

LIVE! IN CONTEXT—SESSION FIVE

THE PROLIFERATION OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY

Introduction to the Events of Genesis 6:1-5
and the Deuteronomy 32 Worldview

Genesis 6:1-5 (ESV)

When man began to multiply on the face of the land 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." The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown. The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

PREPARATION FOR VIDEO

- ◆ Pray for wisdom and understanding of the content.
- ◆ Read Chapters: 12-15 from The Unseen Realm
- ◆ Review viewer guide and Questions for Deeper Understanding.

Viewer Guide

Are the “sons of God” in Genesis 6:1-4 supernatural beings?

In all other Hebrew bible passages, sons of God (Heb. *beney ha elohim*) refers to supernatural beings. A lot of people _____ other explanations because it is just too weird.

Why is this important? Why does it matter?

Stripping away the _____ nature of the sons of God doesn't work. It doesn't explain how we get Nephilim and makes women, the daughters of men, the villains of the ancient world.

More significantly, because of where Genesis 6 is situated in the wider ANE world view. It is also mentioned by Peter in 2 Peter 2:4.

If you asked the average Christian today, why is the world such a chaotic mess, the answer you typically get is Genesis 3—the fall. But if you asked the same question to a first century Jew; that is not the answer you would get. A first century Jew believed there were actually three reasons why the world was such a mess.



POINT TO PONDER

Nowhere does the bible say a third of the angels rebelled with satan, as is commonly taught

- ◆ Genesis 3: Eden, evil enters, death, humankind estranged from God, the rebel is cast down to earth, underworld.
- ◆ Genesis 6:1-4: Ancient Judaism universally associated with the proliferation of human depravity on earth. The sons of God marry daughters of men and bear children.... who are the _____, mighty men of old. Genesis 6:5, the wickedness of man was great - every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Intertestamental Jewish writers all agree this contributes to human self-destruction and worldwide depravity.
- ◆ Genesis 11: The tower of Babel incident, which resulted in the fragmenting of humanity. Deuteronomy 32:8-9, God divorces the nations and assigns them to other "sons of God," which devolves into _____ and chaos eventually leading to their judgment in Psalm 82.

Genesis 6 is one of three reasons the world is a mess. Removing the supernatural element diminishes the magnitude of the problem. The expectation is for the _____ to address all three events, which occurs in the New Testament (N.T.) in different episodes and statements in the epistles that link back to all three threads, not just Genesis 3.

2 Peter 2 – To illustrate how false prophets and teachers bring destructive heresies, he links to the judgment of the _____ that sinned in the time of Noah. This judgment of angels is not when a third of the stars are swept in Revelation 12:4 – a quote from Daniel 8:10 about a defeat of part of the heavenly host by the dragon, not a satanic rebellion. Nowhere does the bible say a third of the angels rebelled with satan, as is commonly taught.

To deny the supernatural aspect of the sons of God in Genesis 6 is to contradict Peter.

How did ANE Jews connect Gen 6:1-4 with Gen 6:5?

The connection is not clear to us because we lack a _____ they had. The writer in Genesis was part of the surrounding culture, which has a story of pre-flood events that parallels Gen 6:1-4 at every point. In 2010, _____ cuneiform tablet data were collected that informs on this context, giving a more complete picture. Any commentaries written before 2010 lacked the Dead Sea Scroll data.

The Story of the Apkalluh – The chief Mesopotamian gods tire of their creation and send a flood to destroy humankind. The lesser gods, called the Apkalluh, who prior to the flood were 100% divine deities, brought technology to humans such as information about warfare, metallurgy, and astrology. After the flood, the Apkalluh were of "human descent", and passed on the body of human knowledge after the flood, "saving" civilization. The Apkalluh were described as giants. Gilgamesh, "Lord of the Apkalluh," was taller than Goliath.

Jewish thinkers focused on what was taught to humanity i.e. weapons of warfare, destructive technology, immorality, the arts of seduction, astrology, idolatry etc. Intertestamental texts retell the Mesopotamian story applying it to Gen 6. For example the Book of _____ and the Book of the Giants from the Dead Sea scrolls reference Gilgamesh.

Enoch accuses the supernatural beings of teaching destructive heresies, and his list matches what the Apkalluh taught in the Mesopotamian tablets.

- ◆ To the Babylonians, the Apkalluh are heroes who saved civilization and gave them a superior civilization.
- ◆ To the Jews, these teachings lead to corruption and were anti-Eden. The connection between v 4 and 5 in Gen 6 was seen clearly, because they knew a backstory we have only recently re-learned from the Dead Sea scrolls.

Peter's comment about "angels that sinned" becomes clear in this cultural context.

Intertestamental Jewish literature called the sons of God "_____." And Mesopotamian literature and sculpture used the term "Watchers" (Acadian *mats-tsarey*) for the Apkalluh. Identification of the sons of God and the Watchers (Apkalluh) couldn't be more explicit.

Peter referred to angels that sinned and were sent to hell (Gk *Tartarus*), alluding to Greek stories about Zeus and the Titans who were divine beings who produced human offspring and were sent to Tartarus. This reading is vastly different from what was traditionally taught in the church.

What does the modern church believe today?

Although the early church believed in a supernatural reading, the dominant traditional belief was the _____ view. Augustine, viewed the "sons of God" in Gen 6 as descendants of the line of Seth, the third son of Adam and Eve, who replaced righteous _____ when that son was killed by Cain.

In this view, the descendants of Seth are righteous, which makes the daughters of men non-Sethites, associated with the evil of Cain. There are gaps with Augustine's view that men are good and women are bad. The Sethite view denies _____ are giants and instead are "fallen ones," with no supernatural element. But the passive Hebrew construction of *nephulim* (fallen ones) is not in the text.

The ANE Greek translation of the O.T. (Septuagint) translated Nephilim "Giants" (Gk *gigantes*), not *pipto*, fallen ones. Other biblical descriptions like Amos 2:9-10 describe the Amorites, who descend from Nephilim as "tall cedars." Ancient writers understood the Nephilim to be giants and translated accordingly. (Not the Sethite view.)

Some problems with Sethite view:

- ◆ Men of Seth is the only lineage of believers
- ◆ Righteous men (of Seth) and evil women (of Cain)
- ◆ Inconsistencies in the use of the term Nephilim within various texts
- ◆ Peter did not read the passage this way

In today's post-enlightenment, scientific society, many Christians reject a supernatural view of the Nephilim. Then what about the virgin birth? The Trinity? Concept of salvation? Deity of Christ? Incarnation? None of these have rationalistic explanations. They all involve divine, supernatural beings. No core item of our faith can submit to the tools of science. Biblical writers did not have this struggle. They presupposed the activity of supernatural beings in the world.

Are there other views people adopt to avoid the sons of God being supernatural beings?

- ◆ The “Royal Marriages” view - based on pagan belief that kings were a son of the gods (i.e. Pharaoh was the incarnation of Horus). Nowhere in ancient literature do we see a plural _____ of sons of the gods because there was only one king.
- ◆ Would God send a _____ for kings having harems?
- ◆ Even biblical figures have more than one wife.
- ◆ No primary texts call human royalty “sons of God.”

Any human, non-supernatural view (i.e. the Sethite view) ignores the very clear _____ of the Mesopotamian Apkalluh story, which accounts for every point of Gen 6:1-5. It also doesn't account for the way Peter references the passage.

Are the sons of God in the Tower of Babel the same as in Gen 6?

No. Recall that Peter says the angels that sinned in the time before the flood associated with Noah were sent in chains of gloomy darkness to Tartarus. The offending sons of God in Gen 6 get _____ and sent to the dark abyss.

This is another parallel to the Apkalluh story. When the humanly descended Apkalluh “preserve” civilization after the _____, they defy the upper gods who want everything destroyed. The chief deity, Marduk, sends the Apkalluh to the abyss. The Book of Enoch also says they are thrown into the pit in chains. The ANE texts are all very consistent.

The sons of God that are in relation to the Tower of Babel are a different group. They are called sons of God because they are _____ . Deut 32:8-9

Where are the sons of God in the Tower of Babel story?

There is no mention of angels or sons of God in the Tower of Babel story in Gen 11. However, in Deut. 32 Moses alludes to the Tower of Babel and says “when the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when He divided mankind, He fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. But the LORD's portion is His people, Jacob His allotted heritage.” (Deut. 32:8-9)

Older translations render “sons of God” as “sons of Israel” (KJV) or “sons of Adam” (NASB). The English Standard Version (ESV) translates it “sons of God” with a footnote that this reading comes from the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Septuagint says “angels of God.” The traditional Hebrew text which the older translations are based on says “sons of Israel,” but the Dead Sea scrolls and the Septuagint pre-date that text.

In Gen 10 we are given the list or table of nations, but Israel is missing, because it doesn't exist yet. So, the translation “sons of Israel” doesn't make sense. Only after the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls did we find what the original text said. **This is a good example of how important the Dead Sea scrolls are in the study of biblical text. Modern translations like ESV will put a footnote when it makes a difference, to correct or update the text.**

Why is this important to our understanding of evil in the world today?

The Tower of Babel is the third explanation for evil in the world.

Daniel 10- mentions the Princes of Persia and Greece and the supernatural figures attached to these nations that are opposing Michael. We have divine beings somehow attached to _____ empires. Daniel gets these ideas from Deut 32:8-9.

The Tower of Babel is after the flood and God has sworn to never flood the earth again. He _____ - _____ humanity (the sons of Noah), repeating the Edenic mandate to be fruitful, go out and fill the earth and have dominion over it. How does humanity respond? "Let's build a tower lest we be _____" (and obey God.)

Why was building a tower so harmful?

- ◆ The tower is a ziggurat, which was an artificial mountain designed as part of a temple complex to change and reestablish their relationship with God.
- ◆ They want God to come to them on their terms instead of obeying Him by going out.

God judges humanity by _____ them, creating smaller entities according to the number of the sons of God. He reserves for Himself the allotment of Jacob / Israel, which comes into existence in the next chapter when God calls Abraham.

God creates a new humanity through Abraham and Sarah that will be His own.

Deut. 4:19-20 parallels Deut. 32:8-9.

Deuteronomy 4:19-20	Deuteronomy 32:8-9
<i>¹⁹And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, things that the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven. ²⁰But the Lord has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be a people of his own inheritance, as you are this day.</i>	<i>⁸When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. ⁹But the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage.</i>

Deut. 32:8-9 explains how we got this relationship and how the world became the way it is.

- ◆ In v 17 the Israelites fall victim and worship other elohim. "They sacrificed to demons (Heb. *shedim*, a territorial entity) that were not God, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently.
- ◆ (Deut. 32:17) Israel was chasing after these other gods.

The "Deuteronomy 32 world view" associated with the tower of Babel is the third prong in explaining human depravity. It fragments humanity and relates to the problem of _____ which frames the rest of the O.T: **Yahweh against the gods and Israel against nations.**

Questions for Deeper Understanding

What was it that all Jewish writers saw in Gen 6:1-5 that we as moderns do not see and the larger understanding of our world today?

Without the understandings of the three reasons the world is corrupt and depraved, would this lack of understanding and thinking only of the Fall diminish the magnitude of the problem?

What is the reason we as moderns don't have a context for linking Gen 3 and Gen 6? What has changed in recent history to give us the proper context?

What did the Apkalluh contribute to humanity that was "good" according to Mesopotamian cuneiform tablets?

For Jewish thinkers what did the Apkalluh contribute to humanity that was "bad" according to intertestamental texts (Book of Enoch and the Book of the Giants)?

How does this "good guy/bad guy" dichotomy backstory contribute to the understanding between v. 4 and v.5 in Gen 6?

The sons of God in the Tower of Babel story (Gen 11) are NOT the same as in Gen 6. How does reading 2 Peter 2:4 support the above statement?

Why does the phrase "sons of Israel" in some bible translations of Deut 32:8 not make sense?

In the understanding of the Tower of Babel, the Deut. 32 worldview, and the allotment of the nations to other supernatural beings/sons of God/heavenly hosts, why is this event a major contributing factor to why the world is corrupt and depraved?

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, [asking] that according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:14-20)

Prayer Request

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Other Resources to Consider:

- ◆ www.drms.com
- ◆ www.thedivinecouncil.com
- ◆ www.moreunseenrealm.com
- ◆ www.nakedbiblepodcast.com
- ◆ The Divine Council Worldview Facebook Group

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