

# Genesis 6:1-8



## THE SONS OF GOD: PRELUDE TO THE FLOOD

# Essential Points



- “Sons of God” married “daughters of men”
- Yahveh’s Spirit will not always strive with man
- The Nephilim were offspring of the sons of God and daughters of men
- Yahveh sees the wickedness of man
- Determines to destroy man, but have grace on Noah and his family

# “The Sons of God” in Genesis 6



- I. History of Interpretation
- II. The Biblical Terminology
- III. Passages in the NT Which May Have Some Bearing
- IV. Context
- V. Why Did God Include Such a Passage?

# I. History of Interpretation



- The Greek OT (Alexandrian text) rendering for “sons of God” was “angels of God.”
- This reading is adopted in Philo, Justin Martyr (*Apol*, ii. 5), Eusebius, Augustine, and Ambrose.
- The OT Pseudepigrapha and Apocryphal writings interpret the text as angels cohabitating with human women and producing offspring: 1 Enoch 6:1; 2 Enoch; Jubilees. 5:1ff.; Genesis Apocryphon;
- Other Jewish writers also took this view: Joseph; *Ant.* i. 3. 1; Philo, *de Gigantibus*; Justin Martyr, *Apol.* i. 5; Ps. Clement, *Hom.* viii. 13; Clem. Alex. *Strom.* v. 1.10; Tert. *de Virg. Veland.* vii; Adv. Marcion. v. 18; *De Idol.* ix; Lact. *Instit.* ii. 15; Commodian, *Instruct.* i. 3. In the *De Civ. Dei* xv. 23
- Augustine combats the view and denies the inspiration of Enoch which Tertullian had upheld.
- [Source: Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the OT*]
- Later Rabbinic literature in the Middle Ages held the phrase was a reference to sons of pre-Flood rulers or magistrates.

# I. History of Interpretation



- Augustine proposed the view that the sons of God were Sethites and the daughters of men were daughters of Cain. Luther and Calvin, not surprisingly, follow Augustine.

## II. The Biblical Terminology



Genesis 6.2, 4

בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים

*bənê-hā'ēlōhîm*

LXX has

οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ

*hoi huioi tou theou*

## II. The Biblical Terminology



Job 1.6; 2.1; 38.7

בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים

*bənê-hā'ĕlōhîm*

LXX has

οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ

*hoi aggeloi tou theou*

In Job, the only other place where the phrase is found the Bible, the “sons of God” reference is to angels. Psalms 29.1; 89.6 and Dan. 3.25 use a slightly different construction but the reference there is to angels as well, or in the case of Daniel, possibly our pre-incarnate Lord.

### III. Passages in the NT Which May Have Some Bearing



Jude 1:4-8 <sup>4</sup> For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. <sup>5</sup> Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, **that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.** <sup>6</sup> **And angels** who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, **He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness** for the judgment of the great day, <sup>7</sup> just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. <sup>8</sup> Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.

*"these" is masc. pl. reference to the angels*  
*"they" is a fem. pl. reference to the cities*

### III. Passages in the NT Which May Have Some Bearing



2 Peter 2:4-11 <sup>4</sup> ¶ For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; <sup>5</sup> and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; <sup>6</sup> and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; <sup>7</sup> and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men <sup>8</sup> (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), <sup>9</sup> then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, <sup>10</sup> ¶ and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, <sup>11</sup> whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.

### III. Passages in the NT Which May Have Some Bearing



Matthew 22:28-30 <sup>28</sup> "In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had *married* her." <sup>29</sup> ¶ But Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God. <sup>30</sup> "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

NOTE: The only thing to infer from this is that angels residing in heaven do not marry. The angels who sinned in 2 Peter and Jude sinned precisely in violating this rule of conduct.

## IV. Context



- a. Within the *toledoth* of Adam or pickup from Chapter 4 and the development of titan kings?
- b. Relation to the struggle of the two seeds and seed of the woman?

## V. Why Did God Include Such a Passage?



- a. To give the reason for the increasing of wickedness
- b. To provide justification for the flood
- c. To state the threat to the promise of God in the seed of the woman

# The Repentance of God



We have already seen a figure of speech applied to God in Genesis, e.g. not knowing when he says “Where are you?”

In Genesis 6 we have several new ones:

God is said to have eyes “God saw” (6:2, 5) “eyes of Yahveh” (6:8).

He has a “heart” which is “grieved” (6:6).

And he “repents” or is “sorry” depending on which translation you use (6:6).

Other passages seem to be in conflict with this idea: Numbers 23.19; 1 Samuel 15.29; Malachi 3.6. We will be in endless confusion about God if we do not acknowledge that the scriptures sometimes speak of God as having body parts (*anthropomorphisms*) and as having human emotions or feelings (*anthropopathisms*).

Doctrinal passages of the scripture are clear about God the Father being a spiritual being, immortal, invisible, infinite, transcendent:

John 4:24 <sup>24</sup> "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Acts 17:24-25 <sup>24</sup> "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; <sup>25</sup> nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things ...

1 Timothy 1:17 <sup>17</sup> Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

God’s apparent change of will in Genesis 6 is only a descriptive change of plan from our human perspective.