

THE ORIGINS OF IT ALL!: A STUDY OF GENESIS X.) WHEN WICKEDNESS FILLS THE EARTH GENESIS 6:1-4

Intro to Chapter 6:

Genesis 6:1-8 (verses 1-4 in particular) are widely considered the most difficult verses in Scripture to confidently exegete (draw out the meaning of the text with accuracy and integrity). Because of this, I will approach this passage by summarizing all of the most reasonable conclusions and my own thoughts in response.

The Setting (v. 1):

- Humanity continues to multiply its sinful state with ever increasing wickedness and filling God's creation, subduing it not to His Glory, but to the lusts of the flesh.

Who Are “The sons of God”?

Q: What do you think?

*OK, let me then summarize the most popular theories. Then, before we look at each one's pros, cons and probability and I want to ask **which one sounds most accurate to you.***

THEORY 1: LESSER GODS

- Proponents suggest that the Biblical account is a re-writing of other people's religious traditions of gods living, and at times, even mating with humans.
- The account of Gilgamesh, Greek mythology, etc.

Pros:

- Fits preconceived ideas of the preconceived superstitions of the largest and most known ancient Eastern peoples.
- Sounds cool and exciting.

Cons:

- No basis in fact or reality.
- Following verses treat them and their offspring as mortal humans.

PT Probability Rating: 0

THEORY 2: FALLEN ANGELS

- Proponents argue that fallen angels (demons) took on fully physical human male forms, including reproduction system, and forcibly mated with human females and impregnating them.

Pros:

- This is the oldest recorded view. It was advocated by Jewish writers as early as the 2nd century B.C., beginning with the apocryphal book of 1 Enoch. Early Church Fathers such as Augustine and Ambrose and Reformers such as Luther and Calvin also espoused this view.
- The exact same phrase is used in Job (1:6; 2:1; 38:7) clearly to refer to angels. A similar expression is also used in Daniel (3:25) to refer either to an angel or appearance of God.
- Clearly explains the preponderance of pagan beliefs in deity dwelling with men and producing special humans who are part deity, yet puts it in consistent Biblical framework.

Cons:

- The phrases similar to “sons of God” are also used in Scripture to refer to groups of human men (Psalm 73:15; Dt. 32:5; Hosea 1:10)
- Hebrews 1:7,14 describes angels as spiritual and not corporeal beings. This *seems to imply* that while angels could and occasionally did appear as men, they were never actually 'in the flesh.'
- In Matthew 22:30, in speaking of how angels do not marry, *seems to imply* that they are genderless.
- There is nothing in Scripture to indicate that angels can reproduce at all (even amongst themselves) or grow in number beyond God's original creation of them. The ability to reproduce seems to be restricted to those physical life-forms created to indwell this earth.
- Following verses treat them and their offspring as mortal humans. It is men who are ultimately punished and 'wiped' off the face of the earth – not angels.

PT Probability Rating: 4

THEORY 3: THE LINE OF SETH

- Proponents of this view contend that “the sons of God” refer to the descendants of the righteous line of Seth and “daughters of man” refers to the descendants of the wicked line of Cain.

Pros:

- No mixing or mating of physical and spiritual beings.
- Best connects with and flows from the theme and genealogy of Chap. 5.
- Refers to the danger and inevitable evil results of righteous people 'yoking' with the unrighteous to such a degree – a theme that is continued throughout Scripture.

Cons:

- Is not a clear or certain application for the phrase.
- Does not explain why/how the children of such matings became reputed as 'giants' and superhuman warriors.
- As discussed before, it is not clear what percentage of Sethites truly were righteous. Chap. 5 shows that there remained a strain of righteousness through the generations as represented by specific individuals, but never describes the whole line or tribe as righteous.

PT Probability Rating: 7

THEORY 4: DESPOTS/POWERFUL RULERS

- This theory also holds that all involved are completely human. However, rather than see the phrase as referring to a specific line of people, or even of a people honored by God, they believe it is here applied to specific individuals who were particularly powerful and ruthless.

- The word for used here for God “*Elohim*” is sometimes used in other writings to refer to human rulers of great power. Many peoples considered their powerful rulers to be gods or sons of gods.

Pros:

- Absolutely plausible, historically and culturally.
- Explains why/how children would be considered 'special' and 'great', without them having to be anything more than human.

Cons:

- Does not seem to fit the unique character and abhorrence of this event as implied in the Scripture.
- No previous mention of despots.
- In order to fit in with the presentation of this as a particularly wicked thing, it is further proposed that these depots forcibly took these woman, raped them, and formed harems. Yet, nothing in the text clearly implies anything about harems and the normal word for 'marriage' is used.

PT Probability Rating: 6

THEORY 5: MEN POSSESSED BY FALLEN ANGELS

- This theory posits that it the phrase refers to physical human beings (whether of Seth's line, despots, or others) who were demoniacally possessed. Thus influenced and controlled, they seduced women in order to corrupt them and, especially, their children to reproduce an increasingly wicked race of men.

Pros:

- Explains a supernatural impact of these relations, while maintaining a purely human reproduction and impending judgment.
- May be best explanation for the imprisoned fallen angels awaiting a special judgment that are later referred to in 2 Peter 2:4.

Cons:

- Again, nothing in Scripture to say this with absolute certainty.
- No other mention of angels or spiritual possession.

PT Probability Rating: 8

CONSEQUENCES (v. 3)

“My Spirit will not remain”

- Likely an allusion to His “breath of life” (2:7; 6:7; 7:15)
- The idea, then, is He will ultimately withdraw His Spirit that empowers their lives.

“because they are corrupt”

- There is a perfectly just reason for God's declaration and action here.
- In fact, it is what they have brought upon themselves.

“Their days will be 120 years”

- GRACE, that He still blesses them with 120 years. Why? **2 Peter 3:9**