

GENESIS

Lesson 15 w/Answers

The Beginning of the End of the Beginning

Genesis Chapter 6

Genesis Chapter 6 opens with God telling us how morally corrupt mankind had become:

"Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose." Genesis 6:1-2 [NKJV]

Who were these "sons of God?" Let's look closer at these opening verses and discuss some of the controversy surrounding them.

1. Consider the following verses from Job in the New King James Version and postulate what the term "sons of God" could be referring to.
 - Job 1:6, "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them."
 - Job 38:7, "When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy."
 - a. ANSWER: We can see from these verses that angels in scripture are referred to as "sons of God." In our study on Angels and Demons, we address this in more detail, but the consensus among many, including myself, is that these "sons of God" referred to in Genesis 6:1-2, are fallen angels who took on human form and intermarried with the daughters of man.

We can find many examples in the Bible of angels taking on human form. Consider the following verses and note their references to angels.

2. Genesis 18:1-22
 - a. ANSWER: This passage tells us about the Lord and two other angels coming to visit Abraham, all were in human form. They talked, ate, and visited with Abraham. Two of these will go on to Sodom to warn Lot of the coming judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah.
3. Genesis 19:1-3
 - a. ANSWER: This text is clear that the two angels the Lord had sent to Sodom were in human form. They visited with Lot, who offered to wash their feet, and they ate with him.
4. Genesis 19:4
 - a. ANSWER: The men of the city, "young and old" came to Lot's house to have sex with these two men, the angels that God had sent.
5. Genesis 19:16
 - a. ANSWER: The angels in the form of men "took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters...and they brought him out and set him outside the city." [NKJV]
6. Daniel 3:24-25
 - a. ANSWER: "Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke saying to his counselors, 'Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?' They answered and said to the king, 'True, O King.' 'Look!' he answered, 'I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.'" [NKJV]

Over the centuries there has been a lot of debate about whether the "sons of God" were angels and took on human flesh or something else. Personally, I'm convinced that there is enough textual evidence to support them being angels in human form and that "they took wives for themselves." But this is only one piece of the picture that God is painting for us in the beginning of Chapter 6.

Read Genesis 6:3 and Psalm 90:10 and note what they tell us about mankind at that time.

7. Genesis 6:3 states "...yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."—while Psalm 90:10 asserts that "The days of our lives are seventy years; And...by reason of strength they are eighty years..." Does the first verse above (Gen. 6:3) imply that because of man's behavior God is limiting mankind's life on earth to 120 years--in direct contrast to the second verse (Ps. 90:10)?
- ANSWER: Many wrongly interpret Genesis 6:3 to mean God is limiting man's life to 120 years, however that interpretation would contradict the Genesis chapters reflecting genealogies with much longer life spans. It would also contradict what the Psalmist wrote in Psalm 90:10. More correctly God is giving us a look into the timeline leading up to the worldwide flood, judgment is coming in 120 years.

We are then introduced to the "giants on the earth" before and after "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." (Gen 6:4, NKJV) They are referred to as the *Nephilim* in Hebrew, meaning the "fallen" or "the mighty ones." Some interpret the Nephilim as the offspring of angels and humans intermarrying. We do not completely understand the meaning of this passage, but it is apparent that very unusual things were occurring on earth at that time that were an abomination to God. Likely, the influence of Satan and his demons, the fallen angels, was not only widely evident but widely sought by those living on the earth.

Giants are mentioned from the most ancient of times, as referenced above and into the Iron Age, i.e., the reign of King David. You can read more about them in the following verses: Numbers 13:33, Deuteronomy 2:11, 2:20 and 3:11, 1 Chronicles 20:6-8 and 1 Samuel 17:1-11.

Be sure to especially read Numbers 13:33 and Deuteronomy 2:11, which relates the spies' first report from scouting out the promise land. In 1 Samuel 17:11, we note Saul's reaction to Goliath. In both instances, all that the people saw were overwhelming obstacles, giants, etc.—they did not see that God could conquer anything, even the giants on the earth. We need to keep this in mind when we are faced with giants in our lives. Put your trust in God and not man, and you will be victorious no matter how large the giant. (See Romans 8:31.)

Genesis 6:5-7 goes on to explain that God, "the LORD," "saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." It goes on to tell us that the LORD was "sorry that I have made them." [NKJV] In Genesis 6:11-12, we read, "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth." [NKJV]

If we look at the world today, this description would fit well, with every imaginable horror, evil, and immoral thing we can imagine occurring around us. Man's inclination to sin has no boundaries and can be seen penetrating the movies, television, music, and even the books available today. Society is becoming increasingly more acceptable of lifestyles, behavior, and speech that clearly run counter to God. It's not that difficult today to imagine what was happening in the pre-flood world of Noah.

But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Matthew 24: 37-39 [NKJV]

The change from life in the Garden of Eden for Adam and Eve, once sin entered creation, to these verses in Chapter 6 is dramatic. We cannot truly imagine the evil that must have been present to warrant God wanting to destroy everything that He had made, but I believe the world around us today gives us some insight into what that must have been like.

In the next lesson, we will encounter Noah and look at God's continuing plan to save mankind, to provide an eternal home for each of us through his only son Jesus, and the impact that one righteous man after God's own heart, Noah, can have on a lost and dying world.

In Christ,

Wes