

## Genesis 6:1-8

***There were two major reasons for the flood: the sins of the sons of God (vv. 1-4), and the sins of humankind in general (vv. 5-8).***

Tom Constable

### **Introduction...**

Genesis 4:1–6:8 provides essential information about the world before the great flood. But these chapters do more than give us a record about former times. The Bible's account of the antediluvian world functions as a microcosm for the entirety of world history. ***After the fall of mankind, the human race was split by a great division between the ungodly and the godly. Genesis 4 showed the line of Cain proudly reveling in worldly attainments, while the children of Seth "began to call upon the name of the LORD" (Gen. 4:26). The opening section of Genesis 6, which both introduces us to Noah and serves as an epilogue to the genealogy of Seth, tells of the ripening of sin until God decided to cleanse the world in judgment.*** All these themes dominate our own era of history. Jesus connected the world before the flood to our world before his return and to God's final judgment: "For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man" (Matt. 24:37).

**Source-** Richard Phillips, Genesis

### **Kent Hughes on Genesis 6:1-4...Human Degeneration (Edited)**

***Verses 1-4 of Genesis 6 record the degeneration of primeval culture...***

(1) marriage was demonized, (2) life shortened/judgment imminent, and (3) violence idolized.

- **Marriage demonized.**

The story opens with what all agree is the most debated text in Genesis: "Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, <sup>2</sup>that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose." (vv. 1, 2)...

***Recall that chapter 4 gives the genealogy of the ungodly Cainite line (vv. 17-22) and that the whole of chapter 5 is about the godly Sethite line.***

***New Testament passages link fallen angels and the flood. 1 Peter 3:19, 20*** alludes to Christ preaching upon his death "to the spirits *now* in prison, <sup>20</sup> who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through *the water*."

***The word for “spirits” (pneumata) is used in the Bible only to describe supernatural beings—here the fallen angels of Genesis 6.2***

***And 2 Peter 2:4, 5, 9 references the same fallen angels in the context of the flood, as Peter warns that God will also hold the unrighteous for judgment:***

<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>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

***Similarly Jude 6 references these same angels:*** “And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day.”

***In addition to these New Testament references, the angel interpretation of Genesis 6 is the oldest view.*** The earliest Jewish exegetes held this view, as represented in such sources as 1 Enoch, the Book of Jubilees, the Septuagint (LXX), the writings of Philo and Josephus, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. ***The same position was held by the early Christian writers*** Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Origen

***Although the Old Testament sometimes declares God’s people to be his sons (cf. Deuteronomy 14:1; Isaiah 1:2; Hosea 1:10), the normal meaning of “sons of God” is angels.*** Job’s usage of the term is normative: “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them” (1:6). “Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD” (2:1). “On what were its [earth’s] bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (38:6, 7; cf. Daniel 3:25).

***The “sons of God” were not godly Sethite men.*** Rather, as Allen Ross says, “The story describes these ‘sons of God’ as a lusty, powerful lot, striving for fame and fertility.” Note that that the Gospels record demons as craving for bodies (cf. Mark 5:11-13; Luke 8:31-33; 11:24-26).

**Therefore, understanding that “the sons of God” are angels (here in Genesis 6, fallen angels), and also understanding that angels are sexless and cannot marry and procreate (cf. Luke 20:34-36), what we must have here in “the sons of God” marrying “the daughters of man” is fallen angels (demons) commandeering the souls of men (demon-possession, in modern parlance), and these demonized men marrying the daughters of other men. It is these same wicked angels whom Peter and Jude reference as having been imprisoned at the time of the flood and as now being kept in dungeons for ultimate judgment. Unbelievable? No.**

As the highly respected Old Testament scholar Gordon Wenham has said, **“If the modern reader finds this story incredible, that reflects a materialism that tends to doubt the existence of spirits, good or ill. But those who believe that the creator could unite himself to human nature in the Virgin’s womb will not find this story intrinsically beyond belief.”**

**Commentators have long seen that the wording of Genesis 6:2 parallels the fall of Eve in the garden (3:6).** Eve “saw that the fruit was good for food” and pleasing to the eye, and she took and ate. Here in the demonized replay of the fall, the object of lust is not fruit but the beautiful women that the “sons of God” saw and took for themselves. The picture is one of unmitigated lust...

**Genesis 6 gives us nothing less than the demonization of marriage and primeval culture itself...What we see here is the takeover of culture by Satan and his hosts. Evil has multiplied faster than the population, so that it has spread through the entire people of earth.**

But more important than the details of this episode is that man was beyond self-help. **Demonic powers were operating in force.**

- **Life shortened/Judgment Imminent**

**Interpretation 1- Life Shortened...**

As we said, these demonized marital unions intended, as with eating from the tree of life, to secure eternal life for humanity.

But God drastically reduced man’s life span from some nine hundred years to a little over a hundred: “My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years” (v. 3). Having sought immortality through his liaisons, man was sentenced to live a maximum of 120 years—roughly a sevenfold reduction of the average life span of the antediluvians.

***This is problematic in the wider setting of Genesis because Noah and many of his descendants lived hundreds of years (cf. Genesis 11).***

Abraham lived to be 175, Isaac 180, and Jacob 147 years. It may simply be that 120 years as a life span was gradually implemented.

As Wenham points out, “In the post-flood period, the recorded ages steadily decline (chap. 11), and later figures very rarely exceed 120. After the time of Jacob, the longest-lived include Joseph (110, Gen. 50:26), Moses (120, Deut. 34:7), and Joshua (110, Josh. 24:29). Only Aaron (123, Num. 33:39) exceeds 120.”

### ***Interpretation 2- Judgment Imminent...***

***Once this program of mixed marriages was underway, it was only a matter of time until the Church would be completely merged with the world. The Sethites would lose their identity and distinctive character and would be merged with the Cainites in a wicked, godless race. And this is exactly what happened. At the beginning of this period, there were two great branches of the human race, one godly and the other ungodly. But at the end of the period, none remained godly except the one family of Noah and his sons. The rest of the godly branch had become like the ungodly Cainites.***

***This development displeased the Lord, as we see in verse 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.” The interpretation of this verse is extremely difficult because of an ambiguity in the Hebrew text. Leupold translates it: “My spirit shall not judge among mankind forever, because they also are flesh. Yet shall their days be one hundred and twenty years.”

***On this translation, the meaning would be that God at this point announced that He would not continue His restraining of human sin indefinitely, as He had previously restrained it to a large extent.*** The reason for God’s withdrawing His restraining power was that mankind was “flesh,” that is, merely human, subject to physical corruption because of sin. ***“Yet shall their days be one hundred and twenty years”:*** that is, God would give the human race one last opportunity to repent before sending the judgment of the Flood to destroy humanity from the face of the earth. This last opportunity to repent would last for 120 years, after which divine judgment will occur.

***Some scholars have held that the reference to 120 years means that the ordinary span of human life would henceforth be reduced to 120 years. This interpretation, however, is improbable.***

***As a matter of fact, people lived longer than 120 years, even after the Flood.*** Noah lived to the age of 950 years; Shem, 600 years; Arphaxad, 438 years; Terah, 205 years; Abraham, 175 years; Isaac, 180 years; and Jacob, 147 years. Clearly, then, the reference to 120 years cannot mean that the life of individual men shall be limited to 120 years. ***We believe the correct interpretation is that divine judgment, in the form of the Flood, would come 120 years after God made this statement.***

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- **Violence idolized (the Nephilim)**

***Genesis 6:4 introduces the Nephilim (literally, “fallen ones”):*** “<sup>4</sup>The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore *children* to them. Those were the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown.”

***Interpretation 1-The Nephilim as Offspring of Demonized Marriages...***

***The Nephilim were the offspring of the demonized marriages.***

***Older translations of this verse translated Nephilim as “giants” because the only other reference to the Nephilim is Numbers 13:33 where they are described as so tall that the Israelites felt like grasshoppers. A direct genetic link is impossible because all the pre-flood Nephilim perished.***

***One thing is quite evident—these fallen ones were the mighty men of old, “men of renown”—and men of violence.*** The same word is used in 10:8 to describe Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man. If the Nephilim were giants, they were all the more fearsome. So we see that the “men of renown,” the idols of pre-diluvian culture, were violent men.

The portrait that Moses gives of pre-flood culture is that of a thoroughly demonized civilization. It was, of course, destroyed by the flood. But it has enjoyed mini-recurrences throughout subsequent history. Canaanite Baal worship is an infamous example. The Herodians during Christ’s life were a cesspool of sensuality and violence. Nero’s and Caligula’s Roman courts come to mind.

Demonized men and women are at the controls of all this—the Nephilim. “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities . . . against the spiritual forces “of evil in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12)

## ***Interpretation 2- Nephilim as Mighty, Corrupt Men...***

***We have already emphasized the sexual uncleanness that God saw on the earth. But Genesis 6:4 speaks of violence as well: “The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God **came in to the daughters of man**, and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.”***

***Some interpreters see the “Nephilim” as the offspring of the angels and women. The text, however, merely states that the Nephilim were “on the earth” at the same time. The word “Nephilim” means “fallen ones.” The other instance of this word in Scripture comes in Numbers 13:33, referring to the giant warriors awaiting Israel in Canaan. These later giants, such as Goliath, whom David slew, were like the “mighty men” of the antediluvian world, “the men of renown” (Gen. 6:4).***

Genesis 6:11 therefore summarizes: “Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence.”

**Source-** Richard Phillips. “Genesis.”

***The word here translated “giants” is Nephilim, a word that occurs only three times in the Old Testament, once here and twice in Numbers 13:33. That this word should be translated “giants” is doubtful. According to the translation found in the King James Bible, these giants were the product of the marriages between the sons of God and the daughters of men. It is possible, however, that these giants are mentioned as a distinct class, whose boldness in wickedness went even beyond the ordinary badness of children reared by ungodly mothers.***

***Certainly the product of the mixed marriages could not be expected to be other than bad; but it may be that the Nephilim are mentioned as a special class of bad men who existed at the same time “and also after that.” Verse 4 adds that these Nephilim “became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.” That is, they had a reputation for bold actions, actions that, of course, were evil.***

***Perhaps “renown” might better be translated “notoriety.” They were famous for their bold and active wickedness. The emphasis of the word Nephilim is not on physical stature, but on lawless violence.***

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## Human Depravity (v. 5)

***The Genesis account tells us in dramatic terms, set up by the repeated phrase in chapter 1 of God’s assessment of creation—“And God saw that it was good” (1:9, 18, 21, 25), concluding with “it was very good” (v. 31). Now here we read in stark contrast, “The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (v. 5).***

***It is hard to conceive of a more emphatic statement of the wickedness of the human heart. The words “every . . . only . . . continually” leave nothing out.*** The term “every intention” is literally “every forming,” which comes from the metaphorical sense of the verb that describes a potter in the act of forming and molding his vessel (cf. Isaiah 29:16; Genesis 2:7, 8).

***It is noteworthy how Genesis 6:5 describes God’s woeful assessment of what he sees in sinful mankind: “The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Notice that God looks on the heart, and he sees the sinful desires and the corrupt plans by which man violates his law.*** The idea that we may hide our sins from God—both the sins of the heart and the sins of the hand—is shown to be absurd. God’s perfect awareness of the full extent of evil accounts for so decisive and destructive a response as the great flood. ***Calvin explains that “a prodigious wickedness, then, everywhere reigned, so that the whole earth was covered with it.”*** (Richard Phillips)

***Their depravity was not a temporary state. There were no relentings, no repentances, no hesitations. Lust was their medium, violence their method. This was total, inveterate depravity.***

The situation described in Genesis 6:5 pertains not merely to the world before the flood but also to the entirety of the human race apart from God’s regenerating grace in Jesus Christ. There is a relative, human sense in which we may describe someone as a “good person.” But measured by the perfect holiness of his law, what God sees in mankind is sin everywhere, in all ways, and at all times.

In this respect, Genesis 6:5 provides a biblical definition of the Reformed doctrine of total depravity: “every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Especially when we consider the selfish and proud motives that corrupt even our ostensibly good deeds, Isaiah argued, “We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment” (Isa. 64:6).

In God's assessment of the human heart, we may rule out the Arminian idea of free human will, in which our nature possesses the inward potential of choosing to please God. Such a view is impossible, given the divine assessment that "every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). (Richard Phillips)

### **J G Vos on Divine Judgment (vv. 6, 7)**

***In Genesis 6:5-7, God gave His summary of this period of history, especially of the closing part. The terrible wickedness that had become prevalent at the end of this period is emphasized. Human wickedness was "great in the earth"; it was a wickedness of heart and mind, as well as of outward conduct ("every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil"); and it was a constant wickedness, without any intervals of goodness ("continually").***

***"And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (6:6 KJV). This, of course, is anthropomorphic language; it speaks of God as if He were a man. Actually, God does not repent (1 Sam. 15:29); God does not change His mind; He has a single, consistent purpose that He follows from eternity to eternity. When the Bible speaks of God as "repenting" or changing His mind, this means that He changed His attitude toward some of His creatures. The change of attitude itself was part of the original purpose of God and was planned from eternity. So, in the present passage, the truth is expressed that God changed His attitude toward the human race. Human sin had developed to such an extreme degree that the purpose for which man had been created could no longer be accomplished. A new beginning had to be made with the godly remnant of the race, while the mass of the wicked had to be destroyed. This, of course, was known and planned by God from eternity; the change was in God's attitude toward man, not in God's own intentions and purposes.***

Richard Phillips comments...It was not only in the world before the great flood that "the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth" (Gen. 6:5).

So how does God respond to what he sees? Genesis 6:6 answers that "the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart." To say that God experienced regret does not mean that God had to change his will because of man's sin. Some commentators take the Lord's regret as a denial of the impassibility of God—the doctrine that God is not in himself subject to an ebb and flow of feelings.



But as an eternal God for whom all time is a continuous present, the Lord cannot be surprised and does not experience a succession of events. God dwells transcendentally in the happiness of his perfect being.

It is true that God also dwells imminently to our world, and in this respect the Bible ascribes emotions to him. But it is precisely because God does not change in himself that he responds so consistently to the actions and intentions of men. In speaking of God's regret,

***John Currid explains, "Moses is employing expressions of human pain and sorrow to demonstrate God's attitude towards mankind's sin."***

***God's revulsion expressed itself in two resolutions. First, "the LORD said, 'My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years' " (Gen. 6:3). God is not willing to write blank checks of life where sin reigns...***

***Second, even more noteworthy is God's resolution in Genesis 6:7: "So the LORD said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.' " The language of blotting out finds fulfillment in the great flood that destroyed all nonmarine life on the earth—except Noah, his family, and the animals they saved—in order to scourge the stain of evil. In this, the solidarity of animals with their overlord mankind resulted in the death of "animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens," together with evil man.***

***H. C. Leupold comments: "The gravity of the situation is made apparent by the severity of the divine resolution: 'I will wipe out mankind.' Sin has become so predominant and crass that the extremest measure alone can cope with it." As the Creator, God is Lord over both life and death and it is to the praise of his holy will that he resolved to remove evil from the earth.***

***Since depraved man has not improved morally since Noah's flood, instead of judging God we ought to fear God's judgment on our sin.***

The apostle Peter forewarned that just as God once reserved the world for judgment by water, "by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly" (2 Peter 3:7). (Richard Phillips)

***“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (6:8). Thus, the destruction of the human race is not to be total. “God saves enough out of the wreck to enable Him to carry out His original purpose with the self-same humanity He had created” (G. Vos, Biblical Theology, p. 62).***

***Looking ahead to the latter part of Genesis 6...“These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God” (6:9). We will recall that the expression “the generations of” is a formula for introducing a new section of the subject. We have here the beginning of the history of Noah and the Flood.***

**The statement that Noah was a just and perfect man, of course, does not mean that Noah was sinless. It means that he was a godly man who lived a consistent life.** The word translated “just” is the common Hebrew word for “righteous.” It implies that, by grace, Noah was regarded as righteous by God. The word translated “perfect” means well-balanced or rounded, complete in all aspects of life with no phase of his character omitted. We might paraphrase the statement by saying that Noah was a saved man who had a balanced and mature character.

To the statement about Noah’s righteousness and his mature character there is added the fact that “Noah walked with God.” As we have already seen in the case of Enoch, this expression means something more than the mere fact that Noah was a pious man who lived a godly life....

Vos, J.G.. Genesis

***The grace of God for Noah launches a new epoch in Genesis and the history of God’s redemptive plan. Mankind would survive the flood because of Noah! But let us not forget God’s promise of salvation through the offspring of the woman, which would also pass safely through the flood in Noah’s ark.***

***The genealogy of the line of Seth receives its final comment in God’s grace through Noah. What would Noah do? He would preserve the human race and the saving seed that would bear fruit in Jesus Christ. The genealogy of Jesus in Luke’s Gospel makes this connection explicit.***

Jesus is the son of David, the true heir to God’s eternal kingdom. And Jesus is also “the son of Noah, the son of Lamech” (Luke 3:36). ***God did not allow the unmitigated pollution of the human race through demonic corruption.***

***Nor did God allow the promised offspring to be cut off. Noah found grace from God in order that Jesus, God's own Son, born of the virgin, would cleanse the world of sin not by water but by his blood.***

***The waters of Noah's flood did not actually remove sin from the world, after all, since Noah's family also brought sin with them. But what Noah's flood could not accomplish, Jesus' cross fully achieved.*** John Flavel wrote: "How deep is the pollution of sin, that nothing but the blood of Christ can cleanse it! All the tears of a penitent sinner, should he shed as many as there have fallen drops of rain since the creation, cannot wash away one sin. The everlasting burnings in hell cannot purify the flaming conscience from the least sin." ***It is only the blood of Jesus that truly and fully cleanses our sin.***

***Ultimately, it was for the sake of Jesus that Noah found favor from the Lord, in order that Christ might be born and die to cleanse our sins. This means that there is favor for you before God, though you, too, have sinned and deserve divine punishment. Noah's favor ensured that in the fullness of time Jesus would be presented as "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).***

Source- Richard Phillips, Genesis

### **Kent Hughes on Divine Grace (v. 8)**

Today our world rightly sits under the judgment of God. Perhaps it is not thoroughly demonized, but the signs are there. Who can doubt it as they look at popular culture?

We, despite the flood and the cross of Christ, are a profoundly sinful people in soul and word and deed.

- Souls: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one" (Romans 3:10-12).
- Words: "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.' 'The venom of asps is under their lips.' 'Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness'" (vv. 13, 14).
- Deeds: "Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known" (vv. 15-17)"

***How pertinent is this primeval story? Jesus thought it highly so and said:***

***As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. (Matthew 24:37-39)***

Excerpt From: R. Kent Hughes. "Genesis."

### **In Conclusion...**

We can deduce why Satan sent his angels to intermarry (either directly or indirectly) with human women. Satan tried to pollute mankind with a satanic corruption...to make the human race unfit for bringing forth the Seed of the woman – the Messiah – promised in Genesis 3:15.

“The Savior could not be born of a demon-possessed mother. So if Satan could succeed in infecting the entire race, the deliverer could not come.”  
(Boice)

And Satan almost succeeded. The race was so polluted that God found it necessary to start again with Noah and his sons, and to imprison the demons that did this so they could never do this again.

David Guzik, EnduringWord

### **Appendix...Bob Deffinbaugh on the Implications of Genesis 6:1-8**

#### ***The Meaning of this Passage for Ancient Israel...***

***For the Israelites of old this passage would teach several valuable lessons.***

***First, it provided them with an adequate explanation for the flood. We can see that this super-race had to be eliminated.***

The flood was not only God’s way of judging sinful men, but of fulfilling His promise to bring salvation through the seed of the woman. Had the intermingling of angels and men gone unchecked, the godly remnant would have ceased to exist (humanly speaking).

***Second, this passage would illustrate the word of God to the serpent, Adam and Eve: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed;” (Genesis 3:15a).***

***Israel dared not forget that there was an intense struggle going on, not just between the Cainites and the Sethites, but between Satan and the seed of the woman.*** While we are accustomed to such emphasis in the New Testament, the Old has few direct references to Satan or his demonic assistants (cf. Genesis 3; Deuteronomy 32:17; I Chronicles 21:1; Job 1,2; Psalm 106:37; Daniel 10:13; Zechariah 3:1,2). This passage would be a vivid reminder of the accuracy of God's word.

***Third, it underscored the importance of maintaining their spiritual purity. God's believing remnant must be preserved. When men failed to perceive the importance of this, God had to judge them severely. As the nation entered the land of Canaan, few lessons could be more vital than that of the need for separation.***

***The Meaning of Genesis 6 for Christians Today...***

***While the New Testament has much more to say about the activities of Satan and his demons, few of us seem to take our spiritual warfare seriously.*** We really believe that the church can operate on human strength and wisdom alone, or with a little help from God. We often attempt to live the spiritual life in the power of the flesh. We urge people to rededicate their lives and redouble their efforts, but we fail to remind them that our only strength is that which God supplies.

***The battle today between the sons of Satan and the sons of God (in the New Testament sense—John 1:12; Romans 8:14,19) is even more intense than it was in the days of old.*** Satan's doom is sealed, and his days are numbered (cf. Matthew 8:29). Let us, then, put on the spiritual armor by which God equips us for the spiritual warfare of which we are a part (Ephesians 6:10-20).

Second, let us learn that Satan attacks us through similar instruments today. I am not aware of any instances in our times when fallen angelic beings have invaded the earth in human form to further Satan's cause.

Nevertheless Satan still works through men.

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

Just as Satan sought to corrupt men by disclosing himself (or rather, his angels) in the form of (allegedly) superior human beings, so he works through ‘angels of light’ today. We are inclined to suppose that Satan works most often and most effectively through the reprobate. We almost expect to find Satan in the pathetic demonic or in the hopeless derelict. It is easy to attribute such tragedy to Satan. But Satan’s best work and, in my estimation, his most frequent work is through those seemingly moral, devout, and pious talking men who stand behind the pulpit or sit on the governing board and talk about salvation in terms of society rather than souls, and by means of works rather than faith. Satan continues to advance his cause through men who are not what they appear to be.

Finally, notice that Satan does his best work in the very areas where men and women place their hope of salvation...If these creatures were immortal, then would their offspring not be so also? Was this the way God was going to overrule the fall and the curse? So it must have seemed to these women.

That is precisely what Satan does today. Oh, he is not above promoting himself through atheism or other ‘ism’s,’ but he finds great success in the arena of religion. He wears his most pious expression and uses religious terminology. He does not seek to abolish religion only to abort it by cutting out its essential element, faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ as the substitute for sinful men. He will readily join any religious cause so long as this ingredient is omitted, or distorted, or lost in a maze of legalism or libertinism. Watch out, my friend, for Satan in the realm of religion. What better way to sidetrack souls and to blind the minds of men (II Corinthians 4:4)?

Source- Bob Deffinbaugh

## **Appendix...Richard Phillips on a Summary of Two Views of “the sons of God”**

### **(1) Sins of the Sons of Seth?**

The opening section of Genesis 6 contains what may be the most enigmatic verses in the entire book of Genesis: “When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose” (Gen. 6:1–2). The challenge is to identify who are “the sons of God” and exactly what their sin was. There are two primary answers to this question. One approach holds that these verses speak of sins committed by males from the godly line of Seth. The other view holds that “the sons of God” are fallen angels who somehow impregnated human daughters.

According to the first view, Genesis 6:1–2 sees Sethite men as marrying ungodly women from the line of Cain.

Instead of prioritizing spiritual fidelity and godliness, they were motivated by a lust for outward beauty. The result was the corruption of the holy remnant until only Noah remained as a righteous man.

There are strong considerations in favor of this position. The first raises the question of angels' mating with human women. In Luke 20:35–36, Jesus indicates that angels “neither marry nor are given in marriage.”

John Calvin thus uses strong language to say that that angelic view “is abundantly refuted by its own absurdity; and it is surprising that learned men should formerly have been fascinated by ravings so gross and prodigious.”

While early interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, tended to hold the angelic view, it is for this objection that later expositors have favored the Sethite position.

It is true that the expression “sons of God” is more typically used to describe angels, yet in the context of Genesis 4–6 this label may also be applied to the godly line of Seth, who “call[ed] upon the name of the LORD” (Gen. 4:26). On this view, “the sons of God” are the godly line, who foolishly married “the daughters of man,” that is, of Cain.

The most significant factor in favor of the Sethite view is the way in which it fits the overall context of Genesis 4–6. These chapters highlight the contrast between the two humanities in the lines of Cain and Seth. In this regard, we should note that this opening section of Genesis 6 belongs to the prior genealogy, since the account of Noah properly begins in verse 9. Chapters 4 and 5 show the line of the godly living separately from the ungodly, but now the line of Seth is assimilated into the ungodly world. This apostasy from faith and godliness anticipates the New Testament teaching about the era before Christ's return (Matt. 24:5; 2 Thess. 2:1–12).

In Genesis 6, the corruption of the two lines through intermarriage becomes so pronounced that ultimately only Noah is left as a man of faith. God, in his wrath against the ungodliness of the world, resolves to punish mankind and cleanse sin.

It should be noted that biblical marriage endorses and even promotes sexual enjoyment—see Song of Songs. But under this Sethite view, the lesson of Genesis 6:1–2 teaches the importance of godly marriages to preserve faith, calling men to prioritize spiritual faithfulness over the outward sensual appeal of women. The problem was not marriage or sex.

Rather, according to John Murray, the problem with these marriages was

“...the failure to remember that in marriage we are not to please worldly and fleshly impulse but to seek wedlock that conserves and promotes the interest of godliness.

In wedlock we must preserve the line of demarcation between the people of God and the ungodly world and have respect to the unity in faith and the bond of peace which will insure godly nurture.”

The dreadful consequences of the sinful Sethite marriages highlight the sanctity of marriage among God’s people. Calvin urges that “marriage is a thing too sacred to allow that men should be induced to it by the lust of the eyes.”<sup>3</sup> Marriage is not intended by God to be a missionary endeavor, but rather a holy union between two believers who are committed to the glory and service of God. Therefore, Paul commanded: “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For “what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?” (2 Cor. 6:14)”

## **(2) The Angelic Corruption of Mankind?**

The other way to understand the union between “the sons of God” and “the daughters of man” is that evil, fallen angels lusted after women and married them. Genesis 6:4 elaborates: “the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them.”

I noted that the expression “sons of God” can refer to the godly line. Yet the most direct reference of this phrase in Scripture is to the angelic court that attends upon God in heaven. A clear parallel is seen in Job 1:6, which describes “a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.” Without question, the Job reference speaks of angels, including both holy and fallen ones, as do similar references in Psalms 29:1 and 89:7.

While it is possible that “sons of God” and “daughters of man” refer to Sethites versus Cainites, Gordon Wenham points out that this “is, to say the least, an obscure way of expressing such an idea.”

What about the claim that angels, as spirits, cannot engage in sexual intercourse with humans? One answer is that angels take on other human properties, so there is no reason to insist that sexuality is excluded from them. In this respect, it is worth noting that gender is assigned to angels, with all of them given male identities and names. Moreover, Derek Kidner writes, “The craving of demons for a body, evident in the Gospels, offers at least some parallel to this hunger for sexual experience.”

As for Jesus’ insistence that holy angels do not marry or bear children, this does not mean that they cannot do so or that evil angels would not cross this moral line. In short, the objection to angels’ engaging in sexual relations with human women presupposes rather than proves this objection to Genesis 6:2–4.



Perhaps the most potent objection to the angelic interpretation is that God punishes men, not angels, for these sins. Murray argues, “If the sons of God were angels we should expect some intimation of the judgment executed upon them.”<sup>6</sup> One answer would be that there is no indication that the women objected to the situation. It apparently seemed advantageous to ungodly fathers and daughters to enter into these abominable unions, which might explain God’s judgment of mankind.

Most pre-Christian Jewish interpreters held the view that the evil angels were punished by God for taking the daughters of man. This approach is recorded in the book of 1 Enoch, an apocryphal document dated from about 300 B.C. First Enoch provides elaborate details on the fallen angels’ taking women, and goes on to show them as being convicted for this sin and cast into prison, awaiting the final judgment. The influence of this view is seen in the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, which renders “sons of God” simply as “angels.”

First Enoch is not a biblical book, and it may therefore be wildly in error. In this case, however, it seems to be confirmed by two New Testament passages. Second Peter 2:4–5 warns against the final judgment, since “God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment”; and “he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.” It is not certain that Peter is referring to the scenario in 1 Enoch, but given the connection with Noah’s flood, it seems to match the context of Genesis 6.

Moreover, a parallel passage in Jude 6–7 not only links God’s judgment of the fallen angels to Noah’s flood but also compares their sin to the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah, “which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire.” Whatever sins the angels committed involved unnatural sexuality, analogous to that of homosexuality. This certainly fits the idea that angels engaged in sex with human daughters in the time before Noah’s flood... In my judgment, the view that sees “the sons of God” as Sethites who sinfully married the daughters of Cain would be the stronger argument, given the overall context of Genesis 4–6, except for the testimony of 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6–7.

### **Conclusion...**

Yet...we must allow the New Testament to provide the final word on the Old Testament. In this case, while the interpretation is still not certain, ***the New Testament seems to identify the sons of God in Genesis 6 as fallen angels.***

***What was the purpose of this angelic corruption? One answer would be that Satan had continued his attack on God's creation and on mankind as the divine image-bearer.***

It was to Satan that God made the promise that a child from the woman would "bruise your head" (Gen. 3:15). Never one to stand still, Satan tempted Eve's first son into murdering his brother. But when God brought forth Seth and his line, Satan then sought to corrupt the entire race by the intermarriage of demons and human beings. The Savior could not be born of a demon-possessed mother. So if Satan could succeed in corrupting the entire race "the deliverer could not come."

***Christians should remember that we face this same cunning, satanic foe in spiritual warfare today. Paul warned that believers must become "strong in the Lord," making use of the spiritual resources that God provides for our warfare: "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil" (Eph. 6:10–11). God foiled Satan's plot through the great flood that cleansed the world, removing corruption from the human race. God will always triumph over the devil, so our victory comes by holding fast to our faith by means of the Word of God.***

**Source-** Richard Phillips, Genesis