

GENESIS 6:1-6

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Genesis 6 has been the subject of much debate, confusion, and controversy. This arises primarily from the phrase the “sons of God” translated from the two Hebrew words *benei haelohim* in verse 2 and the Hebrew word *nephelim* almost universally interpreted as “giants” in verse 4. Given all the debate and commentary, it might seem impossible to truly understand these scriptures given the many respectable scholars that have weighed in on the matter. While some have sincerely thought to research the meaning of Genesis 6 with other parts of the Bible, apocryphal writings, and non-biblical sources, the most common mistake is to attempt to correlate early extra-biblical texts with the Bible. This stems from the idea that ancient authors have greater clarity because they are nearer to the events and their writings are not influenced by the erosion of time. Granted, that can certainly be the case especially with history; however, the problem is that Genesis 6 is an antediluvian (pre-flood) story recorded well after the earth had been destroyed. In truth, early scholars have no better insights than those of modern times and the extant sources pertaining to, or even remotely related to, this topic are greatly biased by pagan mystics.

Popular Views of the “sons of God”

Generally speaking, the *nephelim* of verse four is thought to be dependent upon *benei haelohim* in verse two so to understand the former means first investigating the latter. To that end, there are three primary views on the meaning of the phrase “sons of God”. The first is that it refers to men of the line of Seth taking “wives” of the line of Cain; the second is they were human men described as dynastic rulers that lived pre-flood; and the third is it describes spiritual beings, usually purported to be fallen angels.

The idea that the “sons of God” refer to the line of Seth and the “daughters of men” being of the line of Cain was first recorded in the writings of Julius Africanus, a second and third century A.D. historian. While he was purported to be a Christian, he was heavily influenced by Greek and Roman traditions. Whether or not his was an original idea is unknown but his general thesis is that the “sons of God” has the sense of a group of people that were righteous before God and the Bible specifically mentions the lineage of Seth as those that “called upon the name of the LORD” in Genesis 4:26. His idea was later adopted by Augustine, Luther, and Calvin, eventually becoming the dominant view in Protestantism. Perhaps one of the reasons for the popularity of this idea is that it satisfies the modern propensity to avoid the supernatural.

Dynastic rulers are another, although less popular, interpretation of the “sons of God”. The logic behind this is that the phrase suggests these men were “closer” to God by

reason of their position and power, which is supported by the fact that they “they took them wives of all which they chose”.

By far, the most popular view of Genesis 6:2 is that the “sons of God” are spirit beings. Modern scholars primarily take the position that the four other uses of this exact phrase in the Bible always denote angels. However, this view has been around for millennia. It began with the idea that there were two separate creations of a woman for Adam. The first Eve was created in Genesis 1:27 where it states, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” The claim is that both Adam and First Eve were created from dust at the same time. Problems arose because First Eve refused to submit to Adam and left Eden. Later, after naming the animals, God saw that Adam was alone and without a fitting mate (Genesis 2:20). This lead to the creation of the second Eve from Adam’s rib in Genesis 2:21-22. Second Eve then joined Adam in the Garden of Eden.

The legend of First Eve was then mixed into pagan religion when she was asserted to be Lilith, a sexually promiscuous demon goddess that spent her nights engaging with human men. Stories of Lilith are recorded in the Babylonian Talmud that had its origins around 300 A.D. but was based upon Jewish mysticism that grew out of the syncretism that began during the reign of Solomon who built pagan temples for his wives and then later heavily influenced when the Jews were captives in Babylon.

NOTE: The main construct of rabbinical works include the:

- **Torah:** First five books of the Bible.
- **Tanakh:** Equivalent to the Old Testament.
- **Mishnah:** Explanations and commentaries on the Torah.
- **Midrash:** Explanations and commentaries on the Tanakh.
- **Gemara:** Explanations and commentaries on the Mishnah.
- **Talmud:** Explanations and commentaries on the Mishnah and the Gemara. It usually infers the two most widely accepted Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds.

The mythology of the demon goddess Lilith as First Eve and a demon goddess that engaged in sexual intercourse with human men was the inspiration for later mystics who claim spirit beings could have sexual relations with humans. Coupled with the several obvious biblical references to spirit beings, it was concluded that the “sons of God” could not refer to humans, an idea that was encapsulated in the apocalyptic Book of Enoch and Jubilees. Other mentions include Antiquities of the Jews by the Jewish historian Josephus and the writings of the Jewish philosopher Philo. It later found its way into the Septuagint

(LXX) and Codex Alexandrinus and thus became a very popular interpretation of Genesis 6:2.

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So, is Genesis 6 one of the secrets of God (Deuteronomy 29:29) that only He can reveal to us? Absolutely! But that is the case with the majority of the Bible, particularly when it comes to God's holydays and plan of salvation. So, what happens when we put aside all the apocryphal writings, ancient texts, and myths? Basically, that leaves only the Bible. Is it possible that the Word of God is sufficient to determine the meaning of Genesis 6? To that end, we will allow scripture alone to present the facts and sound reasoning. Begin by reading the scriptures at the heart of the matter:

GENESIS 6:1-6 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 /FV = mighty ones** I 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 /FV = tyrants** 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.

Facts Regarding the “sons of God”

There are four other places in the Bible where the phrase “sons of God” is used. They are found in Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7; and Daniel 3:25:

JOB 1:6 Now there was a day when the **sons of God** came to present themselves before the LORD, and **Satan came also among them**.

JOB 2:1 Again there was a day when the **sons of God** came to present themselves before the LORD, and **Satan came also among them** to present himself before the LORD.

JOB 38:7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the **sons of God** shouted for joy?

DANIEL 3:25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the **Son of God /FV = gods**.

In each occurrence, it clearly refers to spirit beings. It is also important to note that in each case the phrase is used in a setting that is pleasing to God; that is, the “sons of God” were never accused of doing evil. Therefore, all four scriptures refer to righteous spirit beings that were doing what was agreeable to God. A similar phrase “sons of the mighty” is used in Psalm 29:1 and 89:6 but these, too, signify righteous spirit beings.

FACT #1: The phrase the “sons of God” in Job and Daniel refer to righteous spirit beings.

It is important to notice that in Job 1:6 and 2:1 Satan is not included as one of the “sons of God”. If he were, then the scriptures would not say that Satan “also came among them [*the sons of God*.]” From all this we can conclude that Satan is, at least, no longer one of the “sons of God”.

But what about demons (other than Satan)? It is likely, although not conclusive, that they are not the “sons of God” either. There are three reasons for this. First, there is no case in the Old Testament where God speaks directly with any evil spirit beings (demons) other than Satan. Second, we know that the four scriptures in Job and Daniel contain no evidence that God was displeased with the “sons of God”. Finally, the New Testament is consistent in distinguishing righteous spirit beings (angels) from Satan (Adversary) and the demons (devils). This is also true of the phrases the “sons of God” and the “children of God” when used in the New Testament. These are always a reference to physical mankind and, in particular, to those that are converted believers. Non-believers are never included in these phrases.

FACT #2: The phrase the “sons of God” in Job and Daniel is not a reference to Satan or (almost certainly) the demons.

On the other hand, the “sons of God” in Genesis 6 are clearly unrighteous beings. Regardless of who the “sons of God” are referring to, they are, at a minimum, participants in the evil acts of the “daughters of men” in Genesis 6 because God is clearly displeased with them as it tells us:

GENESIS 6:3, 5-6 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.
... 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.

Physical mankind is obviously striving against God so the “sons of God” are committing sin and doing evil. The “wickedness of man” was so great that God repented (regretted) of ever creating physical mankind. Obviously, righteous beings would never participate in evil. Therefore:

FACT #3: The phrase the “sons of God” in Genesis 6 refers to unrighteous beings (whether spiritual or physical).

Obviously, this is in contradiction with Job and Daniel in which the “sons of God” refers to righteous spirit beings. Therefore, the phrase the “sons of God” in Job and Daniel cannot be used to conclusively determine the meaning of the “sons of God” in Genesis 6.

FACT #4: The phrase the “sons of God” in Job and Daniel refers to righteous spirit beings whereas Genesis 6 refers to unrighteous beings; therefore, the scriptures in Job and Daniel cannot be used to establish the meaning of the phrase the “sons of God” in Genesis 6.

However, the fact that the “sons of God” describes unrighteous beings eliminates the possibility that it refers to the descendants of Seth because the “line of Seth” is generally considered to be those that continued in the righteousness of God especially as compared to the line of Cain.

Human or Spirit?

So, are the “sons of God” are in Genesis 6 human or spirit? Read the next few verses:

GENESIS 6:3-6 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 [FV = tyrants] 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.

Notice that these scriptures refer to physical mankind five times: *man* (three times), *flesh*, and beings of a *limited lifetime* (120 years). If we replace the phrase the “sons of God” with “the sons of men”, no one would ever question that God is talking about physical mankind. If the “sons of God” refers to spirit beings, then why does God only talk about man being made of *flesh* with a limited lifetime? If the “sons of God” are spirit beings, then He should also be displeased with their participation and include them in His condemnation.

It is also important to note that God is quoted as saying, “My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.” It is significant that God never mentions the “sons of God” Himself. This was added by the author of Genesis. If the “sons of God” are spirit beings, then why does God never mention them?

FACT #5: God is never quoted using the phrase the “sons of God”; instead, He only talks about physical mankind.

So, is there any biblical evidence that the phrase the “sons of God” refers to physical mankind? Yes! As mentioned above, the “sons of God” and “the children of God” are used in the New Testament to exclusively refer to physical mankind and, in particular, to those that are converted believers.

Another example is the Hebrew word *elohiyim*, which is a plural noun most often translated “God”. However, it is also correctly translated *judges* three times in Exodus 21:6, 22:8, and 22:9 when referring to physical, human judges.

FACT #6: It is impossible to exclude physical mankind as the intended subject of the phrase the “sons of God”.

Finally, the author of Genesis very clearly tells us who the “sons of God” are:

GENESIS 6:4 There were **giants /nephilim; FV = tyrants** in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the **sons of God** came in unto the daughters of men [*Hebrew = adam = human*], and they bare *children* to them, the same became mighty men [*Hebrew = gibbowr*] which were of old, men [*Hebrew = enowsh = mortal*] of renown.

The KJV says, “they bare children to them, the same became mighty men” but added the word *became*. The Faithful Version reads, “They **were mighty men /Hebrew = gibbowr** who existed of old, men [*Hebrew = enowsh = mortal*] of renown,” which clearly shows that *mighty men* refers to the “sons of God” instead of their children. Moreover, the last reference to *men* is from the Hebrew *enowsh* meaning *mortal*. Unquestionably, the “sons of God” are physical human men! It does not get any clearer than this.

FACT #7: the “sons of God” are unambiguously nothing more than **physical human men**.

Are Spirit Beings Capable of Sexual Relations?

All the factual evidence proves that the “sons of God” are physical humans. However, is it even possible that spirit beings are capable of sexual relations? To answer this question we must, as God says, “reason together” (Isaiah 1:18); that is, present a rational argument. In this case, it is based upon God’s Law of marriage. We know that God’s Law applies in heaven and on earth. This is confirmed by the fact that God is righteous:

MATTHEW 6:33 But as for you, seek first the kingdom of **God and His righteousness**, and all these things shall be added to you.

What is righteousness? Righteousness is keeping God's Law. As it says, "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness." (Psalm 119:172). God obviously keeps His own Law so He would require all heavenly beings to keep it as well. Now read:

MATTHEW 5:18 For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled.

If God's Law did not apply in heaven then why would Jesus Christ also include "heaven" in this statement? While some might try to argue that this is only an assumption, the Bible clearly states that the angels sinned:

2 PETER 2:4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but, having cast them into Tartarus, delivered them into chains of darkness to be kept for the judgment;

What is sin? "Sin is lawlessness [KJV = transgression or violation of the Law]" (1 John 3:4). Sin is a violation of God's Law. If the angels sinned, they violated God's Law. Therefore:

FACT #8: The Law of God applies both in HEAVEN and on earth.

To answer the question about spirit beings being capable of having sexual relations, first notice what God's Law says about marriage in Hebrews 13:4: "*Let marriage be held honorable by all, and the marital union be undefiled*; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers." Marriage is an honorable union that is to be esteemed precious. Furthermore, the marital union is to be undefiled by fornicators and adulterers. Does this Law exist in heaven? Yes, but does it apply to angels? Are angels capable of sexual relations and, therefore, able to marry?

Jesus Christ said the heavenly angels "neither marry nor are given in marriage" (Matthew 22:30). Think about this. If the angels are capable of having sexual relations, then why is there no marriage among angels? It would be absolutely cruel of God not to allow them to enjoy the marriage union if they are capable of sexual relations. The other possibility is that the angels are allowed sexual relations outside of marriage; however, that means heaven is a place adulterous liaisons since God's Law applies in heaven. The only other possibility is the angels have enormous pent up frustration and are continuously tested by their lusts. Perhaps this drove some angels to resort to mating with human women. But would not that be a sign that there is a problem with lust in heaven? And does not God's Law apply both in heaven and on earth? Given all this, Matthew 22:29-30, for all practical purposes, can only mean that angels are incapable of having sexual relations.

Even as absurd as this sounds, it is not absolute proof that angels are incapable of sexual relations. So, look at this from another angle. The main reason for sexual relations is to procreate. Is it possible that God created angels to reproduce much the same way He created physical mankind; that is, from one male and one female angel? If that were the case, then Satan and the demons would be producing wicked offspring for all eternity. Again, this would be absolutely cruel of God if devils were able to give birth to eternal offspring that are raised to be wicked beings.

Taking this argument further, giving angels the sexual wherewithal would mean that God had to create both male and female angels. If that were true, then why are there no “daughters of God” (female angels) in Genesis 6 who took for themselves “husbands” and “came in to the sons of men”? Is it because the female angels are to submit to their “husbands” while the male angels run around engaging in adulterous relationships? Ridiculous.

We should also explore whether or not spiritual beings could ever find human women even remotely attractive. For instance, cherubim, seraphim, and “living creatures” look nothing like physical mankind. So, at least some of the heavenly beings are completely different from humans, having multiple faces and wings among other features. Would such beings be attracted to human women? Possibly, but unlikely. Marriage among people is usually to those that are similar in race and culture. While many people marry interracially, it is not very common. So, aside from the cherubim, seraphim, and “living creatures”, do the other angels even look like physical mankind? Unlikely. Notice:

GENESIS 1:26-27 And God said, Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.

Physical mankind is made in the image of God. While the Bible does not specify that the angels were not created in His image, why would God make a point of specifically saying He created mankind in His image if they are not unique from all those in the heavenly realm? If the heavenly beings do not look at all like physical mankind, how could they find human women attractive?

Moreover, human women can never be as beautiful as spirit beings. Think of all the things that are pushed on women to become more attractive and cover imperfections. There is a plethora of makeup, hair removal products, hair care items, cosmetic surgery, etc. How could any angelic being find imperfect human women more attractive than a spiritual mate?

Finally, those that believe angels are capable of sexual relations must believe that there is nothing more desirable. In other words, there is nothing more pleasing than the sexual

act, even for spirit beings. Is that possible? The following scriptures show that there is something much more desirable than the momentary gratification of sex:

MATTHEW 25:21 AND HIS lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! Because you were faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

1 PETER 4:13 BUT to the degree that you have a share in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice; so that, at the revelation of His glory, you also may rejoice exceedingly.

JUDE 24 Now to Him Who is able to keep them from falling, and to bring them into the presence of His own glory, blameless in exceeding joy,

1 PETER 1:8 WHOM, not having seen, you love; in Whom, *though* at the present time you do not see Him, you believe, and rejoice with unspeakable [unutterable] joy, and filled with glory;

JOHN 16:20, 22 Truly, truly I tell you, you shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and you shall be grieved, but your grief shall be turned into joy. ... 22 And likewise, you indeed have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and no one shall take your joy from you.

At the time of our resurrection, God promises that we will “enter into” joy that is unspeakable and indescribable. This is a joy that is eternal and no one can take from us. While we have no way to even relate to this kind of joy, imagine having utter joy for all eternity! How can sex even compare? In fact, sex is but a temporary pleasure:

HEBREWS 11:25 Choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the temporary pleasure of sin;

The word *pleasure* is only used to describe things that produce physical enjoyment. The word used most often for the *joy* that will be given to His children at the resurrection means to exult and be exuberant. This joy is so wondrous that it produces a climax of emotional, mental, and spiritual delight. There is nothing comparable for physical beings to comprehend the joy of God but it is unquestionably much more desirable than sex and it is eternal.

Nephelim

The facts clearly exclude any notion that the “sons of God” are spirit beings. The right translation of the Hebrew actually proves they are physical humans. Furthermore, “rightly dividing the Word of the truth” (2 Timothy 2:15) eliminates the possibility that spirit beings are even capable of sexual relations.

Now, what about the *nephelim*? In Numbers 13:33 the same word is used twice to describe the sons of Anak:

NUMBERS 13:33 And there we saw the *giants*, the sons of Anak, *which come of the giants*: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."

Clearly, the Israelites felt small and weak compared to the sons of Anak so it makes sense that this word is translated *giants*. However, in the Hebrew, *nephelim* means *bully* and the idea of a *fallen one*. In the case of the sons of Anak, translating it as *giants* satisfies the context of the scripture because they were not only large physically, as the scripture indicates, but also an aggressive people.

The use in Genesis 6:4 is different because there is no inference of physical stature. Therefore, translating it as *giants*, as originated with the Greek Septuagint (third century B.C.), is less appropriate. In this scripture, the sense that *nephelim* have fallen from God's favor within the context being "mighty men" render the Faithful Version translation of *tyrant* as the most accurate. This is quite sufficient to establish that the translation of *nephelim* as *tyrants* in the Faithful Version, not *giants* as is used in almost every other translation, best fits.

Another common mistake is assuming the *nephelim* are the offspring of the "sons of God" and "the daughters of men" in the previous two scriptures. Once again, the problem lies with translations like the KJV that was covered previously. However, notice that verse 4 in the Faithful Version clearly indicates that the *nephelim* came before the "sons of God":

GENESIS 6:4 There were *giants* [FV = *tyrants*] 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* [were] mighty men which *were* of old, men of renown.

While some Hebrew scholars have rightly concluded the *nephelim* and the "sons of God" are not connected, it is not the popular view but one that has been clarified in the Faithful Version.

Conclusion

Many have been fascinated with Genesis 6, partly because they want to believe that mankind could achieve a half-spirit, half-human form as demigods with eternal life. Mankind has always wanted to attain unto eternal life in this physical body because that does not require obedience to God and His Law.

Facts show that the "sons of God" in Genesis 6 refers to physical mankind. Moreover, no rational argument that can be made to support spirit beings being capable of sexual

relations. While there are a few instances when beings from the heavenly realm, other than God, have interacted with physical people, they are very few and are either messengers from God to His people, armies fighting on behalf of His people, or demons causing people evil. There are no biblical descriptions of spirit beings ever physically engaging with humans (Jacob wrestled with God, not an angel, and Isaiah was touched by a live coal). The idea that angels are capable of sexual relations or procreation is irrational and absurd and completely unsupported in God's Word.

Likewise, *nephelim* are nothing more than a distinct group of physical humans that are nothing more than abusive, oppressive, and rebellious people that are best called *tyrants*. Whether or not they were physically large is not hinted at in context of scripture unlike the case in Numbers 13:33.

So what is the purpose of Genesis 6? The Bible is focused on God's plan for physical mankind and not the heavenly realm. Once we put aside all the irrational notions about the phrase "sons of God" and "giants" it becomes clear. Genesis 6:1-6 records that from the earliest days, physical mankind engaged in practicing evil, especially that of disobedience, rebellion, fornication and adultery. As Solomon said, "*there is no new thing under the sun*" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). As a result, God greatly reduced the life expectancy. That's it. Nothing more. Now, let us "go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of [...] dead works" (paraphrased from Hebrews 6:1).