sword, yet Sigurd's father, Sigmund's sword, did work? Well, for that, we need to know more about Sigmund's sword before it was broken in half. See, in the Norse legends, they tell us that when Sigmund was younger,

43:32

He was seated at a wedding feast for his sister, Cygni, when a strange man appeared holding a sword. The strange man thrust the sword into the barn stoker tree that grew. Can you guess where this tree grew? That's right, it grew right in the center of the room where the wedding feast was being held in King Valsing's hall.

43:57

Now this is crazy. Where have we seen this before? A tree growing in the middle of the King's Hall or Palace or Temple or Garden? If you thought of the Garden of Eden, then you're correct. If you're a new listener or you haven't had a chance to listen to episode number six, the King and the Tree of Life, be sure to give it a listen. It's super important to what we see going on here. After the strange man thrusts the sword into the tree, he tells the wedding guests the following quote,

44:25

pull out this sword from the trunk, shall receive it from me as a gift. And he will find out for himself that he never bore in hand a better sword than this. The cover art for today's episode is a depiction of this, of this strange man thrusting the sword into the tree. So what's going on here? If you're a regular listener, you know that the tree growing in the center of the Garden of Eden,

44:53

And in this legend, the tree growing in the center of King Volsons hall represents the tree of life. And you also know that the tree of life is a powerful symbol that the ancients used to symbolize God. In particular, his ability to produce life in the seat of his throne in the center of all things. There's a lot of other things too, but we'll discuss those in future episodes. So in the legend of Fafnir, what is meant by this strange man thrusting his sword into the barn stoker tree?

45:23

Well, if you remember in episode number six, the earthly Mesopotamian King Amiduranki is summoned by the council of the gods into the temple Ibarra, where they give him a branch of the cedar-kiskanu tree, the Mesopotamian tree of life. And Dr. Windegren, who studied this, said, quote, “The legendary King Amiduranki in a scene of enthronement ““was given a scepter of cedar wood.’

45:52

we see that the king holds in his hand as his scepter, the plant of life or a branch from the tree of life. So in other words, a branch from the tree of life and the king’s scepter are to be understood as one in the same thing, which is implied here in the legend of Fafnir when the strange man thrusts the sword into the barn stoker tree and it sticks out like a branch. Okay, so what does this mean?

46:22

the branch of the tree of life and the scepter connected. And what do they symbolize? Well they symbolize power and authority. But not any old power and authority. They represent the power and authority of God. The branch is an extension of God. So the one that holds the scepter which is made from a branch of the tree of life holds the power and authority of God in his hand. He holds a power greater than any mortal or immortal enemy.

46:51

And note in the legend of Fafnir how the strange man tells him this. And he tells the wedding guest this. He says, quote, the man to pull out this sword from the trunk shall receive it for me as a gift and he will find out for himself that he never bore in hand a better sword than this. See the sword, the power and authority of God is a gift, a gift which endows the holder.

47:18

with the power and authority needed to conquer the terrible dragon. But there’s a catch. Not everyone can pull the sword out of the tree. Not everyone can obtain the gift. Only those who are worthy can obtain the gift. This is expressed pretty clearly in this legend and in similar legends like the legend of King Arthur and the mythical sword Excalibur by one’s ability or inability.

47:46

to pull the sword from the tree or the stone. So these legends are clear. Unworthy persons cannot obtain the special weapons needed to slay the dragon. And all of this is made pretty clear when we learn in the legend of Fafnir that this strange man who brings the sword to Cygni's wedding feast is actually the high god Odin himself. He was just in disguise.

48:14

So what this means is that the epic sword Sigurd used to slay the terrible dragon was in fact a sword endowed with God's power and authority. And as Odin tells us, right, he never bore in hand a better sword than this. We know the sword in these legends is symbolic. It represents some special weapon that God gives the worthy. But what is this weapon? Well, we'll get to that in a minute.

48:43

Whatever this special weapon is fashioned by God, it's extremely important in the ancient writings. And from what I can tell, it's an absolutely critical component or doctrine of the ancient tradition. When we examine the ancient record, we find that this special weapon shows up literally all over the place. And we see just copious examples of it all over in the modern world too, though it's pretty much in degenerated forms.

49:11

So let me give you some examples. In the Enuma Elish, Marduk uses the special winds of the four directions that Anu, the high god, gave him at birth and a special net, which Marduk uses to ensnare the monster Tiamat. In fact, the Enuma Elish calls this special net, quote, a gift of his father Anu. Pretty great. Among the Hindu, the god Indra uses a special thunderbolt called the Vajara.

49:41

to battle the dragon Vritra. Indra is told by the god Shiva that no weapon made of wood or metal could harm the dragon. He would need a special weapon made of the bones of Dadhichi, the sage, to defeat Vritra. Dadhichi then sacrifices his life so that his bones can be used to forge the weapon that can kill Vritra. Now there's a lot in there. In a Sumerian account, the god Ninurta uses Sharur.

50:11

an enchanted talking mace to defeat the monstrous demon Asag. And among its special abilities, this weapon had the ability to relay the god Enlil's will to Ninurta. It was

considered the ultimate weapon of the Anunnaki, the council of the gods. In ancient Greece, to help Perseus decapitate Medusa, the god Hermes gives Perseus a special curved sword.

50:37

and a pair of winged sandals. And the god Athena gives him a mirror of polished bronze and a cap from Hades that could make the one who wore it invisible. In Norse mythology, the god Loki commissions a hammer of unsurpassed quality, which never misses its mark and boomerangs back to its owner after being thrown and gifts this mighty hammer to the god Thor who uses it to battle Jormungandr, the Midgard serpent.

51:08

In ancient Greece, the artisan god Hephaestus gifts the god Apollo a golden bow and a quiver of golden arrows which he uses to battle the fearsome serpent Python. In Japanese mythology, the god Susanu uses the great sword Morichino Aramasa to slice off the heads of the legendary eight-headed dragon serpent Orochi. And also in Japanese mythology, during the reign of the 12th Emperor Keiko,

51:37

A great warrior named Yamato Takaru is gifted a magical sword, the Kusangi no Tursugi, by his aunt, which Yamato uses to crush a band of rebels. According to the Hindu, the supreme deity Brahma produces a razor sharp sword known as Asi, which Rudra, the god of storms, uses to rout the army of the Asuras. And in Jason and the Argonauts, the enchantress Medea?

52:06

gives Jason a special potion, which Jason uses to put the dragon guarding the golden fleece to sleep. In Chinese mythology, Emperor Yu, the legendary founder of the Xia dynasty, under the mandate of heaven, slew the venomous nine-headed serpent with the mighty sword,

52:32

Of course, I could go on and on and each of these accounts, the god, the king, or the warrior is gifted a special weapon, either fashioned from the high god himself or from one of his emissaries. And it's this special weapon that ensures that the hero will come off victorious, that he will win the great battle against the dragon. And can you think of any instances in the modern era in movies or literature or fairy tales where this theme shows up?

52:59

where the heroes gifted a special weapon which ensures his victory. And there's innumerable examples here, but I'll just give you a few. In *Sleeping Beauty*, the fairies give Prince Philip a sword of truth and a shield of virtue to fight Maleficent. In the Arthurian legends, the magician Merlin gives Arthur the special knowledge he needs to recover the magical sword Excalibur. In the *Wizard of Oz*, Glinda

53:28

The Good Witch of the North gives Dorothy ruby slippers, which the Good Witch tells her to never take off. And Dorothy later learns that by merely clicking the heels of her ruby slippers three times, she can quote, return home. Very interesting. In the *Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Father Christmas gifts Peter a special sword, the rindon and a shield.

53:57

To Susan, he gives a bow and an arrow and a magical horn. To Lucy, he gifts a magical healing cordial and a small dagger, all of which play an essential role in helping the children come off victorious over the white witch. And let's not forget that the children are also guided throughout the story by the mystical lion, Aslan. In the *Harry Potter* series, Harry's gifted a number of magical objects, which he needs to claim victory over Voldemort, the Marauder's map.

54:27

the invisibility cloak and of course, a very, very special wand made of holly and a single feather from the tail of a phoenix. And it's the precise constitution needed to conquer Voldemort. In the movie *Aladdin*, Aladdin finds a magical lamp and a magic carpet in the cave of wonders. In the *Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf, the Grey, gifts Frodo a special blade named Sting.

54:56

which was found by Gandalf in a cave. Gandalf also gifts him the Mithril jacket, the Thor's map, which displays the secret entrance to the lonely mountain, and Smog's, who's the dragon's, Smog's lair. In addition, Galadriel, the elven lady of the woods, gives Frodo a file of light, all of which are vital to Frodo's success. And if you're a gamer or you know a gamer, you'll notice that this motif is central.

55:25

a central characteristic of most video games and games like Zelda or the Elder Scrolls. The adventurer must acquire a variety of special weapons which they often happen upon by exploring the terrain or they're gifted by special emissaries. And these special weapons are absolutely critical to the adventurer. He or she can't win the war against the terrible monsters they face without them. Every time a gamer plays one of these games, he or she is reenacting

55:54

the great battle against the dragon. Sadly, it's not the real battle against the dragon. It's an imitation or a simulation of the real thing. It's a degeneration of the original teaching, but still the same, it's pretty fascinating to me that thousands and thousands of young men and women spend copious hours of their day playing and replaying these games, which mirror key doctrines that appear to have been taught in the ancient tradition. Clearly something resonates within these gamers.

56:22

that draws them back again and again to conquer the dragon. It's almost like they know on a subconscious kind of spiritual level that this is what one of the major objectives of this life is, to conquer the dragon. Before I close out this episode, I wanna stress the incredible importance of this special weapon. By pointing out what happens to the gods, kings, and adventurers who have not acquired this special weapon, who have not pulled the sword.

56:51

from the barn stoker tree, so to say. The ancient record is clear. They are doomed to failure. They're doomed to be consumed by the dragon. In fact, you'll know that this is the crux of every single horror film ever created. In fact, it is the main point in every horror film ever created. A protagonist left to his or her own devices.

57:17

A protagonist without the necessary special weapons to successfully slay the monster are consumed by the monster. And this is horrible to watch. It's the ultimate horror. The message is that no protagonist, no matter how able-bodied they are, has on their own what it takes to defeat the monster. They need additional help. Without it, it's horror.

57:47

So what is this special weapon? If we all need it to defeat the dragon, what is it? And how do we acquire it? Pull it out of the tree. All of these questions are very important and they require more time than I have in this episode. So unfortunately, we'll have to explore the answers to these questions in our next episode. But while you wait, why don't you ponder what we've learned so far from the ancient record about this weapon?

58:15

and see if you can't figure it out for yourself. First, from the ancient record, we learned that this special weapon is a gift from the high God. Sometimes the special weapon is found in caves or on a mountain, both of which are symbols of where the high God resides, his home or temple. It's a special weapon that comes from or is acquired there. Second, from the ancient record, we learned that this special weapon is not given to everyone.

58:44

And this is pretty clear from the ancient texts when we see that only the worthy one can extract Excalibur from the rock or pull the sword from the barn stoker tree. And third, we learn from the ancient record that no one will succeed against the dragon without it. It's essential in every sense of the word. Without it, the dragon slays the god, the king, or the adventurer. I want to leave you with one last clue as to the identity of this special weapon.

59:12

All of this, and I mean all of this, is symbolic. There is no mythical sword or silver dagger or magic potion or ruby slippers that we must acquire to defeat the dragon. And I know that might be kind of disappointing to some of you. These tangible earthly weapons are used by the ancients to teach us something about the reality of the spiritual realm. The great primordial Theomaki, the

59:39

The battle fought in the spiritual realm before the earth was formed was not a physical battle. It was a spiritual battle, a war between those who upheld the authority of the high god and those who rebelled against the authority of the high god. The ancients used physical war with its swords and blood and death to help us capture the gravity of this spiritual war.

01:00:06

This means that the special weapon that we all need is not a physical weapon, but a spiritual weapon. That's what the theology of the ancient tradition is teaching all of us. I'm gonna

have to leave it there. If you enjoyed what you learned in today's program, take a minute right now.

01:00:26

and share a link to this episode on your favorite social media accounts like Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat so that others who are searching for the original religious doctrines can more easily find our program. With that, I'll leave you with the words of William Shakespeare, knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven. I'm Jack Logan.

01:00:50

You've been listening to the ancient tradition. A Wonk Media Production.