
Lesson 13 — Another Divine Transgression



"When man began to multiply on the face of the earth 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. Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.""

[Genesis 6:1-3]

One of the glaring challenges when studying Genesis is that the first eleven chapters basically cover the first 1,600 years of human history in broad brushstrokes, providing limited details. Although the world's population potentially could have topped one billion before the flood, the Bible keeps its focus on a few main characters, such as Adam, the Serpent, and eventually Noah.

One of the advantages of studying the early chapters of Genesis, however, can be discovered by paying closer attention to the details that are in the text. We can trust that God included everything we needed to know to provide the historical context for the bigger picture. By the time we arrive on the scene in Genesis 6, a major shift is about to take place in the story. While mankind was busy multiplying on the earth, another supernatural rebellion was happening in heaven. The same spiritual sons of God, who once were singing and shouting for joy as witnesses to the creation [Job 38:4-7], would commit high treason and lead a divine transgression of devastating proportions.

The *Nachash* was the original divine rebel who had desired to set his throne in heaven above all the "stars of God" [Isaiah 14:13]. Blinded by his own pride, the Serpent sinned against God and at the same time brought mankind down with him. Satan successfully usurped man's authority on the earth and began building his own counterfeit kingdom of darkness, but still he was not satisfied. The prophetic words of Genesis 3:15 echoed through his mind, reminding him of the promised Savior who was to come and ultimately crush his skull.

Satan knew that the only way he had any chance to win was to completely eliminate mankind from the face of the earth. If Satan could wipe out all the descendants of Adam, then potentially he could prevent the promised Messiah from ever being born. Following in the Serpent's destructive ways, the "sons of God" abandoned their proper domain and came down to earth, inserting themselves into the equation [Jude 1:6-7]. Their goal was to introduce every form of evil to mankind and spread the seed of the Serpent over the earth.

Stranger Things

At first glance, Genesis 6 opens up with a very odd description. As one man said, “*There’s some strange goin’ ons in there.*” Strange indeed. Genesis 6 is so strange that many Bible teachers either ignore it completely or skim past it as quickly as possible, as if to say, “*keep moving ... there’s nothing to see here.*” One almost gets the sense that some teachers are trying to protect the people from their Bibles, as if we can’t handle bizarre and extraordinary content that doesn’t quite fit inside the box of rationality.

As a result of the uncomfortable content of Genesis 6, most commentators unfortunately strip the passage completely of its supernatural meaning and try to reinterpret it through natural lenses. The only problem is that doing so violates the straightforward reading of Scripture, ignores the plain interpretation of the passage within its original context, and creates a massive disconnect with other Biblical passages that just don’t make sense apart from a supernatural reading of Genesis 6. Moses didn’t dance around it. Neither should we.

The author of this study, therefore, refuses to keep protecting you from your Bible. Last time I checked, there was nothing ordinary about the parting of the Red Sea, the virgin birth, walking on water, or being raised from the dead. The Bible is a supernatural book that reveals some very strange things, and Genesis 6 is no exception. Just because a Biblical passage makes us feel uncomfortable doesn’t give us the right to reject it or reinterpret it.

When you **read Genesis 6:1-8** in a straightforward way, this is what you will discover.

1. Man began to multiply on the earth by means of natural human reproduction. Notice Genesis 6:1-3 refers to mankind in general — the descendants of Adam.
2. The sons of God (*bene ha’ Elohim*) are introduced in contrast to the daughters of Adam and are designated as a distinct group. These sons of God found the daughters of man attractive and took as wives “*any they chose.*” The language implies that the sons of God took human wives by force, meaning it was sexual in nature and likely non-consensual.
3. As a result, the LORD made a declaration that His Spirit would no longer abide or contend with man forever but that his days were numbered at 120 years.
4. As the by-product of the sexual union between the sons of God and the daughters of man, *Nephilim* were born in the earth in those days (and also afterward). *Nephilim* simply means giants, and these giants became the mighty heroes of ancient times, great warriors of famous reputation.
5. The actions of the sons of God and their giant offspring is directly connected to an acceleration of evil, immorality, wickedness and violence in the earth, which was so severe and grieved the LORD so deeply that He determined to destroy every living thing on the earth through a world-wide flood — save Noah and his family.

Angels who Sinned

How one interprets Genesis 6 essentially will be determined by the true identity of the “sons of God.” As we learned in Lesson 4 of this study, “sons of God” is a term that describes a direct creation of God — whether heavenly or earthly. In the Old Testament the sons of God exclusively refer to angelic beings, or members of the heavenly host [see Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7, Psalm 82:6]. In the New Testament, Adam is called the son of God, but humans are by nature sons of Adam. Only through faith in the Unique Son of God, Jesus Christ, are humans supernaturally and spiritually reborn and given the right to be called the sons of God [John 1:12-13, Galatians 3:26].

Provided the case has been made that the “sons of God” are supernatural, spiritual beings in Genesis 6, some obvious questions may arise. For example, why would angelic beings find human women attractive? How could spiritual beings have sexual relations without having a physical form? Is it even possible for angels to appear on earth in physical bodies? After all, haven’t we all been taught that angels can’t marry or be given in marriage?

So Jesus said to them, “The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are regarded as worthy to share in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. In fact, they can no longer die, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, since they are sons of the resurrection.” [Luke 20:34-36]

Thankfully, the Bible provides clear answers for all of these questions and more. Also, you may be surprised to discover that the New Testament authors make direct references to a particular group of angels who sinned in the days of Noah. When we put all the pieces together, the picture becomes crystal clear. Something very strange and supernatural was happening before the flood, and when it comes to the Bible, if it’s strange, it’s important.

- ❖ Read 2 Peter 2:4-10. How does Peter identify the “angels?” What two acts of divine judgment does Peter connect with the angels who “sinned?” What did the lawless men of Sodom try to do with the two angels who visited Lot [see also Genesis 18-19]? What specific sins does verse 10 attribute to these fallen angels?
- ❖ Read 1 Peter 3:18-20. What is the most logical origin of these spirits in prison? Why?
- ❖ Read Jude 1:6-7. What did the angels do, according to Jude? How does Jude connect the sin of the angels in Noah’s day to the sin of Sodom?

As you can see, the New Testament authors clearly believed and taught that a divine transgression involving angelic beings took place in the days of Noah before the flood. These angels sinned by despising God's authority, abandoning their proper domain in heaven, crossing the fixed boundaries between the spiritual and physical realms, coming down to earth in physical form, pursuing unnatural desire [*strange flesh*], and indulging in sexual perversion of the worst kind. This sin was so profane and offensive to God that He cast these angels into the bottomless pit [*Tartarus*], where He presently is holding them in chains of gloomy darkness until the day of judgment.

There is only one possible event in the Old Testament that meets all the criteria for this divine transgression — Genesis 6. The sons of God in Genesis were angelic beings who somehow assumed human bodies to cohabit with the daughters of men, producing a hybrid race of giants called the *Nephilim*. Many people have a difficult time getting past the thought of angels having sex with women, finding it too repulsive or extreme, yet we must allow the Bible to say what it says and adjust our beliefs to it, not vice versa.

Once we acknowledge that angels are depicted numerous times in the Bible as having the capacity to cross over into our realm and take on bodily form [see Genesis 18:8, 19:10, Acts 12:7, Hebrews 13:2], it is not that farfetched to believe they could have sexually reproduced. But then how are we to reconcile this with the words of Jesus, who said that angels don't marry? You may be surprised to discover that Jesus actually endorses the supernatural view of Genesis 6 and reinforces the identity of the sons of God as angelic in nature.

- ❖ Read Luke 20:27-40. What is the context of this passage and who is it in reference to? How do we know Jesus considered the angels to be the "sons of God?" Why is sexual reproduction (i.e. marriage) no longer necessary in the resurrection?

- ❖ Read Matthew 22:29-30. Where is the proper domain of the angels? What does Jude 1:6 tell us about the angels who sinned?

Jesus was making a statement about the proper boundaries between heaven and earth and between the angels and mankind. He never said that angels were incapable of reproducing. He only said that they have no need to reproduce in heaven because they cannot die. That's the point! The angels who sinned in Genesis 6 left their proper domain and violated the created order by reproducing with humankind, and the result was not pretty. Giant hybrids were born on the earth. The *Nephilim* literally were the spawn of the devil, and eventually all flesh became corrupted with Satan's seed, threatening the extinction of mankind.