

Doctrine of the Sons of God

Genesis 6

1. Genesis 6:1-8 has been a passage of debate for centuries.
 - *Genesis 6:1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, 2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. 3 And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. 4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. 5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.*
2. The question that arises is, “*Who are the sons of God mentioned in this text?* “
3. Two main views are espoused.
 - They are righteous men, perhaps descendents of Seth.
 - They are fallen angels.
4. The former explanation should be embraced for the following reasons:
 - It is the most natural way to interpret the passage. This follows the “golden rule” of hermeneutics; when the plain sense of Scripture makes sense, seek no other sense, lest you end up with nonsense.
 - Because of a statement in Matthew 22:30. This verse implies that angels do not marry. While it may be argued that they should not marry, I find no reference in Scripture that indicates that angels have ever married, reproduced, or even desired to do so. *Matthew 22:30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.*
 - Because of the law of biogenesis-life begets similar life. This is clearly spelled out in the creation account. How could an angel reproduce with a human? If the angel took on the form of a man, what would his offspring be, man or angel? If the angel merely possessed a man, then it is no longer angels cohabiting with women, but men with women.
 - Because of Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 15:35-40. These verses are emphasizing that there is a difference between earthly bodies and heavenly bodies, and it is a distinct difference.

1 Corinthians 15:35 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? 36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: 37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: 38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. 39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. 40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

- Moses did not use the word *malak* for angels. This is the normal Hebrew word for angels, used almost 30 times in the Pentateuch.
- Because “*mighty men*” is the Hebrew word *gibbor*. A point of significance with those who hold that the sons of God are fallen angels is that their supposed offspring were “*mighty men*”. Yet this word is used over 150 times throughout the Old Testament. Should we conclude that Gideon, Saul, David, Boaz, and even God Himself are the offspring of fallen angels and women since this word is used in reference to them? Obviously not!

Those who hold to the view that the sons of God are fallen angels generally support their arguments along the following lines:

- The Hebrew phrase *bne-elohim* (sons of God) always refers to angels in the OT. To my knowledge, this word is only found six times in the OT. (Genesis 6:2,4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Hosea 1:10). While five of the six seem to clearly be reference to angels, Hosea 1:10 is obviously a reference to the children of Israel. Another observation to be noted is that in the book of Job the sons of God are seen to be faithful angels, with Satan coming in among them. The reading leaves you with the impression that he is out of place, that is, he does not belong there. If Genesis 6:2,4 are references to fallen angels, then it is possible the only place Scripture uses that phrase to refer to fallen beings, whether men or angels is here.
- The Hebrew word *nephilim* actually should be rendered as “fallen ones”. Nephilim means a feller. It is a masculine Hebrew noun with roots meaning to fall. Whether nephilim is a fallen one or one who causes the fall of others, such as a bully or tyrant, is debatable. The word is used only three times in the OT, here, and twice in Numbers 13:33 where it is used in reference to the sons of Anak who were apparently much larger than the twelve spies. Is the possibility that these men were unusually large sufficient reason to conclude that they were the offspring of fallen angels? Where does that leave Goliath? Or David’s mighty men of valor? Or, on the opposite extreme, pygmies, who are unusually small? This type of conclusion seems without basis and beyond the realm of reason to me. Why can’t the Nephilim simply be fallen men who are “big, bad, and ugly”?
- Because of ancient pagan legends. While there may be some truth to ancient legends, they are still legends and are poor guides to use in understanding Scripture.

- Because of the common opinion of Jewish writers. This is perhaps the best case for this view, especially if the Septuagint translates Genesis 6:2 as “angels of God.” However, while history is important to consider, it is not the determining factor in interpreting Scripture.
- Because of the interpretation of the early Church. Here again it is important to consider the views of the early church, but, their interpretation was probably colored by the reading of the Septuagint.

Conclusion.

There is no need to look for alternate meanings to this passage when the normal reading of it makes sense. In Gen. 5, we see listed for us the descendents of Seth, the God-honoring line of Adam. It seems to flow quite naturally into chapter 6 as these men begin to intermarry with pagan woman, which results in the statement by God in Genesis 6:3. The point has come when even those who fear God have begun to fall away, and God makes plans to destroy them all. But there was a remnant, one who had not defected, Noah. He found grace in the eyes of God (Genesis 6:8).