

Ray Mondragon

This is probably one of the most difficult passages in the Bible. There are three main views about it and very skilled, spiritual and academic scholars hold to all three of them. This tells you that there is probably a lot of information that we don't have in order to be conclusive about it. I will give you an overview of the three major views and let you decide what you think the Scriptures most support. It is a passage is very, very obscure, but I think it tells us a few things and we can draw some applications from it.

We have realized that God has been pleased to reveal an abundance to us but there are a lot of things that He has *not* revealed and this passage illustrates how much more we would understand if there were more revelation. But we have to be satisfied that God has given us all that we need and that His Scriptures are clear in the areas that He has revealed even though we may not understand every aspect of it but what he *has* revealed we need to take and apply and utilize it in our everyday experience.

First a quick review of our last study, in terms of chapter 4 because 4 and 5 lead into chapter 6; in fact I see chapter 6:1-8 as the last paragraph in that subsection of the Early History of Civilization with respect of the *decline* of civilization. Everything is leading to this paragraph, I think, to show us the *need* and why it was necessary for Him to intervene and bring the Genesis Flood. When we get to the Flood we will see that it was the most important event, probably of world history, affecting not only planet earth but probably most of the universe as well. Why would God bring such a judgment? I think this passage explains that, at least in part.

We have been seeing, in chapters 4 and 5, these Implications:

### Implications

1. Effects of Fall Passed on to the next generation

2. Corrupting effects of Sin, causing degeneration
3. God's grace is always available to all
4. God's judgment cannot be avoided if sinning, like Cain
5. Image of God expressed in unbelievers confirmed in James
6. God keeps godly remnant
7. Death is inescapable
8. Chronology emphasized to indicate that the earth is young—no long times for evolution

We, in this subsection of the Decline of Civilization, have studied the Cainite Line, the Sethite Line and now: the Corruption of Mankind 6.1-8—which completes the 2nd toledoth. Starting with verse 9 it will be the next one, with the narrative relating to the Genesis Flood.

- |                                  |           |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| I. The Primeval History          | 1:1-11:26 |
| A. The History of the Creation   | 1:1-2:3   |
| B. The Early History of Mankind  | 2:4-3:24  |
| C. Early History of Civilization | 4.1-9.29  |
| 1. Decline of Civilization       | 4.1-6.8   |
| a. Cainite Line                  | 4.1-24    |
| b. Sethite Line                  | 4.25-5.32 |
| c. Corruption of Mankind         | 6.1-8     |
| 1) Corrupt Condition             | 6.1-4     |
| a) Depraved Marriages            | 6.1-2     |

First: the Corrupt Condition, starting with verses 1-2: Depraved Marriages, which introduces a lot of strange things, much of it even beyond our understanding because God has been pleased *not* to give us a lot of detail here. This passage, then, is full of problems or issues.

6.1 Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them,

2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.

An issue that we can kind of figure out, in almost the whole passage will depend on how we understand the ‘Sons of God’. We will see some options. Also, in verse 2, who are these ‘Daughters of Men’, why are they mentioned? That will be related to some decisions we make concerning the Sons of God.

### Major Issues

- |                     |       |
|---------------------|-------|
| 1. Sons of God      | 6.2   |
| 2. Daughters of men |       |
| 3. 120 years        | 6.3   |
| 4. Nephilim         | 6.4   |
| 5. Mighty men       |       |
| 6. God sorry        | 6.6-7 |

Then in verse 3:

3 Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”

What does it mean ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever’? This is not on the list, but the next is: the man’s ‘days shall be one hundred and twenty years’. Commentators, even conservatives, disagree on *all* of these issues.

Then the last verse in this section:

4 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.

Some translate the Hebrew *nephilim* as *giants*, so we will talk about that. The NAS just transliterates it, already showing you that is not enough information to try to translate it, the most common one would be *giants*. So who are they and why are they introduced into the passage here? The Nephilim are only mentioned in one other passage which we will see, so there is not a lot of detail in any of these issues to come to anything definite and conclusive. That’s why it is a very difficult passage.

Also in verse 4 there are ‘mighty men’ who seem to refer back to the Nephilim; some commentators use that to try to come to some conclusions as well.

Then, skipping to verses 6 and 7, two times it mentions that God is *sorry*. What’s going on *there*? Did God not *know* what was going on? Did He not anticipate what is happening in verse 4? Why is God *sorry*? And is that even a good way of translating the word from Hebrew? We will have to talk about the nature of God and this aspect of His character.

So there are at least 6 or more issues that we are going to wrestle with. There aren’t many other passages that help, mostly some that are alluding. But I think we do not have enough revelation to be conclusive in anything that we decide on in this passage. We just trust God and that what He has given us is all that we need to know. I think one of the things that we can draw from it is that there are a lot of things going on in the spiritual realm that we have no clue about, no idea what’s going on. This passage just gives us a few little hints of some of the things that might have been going on, particularly in the past.

We have the general y broad context of when this happened, obviously before the Genesis Flood. The narrative continues with a little bit of a story, kind of self-contained within these 8 verses, so it is a particular historical series of events. The liberal scholars

try to inject mythology here and I think it comes from the event that is described here—and in other cultures that mythology would be a distortion, but some of that mythology might be based on an actual, historical event that we have here.

6.1 Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them,  
 2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.

when men began to multiply on the face of the land. the general time frame: somewhere in the genealogies that we have just studied. The population is multiplying, growing, and there is a significant number of people. Then this event, not yet close to Noah. I think it is the two lines/lineages.

6.1 Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them,  
 2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.

The next phrase: daughters were born to them. One view is going to focus on the daughters of the line of Cain, but I don't think there is evoking information to be definite on it, because daughters were born to *both* lines.

6.1 Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them,  
 2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.

Then this incident takes place: sons of God...took wives for themselves. There is nothing wrong with that; it's part of the creation mandate to have marriage, children, descendants. But something is very wicked here—as verse 5 tells.

First we look at views on who the 'Sons of God' were.

I think that 'when men began to multiply' is in a generic sense, not excluding women, obviously. So I think the thrust is that *as the population began to multiply*, an incident took place that is described in this narrative that was extremely wicked.

### Sons of God

1. Intermarriage of Lines
2. Demon Possessed Despots
3. Fallen Angels

1. One of the views (which I favored for awhile) is the Intermarriage of Lines of Cain and Seth. This view would say that the daughters of Cain intermarried with the Sons of the Seth line described as the Sons of God. That is, it would emphasize the spirituality of the two lines and I think that a few of the Cainites were believers, (with the *-el* in their names), but not all of them. This view makes a strong distinction between them and the coming together of these lines, intermixing the believer with the unbeliever.

2. Another view: Demon Possessed leaders or despots during the growing population intermarried with these daughters of men, whoever they may be in this viewpoint. This view, like all, has strong points.

3. The third view, and probably the hardest to accept, is an intermarriage between Fallen Angels and human beings, the daughters of men. There seem to be some passages to go against it, but there are a lot of details that seem to support that view.

As mentioned, each has very qualified scholars that support it.

## Intermarriages

24f

### > Support

1. Context - 2 lines
2. Phrase used of men
3. Marriage warning in Pentateuch

Now we look at #1 first and I will tell you some of the reasons why scholars hold to it, the Intermarriage of the Cainite Line and Sons of God from the Sethite line. The immediate context supports it because we have the 2 lines laid out just before. That is probably the strongest support. To add to that: Angels are not mentioned so far in the book of Genesis. So, if the ‘Sons of God’ are angelic creatures, they appear out of context.

But the phrase ‘Sons of God’ does occur in other contexts relating to Israel, Deuteronomy 14.1 where a similar phrase appears: also in Isaiah 1.2, Hosea 1.10. In the New Testament we have the ‘Sons of God’ that are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, John 1.12, Romans 8.14 and Galatians 3.26. That is other support for the Sons of God relating to men and not angelic creatures. Romans 8.14 *For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.* A very clear reference in the NT referring to those who have a special relationship, have regeneration, have a new nature. And in a very real sense we have a Father-Son relationship with God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

But I think there is a slight distinction between that usage in the NT and in the OT. This is something that God created within us that distinguishes us from the Old Testament, and think it is different from what we have in the Old Testament.

And there are several warnings in the Pentateuch concerning ungodly or marriages that God does not support.

## Intermarriages

### > Support

1. Context - 2 lines
2. Phrase used of men
3. Marriage warning in Pentateuch

24g

### > Weakness

1. Does not explain phrase
2. Daughters in both lines
3. Passage details

1. Now for the weakness of the Intermarriage of Lines views. Even though the NT seems to give support, it doesn’t explain the phrase from the OT perspective and particularly this early in the book of Genesis.

2. There are daughters, and probably *unbelieving* daughters in both lines, not just in the Cainite line; we have no limitation of spirituality of daughters in one line as opposed to the other. So that is a weakness of the view.

3. And some of the passage details seem to go against this Intermarriage viewpoint—such as the differences in the Hebrew and Greek words for ‘Sons of God’. Just so you know, one of the major scholars, commentators on Genesis support this view:

## Sons of God

1. Intermarriage of Lines

Supported - Leupold, K&D, Kline

This has been a standard commentary, not so much in recent times, but in the past it was relied upon by students of the Bible. More recently, Meredith Kline, and others. We shouldn’t question their scholarship or their commitment to the Lord, but we note that if you reject this view, just note that well-established scholars have supported it.

**The Demon possessed view** is the second view in the list for Sons of Man

## Demon Possessed

### > Support

1. Examples in Bible

2. Examples in outside texts
3. Examples - Lamech, Nimrod
  1. Those that support the view look at examples in the Bible and even outside the Bible of great kings and some that seem to have demonic powers or demon possession. Ezequiel 28.11-19 appear to be demon-possessed kings. Daniel 10.13 is another example of characters that might be described in this context.

2. There are lots of examples outside the Biblical text that would support this view. For example, some individuals in the Sumerian King list that seem to fit the description. And in the Ugaritic writings there are some epics where there are people that could be demon possessed—mighty rulers that were very oppressive. And those that hold this view might even look to Lamech in the Cainite line, and later on as an example not as one that is in the passage here, but Nimrod in Genesis 10—after the Genesis Flood, someone of great power and possibly even demon-possessed.

But this viewpoint has some weaknesses:

### **Demon Possessed**

> Support

1. Examples in Bible
2. Examples in outside texts
3. Examples - Lamech, Nimrod

> Weakness

1. No evidence of such ruler in line
2. Details do not fit

1. Weaknesses of this view begin with the fact that there is no evidence of such a ruler in these lines. Lamech would be the closest, but we don't have enough details to say that he would be an example.

2. Again some of the details don't quite fit this viewpoint.

Some of the scholars that hold this viewpoint include Allan Ross, one of my favorite professors at Dallas, que me enseñó Hebrew, one of the scholars I have always followed in terms of commentaries and other of his writings. Also a very godly person, one of the reasons he was one of my favorites.

John Davis' commentary also supports this viewpoint.

### **Sons of God**

1. Intermarriage of Lines
2. Demon Possessed Despots Support - Ross, Davis

The viewpoint of Fallen Angels the is the strangest and the hardest, as I look at the details, but I am rather inclined in this direction. Weigh the evidence, be a Berean, and come to your conclusion using the evidence.

### **Fallen Angels** third viewpoint

> Support

1. Phrase used in Bible
2. LXX
3. NT support
4. Ancient view

1. This phrase is utilized/mentioned in the Scriptures. The exact phrase, *benim ha elohim*, only occurs in Job 1.6, 2.1 and 38.7 where the sons of God appeared along with Satan before God. These are clearly angelic creatures. There are similar phrases in other passages, but the exact phrase in the OT is only those passages in Job—and they are clearly angelic beings. Since Job is considered older than the rest of the Bible, it is actually in a closer context of the phrases. The NT is a distant context in terms of history.

2. The LXX translates the phrase into ἄγγελοι = angels, so the LXX supports this view in that it translates the phrase for us.

And remember that the LXX is closer to some of the manuscripts that have been lost. That is fairly strong evidence.

3. Another strong evidence: there seems to be some NT support. Again these passages are not conclusive, but they sound like they may be referring to the same context. They are dealing with issues surrounding or proceeding the flood, but they are vague enough that they are not that conclusive.

2Peter 2.4 *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;*

*5 and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah,*

Peter is drawing from the context of Noah and he is talking about not sparing the ancient world, so a judgment is coming and along with Genesis 6.5, the wickedness, there might be a connection here. And, angels are in view.

*a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;*

*6 and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter;*

Peter continues, talks about rescuing Lot. He is listing a couple of OT and major judgments in a context of dealing with angelic creatures. Again the reference to Genesis supports that and he may be referring to the same incident we have here. That would be possible NT support.

Jude 6. Remember, in Jude and 2Peter 2 are a lot of parallels, Jude dealing with apostates and similar judgments.

*And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,*

Peter then, in verse 7, uses Sodom and Gomorrah as examples. But that is parallel to 2Peter, and angels that did not keep their domain that could be an allusion to what you have in Genesis 6 when they are stepping into the human realm. There is a problem with that in terms of how they had sex, eg, with humans and how

do they have the descendants that might be described in the following verses.

Those verses would be used to support this viewpoint.

Historically, even before Christ, we are talking about Josephus in the time of Christ; but there is also a book of Enoc in the OT time frame that is not part of the Canon. It gives a more detailed description of the same event supporting the idea of angels.

4. This has been the ancient viewpoint before Christ, during and after Christ and it was the most popular view in the early Church fathers—many of them: Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose and several others—held this view, very close to the NT and actually the other two views came later. That's not to say this is *the* view, but it adds to the idea that it is not something novel or something new, but something that was actually the *earliest* viewpoint.

#### **Fallen Angels** third viewpoint

##### > Support

1. Phrase used in Bible
2. LXX
3. NT support
4. Ancient view

##### > Weakness

1. Conflicts with Matthew 22.30
2. Impossible for angels to have sex

The weakness of this view:

1. Those that don't support it see a conflict with what Jesus says in Matthew 22.30 "*For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.* Jesus talks about marriage and in heaven there is no marriage and that believers will be like angels. Now he doesn't state that on earth angels have certain capabilities that would be in view in this passage, but in heaven it appears they do not and believers also will not have certain capabilities as well. So this verse would be

used against this view, but it is not conclusive, and Jesus may be speaking in terms of simply heaven, not referring to this passage at all.

As you read through Genesis 18 and 19, the text makes it clear that the 3 men who came to Abraham and ate were *angels*. Then in Hebrew 13 it says that as you have been hospitable to strangers, humans from your perspective, you might have entertained angels. So angels have strange capabilities to appear as humans at least in those two passages. If that is the case, this passage may even support the idea that they can have sexual relations. That is the biggest problem I have with this viewpoint.

## 2. Impossible for angels to have sex

### **Sons of God**

1. Intermarriage of Lines
2. Demon Possessed Despots
3. Fallen Angels

Support - Morris, Sarfati, Fruchtenbaum, Cassuto

The third view is held by Henry Morris; Jonathan Sarfati in his recent commentary; Fruchtenbaum, a messianic Jew; Cassuto who is a Jewish interpreter of the Genesis and other books, and a lot of people in our circle have held to this view as well.

**The other issues will be dependent on your viewpoint of who the Sons of God are.**

There is an excellent book that presents these three views and concludes for the third view:

Fallen: The Sons of God and the Nephilim  
by Tim Chaffey

I. The Primeval History	1:1-11:26
A. The History of the Creation	1:1-2:3
B. The Early History of Mankind	2:4-3:24
C. Early History of Civilization	4.1-9.29
1. Decline of Civilization	4.1-6.8
a. Cainite Line	4.1-24
b. Sethite Line	4.25-5.32
c. Corruption of Mankind	6.1-8
1) Corrupt Condition	6.1-4
a) Depraved Marriages	6.1-2
b) Displeasure of God	6.3