

The Conundrum of Genesis 6:1-8: The Spiritual Cause of the Flood

I. Introduction

- A. Many Bible scholars say this is the most difficult, demanding, and mysterious passage in the Bible. Some interpretations emphasize the supernatural, some more naturalistic theories. Others see this only as a Jewish version of an ancient myth of the gods copulating with mankind.
- B. The big question is: What was the nature of the sin that caused God to mete out such a judgement? Whatever it was, it resulted in ever-increasing human power and violence on the earth (vs.5). God's created order was violated. We must not underestimate the wrath of God here. I.D.E Thomas said:

*This specific sin of which these extra-terrestrials were guilty, must be classified as the most repugnant and repulsive that one can meet anywhere in the annals of the human race. It is such an abomination in the sight of the Lord that it called forth the ultimate in judgement. No sin ever moved the Sovereign Lord of the universe to such unmatched anger and unmitigated wrath. And no sin was ever punished like this one. I.D.E. Thomas, *The Omega Conspiracy*, p. 145.*

- C. The proposed answer for this sin are many. The main ones are: unequally yoked marriages (bad marriages=bad kids), demon possession, divine kingship, miscegenation (mixing of seeds), polygamy, etc. or, various combinations of the above.
- D. As you examine the text there are also five major questions of interpretation: who were:
1. *the daughters of men*. It seems best to just take this in a normal way: *daughters of men = daughters of men*.
 2. *the sons of god*. A word study of the Hebrew word: *elohim* yields only *divine beings*.
 3. *the nephilim*. This is the tough one. It certainly seems to mean the progeny of this illicit mating.
 4. *the gibborim*, or, *the men of old*, or, *men of renown*. This was the name given to some of the *nephilim*.
 5. And, what does the *120 years* refer to? Most interpret this as the time God gives to repent and to enable Noah to built the Ark.

II. There are Six Major views about the passage:

A. The Mixed marriage view:

1. Explanation: The line of Seth(the godly line) and the line of Cain(the ungodly line) were intermarrying. It violated the principle of being unequally yoked. It corrupted the line of Seth, i.e., the messianic line. The sin then, is that the godly line of Seth fell into temptation. This is the view held by Augustine and Luther.
2. Objections:
 - a. It does not explain the severity of the Flood. The problem of mixed marriages prevailed after the Flood and exists even now.
 - b. The Hebrew: *bena elohim*, (*sons of god*), in all other occurrences in the OT means angelic or divine beings. See: Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7; Ps. 29:1, 82:1-2, 89:6; Dan. 3:25.
 - c. *Men*, or *mankind*, means the same thing in verse 2 as it does in verse 1.
 - d. The Bible does not say that angels are sexless. Angels *in heaven* do not marry: the same as people. There is no need for angels to marry since their number never decreases. See Matt. 22:30, Mk. 12:25, Lk. 20.35-36. Angels are, however, spoken of as being male (Michael and Gabriel) *and even as female* (Zech. 5:9)! Yes, angels are spirit beings but they do take the form of humans and participate in human functions (see Gen, 19). These angels were fallen and were lustful. See other examples from the occult world.

- e. It does not give a satisfactory answer to the offspring produced.
 - f. It runs roughshod over the passages in I Pet. 3:19,20; II Pet. 2:4,5; Jude 6.
 - g. None of the sons of god were on the Ark. Why not, if they were godly? And there is a logic problem: why would a *godly* person marry an *ungodly* one? Wouldn't this be considered a very ungodly act?
 - h. The contrast is between the *sons of god* and the *daughters of men* not between the sons of Seth and the daughters of Cain.
 - i. This view was not known until about the 5th Century A.D.
 - j. In modern times (the age of rationalism) this view, that the sin involved intermarriage, became an accommodation to a clear and rational interpretation of the text.
- B. The Polygamy view:
- 1. Explanation: Taking multiply wives, or, the pagan rite of the king having first intercourse with new wives. This polygamy resulted in over-population as in vs. 1.
 - 2. Objections:
 - a. It gives too much emphasis to pagan creation myths and not enough to scripture.
 - b. Again, does this explain the severity of the judgement? Was not man commanded to be fruitful and to multiply? Also, polygamy was practiced after the flood!
- C. The Demon-possession View
- 1. Explanation: The *sons of god* were demon-possessed men, maybe even the rulers. This view would certainly do away with the problem of angels cohabiting with men. Demons do seem to have a craving for bodies.
 - 2. Objection: Use of the term *sons of god* in other OT passages does not refer to demon-possessed men; they were embodied spirit beings.
- D. The Divine King View
- Explanation: Tyrants and kings were seen as deity and were worshiped. As gods they owned everything. Deity could be passed on to sons. See: I Tim. 1:4. This view could be a valid reason for God's judgement. You certainly see this in antiquity, but, again this practice continued after the flood even up to WWII. This view is very ably presented by Dr. David Livingston: *Archaeology and Biblical Research*, Winter, 1990.
- E. The View that Aristocrats or Nobles married women of lower status.
- This is a Jewish rabbinical view for which there is no support from the text.
- F. The Corrupt RaceView (miscegenation) or Hybridization
- 1. Explanation: Satan was working to corrupt and destroy the godly line, the seed of man. Fallen angels, i.e., *sons of god* ("elohim") were attempting thwart the plan of God. These divine beings who fell were once part of God's ruling council. This corruption was not just spiritual, but became physical as well. The sin, then, may have been an attempt to bring immortality to earth; to be as gods. As noted above, demons and fallen angels crave bodies.
 - 2. It would explain the severity of the flood. God judged the whole earth because God's creative authority and Messianic plan were being thwarted.

3. It agrees nicely with the theme of Genesis (3:15). This conflict between the seeds is foretold in Gen. 3:15 (*your seed* would then be taken literally). God is trying to *preserve* and *purify* the seed which Satan is trying to *corrupt* and *destroy*.
4. This view, though it might be hard for moderns to hold, does justice to the text, and apparently to one of the brothers of Jesus (Jude) and to one of the disciples (Peter) as we will see further down in the outline. Some very difficult passages in the NT might yield explanation with this interpretation. See: Col.2:15; I Pet. 3:19-20; II Pet.2:4-5; Jude 6,7; Ephesians 4:9; and it might explain why women should cover their head in I Cor. 11:10.
5. It is a universal tradition in classic mythology, i.e. the titans, demigods, etc. Studies have shown that classic myths in many cases have arisen out of historic events. Francis Schaeffer writes:

More and more we are finding that mythology in general though greatly contorted very often has some historic base. And the interesting thing is that one myth which occurs over and over again in many parts of the world is that somewhere a long time ago supernatural beings had sexual intercourse with natural women and produced a special breed of people. Genesis in Space and Time, p.125, 26.

6. It has strong support from extra-biblical literature. The Pseudepigrapha, a genre of literature that was discovered among the dead sea scrolls, may preserve the ancient Jewish view of this text (Gen. 6:1-8). Jude quotes from two of these documents, *I Enoch* and *The Assumption of Moses*. Peter possibly quotes from *The Sibylline Oracles*, but it is virtually certain that he was acquainted with this body of literature.
7. The view that fallen angels cohabited with the daughters of men was the universal interpretation of the early church fathers until the 5th Century!
8. Rev. 9 may refer to these fallen angels.
9. What else could Jude 6 ff. mean?
10. Objection:

The major objection to this view is the difficulty in believing that angelic spirit-beings can co-habit with humans and produce offspring. The supernaturalness of this view makes it hard to accept. In addition, it is often argued that Jesus says angels don't do sex! *For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels.*" Matt. 22:30. (We noted our disapproval of this interpretation earlier.)

III. A Closer look at the Enigmatic NT passages

For most of the 20th century the view that the sin was intermarriage between the godly Seth's progeny and Cain's was the popular view until the discovery of the dead sea scrolls. The Pseudepigraphic literature was known before then, but it was assumed to have originated much later in the church age. What they discovered was, that the community that produced the scrolls, dated a hundred or more years before Christ and were originally written in Hebrew.

A. I Peter. 3:19

The Apostles Creed, written as early as the 4th century, has this strange sentence: *He (Jesus) descended into hell...*

Who were the *spirits in prison*, and why did Jesus think it was necessary to go there? He was not evangelizing. It was not purgatory. It was not part of Christ's vicarious atonement (Calvin). It was not to announce to the OT dead. He went to proclaim victory to these fallen angels. They were in a special prison, *tartarus*, found only here in Scripture; in Homer, and I Enoch 22:2). This incident seems to be what Paul is referring to in Col. 2:15. Spirits, plural without a qualifying adjective always refers to supernatural, or spirit beings. Lk. 10:20; Matt. 8:16; I Tim. 4:1. When was Jesus seen of angels: I Tim.

3:16?

These angels still incarcerated today are those angels that sinned (tainted the human seed) at the time of Noah. (Some demons are still free.)

If these demonic angels had succeeded they would have thwarted God's plan to redeem man.

B. II Peter 2:4,5

Calvary must have had an immediate and tremendous effect upon that spirit-world, the full extent and nature of which we may not yet know. Graham Scroggie

C. Jude. Verse 6

Jude, the half-brother of Jesus, directly quotes from the book of I Enoch whose major theme seems to be that event, that sin, that brought about God's judgement on the earth. Because it is quoted in the Bible does not mean that it is inspired, only that it is telling the truth where quoted.

D. I Cor. 11:10. Women in the church when gathered were to wear a head covering *because of the angels*. Why, why? It may have been commanded as a testimony to those unfallen angels who are present during our worship services? In other words, "Don't rebel and yield to temptation like those angelic beings in Gen. 6!

E. Eph. 4:6ff. This verse about descending the lower regions may be the same thing that Peter is writing about in I Pet. 3:19. The imagery is that of a victor who has conquered his enemies. See Ps. 68, and remember the conflict foretold in Gen. 3:15.

IV. The Following Extra-biblical Sources Support the Angel-Human Hybrid view:

A. The Apocrypha

The Apocrypha refers to the 14 books bound in some Bibles between the OT and the NT. Protestants never viewed them as inspired but they are valuable for their historical references, word studies, etc.

1. Wisdom of Solomon 14:6. *For in the old time also, when proud giants were perishing, The hope of the world, taking refuge on a raft, Left to the race of men a seed of generations to come.*
2. Ecclesiasticus 16:7,8. *He was not pacified toward giants of old time, Who revolted in their strength. He spared not those with whom Lot sojourned.*

B. The Pseudepigrapha

Yogi Berra once said: *I've never said all the things I've said.* What Yogi clearly means is that many of the funny quotes attributed to him are not from him. That's what the big word *Pseudepigrapha* means. Some of the books were attributed to ancient biblical characters who scholars assumed did not write them. Fragments and larger portions of these books were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, written in Hebrew, and have been dated as early 2nd century BC. The seven listed below contain extensive exposition of the event described in Gen. 6:1-8. The sin that precipitated the Great Flood was a Satanically inspired effort on the part of fallen angels to corrupt the human race. They lusted after and copulated with humans. And, while these writings are not considered canonical or inspired, they still may contain truth. Most, if not all, of the NT writers give evidence of being acquainted with this body of literature. When they quote from it factually, obviously, then that must be considered to be true. Jude quotes Enoch, and somehow we can only assume that some accurate tradition or manuscript must have preserved his comment. Genesis 3:15 foretells of a conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. The story of Genesis 6:1-8, seems to represent the coming-to-a-head of this spiritual battle. The Genesis Flood judgement is God working to *preserve* and *purify* the seed of the woman. Satan is working to *corrupt* and *destroy* the seed. There is undoubtedly a supernatural element here. It would seem that Satan, through these powerful fallen angels, is trying to physically corrupt the seed of the woman by mixing the seeds. The Lamb of God, the seed of the woman, must be without blemish and

without spot.

- C. Here is a brief listing of some of the interesting data written about in this literature concerning this event described in Genesis. This info is taken from the following books of the Pseudepigrapha: I Enoch, Sibylline Oracles, III Baruch, Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, Jubilees, Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, and the Genesis Apochryphon. (I will also list books from the Apocrypha, and note when the historian Josephus agrees with the above).
1. The *sons of god* are fallen angels. Also, called *the watchers* (found in: I Enoch, Jubilees, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Genesis Apochryphon, and Josephus)
 2. It confirms Jude 14 that multitudes of holy angels were involved in the Flood Judgement. Jude says *thousands*, I Enoch says *10 million!*
 3. Fallen angels take on male bodies and marry daughters of men. This is said to violate the divine order. (Found in: I Enoch, Jubilees, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs).
 4. The number of fallen angels involved in this sin is given as 200. (I Enoch)
 5. Even the names of the main leaders of these fallen angels are given. (I Enoch)
 6. These fallen angels taught humans magical medicine, incantations, the cutting of roots, how to use plants, personal beautification techniques, astronomy and astrology, instruments of war, such as knives, swords, breastplates and shields, etc. They are apparently super- intelligent. (I Enoch) (Prior to their fall they were part of God's council. See Ps. 82:1,2.)
 7. When the daughters of men became pregnant they gave birth to giants. (I Enoch, Jubilees, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. (Also found in these books of the Apocrypha: Ecclesiasticus, The Wisdom of Solomon, and in the first century historian: Josephus, and it is clear in the translation of the Greek OT known as the Septuagint, i.e., LXX)
 8. These giants consumed so much of the food supply that they were detested by the people. The giants consequently turned against the people and ate them! (I Enoch)
 9. I Enoch says these giants also sinned against the birds, wild beasts, reptiles and fish. They also turned against each other (the giants) and drank blood. All flesh, even animal life, is corrupted, and must be destroyed. Animals began to eat each other. (Jubilees)
 10. All forms of oppression and evil were taught on earth. As a result the whole earth was filled with blood and oppression. (I Enoch, Jubilees)
 11. These fallen angels revealed secrets on earth that were only known in heaven. (I Enoch)
 12. According to III Baruch 104, 000 giants were killed by the flood.
 13. These fallen angels were confined into a dark prison (*tartarus*). I Enoch says they are to be confined for 40 generations. (Do the math) They are to be released and judged after the eternal judgement is concluded. (Does this have anything to do with the release of the *locusts* from the abyss in Rev. 9? (I Enoch, Jubilees)
 14. The fallen angels taught false doctrines and deceived men on earth. Animal sacrifices were being offered to these fallen angels (demons). So apparently, they were worshiped as we are told in classical literature. (I Enoch)
 15. After the flood, some demons (*watchers*) tried to lead the sons of Noah astray but Noah prayed for protection from them and God restrained them. Obviously, not all demons were imprisoned at the time of the flood. There may have been an outbreak of this mixing of seeds among the Canaanites

(Num.13, 33) and this then may be the reason the Children of Israel were commanded to utterly wipe them out. (Jubilees)

16. The Flood is designed to destroy all the progeny (*souls of pleasure*) of the fallen angels. (I Enoch)
17. According to the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs the daughters of men lusted after the *apparitions* so they have some of the blame for alluring the Watchers. This document also says the Watchers showed up during the intimate moments when the husbands and wives were cohabiting. Is that why they were called *watchers*?
18. Interestingly enough the Sibylline Oracles refer to the fallen angels as the *Titans* as in the Greek classics. Josephus also notes that the giants were what the Grecians called *gods*.
19. Josephus claims the sons of Seth also became perverted. What? They were supposed to be the godly line!
20. According to Josephus, the flood occurred 2656 years from Adam. He notes that *those who then lived having noted down with great accuracy, both the births and deaths of illustrious men*.
21. Josephus says God brought on the flood *to make another race that should be pure from wickedness*.
22. Noah, according to Josephus, preached to the progeny of the angels but when they did not repent he was afraid they would kill him and so he fled and hid with his family.
23. I Enoch seems to intimate that the fallen angels hoped by marrying humans to create progeny that would be immortal.

V. Summary:

Today in moments of candor, biblical scholars will admit that the above-argued interpretation is the clear meaning of the text. With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and after intensive new scholarly studies of the pseudepigraphic literature it is no longer in doubt. However, many scholars, in order to maintain their academic reputation and tenure, hesitate to write openly and publicly about what the text clearly says. The view that is gaining strength among Christians, even those calling themselves evangelical, is that Genesis 1-11 should be read in its ancient cultural context which sees it as ancient origin myth.

However, if the supernatural context of the story is acceptable, then Genesis 3:15 foretells of a conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. The story of Genesis 6:1-8, seems to represent the coming-to-a-head of this spiritual battle. The Genesis Flood judgement is God working to **preserve** and **purify** the seed of the woman. Satan is working to **corrupt** and **destroy** the seed. There is undoubtedly a supernatural element here. It would seem that Satan, through these powerful, fallen angels, is trying to physically corrupt the seed of the woman by mixing the seeds. The Lamb of God, the seed of the woman, must be without blemish and without spot.

VI. For Further Study

1. To read the critical version of the *Pseudepigrapha* I recommend the two volume set: *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, edited by James H. Charlesworth.
2. To study the NT passages mentioned above, see the commentary on *Jude & 2 Peter*, by Gene Green.
3. Brian Godwa, a movie critic has written a series of novels depicting this antediluvian period. I can't recommend them since I have not read them, however, in volume one, I highly recommend Appendix A and B.(which I have read) for his careful and scholarly work on the *sons of god*, and the *nephilim*.
4. Thomas, I.D.E., *The Omega Conspiracy*.
5. Heister, Michael, *The Unseen Realm*, or, the easier-to-read version: *The Supernatural*.
6. Wise, Michael, Abegg, Jr. Martin, Cook, Edward. *The Dead Sea Scrolls*.