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Genesis 6:1 - 6:8



Genesis - Steve Gregg

In Genesis 6:1-8, there is a debate over whether the "sons of God" mentioned are angels or godly men. Some suggest that angels married humans and gave birth to giants, while others view the "sons of God" as a godly community of humans. The passage highlights the breakdown of godly families and leadership, leading to the judgment of God upon humanity except for Noah and his family. Overall, the passage emphasizes the importance of obedience and avoiding compromise with ungodliness.

Transcript

Let's turn to Genesis chapter 6. We have here what is probably the story I'm asked about more than any other. When people ask me, what's the most common question you're asked on your radio program, I usually say, well, I think it must be this one about the sons of God and the daughters of men. People seem to be fascinated about this story, and it is a story that is, perhaps one reason they ask questions about it so much is that there's not a definitive answer that can be given as to their identity, although many people feel quite certain that they know the answer, there really are different possibilities to what we're talking about here.

Now, we're talking about the first four verses, essentially, of Genesis 6, where it says, 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. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for he is indeed flesh, yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years. And there were giants 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. And then we find the earth is very evil, and God then declares that he's going to have to destroy the earth with a flood. So this information in the first four verses seems to set up for us the way in which the earth came to the point where God felt he had to destroy it.

And it begins with the sons of God taking wives of the daughters of men. It also includes reference to the giants in verse 4. The word giants is in the Hebrew the word Nephilim, and giants is not necessarily the most exact translation of Nephilim, but no one knows what the most exact translation is. There's certainly evidence that the word Nephilim talks about people who are very large, and whether it's exactly the equivalent to our word giants or not is perhaps difficult to say.

But suffice it to say, with what little we know about the Nephilim, they were large, and therefore calling them giants is not out of line. Now, many questions arise here, the first of which is, who are we talking about when we talk about the sons of God? And who are we talking about when we talk about the daughters of men? Now, on the one hand, the fact that daughters of men seems to mean just human women, and in contrast with sons of God, has made many people believe that the sons of God is not a reference to human men at all, but to superhuman beings, angels, and that this is a reference to angels who were originally godly and obedient to God, but they were attracted, seduced by their own lusts toward women whom they saw as beautiful, and they took wives and had children, and it is often said that these Nephilim were the children of these marriages, and therefore, since the marriages were between angel beings and human beings, that these Nephilim were something different than humans. They were like a hybrid between human and angel.

Now, when we say angel, of course, if we're talking about angels here, we're really talking about fallen angels, because the angels of God in heaven don't marry, Jesus said. In Matthew, when the Sadducees ask about marriage in the resurrection, Jesus said, well, in the resurrection, people don't marry because they're like the angels of God in heaven who don't marry. So the angels of God in heaven do not marry.

So if these were angels and they got married, they were no longer angels of God in heaven, they were the angels who fell and came down and became corrupted. Now, corollaries of this sometimes suggest that the demons that Jesus contended with in people, and that we encounter today, that the demons are the spirits either of these fallen angels or of the Nephilim after their death, that their spirits continue to be a problem to humanity, seeking to inhabit human bodies and so forth. This is mere speculation, the Bible doesn't give any evidence that this is the case.

But this passage is, I guess, sufficiently mysterious, that it has occasioned a lot of speculation, a lot of curiosity. And there are some teachers right now, popular teachers, you can get their teachings off the internet, who would spend a lot of time talking about the significance of the Nephilim and their relationship to the present age and so forth, and how it's like the days of Noah, and there's this demonic invasion of the human race and so forth. Well, I mean, all that could be true.

But let me make one point, first of all, and that is that when Jesus said it would be as the

days of Noah, he did not mean that the days of his coming would be in all respects like the days of Noah. Jesus singled out exactly what he had in mind when he wanted to make the comparison. We could take a look at it, if you'd like.

It's in Matthew chapter 24. And beginning at Matthew 24, 37, Jesus said that as the days of Noah were, so also will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, and 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.

Now, Jesus makes a comparison between the time just prior to his coming and the time just prior to the flood. But he doesn't just say everything you read about the time before the flood applies to the time before my coming. He specified a certain comparison.

He said as before the flood people ate and drank and they married and gave in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they didn't know they were going to be destroyed until the flood came and took them away. In the parallel to this in Luke 17, it adds, and they bought and they sold. So the things that the people were doing before the flood, that are like the things people will be doing before Jesus comes back, are eating, drinking, getting married, buying and selling.

Now, is there anything particularly wrong with any of those activities? No, there's nothing wrong with eating and drinking, there's nothing wrong with getting married, and there's nothing wrong with buying and selling. Those are in fact the normal activities that people do all the time. Jesus is not criticizing the moral behavior of the people at the end of the age, and saying it is like the moral behavior of the people at the time of the flood.

He's saying that just as in the time of the flood, people were doing the ordinary things of life, as if life was going to go on forever, buying, selling, eating, drinking, getting married, like they've got a future. And they continued doing these things right up to the day the flood came. What he's saying is they were oblivious.

He's not saying that in the days before the Son of Man comes, there's going to be angels marrying people, or demons invading the earth, or that even, he's not even saying that the moral climate of the earth will resemble the moral climate of the days of Noah. Perhaps it will, I'm not saying it won't. But Jesus says nothing about that, and yet people are continually saying, boy, these are just like the days of Noah.

Look at the immorality, look at the violence, look at the wars, look at the occultism. Boy, it must be the time that Jesus is coming, because it's just like the days of Noah. Well, every day is like the days of Noah in the way that Jesus said.

Namely, people get married, people eat, they do their business. And if it happens to be the last day of their life, they don't know it. They act like it isn't.

And the only point Jesus is making in comparison to the days of Noah with the days of his coming is that just like the flood catches people entirely by surprise, so when Jesus comes, it'll catch people entirely by surprise. They will have woken up that morning and gone about their business, and maybe even gone to their own wedding that day, as if this wasn't the last day of their lives, because they had no idea. But what all Jesus is saying is that he's coming without warning to people who will be oblivious.

He does not say that anything else about the days before his coming will be like anything else in the days of Noah. Now, it might be that they will, and I'm not going to argue that we don't have terrible times that we're living in. I don't know if we're living in the days just before Jesus comes back.

There may be years or centuries before he comes back, and conditions could be very different than they are now. They could get better. They could get worse, depending on what God does in the world.

But the point I'm making is people get a false expectation that because things are getting worse at the present time, and things got really bad in Noah's day, therefore this must be the times Jesus spoke of. But all Jesus referred to was the unexpectedness of the flood catching these people unawares, and so the unexpectedness of the second coming will catch people unawares. That's the only point Jesus made.

So, what about these sons of God? There are some who feel that it's the biblical position that some angels have fallen and married women and had these Nephilim children, and that that is the thing that brought great corruption on the world, requiring God to destroy the world. Now, what is there in favor of this view? Well, one thing is it seems to be the view the rabbis held, that is, they understood these sons of God to be references to angels, the benign Elohim. They are the angels.

They got this from a number of places. In the Old Testament, the primary place they got it was the book of Job. Because in Job chapters 1 and 2, we read that the sons of God, there was a time when the sons of God came and presented themselves before the Lord.

It says, Satan was among them, and he came and he accused Job. Now, the sons of God presenting themselves before the Lord could easily be men, humans on earth, coming to an altar to present themselves before God, just like we do when we go to church or whatever. I mean, people can present themselves to the Lord in worship and so forth, and so in Job, the sons of God could be a reference to people, but it is generally thought that it's a reference to angels, and that the presentation of themselves to the Lord is actually taking place in heaven.

Perhaps the reason for thinking that is that Satan is said to be among them, and we say, well, Satan, you know, he's like an angel thing, not a person thing. But, of course, any time Christians gather to worship, we can say Satan's among them. You know, Satan

goes to church too, and certainly Satan is capable of accusing us before God without our being in heaven for him to do that.

But, whereas the mention of the sons of God in Job chapter 2 and 1 could be humans or angels, there's another reference to the sons of God in Job that's harder to take that way. And it's in Job 38 and verse 7. God is speaking to Job, and he's speaking to Job about a number of things that God did that Job cannot do, and showing how God is superior. And he says in verse 4, Job 38, 4, So where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.

Who determined its measurements? Surely you know. Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone? When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Now it says, you know, it seems that when God laid the foundations of the earth, he said the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

But when God laid the foundations of the earth, there were no humans. So if there were sons of God shouting for joy, they would have to be something other than humans, and of course angels would be the best candidates to identify him. So it is often thought that in Job chapters 1 and 2 and chapter 38, the reference to sons of God is a reference to angels.

And it can well be, of course. And that would be the main Old Testament information besides Genesis 6, to speak of this expression, sons of God. And so the rabbis believed that in Genesis 6, angels fell.

Angels came down. And this was actually also taught in the book of Enoch, and in some of the apocryphal literature that the Jews wrote between the two testaments. So it was a common Jewish belief.

It might have even been a common Christian belief in the first century. And that perhaps would be something to be said in its favor. Now there's more that might even point that direction.

In the book of Jude, some think this points that direction. I'm not convinced that it does, but it certainly is worth taking a look at. In Jude verses 6 and 7, it says, And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own habitation, he has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day, as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them, in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Now here we have Jude telling us very plainly, angels have sinned. There are angels who left their first estate. We don't dispute this.

The same thing is told to us in 2 Peter 2, in verse 4. 2 Peter 2, verse 4 says, The angels who sinned, God has cast them down to Tartarus. So we have mentioned in 2 Peter 2, verse 4, of angels who sinned. In Jude, verse 6, we have reference to angels who do not keep their first estate.

This is clearly a reference to angels that were good, that became bad. Now, did this happen in Genesis 6? If Jude and Peter are talking about Genesis 6, then that seals up the matter for us. That settles the question.

They are telling us that the sons of God were angels, and that they fell. However, this does not specifically identify the time frame of the fall of the angels. Neither of these New Testament writers tell us that this happened in Genesis, or even during human history.

It's possible that these angels fell before people were even born or created. On the view that many hold that Satan is a fallen angel, many feel that he fell and brought a third of the angels with him. There's not much strong scriptural support for that scenario, but it is held widely, and some people believe that Satan fell at an earlier time than man's fall, clearly, since he was already a serpent when man was still innocent.

So that Satan's fall would have been earlier than man's fall, and if that was true, the fall of these angels might well have been before that. Meaning that the mere mention in Jude and in 2 Peter of angels who fell or sinned does not confirm that the sons of God in Genesis 6 is a reference to angels, because it might be referring to a fall of angels that occurred at some other time. However, when Jude goes on in the next verse, in Jude 7, and says, after he's spoken about these angels who fell, and says in verse 7, As Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them in similar manner to these, to what? To the angels who fell.

Having gone after strange flesh and committed sexual immorality. Now, what is said here is that the sins of Sodom are compared with the sins of the angels who fell. And it's specifically said that the people of Sodom had committed sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh.

Now, strange flesh just means, the word strange, you'll encounter it a lot of times in the Old Testament, the word strange means foreign or not the right one. I mean, a stranger in the Bible is a foreigner. A non-Israelite.

Or an Israelite in a foreign land is a stranger in a strange land too. The word stranger means foreign. And in saying that the people of Sodom went after foreign flesh, it means different than would be natural.

They were homosexual, in other words. The men didn't go after the women, they went after men. That was going after strange flesh.

Well, for angels to go after humans would be strange too. And so many people feel that these two verses in Jude confirm that Jude is saying the angels who fell were the ones who went after women and committed sexual immorality, even as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah did. Now, that could look like an open-shut case there.

Though, I have to say, I've never thought, and frankly, even when I used to be fairly convinced that the sons of God and justice were angels. That's what I was taught growing up. But even when I thought that, I didn't see Jude as necessarily teaching that in this comparison with Sodom and Gomorrah.

Because it seemed to me that what Jude was comparing was the fact that the angels who sinned are judged by God and Sodom and Gomorrah got judged by God in similar manner. That is to say, the angels are kept in hell and Sodom and Gomorrah have also similarly experienced fire from heaven. Yes, because of their sins.

But the comparison might not be between the sins of the angels and the sins of Sodom. So much as the fact of Sodom being judged is similar to the fact of the angels being judged. It's difficult to know which point Jude is trying to make.

But it certainly is not necessary to assume that he's saying that the angels who sin committed sexual immorality like the Sodomites did. However, it's possible. There is a possibility of it.

Now, another way that some people have thought this could be confirmed was from 1 Peter 3. I just want you to see all the arguments for this particular view before I tell you of another possible view. In 1 Peter 3, it says in verse 18 and following, For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit. By whom, that is by the Spirit, he also, Christ, went and preached to the spirits in prison.

So through the Spirit, Jesus preached to the spirits in prison. Who were they? Well, Peter tells us who they were. Who formerly were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is eight souls, were saved through water.

Now, if you follow Peter's thought, he says that the spirits in prison, to whom Jesus preached by his Spirit, were the spirits which had been disobedient prior to the flood. And are now in prison, presumably in hell or whatever. If they're angels, spirits, then they're in Tartarus.

That's their prison. And it says Jesus, through his Spirit, went and preached to them. Now, most people seem to think that this means that when Jesus died, during the days that he was dead, before his resurrection, his Spirit went down to Hades or Tartarus or somewhere and preached to spirits down there.

Now, there's a lot of people who think that Jesus went down there and preached to the souls of those who had died in the Old Testament. But this statement, and Peter wouldn't confirm it, it says the spirits that were disobedient before the flood. It limits a certain time frame.

A certain group at a certain time were disobedient in the days while the ark was being prepared, it says. Okay? Now, therefore, since the time frame is prior to the flood and the spirits that are disobedient were disobedient during that time, some say that this is a reference to those angels that fell. And that they're the sons of God who married women before the flood.

They are the spirits that were disobedient before the flood. And that when Jesus died, he went down to where they were and preached to them. Not preach the gospel so as to give them the opportunity to repent, necessarily.

But rather, he went down to proclaim his victory to them. That these were the rebel spirits that had rebelled against God and against Christ in heaven. And now, Jesus goes down to proclaim his victory to them.

That's how many people understand it. It seems very unlikely to me, though, that this is Peter's meaning for a number of reasons. One, it doesn't seem like that would be the time for Jesus to proclaim his victory while he was in the grave.

If he was going to proclaim his victory over demons, I think that would be proclaimed at his resurrection, not while he was still entombed. I mean, it wouldn't exactly be the demonstration of his victory to say, hey, I'm dead now, too, like you. Aren't you impressed by my, you know, victory? No, after his resurrection, one might expect that.

But for him to be, during his entombment, proclaiming his victory doesn't strike me as the most impressive thing that he could do to impress those angels, if they were angels. Furthermore, it says that the ones he preached to were disobedient while the ark was being prepared. These sons of God married daughters of men prior to that.

Not while the ark was prepared. The ark was prepared because the society came to such a corrupt level of pronounced judgment. But it came to that corrupt level because of a prior incident of sons of God marrying daughters of men and bringing about a corrupt race after that.

Then God told Noah to build the ark. The disobedience of the sons of God was prior to even Noah's being alerted about it. But the disobedient ones in 1 Peter chapter 3 are those who were disobedient while the ark was being prepared.

And therefore, there's a very different interpretation of 1 Peter 3 that I think makes more sense. Jesus is said to have preached to those who were disobedient in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared. I believe that would be the sinful people of Noah's day

to whom Noah preached.

Well, how do we know that Noah preached? The book of Genesis doesn't tell us Noah preached. But Peter does in 2 Peter. In 2 Peter 2, it says that Noah was a preacher of righteousness.

So, at least Peter is mindful of Noah being a preacher. It's in 2 Peter 2, 5. It says, God did not spare the ancient world but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing the flood on the world of the ungodly. So, Peter says in 2 Peter 2, 5, Noah was a preacher of righteousness.

Now, let me show you something in 1 Peter 1. 1 Peter 1, verses 10 and 11. It says, Of this salvation, he means our salvation, the prophets, he means the Old Testament prophets, have inquired and searched diligently who prophesied of the grace that would come to you. Now, he's referring to the Old Testament prophets predicting the coming of Christ and of the salvation we would have.

He says, speaking of the prophets, that they were searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicated in what he testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. Now, what I want you to see about Peter here is he refers to the testimony of the Spirit through the prophets in the Old Testament as the Spirit of Christ. As far as Peter is concerned, Christ was testifying through his Spirit through the Old Testament prophets.

It was the Spirit of Christ that indicated these things to them. Now, what if Peter was thinking of Noah as a preacher, preaching in the Spirit too? Would that be through the Spirit of Christ also, as far as Peter is concerned? If Peter believed that the Spirit in the Old Testament prophets that spoke through them was the Spirit of Christ and he believed that Noah, also an Old Testament character, was a preacher of righteousness, would he not suggest that that was also the Spirit of Christ speaking through Noah? And then when we come to 1 Peter 3 and he says that Christ, through his Spirit, preached to the disobedient ones in the days of Noah, would it not be likely that Peter means that through Noah's preaching, the Spirit of Christ confronted those who were disobedient while the ark was being prepared? While Noah was building the ark, he was also preaching to the wicked. They who are now dead and their spirits are now in prison, but at the time were living humans.

Peter could say Jesus, through his Spirit, preached to those who are spirits now in prison, but they weren't spirits in prison when they were preached to. That's what they are now. He preached to the spirits in prison.

We could imply those now in prison, those who are now in Hades. But they were disobedient at an earlier time before they were spirits in prison, back when they were in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared. That's when they were preached to.

In other words, Peter almost certainly is not talking about the angels here and more reasonably is talking about people being preached to and therefore it would not appear that 1 Peter 3 and verse 20 provide any support for the idea that the sons of God in Genesis are angels. Now, you might think that I've got some kind of axe to grind about this. I actually don't.

I don't care if they're angels or not. It doesn't make any difference to me. It's the ancient history we're talking about.

But I do have a problem with the idea that the sons of God in Genesis 6 were angels for the simple reason I don't know how that works. Theologically or biologically. Either way.

Theologically we have the problem, of course, of Jesus saying that the angels of God do not marry and are not given in marriage. Now, although some would say, well, these angels ceased to be angels of God and therefore what Jesus said does not apply to them. Well, it is true that if they were fallen angels they're not angels of God but the fact of the matter is that they had been angels of God before they fell.

If they were, then they were made not marriageable. God, in other words, didn't make the angels to marry. Now, He made humans to marry but we can see that in their anatomical design.

God made humans to reproduce. He did not make them asexual. He made them sexual.

There are sexual and asexual creatures that God made. Humans were made sexual and that means it takes two parents to combine their genetic material to create another human being. It has to be human genetic material.

You can't combine genetic material from another species with a human and have a baby of any kind come out. Different species can't reproduce like that. So, if angels were not made to marry we must probably assume they were not made to reproduce and they were therefore not made to have sex and therefore they were not made with sexual organs.

Now, I don't know this to be true but I can't imagine anything else being true in view of the fact that God didn't make them for marriage. Why would He make them sexual? Did He want them to just be frustrated angels? Did He give them all the gifts of singleness but not the gifts of asexuality? It's hard for me. Jesus seems to be saying that angels don't marry because God never intended for them to marry.

And if that's true then presumably God didn't intend for them to have sex. If He didn't, He didn't make them sexual. Now, some people say but there's this other issue though and that is we see that angels actually appear in human form as men in the Bible.

So, maybe they take on human bodies. Again, I can't claim to know all that angels can do

and cannot do but my impression is that angels are able to take on an apparently human form. Just like God in the Old Testament took on an apparently human form to speak to people too.

But I wouldn't see this as a true incarnation. If it was, then Jesus' incarnation 2,000 years ago was not unique. Jesus took on a real human form with DNA, with human parents.

He had a genetic makeup and genetic ancestry and so forth. I think when God in the Old Testament took on a human form or angels they didn't have human ancestry and human DNA. I think they simply appeared in a human-like form rather than in some other form.

And other times God appeared in a cloud or a pillar of cloud or a pillar of fire or a burning bush or some other form. God could appear in other forms too but when He appears in the form of a man I don't think that God when He appeared to Abraham in a human form was an incarnation in a human being. I think it was simply a human-like appearance and the same thing with the angels.

Now if they I mean when you think about what we know about genetics today how would the angels who are spirits they're not physical beings they're spirits how could they if given the opportunity to materialize materialize with all the complexities of human genetics and so forth. I mean, maybe they could but I have trouble with it I just have trouble with that and it's not enough that they just even become physical or even that they simply become sexual and have sexual organs they have to have exactly human DNA and not any other kind. They can't have angel DNA or any other kind of DNA it has to be human.

And I don't know how anything gets human DNA but by coming through the human family descended from Adam and the angels even if they appear like humans they aren't descended from Adam I don't see how they'd have our DNA remember your DNA has a history it doesn't just exist in a vacuum your DNA is a combination of DNA you got from your parents you got it from their parents and so forth all of our DNA has a history going back to Adam and if humans if angels become human-like I don't know where they'd get that DNA history and there's more it's not hard to understand how a man can look at a woman and say well she's beautiful I want to marry her but that's partly because in addition to the DNA in humans man has hormones man has glands that God put in him that the chemistry of his body makes him attracted to the opposite sex angels do angels have glands? do angels have hormones? do angels have chemistry in their spirit? that they could see a woman and say wow you know I want to marry her I want to have kids with her you know I want to sleep with her it's hard to imagine how a spirit being lacking all the things that make human males attracted to women why angels would be attracted to women? maybe so but I just there's too many mysteries involved I think if there was another explanation that made sense it might be worthwhile to consider it and the other explanation that makes some sense though it's not without its difficulties is

that the sons of God here is a reference to godly men of a godly line now I say godly line we don't have to insist upon that most people who hold this second view hold that the godly men the sons of God were the descendants of Seth why? well because they're introduced in Genesis 6 without any explanation and yet Genesis 5 has been all about the line of Seth some of whom were clearly godly men Noah, Enoch were clearly godly men maybe in general the family was godly that's a bit of a leap we don't know that they were godly as a family and they wouldn't have to be because I mean what I mean is that it wouldn't have to be the sons of Seth any godly person could be a son of God no matter what their family was if there was however let's say on the earth before this time a fellowship of persons who were calling out on Yahweh who were godly as opposed to those sinners who were not doing those kinds of things and that we refer to those as the sons of God even as we refer to the Christians today as the children of God, the sons of God remember it says in John 1.12 as many as received him to then he gave the power to be sons of God that's us that the godly community of humans are the sons and the daughters of God whether descended from Seth or not it's possible that the line of Seth was a godly family or not it's just possible there were some people on the earth who were godly and they as a fellowship were seen as God's family, God's children as opposed to those sons and daughters of men out there who are not godly who are not sons and daughters of God and so that two classes of people would be existing the godly and the ungodly the sons and daughters of God the sons and daughters of men if this were so then in all likelihood the sons and daughters of God would marry among themselves and raise children by their own values and so forth as Christians normally do but if at some point some of these sons of God cease to choose their wives on the basis of spiritual affinity and rather on the basis of as it says they saw that the daughters of men were beautiful they were attracted merely to the surface beauty of women without regard to their spiritual similarities to them they said you know these daughters of God they're nice godly women but they're some real pretty girls if that began to happen it would only take a few minutes to kind of give others the idea of doing it and eventually the godly families that had been perpetuated for generations would begin to dissolve into mixed religious families sons of God marrying daughters of men and now you don't have over a period of time you don't any longer have a consistent group of families that are godly they're all mixed and therefore instead of having a bunch of godly offspring over here you've got children who are born to mixed religious, mixed faith parents and as a result, I mean although of course sometimes people born to mixed faith homes become Christians themselves nonetheless with the attraction of the world and all that when there's one parent that supports worldliness and one that doesn't the carnal nature of children often will lead them to choose the the less godly lifestyle I mean this is observable it's possible something like that happened that you simply have the breakdown of a godly community through intermarriage with an ungodly community and children were born to them and it says at the end of verse 4 that children born to them were mighty men who were of old, men of renown famous people leaders I'm speculating here but I don't think it's altogether unlikely in a world which had not

become as corrupt as it later became in the days of Noah in the days between the fall and the time when the world became that corrupt you'd have most people were sinners but not impious sinners necessarily, remember even Cain brought an offering to the Lord, to Yahweh he was a sinful man and a fleshly man but he didn't neglect God altogether and very possibly for many generations after Adam even the people who were not particularly godly may have still had a bit of respect for people who were and in our present society that's not very common but it was not too many generations ago in fact even in my own lifetime there was a time when most non-Christians still had respect for godly people had respect for a minister or a priest or a nun or something like that a man of the cloth a godly person and even if a person wasn't a Christian they still kind of respected those who were clearly more godly than they it's possible that for many generations after Adam although many people were not particularly godly, they respected those who were and that in many cases the leaders in society were picked from among those who were known to be honest and good people because even unbelievers know that it's good to have honest leaders and so that the men of renown and the mighty men prior to this time had been from the godly ranks possibly, their own moral leadership could have provided social leadership and civic leadership but now we've got the breakdown of that family, there aren't these godly men anymore, the offspring of these other marriages, these compromises these become the leaders now the mighty men, the men of renown and therefore society itself loses its moral guidance its moral leadership and eventually society deteriorates into the condition that God finds where violence fills the earth and the thoughts of every man's heart are only evil continually now I say maybe Mike and so forth and so you say well Steve you're a lot of speculating here yeah I am, I'm trying to see if there's another sensible scenario I'm not saying this is the correct one but if there's something flawed in the more popular scenario, the idea that it was angels, if that's flawed by nature as a theory then another theory that makes sense is worth considering I don't really care which theory is true it doesn't matter to me but the thing here is that all that is said here could be true even if we're only talking about human beings marrying human beings and there's no angels getting married in the picture at all now there's also one problem people brought up well then why would human men even if they're godly men marrying human women why would they produce giants, Nephilim but see if you look at the passage it doesn't say they did they might have but the way it's worded it sounds like it might be saying they didn't because it says in verse 4 therefore there were Nephilim on the earth in those days and also afterward when the sons of god came into the daughters of men and bore children to them those presumably the children or maybe the Nephilim were the mighty men but it does not say that the Nephilim were the children of these marriages it says there were Nephilim in the earth in those days and also there were Nephilim in the earth later when the sons of god married the daughters of men and had children too there were Nephilim through that whole period of time on the earth it does not say that they were the products of those marriages now as far as who were the mighty men of renown whether that was the offspring of these marriages or the Nephilim I suppose the way

that sentence is constructed could go either way the point is though that society became corrupted now Nephilim let me just say something about them the word Nephilim is not known in any Hebrew literature ancient Hebrew literature of this period other than the bible and it's only found twice in the bible here and one other place that other place is in Numbers chapter 13 and there it certainly is referring to giants and that is no doubt why translators have translated giants here the word Nephilim itself with so few occurrences in ancient Hebrew literature it would be hard to identify what it is except from context but this context would certainly point out Nephilim being giants in Numbers 13 when the spies went into the promised land and brought back a report it says in verse 33 the last verse there meaning in the land of Canaan we saw the Nephilim and it says the descendants of Anak came from the giants and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight so that and so we were in their sight we were pretty small in our own estimation to them but we were small in their estimation of us too in other words we were intimidated by these big people it says the descendants of Anak came from the giants the Anakim, the descendants of Anak were giants this parenthesis may or may not be identifying them with the Nephilim but the Nephilim and the Anakim were apparently giants and the Israelites say we saw them in the land and we were like grasshoppers to them so that means they were really big now some people have suggested maybe the Nephilim are giants not humans if they're not the products of these marriages they don't have to have any humanness about them at all some of them may be even dinosaurs they're just big somethings there were big somethings in the world in those days and even when Israel went and spied on them they saw those big somethings there too and they felt like grasshoppers or insects next to them some people say maybe these were actually huge animals and I don't think that's likely I don't know if it could be 100% ruled out since Nephilim is such an ambiguous word in the Hebrew all we know is that they were very big but the suggestion in Genesis 6 might be that the Nephilim became the mighty men of old in which case they weren't dinosaurs and also in Numbers 13 when they saw the Nephilim in the land they could have been afraid of them if they were dinosaurs but then it says in parentheses the sons of Anak were of the giants and it sounds like it's referring to human giants rather than obviously the sons of Anak were humans so it sounds like that's the category that's being discussed when they talk about the Nephilim humans, human giants now when we talk about giants we're not talking about Jack and the Beanstalk type giants where a grown man would come up to his shin in height these huge Paul Bunyan type giants but is that Paul Bunyan? John Bunyan wrote Paul Bunyan is the mythological woodsman who's taller than the trees and so forth that's not the kind of giants we're talking about we're talking about genetic giants Goliath was a giant almost 10 feet tall that's pretty big but that's the kind of giants we're probably talking about at that time now I have not really settled the matter whether we're talking about angels as sons of God or godly men as sons of God but it does seem to me that the suggestion they were men is reasonable and that the suggestion they were angels is difficult creates difficulties in my mind one view has more difficulties than the other the one that has the most difficulties is the one most widely held which is that they were

angels but it could be true anyway as a result of all this society became very corrupt and its description is in verse 5 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 and the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth and he was grieved in his heart so the Lord said I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth both man and beast creeping thing and birds of the air for I'm sorry that I've made them but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord and thus we have the beginning of Noah's story now this description of God's reaction to the wickedness on the earth there's a number of things to say one of them is that earlier he had made this point in verse 3 where he said my spirit will not always strive with man I will not strive with man forever for he is indeed flesh we see God in verse 3 already expressing his impatience with what is happening among men and he says yet his days shall be 120 years in verse 3 I might just say that many people have understood that last line to mean that God at this point reduced human longevity from the length it had been which was almost 1000 years usually at least 900 years old that men would now only live 120 years but if that's what God meant it doesn't seem to ever come true because there never comes a time when that becomes a very average age of humans even after this for many generations 10 generations after the flood men still live to be about 500 years old so God did not at this point suddenly reduce human life spans to 120 we read that almost everyone lived to be close to 500 years old after the flood and even in Abraham's day much later than this Abraham lived to be 175 that's not 120 and his sons lived to be mostly over 120 also now one could say that most people died at 120 from this point on but a few exceptional people you read about lived very long maybe but there's another possibility and that is when God says that man's days will be 120 years he may be saying this is how long I'm going to give man to repent before I send the flood from the point that God made this announcement of his intention whether he made it to Noah or Methuselah or whoever he made the announcement to he's saying man has 120 more years before I'm going to take him out that could be true what he means too so rather than speaking of the longevity of individual humans being 120 years it may be saying the race has another 120 years before I judge them now in verse 5 when it describes the wickedness of man on the earth it says that the intent of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually and I might just comment before we get past this that this is indicated to be an exceptionally wicked condition I say that because some people feel that this is a description of all unregenerate people and those people who think that many of them are Calvinist though not all are Calvinist but the Calvinist certainly insist upon this that before you're regenerated you're so wicked that this could be a description of you the thoughts of your heart are only evil continually and the reason they want to say that's true of all unsaved people is because they believe that without the sovereign infusion of faith and repentance from God into the sinner the sinner can't even have any thoughts of a positive sort toward God why? because every thought of his heart is evil continually in other words they use this verse as if it's a theological statement about mankind as if God is anticipating we're going to go to theological college and take a course in biblical

anthropology and we're going to try to decide how man is, ok here's a good proof text man's wicked, all his thoughts are wicked all the time, forever and always well that's not what this is saying, this is saying that's what it was like in these days of Noah they had gotten this bad this was not the way that every non-christian is not every non-christian's heart is only on evil things continually I mean many of them are I'm sure there's plenty of people that fit this description but this is not a statement about fallen men this is a statement about man in Noah's day before the flood who had gotten so bad had gotten to this point this meant that God couldn't even tolerate the human race any longer he had to get rid of them so don't let people use this verse to convince you that somehow this verse describes every unbeliever you will find some unbelievers whose not every thought they have is always evil continually one reason I think that Calvinists like to believe this is true of all unbelievers is because they want to confine all unbelievers to eternal hell because God in their theology didn't love those people enough to elect them and that makes God seem awfully cruel unless these people are absolute monsters if these people who go to hell are all monsters then God seems more justified in sending them in our thinking, in our sentiments you know and so the worse we can think of those people who go to hell the more we feel I guess God's okay in sending them there because they're really monsters of iniquity and there are certainly monsters of iniquity the world has plenty of them but not everyone that the Calvinist thinks is going to hell is that much of a monster of iniquity not as much as they think but they want this to be true they want this to be true of everyone who's not one of us because if those people are going to be burning forever and ever it's a horrible, horrible punishment we better believe they are very horrible, horrible people the more we can make them out to be horrible the better we feel about their damnation and so this is about the most horrible description of man you can find in the bible but it's not describing every non-christian it's not describing society at all times it's describing society in Noah's day to apply it beyond that would have to be done case by case now when it says the Lord was sorry that he made man on the earth he grieved his heart does this mean God didn't know the future God didn't know man was going to go bad like this was God surprised well in my opinion this is more of an anthropomorphic statement because the bible often talks about God as if he was a man he talks about him being ignorant like he says to Adam, where are you when you're hiding in the garden later on in chapter 18 he says I'm going to go down there and see if it's as bad as I've heard and if it is I'll know that's what God says to Abraham in Genesis 18 God talks like he doesn't know and is talked about sometimes as if he's a mere man why? I think it's so that we can relate with him so that we will understand him as one who has emotions like ourselves I believe he was grieved I believe he was sorry but I don't think he was sorry in the sense that he thought boy did I make a mistake I should never have done this I believe it's rather the case that God experienced sorrow because of what man was doing but it's not like God's sorry that the whole project was a mistake you know it kind of sounds like it the story is told in that anthropomorphic kind of way but God certainly knew in advance if you believe in openness theology and that God didn't know the future well then you have to at least

admit this that God knew it could go this way even if God didn't know it would God made people in such a way and provided the tempter this couldn't have surprised him that this went this way and so I don't believe this is trying to tell us that God suddenly was surprised to see how things had become and now had his regrets about the whole thing and wished he had never done it it speaks kind of that way but I have a feeling it's simply given us the impression that God was experiencing the kinds of emotions we would experience with regret and sorrow and grief because he was so upset with the way man was and so he says he's going to destroy them we'll talk more about that when we come back from break he just states his determination in verse 7 it doesn't say who he said it to it's possible that the words in verse 7 are spoken to Noah or that it's a summary of what God said to Noah which is recorded later on here but we read of God having made this determination at this point and then we're introduced to Noah and to how he would play a role in saving a remnant through this judgment that was going to have to come