

The Sons of God, Part 2

Bible Text: Genesis 6, 18, 19; Hebrews 1:4; Matthew 22:30

All right. So we are told here in Hebrews one, verse 14, that angels are ministering spirits sent forth to serve those who are the heirs of salvation. We are going to inherit salvation. We already possess the salvation of our souls. Our bodies are not yet saved.

When will our bodies be saved? They will be saved when the Lord Jesus returns and the dead in Christ rise. And if we are around when Christ returns our bodies will be transformed. That is when our bodies will experience salvation. But in the here and now our souls are saved.

These angels are sent into the world to serve you and me just as Jesus talked about the angels who come into the world to serve little children and our children have angels who behold the face of our Father.

So this says something about angels. It says they are spirits. They are spirits and so we don't think of angels, then, as having physical bodies. But there is an answer for that. And we turn over to the book of Genesis, chapter 18; Genesis chapter 18.

And we find here that Abraham is visited by three supernatural beings, three supernatural beings. What do we read? Genesis 18:1

‘The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground. He said, “If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by” (Genesis 18:1-3, All Scripture quotations are from the New International Versions of the Bible unless otherwise indicated).

All right. What do we find here? We find that the Lord comes. Notice that the word “Lord” in verse one is all capitals whereas the word Lord in verse four is not capitalized at all because that is the Hebrew word Adonai which means boss, sir, master, lord. That is the word that is used, substituted for saying God's name. God's name is in verse one, Yahweh. That is God's proper name.

And so we are told here that Yahweh and two other—we are able to discover as we read on—supernatural beings join Abraham out here in the wilderness.

Now, we can't around it. And the person that Abraham dialogues with throughout Genesis 18 is Yahweh. Is Yahweh is a spirit? Yahweh is a spirit.

Jesus said in John chapter four, “God is a Spirit: and [those] that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:2). And yet here is Yahweh himself, Yahweh himself appears in verse one to Abraham along with two others. And we read on. And they appear, these three appear to be men. They are indistinguishable from men and yet something about them causes Abraham to immediately realize he is dealing with some beings who are very special. I think

that it goes beyond simple hospitality. There is hospitality here in verse three. And ancient Near Eastern hospitality is very polite. People call each other sir and boss, master. Won't you come in? Even if you are a famous person and wealthy you still great strangers that way. And you offer them food. It is just good manners from the ancient Near East.

Verse five: "Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant." 'Very well,' they answered, 'do as you say'" (Genesis 18:5).

'So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick," he said, "get three seahs of fine flour and knead it and bake some bread." Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them' (Genesis 18:6-8).

While who ate? They ate. "...he stood near them under a tree" (Genesis 18:8).

So all three ate. So the Lord ate. Yahweh ate. And these two creatures who were with him ate.

So three beings, all of whom are supernatural—as we will see—appeared in human form and actually did what? They actually ate. So these are not mere apparitions. This is not a vision. This is God himself taking a human form, as it were, pre-incarnate. It may have been Christ, pre-incarnate Christ. We don't know. The text gives us many unanswered things.

The Bible, if we really study the Bible, leaves us with many questions. It teaches us a lot, but it doesn't answer every question.

So here is God himself taking on a human nature, a human form and accompanying God are two angels and they all appear as human beings just as Christ who is the eternal Son of God became flesh and dwelt among us. So, in a temporary form God himself takes a human form. Perhaps it is the Son of God. We don't know. It could be. And they ate. That is very significant.

Verse eight, they ate. "While they ate, he stood near them under a tree" (Genesis 18:8).

Now, throughout this time, of course, there is this dialogue with Yahweh, God and Abraham. And that is where, by the way, God announces to Abraham that Sarah is going to have a child. And she is an elderly woman at this point. I think we would all agree that she was elderly because she is about 88 or 89 years old. Everybody agrees that up in years when it comes to child bearing.

And so the Lord is telling him that. Verse nine.

"Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him. "There, in the tent," he said. Then the LORD said, [verse 10,] "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son." Now Sarah [eavesdropping, naturally curious, Sarah] was listening at the entrance to the tent' (Genesis 18:9-10).

That doesn't mean...I didn't mean that in a gender insulting way. I am sure that if men were out there talking to Sarah Abraham would have been listening at the tent as well. People do that. That's just how people are.

So Sarah is listening at the entrance to the tent which was behind him. "Abraham and Sarah were already old and well advanced in years, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing" (Genesis 18:11). I guess so at that age.

So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?" [That is having a child] Then the LORD said to Abraham, [verse 13] "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old? Is anything too hard for the LORD?'" (Genesis 18:12-14)

Now, who says this in verse 13? The Lord says, all capitals. That means it is Yahweh. It is God himself. This is God himself in human form saying that to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh?" (Genesis 18:13)

Verse 14, God himself says,

"Is anything too hard for the Yahweh? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son." Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I did not laugh." But he said, "Yes, you did laugh" (Genesis 18:14-15).

And, of course, by the way, as a memory of Sarah's laughter, her mocking laughter, "Hah, it can't be," which later became the laughter of joy when a child was born, they named their child Laughter, Yitschaq from tsachaq. Tsachaq in Hebrew means laughter. So the child memorializes Sarah's sinful laughter of unbelief and her later laughter of grace when God gave a child, Isaac, laughter.

So...but what it...what I want to point out in the passage, throughout is: Who is talking to Abraham here? It is the Lord himself. It is God, God come down in the appearance of a human being and not just appearance. I mean we are talking about somebody that had some calf and flour and yogurt and milk. So, I mean, this isn't an apparition. This isn't merely an appearance. This isn't a phantom. This is human flesh that God is inhabiting in a personal and dynamic and real way eating veal, yogurt, drinking milk and fine flour.

Now, what happens further? Verse 20. The Lord said, that is Yahweh, that's the God of the Bible:

"The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know" (Genesis 18:20-21).

And, again, this is not a vision. God does know, but God says, "I am going to find this out," verse 20, "And I am going to find it out by direct sending my agents in there."

Verse 22: “The men turned away and went towards Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Yahweh.” So it is very apparent in verse 22 we have three men. Is Jesus a man? Yes. Is he also God? Yes. So we have the Lord himself in human form here and we have two angels in human form.

How do we know they are angels? How many were with the Lord? Two. There are a total of three persons that appeared to Abraham on the plains of Mamre. Two go down to Sodom. Hold your hand there. In chapter 19, verse one, what do we read there? “The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening” (Genesis 19:1).

Okay. So the two men that are eating there with Abraham along with the Lord who is there as a man, two of the men who turn out in chapter 19, verse one, to be angels, go on down to Sodom. And then, of course, God gets into this haggling. It is straight out of a Middle Eastern bazaar? What do you call...is that what you call? Yeah. okay, yeah. That’s right. I always worry about these pronunciations of words.

Ok, so they are in a Middle Eastern bazaar. Here is the Lord and here is Abraham and they are haggling over something. What are they bargaining about? They are bargaining about will God destroy Sodom. And that is where, you know, the story of the 50 righteous and then the 40 righteous and...

“Wait a minute. Can you make a better deal here? Well, how about 30 righteous. Will you spare the city for 30 righteous?”

“Well, you know, okay.”

Then 20. I mean, this is really a picture, isn’t it, out of the ancient Middle East. And go over to the Middle East today and you will still find people haggling like that. And so finally we turn the page over there at the end of chapter 18 and, you know, “What if only 20 are there?”

‘And he said, “For the sake of 20, I will not destroy it” (Genesis 18:31). “Then he said, ‘May the Lord not be angry”’ (Genesis 18:32). Notice at this point, at this point Abraham...no, that is not correct. “May the Lord not be angry” (Genesis 18:32). He says, “May my master not be angry.” He is not recognize it the God of the Bible, but he is clearly respectful of who he is talking to.

So Abraham throughout does not call him by his proper name. But he says, “May the Lord not be angry.” (Genesis 18:32). Notice it is lower case “o,” “r,” and “d.” ““But let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?” He answered, ‘For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it”’ (Genesis 18:32).

Verse 33:

‘When Yahweh,” all caps, “When Yahweh had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.” The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening’ (Genesis 18:33-19:1).

So here is the thing. Are angels spirits? Yes, they are. Is God a spirit? Yes, he is. Can God take on a human form? Yes, he can. Did Jesus take on a human form? Yes.

What is the difference in Jesus' taking on a human form in the New Testament, in the gospels and God here in the Old Testament taking on a human form? One difference and one difference that I can see only...well, maybe I shouldn't say only. A major difference is that when Jesus takes on human form he takes it on permanently in the gospels. Jesus, who is God, in all eternity becomes a human being and always, from there on, is human. We have a human being sitting at the right hand of the Father in heaven.

But this appears to us in this text to be a temporary thing. God takes on a human body in Genesis and appears to Abraham. These angels, who are spirits, take on a human body and appear to Abraham. These angels take on a human body and go down to Sodom and visit there.

Now, of course, there are other differences and that is why I caught myself. In the New Testament God doesn't simply take on a human body, God actually becomes a real human being just like you and me in every sense except he never sinned and he doesn't cease being God at the same time.

So notice, then, we have these spirits here. These spirits take on human bodies and they go down to Sodom. So when someone raises the objection and says, "Well, these sons of God, these B'nai Elohim in Genesis six and Genesis four, can't be angels because angels are spirits and don't have bodies to do this act with these women with..." Well, the answer would be, "Well, it is clear that these two angels go with the Lord and they actually sit down to a nice steak dinner with fresh bread and yogurt and milk.

So, objection number one, they are spirits. Spirits can take a human body. It isn't that they borrowed some human body like a demon possessed man or, in this case, an angel possessed man. These are actually bodies that they have as their own bodies, whether temporarily or permanently we are not told, but they have this.

Any questions or comments on this so far before we move to the second objection?

I see no...nothing that would tell me they couldn't. I find no biblical reason to say they couldn't.

It could easily have been an angel. It could easily have been an angel. So we don't know. It could easily be an angel.

We hear all kinds of stories. I have had people tell me personally stories of what appear to be angelic visitations and we are instructed in Scripture, in the book of Hebrews, be careful to show hospitality for some have entertained angels without knowing it.

So, objection number one: They can't be angels because they are spirits. Hebrews 1:14. I think the Bible dispenses with that.

But there is a second one and a far more compelling objection. These can't be angels in Genesis 6:2 and four having physical, sexual relations with human females because what? Two verses in the Bible would tell us the cause of that. Anybody got a good guess? It is found in two of the gospels. It is the same thing, but it is recorded in two places. Matthew chapter 22 Jesus is in an argument with the Sadducees and in Matthew chapter 22 they are arguing with him and the Sadducees come up. You can just see the smirks on their faces starting in verse 23 as they think they have stumped Jesus because the Sadducees didn't believe in angels, first of all. They didn't believe in life after death, second of all. They didn't believe in predestination, third of all.

Verse 23.

‘That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. “Teacher,” they said, “Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and have children for him. Now there were seven brothers among us’ (Matthew 22:23-25).

And they go into the story. Now the brother gets married to the woman. He dies. He hasn't produced a child so it is his brother's obligation according to Levirate marriage to marry her. But he dies before a child is produced and this goes right on down they say. “Finally,” verse 27, “the woman died. Now then at the resurrection...” (Matthew 22:27-28) You can just see their smirks on their faces. “I've got you stumped now.” That's what they are thinking.

Verse 27. Now, “Finally,” I said, “the woman died” (Matthew 22:27).

Verse 28.

“Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?” Jesus replied (Matthew 22:28-29).

And Mark's account is identical to this.

“You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living” (Matthew 22:29-32).

But the thing that we want to notice here—and this is the second objection—well, angels neither marry nor are given in marriage. Angels neither marry nor are given in marriage. I think that is a very strong statement, isn't it, that would seem to say that this could not be. I say it would seem to say. It says they are like the angels. They neither marry nor are given in marriage.

It is interesting, however, if we look at Luke chapter 20. Listen to Luke's account and Luke is dealing, again, with a Gentile audience. And Luke often paraphrases Jesus' expressions so that his Gentile audience will have a better understanding of what he is saying.

Now, get it back in the context. Luke 20, verse 33. The mocking Sadducees asked, “Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?” (Luke 20:33)

Verse 34.

‘Jesus replied, “The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels”’ (Luke 20:34-36).

Now, in Greek there is a strange phrase that is unusual. When he says, “They are like the angels, they are.” (Luke 20:36). And if we were to use the Hebrew expression instead of Greek for this they are B’nai Elohim. Strange. They are like the angels. They are sons of God.

Of course, it is in Greek, and it is *huioi tou Theou* which is the Greek translation of that phrase B’nai Elohim, sons of God.

So it is interesting that he says here, “They are like the angels. They are sons of God,” since they are children of the resurrection.

So it is interesting that even at this point Jesus is referring to the angels in the gospel of Luke as, again, if it were in Hebrew, B’nai Elohim, sons of God. They are like the angels. They are B’nai Elohim, sons of God.

Of course, Jesus spoke in Aramaic and I am not quite sure how it would be pronounced in Aramaic. B’nai Elohim. They are *huioi tou Theou*, sons of God.

Is this an insurmountable objection? From my way of thinking it is the only substantive objection to the interpretation. Everything else that we have seen the phrase is used throughout the Old Testament for angels except we are not sure if there is an exception in Genesis 6:2 and four.

2 Peter two and Jude both tell us that these angels that didn’t keep their first estate were punished not by being released on the earth. There are obviously fallen angels on our planet. Correct? There are people that are possessed of demons. There are demon spirits that are in this room as the angels of God are in this room. You don’t go anywhere. They are over at Mac’s Grocery. They are down at the video store, a lot of demons down there. And they are here. Angels and demons are all around, unseen creatures. Good angels, the good angels are called in Scripture elect angels. These fallen angels are called demons. They are all around.

But a certain class of them are sent to—as we saw last week—Tartaros, not to Hades, not to Gehenna. Hades, the holding compartment of the dead until the resurrection, Gehenna where the dead, the unrighteous dead are cast forever and ever in the lake of fire. But these angels that didn’t keep their first estate are sent to Tartaros and we saw last week that Tartaros is used by the Greeks to describe a prison for what? Anybody remember from last week? What is Tartaros in

Greek, in the Greek world? It is a prison for a group of what? Remember the...Remember the Titans. Remember the Titans.

What were the titans? In Greek mythology they were supernatural beings that were gigantic and in Greek mythology these titans were judged and sent to, not Hades, but to Tartaros and that is exactly what the New Testament tells us about a certain class of angels.

And you remember there is a group of fallen angels who are inhabiting these two demonized men, the gathering demoniacs. That is the guy, of course, that ran around naked all the time and took rocks and cut himself shedding his own blood, howling and shrieking and had great strength, breaking chains. And when Jesus is getting ready to cast them out they beg Jesus not to do what?

“Don’t send us...don’t send us to the pit. Give us a little more time to play, please, you know. Have you come here to torment us before the time?” (Cf. Matthew 8:29; Mark 5:10; Luke 8:31)

And yet when you read the account in Jude and the account in 2 Peter two, there are fallen angels who are being tortured right now and held in prison right now awaiting future judgment.

So what do we do with that? And I am simply going to say this and you pay your money and you take your choice. Does he tell us that angels are incapable of sexual activity in Matthew, Mark or Luke? No, he doesn’t. What does he tell us that the angels do not do?

They do not marry and they are not given in marriage. They are like the angels. They neither marry nor are given in marriage.

Now, I am just going to ask this question, and I realize I am kind of begging the question with this a bit. Have you ever met a child born out of wedlock? Of course. Human...those are human beings who do not marry in that case, who have not married or been given in marriage before engaging in physical activity that results in a child being conceived and born. So what I am saying is that at least in the human family, you do not have to be married or given in marriage in order to have physical relations and produce a child.

All Jesus says explicitly—and I realize that if we didn’t have Genesis six, this would really be stretching it—but all that Jesus actually says about the angels in Matthew chapter 22 is that they are...they neither marry nor are given in marriage. We may infer from that they do not...they are incapable of sexual intercourse, incapable of siring a child. But we have only inferred from that. We are not told that explicitly.

So where am I when it all comes down to the whole thing? As I weigh the whole thing, all the evidence I presented last week, the fact that this is the Jewish interpretation at the time of Jesus, the fact that it fits in with all the data that sons of God, B’nai Elohim, is used consistently in the Old Testament elsewhere to refer to angels and that even in the gospel of Luke when Luke writes about Jesus’ own words he says, “They are like the angels, they are...” and if we were to translate what Jesus probably said in Aramaic it would...he would be using in that cognate language—similar to Hebrew—B’nai Elohim, they are elect angels, they are B’nai Elohim.

The fact that there are certain angels that are currently bound and being tortured and there are other fallen angels that are not, and the fact that in—as we look at 2 Peter two and then Jude—there is a comparison with what went on in Sodom and Gomorrah—if we just turn there by way of quick review we discover this.

Jude, verse six.

“The angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. In a similar way [verse seven], Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion” (Jude 6-7).

In a similar way to what? I think the most natural way to read the language is that the angels were engaged in sexual immorality and perversion. For it is immoral for one species to engage in copulation with another species. I am saying that the most natural way to read Jude six and seven is to say that there is a similarity here and that between what the angels did and what they were doing in Sodom and Gomorrah.

The only objection, then, that I can see, biblically, is Jesus saying, “In the resurrection, there people are like the angels. They neither marry nor are given in marriage.” But that taking the words strictly literally in Matthew—which I normally would not do, but in the face of all this evidence—I come down pretty solidly in saying I believe that Genesis six is actually a story of a certain group of angels who left their own estate and actually physically engaged in sexual relations with human females and the result was a bizarre monstrous race that, I see, is the weight of the evidence.

Any comments or questions on that?

Oh, yes, they would be fallen angels. And I am saying what makes sense to me is that of the fallen angels, a small group came and joined themselves to human females, and they ended up being locked up and they are locked up right now and can't get out. And when they are finally released it is going to be for final judgment to be cast in the lake of fire. But the vast majority of other fallen angels never did that. They were frightened to do that. And so what they do is seize and torment people like you and me and put crazy ideas in our heads and scare us and tempt us to do this and tempt us to do that. They are Satan's agents and make people go crazy and other things as with King Saul.

The offspring of those angels were drowned in the flood, the Nephalim. There later came to be great creatures like Goliath, but they weren't fantastically great and so that that word is used...giants is used of like Goliath. But there was a race of similar people or similar creatures.

Well, now that is the case of Goliath.

But now these creatures, when I read from that Pseudepigraphical book of Enoch last week, they were like 100 feet tall.

Now, again, that is not the Bible. That is not the Word of God. All I read that for was simply to demonstrate that the interpretation that these are actually fallen angels joined to human females and that the offspring was a weird monstrous race of great power, that that believe was around at the time of Jesus.

I think that so far as I can tell we are told...in my opinion only these angels are in Tartaros. But ones that violated this creation ordinance that would be very prohibitive of this, they are in Tartaros and these other angels, these fallen angels that were in the Gadarene demoniacs kicking around and feeling groovy as they drove these guys through the grave yard to live out there, they are scared of going there because they know that the Lord God can send fallen angels to Tartaros. They know their brothers, their brother angles are there. They don't want to go there.

“Please don't send us to the pit. Let us still have some fun while we wait for the judgment.”

Evidently so. God wipes out this race of giants in the flood of Genesis. God wiped out the human race in the flood of Genesis, except for Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and his wife and three children and three daughters-in-law.

Weird stuff, weird stuff. I don't like it. You know, it bothers me. It is so weird, it goes against all of my sense of the way the world ought to work, but nevertheless, as I weigh the biblical data, I can only find two arguments, really, against the...what to me is a very obvious in the text and that is they are spirits. And I think we have dismissed that. And the only one that, to me, has any weight at all is, “They are neither married nor given in marriage.”

And so as weak as my response to that would be, which is to say, “Well, if you take it strictly literally, it only explicitly says angels neither marry nor are given in marriage.” It explicitly does not say anything regarding their physiology and anatomy. It simply says they have neither married nor given in marriage.

So I realize I am stretching that one, but when I weigh all the other evidence—which, to me, is pretty overwhelming—I am prepared to say, “Well, I am just going to look at it at face value. What does Jesus tell us here? What does he not tell us here?”

So as frightening as it is, I am going to close with one passage. And it is about worship; 1 Corinthians chapter 11. And see if this fits in with what we have read thus far. 1 Corinthians 11, starting at verse two.

“I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings, just as I passed them on to you. Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head” (1 Corinthians 11:2-4).

Verse five.

“And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is just as though her head were shaved. If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head. A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. For this reason (1 Corinthians 11:5-10).

Verse 10. “...and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head” (1 Corinthians 11:10).

What is that saying? It is saying that a woman who is not in submission to a man is vulnerable. That is what it is saying. A woman who is independent of a man is vulnerable. And so he is saying in the Church in Corinth when women gather to worship—and the way I read the passage—she should not have her hair cut short and she should, in addition to not having her hair not cut short she should also have some kind of hair covering over her hair. And he says that she should do this, among other reasons, because of angels. Because an uncovered woman—that is, a woman who is not under the authority of a man—is a woman who is vulnerable. And he says because of the angels.

Does that mean this could happen again?

I see no reason why it couldn't happen again except one thing. Throughout all the ranks of angels, elect and reprobate angels, fallen angels and non-fallen angels, they are scared of going to Tartaros.

So what keeps the angels from trying to do, again, what they did in Genesis six? Fear of Tartaros.

“We are going to go to hell eventually. Let's have some fun. But let's not have fun to the point that the Lord God intervenes and sends us to Tartaros.”

And so he says, “For this reason a woman should have a symbol of authority on her head.” And that is strange, isn't it? Something to ponder. Still around. They are still there. They are here with us tonight. Hello, angels, good and bad. God bless you good angels. We are glad you are here.

But there still...pose something of a warning to the human race. “For this reason,” he says, “for this reason.”

Verse 10: “... and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head” (1 Corinthians 11:10).