

The “Sons of God” and the “Daughters of Men”

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For two millennia, some Christians have taught that just prior to Noah’s flood, angels descended from heaven and mated with human women, producing a hybrid class of beings. This story is allegedly taught in Genesis six. But, its real source is a Jewish document written in the intertestamental period. This book purports to be written by Enoch (whom God transported to heaven).

There is no question that acceptance of this theory has been widespread among Christians from very early on, and it currently has an impact on eschatological teaching, particularly among some of the more sensationalist prophecy gurus. Several of the early Church fathers taught it. A few opposed it. It remains popular today. Some go so far as to claim that fallen angels are still mating with humans, and producing hybrid offspring. UFO abductions are even claimed to be cases of fallen angels taking human women for their perverse pleasures. However, to date no hybrid babies seem to have been produced by women who claim to have been abducted by aliens.

An examination of this topic, using sound biblical exegesis and investigative principles, is critically necessary if Christians are to avoid deception, particularly as it relates to the study of eschatology. Another insidious danger lurks in the pressure among Christians to adopt the “Book of Enoch” as Scripture. This article is an attempt to deal with this topic using sound exegetical principles in all of the major passages involved in the debate. The place to begin is Genesis.

I. Understanding the Genesis Context

Genesis was written as the introduction to the “Book of the Law” (Torah). Its purpose was to give the children of Israel a concise history of where they came from, and their special character as the covenant people of YHVH. It traces the major events of God’s interaction with man from the creation of the world to His covenant with Abraham. Genesis ends with the Israelites in Egypt, looking forward to their inheritance in the land God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses even included God’s prophecy to Abraham that his descendants would be oppressed by another nation, but that He would miraculously deliver them.¹

1. Gen. 15:13-14

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Genesis was no doubt written some time during the forty years the Israelites wandered in the wilderness. The original “Book of the Law,” containing Genesis through Deuteronomy, was placed in the tabernacle beside the ark of the covenant.²

In his historical narrative, Moses outlined the fall of man, his expulsion from the Garden of Eden, the curse upon creation, and the corruption of humanity. Yet, God did not leave Adam in a hopeless state. The “curse” contains a promise of eventual deliverance.

Gen 3:15 NKJV

*5 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between **your seed and her Seed**; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”*

This is a prophecy of two distinct “seeds.” The seed of the woman is Christ.³ The seed of the serpent is Antichrist.⁴

After this, God blessed Adam and Eve with two sons. Yet, the fallen nature of man quickly became evident with Cain’s murder of his brother, Abel. As a consequence, God put a curse on Cain, and he and his family were separated from the rest of humanity. “Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth. ... Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden.” (Gen. 4:14,16). Moses proceeded to trace one line of Cain’s separated genealogy through six generations, down to Lamech. Moses informs us that Lamech was also a murderer.⁵

The names of Cain’s descendants reveal quite a bit about each generation of fathers. Irad means “fugitive.” Mahujael means “smitten by God.”⁶ Methusael means “I am man, who (or where) is God?”⁷ Immediately following Moses’ linkage between the murderers Lamech and Cain, we find the following account.

Gen 4:25-26 NKJV

25 And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, “For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.”

*26 And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. **Then men began to call on the name of the LORD.***

2. Deut. 31:26

3. Rev. 12:1-6

4. 2 Thess. 2:3

5. Gen. 4:23

6. <http://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Mehujael.html>

7. <http://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Methusael.html>

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There is no question that Moses intended to draw a contrast between Cain's descendants and Seth's descendants. The statement, "*then men began to call on the name of the LORD,*" has been the subject of much discussion. If Moses meant "men" in general, and simply wished to mark a point in time, we would expect him to include this statement in the previous genealogy of Cain. Furthermore, it would imply that previously Adam and Seth had not called upon the name of the Lord. The very next verses begin the genealogy of Adam, through Seth, and down to Noah, mentioning again the birth of Seth and Enos. There is no reason for Moses to give the account of Enos' birth to Seth twice unless the first mention of his birth in the above passage was meant to give context to the statement that immediately follows, "*Then men began to call on the name of the Lord.*" Our conclusion from the context is that the "men" referred to by Moses were the sons of Seth, and that something significant began with Seth's son, Enos, and his descendants.

The clause "call upon the name of," in the Hebrew text is ambiguous because the preposition can mean, "on," or "by," ("call on the name of" or "call by the name of"). The KJV illustrates this uncertainty with a marginal note giving the alternate reading, "*or, 'to call themselves by the name of the LORD'.*" This is the sense also of the same clause in Isaiah 44:5, "*another shall call himself by the name of Jacob.*"

Some scholars have understood this statement to refer to the practice of naming children with compounds of the Lord's name. This was a common practice of the Jews later. Many names in the Bible contain compounds of YHVH (eg. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah), and Elohim (eg. Samuel, Daniel, Ezekiel). However, the statement clearly has "the name of YHVH" here and not "the name of Elohim." So, any such compound birth names would have to be compounds of YHVH, if compound birth names was meant. A search of the names listed in Cain's and Seth's genealogies fails to produce a single name that is a compound of YHVH.

There are a few names that are compounds of Elohim. Two of them appear in Cain's genealogy. Mehujael (smitten by God) no doubt had reference to the curse put upon Cain, which Mehujael's father apparently considered to be generational. One can easily see the anger and resentment in such a name. And this was apparently passed on, because Mehujael named his own son, Methushael (I am man, who is God?). The Hebrew word used for "man" here is "math," most often used for men capable of combat. Certainly, Moses' reported these names to impress upon his Israelite audience that this race of men was not only cursed, but remained in open rebellion against God, and bitter about the curse of their forefather, Cain. In contrast, we find both humility and hope in the names of the descendants of Seth. Enos means "mortal," no doubt in recognition of man's fallen condition and his impending death. Mahalalel means

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“praise of God.” Noah means “rest,” “relief,” or “comfort.” In any case, there are no names in either genealogy that are compounds of YHVH. Therefore, there must be another sense in which *“men began to call themselves by the name of the YHVH.”*

The Septuagint resolves the puzzle for us. An accurate English translation of the LXX is as follows: *“And to Seth, to him also was born a son, and he called his name, Enos. This one hoped, therefore he called to himself the name of the Lord God.”*

The Jewish translators of the Septuagint did not understand this passage to refer to birth names given to children. Rather, the sense is that because of Enos’ hope in God’s promise, he **called unto himself** “the name of YHVH.” The most natural interpretation that agrees with both the Hebrew and LXX is simply that Enos and his descendants began to call themselves collectively by the name of YHVH. The people of YHVH, as distinguished from the rest of the population, began to call themselves by God’s covenant name – YHVH. In practice, this would mean referring to themselves as “the sons of YHVH” or the “people of YHVH.”

The concept of a segregated people of YHVH was familiar to the Israelites to whom Moses wrote. They were distinguished by exactly the same terminology.

Deut 28:9-10 NKJV

9 “The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways.

*10 Then all peoples of the earth shall see that **you are called by the name of the LORD**, and they shall be afraid of you.*

2 Chron 7:14 NKJV

*14 if My people **who are called by My name** will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

In the Bible, the terms, “called by the name of YHVH” and “sons of YHVH” are synonymous, always referring to a covenantal people separated unto God, and distinct from the rest of the population.

Deut 32:6 NKJV

*6 Do you thus deal with the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? **Is He not your Father**, who bought you? Has He not made you and established you?*

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Deut 32:19 NKJV

19 "And when the LORD saw it, He spurned them, because of the provocation of **His sons and His daughters**.

Deut 14:1-2 NASB

1 "**You are the sons of the LORD your God**; you shall not cut yourselves nor shave your forehead for the sake of the dead.

2 "**For you are a holy people to the LORD your God**, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth."

Isaiah 43:5-7 NKJV

5 Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, And gather you from the west;

6 I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not keep them back!' Bring **My sons** from afar, And **My daughters** from the ends of the earth —

7 **Everyone who is called by My name**, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him."

Being "sons of YHVH your God" and being "called by the name of YHVH" were synonymous in the minds of the Israelites. This is a critical component to understanding Moses' hotly disputed comments in chapter 6, where we will turn our attention next.

II. The "Sons of God" and the "Daughters of Men"

Gen 6:1-3 NKJV

1 Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them,

2 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.

3 And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."

The meaning of the term, "sons of God," is hotly disputed. Some derive the sense from Job, where the same term refers to angels three times. One of the problems with that theory is there is no evidence that the Israelites, for whom Moses wrote Genesis, had any knowledge of the book of Job, or even that it existed at that time. No doubt, Job lived before Moses, as is evidenced by his great age.⁸ But, the internal evidence from the

8. Job 42:16

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book of Job argues for a much later date, written from the land of Israel after the conquest.⁹ Job was not likely known by Moses' audience. But, more importantly, in section VIII of this paper, we will demonstrate that the "sons of God" reading in Job is faulty. The Greek Septuagint version has the true reading, as proven from the book of Hebrews.

That the "sons of God" refers to humans and not angels is plain from God's immediate reaction to the "sons of God" taking wives from among the "daughters of men." God said, "*My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.*" The crime was committed by "the sons of God." If they were angels, why would God react against men of flesh? The Septuagint translates God's reaction this way: "*And the Lord God said, 'My Spirit shall certainly not remain among these men for ever'.*" The antecedent for "these men" is the "sons of God" in the previous verse. This is a telling statement, because it clearly shows that the "sons of God" were men and not angels, and that they had a covenant relationship with YHWH, because His Spirit had remained among them collectively. God's Spirit remaining among His covenant people is also clearly seen with the covenant people of Israel.

Haggai 2:4-5 NKJV

4 "Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel," says the LORD; 'and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,' says the LORD, 'and work; for I am with you,' says the LORD of hosts.

5 'According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear!'"

Isa 63:11 NKJV

11 Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying: "Where is He who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of His flock? Where is He who put His Holy Spirit within [among] them,

9. Job lived in the land of Uz (Job 1:1), which is identified as "Moab" (Jordan) in Jer. 25:20 & Lam. 4:21. The author of the book wrote that Job "*was the greatest of all the people of the East.*" (Job 1:3). Since "the east" is a relative term, it places the writer west of Uz where Job lived. This would put the author of the book across the Jordan river in the land of Israel. Consequently, the writing of the book would have been after the conquest of this land under Joshua. Also, the reference to "Satan" as a proper name (Job 1:6) was unknown to the Israelites until about the time of the Babylonian captivity (cf. 2 Sam. 24:1 & 1 Chron. 21:1, Zech. 3:1-2). For these reasons, the writing of the book of Job should be dated after the conquest of Canaan, perhaps as late as the Babylonian captivity, even though Job himself lived much earlier. The Israelites would have no knowledge of Job or this book when Genesis was written. Consequently, it would not likely provide a frame of reference for the term, "sons of God," in Gen. 6. Furthermore, it is not very likely that Moses would leave the interpretation of the words "sons of God" to chance, relying on the hope that his audience would be familiar with the book of Job. It is much more credible to gain an understanding of the term from what Moses had written thus far, and from the Israelites' own experiences at Mt. Sinai and their wilderness wanderings.

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Paul stated, in Romans 8:14, that *“as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”* The collective presence of the Holy Spirit is one of the distinguishing marks of the “sons of God.” I do not believe it is a coincidence that when the “sons of God” rebelled, God reacted by saying, *“My Spirit shall certainly not remain among these men forever.”*

Those who claim that angels mated with human women also claim that their offspring were angel-human giants. These are supposed to be super-human god-like creatures. The book of Enoch, from which this “tall tale” originated, says that they were “three thousand ells” in height.¹⁰ An “ell” is a synonym for a cubit, roughly the distance of the elbow to the fingertip (18”). That would make these “giants” about four-thousand five-hundred feet tall if the Book of Enoch is correct! But, even excusing such an absurdity, the text of Genesis does not support the idea that “giants” were the result of the marriages between the “sons of God” and “daughters of men.” Let’s look carefully at the text.

Gen 6:4 NKJV

*4 **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.*

The text says plainly that the “giants” already existed when the “sons of God” took wives from the “daughters of men.” Therefore, the “giants” (Heb. “nephilim”) are not angel-human hybrids. Further, the word rendered “giants” means “bully” or “tyrant” according to Strong’s Hebrew lexicon. Its usage elsewhere in Scripture clearly proves that it is not limited to people before the flood, nor does it refer to angel-human hybrid creatures. Sometimes it describes large people. Other times it refers only to violent or intimidating warriors or rulers.

What then is meant by the terms, “mighty men of old” and “men of renown?” The term “mighty men of old” indicates they were strong, violent, or intimidating men from ancient times. The term, “ancient times,” no doubt, was meant by Moses to contrast the more recent use of the term, “nephilim,” which the unfaithful spies claimed to have seen in Canaan¹¹, and for which reason the Jews failed to take possession of the land. God punished them with forty years of wandering in the wilderness, during which time Genesis was written by Moses.

10. Book of Enoch, 7:3

11. Numbers 13:33

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The term, “men of renown” is a bit more interesting. It could simply mean “men of reputation.” But, the Hebrew actually says, “mortals of the name.” Remember, Seth’s son was named “Enos,” meaning “mortal” (from a verb that means sickly). No doubt Seth named his son “Mortal” out of his recognition of the fallen state in which he lived under the curse. Yet, this “Mortal” (Enos) is the one who *“hoped, therefore calling to himself the name of the Lord God.”* God pronounced the coming judgment: *“My Spirit will not remain among these men forever,”* prophesying of His impending judgment 120 years before the flood.

By the time God took notice of the departure of the “sons of God” to pursue the “daughters of men,” all of Noah’s ancestors named in the genealogy were dead except his father, Lamech, and his grandfather, Methuseleh. Enos himself lived until the year, 1140 after creation, only 396 years before God pronounced judgment, and Noah began building the ark. No doubt, when the ancient fathers of Seth’s tribe began to die off, the godly influence began to wane, and eventually the younger generations saw no need to keep their godly covenantal line distinct from the general population. And when they took wives from amongst those in rebellion against God, their children were heavily influenced by their mothers and her side of the family. They were “sons of God” in name only, they no longer followed the Lord. Consequently Moses called them, “mortals with the Name.” That is, while they carried the name of YHVH, as their forefather Enos originated, their character as “mortal” or “sickly” began to dominate. While the fathers who took foreign wives may not have degraded significantly morally, their offspring certainly did, and became just as violent and corrupt as the rest of mankind.

With this in mind, it becomes obvious why Moses would include this story in Genesis. The Law that he delivered to the Israelites commanded that they refrain from taking wives from among the nations for the very same reason, because these women would cause their husbands and children to depart from the Lord. Moses included this as a major reason for the flood, to show to the Israelites just how serious God was about this.

Some have argued that such a distinct line of people smacks of racial superiority. Our answer is simply that it is no different than the Jewish nation. The people of Israel are God’s covenant people after the flood. While genetics is a component, the New Testament makes it very clear that genetics is not the major component, but a minor one. The real concern for keeping Israel from taking foreign wives had nothing to do with DNA or genetics, but everything to do with preserving the worship of YHVH generationally. The Jews were permitted to take wives of people they had conquered in war. Their gods were deemed to have been defeated by YHVH. In fact, Rahab was such a woman, and ended up in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. The Israelites were forbidden

to take wives from their unconquered neighbors because they worshipped foreign gods, and would corrupt their husbands and children with idolatry.

The reason the Sethite covenant people and the Israelite covenant people were segregated was to preserve the truth of God and worship of YHVH generationally, from father to son, rather than genetically in one's DNA, as a special elite race. And when the Sethites violated this principle, the result was exactly the same as when the Israelites violated it. First, the succeeding generations became increasingly corrupt, and then God's judgment came.

Deut 6:6-9 NKJV

6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

The last generation of the first covenant people of YHVH, among whom His Spirit dwelled, did not remain faithful. Noah and his sons were chosen by God, because of Noah's faithfulness, to preserve the "sons of God" and true worship of YHVH. Had God delayed His judgment, the rate of decay of the "sons of God" would no doubt have left no one still proclaiming the true worship of YHVH within just a few more generations. So, God acted to eliminate all the rest, even all the other "sons of God," sparing only this one family for a new beginning. And it was from a descendant of one of Noah's sons (Shem) that God called Abraham and established His covenant with him and his descendants after him, ultimately bringing about the One who would crush the Serpent's head.

III. The "Sons of God" in 1 Peter

There are two verses in 1 Peter that have baffled Christian commentators. Whenever this occurs, it is almost always because they are assuming certain presuppositions that are wrong, or else they do not fully understand the historical context. Yet, if we understand these two verses in light of what we have learned from Genesis, the difficulty disappears completely. Both verses appear very close to each other, and are clearly related. The chapter division is unfortunate. We have highlighted the seemingly difficult verses in bold.

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1 Peter 3:18-4:6 NKJV

18 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,

19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison,

20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

21 There is also an antitype which now saves us — baptism(not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

4:1 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

2 that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles — when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.

5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

6 For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

Scholars have struggled to understand what Peter meant by Christ having preached to “the spirits in prison,” because this group was clearly limited by Peter to those who were “disobedient” while Noah prepared the ark. The usual explanation is that the language is figurative, and that the “preaching” was actually done by Noah. Others view this as Jesus’ preaching in hades between his death and resurrection, but are at a loss to explain why Peter limited it to only those of Noah’s day. Catholics use this as evidence for Purgatory. But again, why the limitation to Noah’s building the ark?

Similar problems are evident in handling 4:6. Some claim that it shows people are given a second chance after death. Others take the phrase “those who are dead” figuratively, and suppose Peter meant people who are lost. The problem is that Peter would not use the word “dead” in verse 5 literally, and then immediately use the same word figuratively in the very next sentence. All of these explanations strain the limits of

sound exegetical principles. If our interpretation is correct, it should flow easily from the text without forcing, and make sense with the limitations Peter placed on this group.

The “spirits in prison” in 3:19 are the “sons of God” who did not listen to Noah’s warnings about the coming flood, and consequently died along with the wicked in that judgment. The word translated “prison” simply means to guard. It is used of the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks.¹² In 2 Peter 2:5, Peter referred to Noah as a “preacher of righteousness.” To whom did Noah preach? No doubt, it was to his relatives of the line of Seth. Some of them had taken pagan wives. Others may not have been guilty of this, yet they did not believe Noah’s warnings of the coming judgment, and refused to go into the ark. Note in 3:20, “...while the ark was being prepared, *in which* [ark] a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.” Salvation from physical death was secured only by entering the safety of the ark. Most of the “sons of God” who were “called by the name of YHVH” did not enter the ark, and died along with the wicked.

Peter then compared Noah’s ark to baptism. Why? Peter was writing to Jewish believers. And their own “flood” was on the horizon, the coming destruction of Jerusalem prophesied by Daniel and Jesus. Peter had been preaching that his Jewish brethren needed to “*be saved from this perverse generation.*” Then those who gladly received his word were baptized.” (Acts 2:40-41). Christian baptism was to the Jewish covenant people what Noah’s ark was to the first covenant people of YHVH – the only means of escaping the impending judgment.

All of the sons of Seth, the first covenant people of God, perished in the flood except eight people who were safe in the ark. The NKJV says those to whom Jesus preached had been “disobedient” during the time Noah was preparing the ark. The Greek word actually means, “unconvinced” or “unbelieving.” They did not believe judgment was coming, and consequently lost their lives. Yet, they were still in a covenant relationship with God, as is evidenced by their being called by the name of YHVH.

Paul informs us in Romans 11 that for the sake of the patriarchs “all Israel will be saved,” even though at the present time they are enemies of the Gospel. God deals with His covenant people differently than he deals with the general population. And this is why Jesus made a special point of preaching the Gospel to those who were unconvinced that judgment was coming when Noah was preaching and building the ark.

Chapter 4 verse 6 says, “For *this reason* the Gospel was preached to those who are dead...”

12. Luke 2:8

What reason? The answer is given, “that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in spirit.” That is, that they might take part in the resurrection of the righteous.

IV. The “Sons of God” in Revelation

Revelation 14:1-5 NKJV

*1 Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having **His Father’s name written on their foreheads.***

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps.

3 They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.

*4 **These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.***

5 And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

This passage takes on new meaning when we approach it from the perspective of the first covenant people. Consider the four identifying markers:

- They are a fairly small number, 144,000.
- They possess the Father’s name.
- They were “not defiled with women.”
- They are the “firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.”

What is **the only group in the Bible** that could fit all four of these identifying markers? It is the faithful tribe of Seth through his son, Enos.

1. They are a small number, 144,000: The sons of Seth through Enos were one tribe spanning only eight generations, from Enos to Noah. If each son, beginning with Enos, had six sons, and about half of the last generation took foreign wives from the “daughters of men,” the total number of faithful sons of Seth through Enos (who “were not defiled with women” – the “daughters of men”) would be about 144,000 men. (Traditionally, a multitude is counted by the number of adult males).¹³

13. Matt. 14:21, Matt. 15:38

All other covenant people number in the millions.

2. They possess the Father's Name: The first covenant people are specifically said to have "called themselves by the name of YHVH."

3. They were "not defiled with women": Until the last generation before the flood, the sons of Seth were "not defiled with women" who were outside of God's covenant people. The Bible teaches that "marriage is honorable." There is only one way, according to Scripture, that "women" defile God's people. And that is when God's covenant people take wives from among those who are not God's people.¹⁴

4. They are the "firstfruits unto God and the Lamb." No group after the flood can claim to be the "firstfruits." This term refers to the practice of the Jews of bringing a token offering to God from the very beginning of their harvest. Clearly the very first covenant people, "called by the name of YHVH," uniquely qualify for this title.¹⁵

Assuming the identity of this group of 144,000 to be the faithful sons of Seth, the statement that they were "not defiled with women" clearly implies that they are from among a larger group, some of which were "defiled with women." The language strongly implies that these are the "sons of God" in Genesis who did not take foreign wives. No other group is distinguished in the Bible in this way. Therefore, the "sons of God" in Genesis are men, not angels.

V. Angels Are Not Equipped to Procreate

Reproduction was designed by God. The first man was called "Adam," which means "earthling," because he was made from the dust of the ground. Angels are not of this creation. When God formed all of His creatures, He limited their reproduction compatibility to the opposite gender of the same "kind." Even today, breeding is only possible within a particular "kind." Dogs and cats cannot breed. Humans and animals cannot cross breed. The reason is the DNA is not compatible. Angels are not only of a different "kind," they are not even of this physical creation.

Furthermore, reproduction is not a function of angels, only creatures of this creation. God designed the genders with the necessary equipment to produce offspring. Jesus clearly stated that angels do not "marry or are given in marriage."¹⁶

14. Exodus 34:11-16

15. Methodius (AD 260-312) Discourse VII, v. "For consider what confidence Seth had towards God, and Abel, and Enos, and Enoch, and Methuselah, and Noah, the first lovers of righteousness, and **the first of the first-born children** who are written in heaven, being thought worthy of the kingdom, as a kind of **first-fruits** of the plants for salvation, coming out as early fruit to God."

16. Luke 20:34-36

VI. The Source of the “Fallen Angels” Myth – The Book of Enoch

The myth of fallen angels procreating with women is no doubt ancient. The first known mention among the Jews comes from the Book of Enoch, written around 200 – 100 BC. It is an apocalyptic piece, typical of certain groups like the Essenes. The writer of this book falsely claims to be Enoch, with parts of it written under the name of Noah. It contains many fanciful and ridiculous claims. Enoch is allegedly caught up to the angelic realm, where he is shown many things, even becoming a go between for the fallen angels and God. They beg for mercy through Enoch, but are refused and condemned to eternal punishment. In his travels in the angelic realm, Enoch is shown how the solar system works in minute detail. There are so many things in this book that border on the absurd, it is incredible that so many Christians think it should be included as Scripture. No doubt those who think this have not read through the book, but only heard a few excerpts from it. Some of the more preposterous claims are as follows:

- The offspring of these angels were "3000 ells" in height. An "ell" is a synonym for a cubit. It is the length between the elbow and fingertip, about 18". So, these giants were about 4,500 feet tall!¹⁷
- These supposed "great giants" began eating all of men's food, and when that quickly ran out, they began eating all the people, birds, and animals (meat was not "food" before the flood). Then, when those provisions became scarce, they started eating each other!¹⁸
- The Book of Enoch claims that *"The women also of the angels who went astray shall become sirens."*¹⁹ "Sirens" are pagan mythological creatures, birds with the faces of women, whose singing seduces sailors.
- The earth is flat, the heaven is a hemisphere that rests on the edges of the earth.²⁰
- The sun is carried across the sky in a chariot blown by the wind. At dawn, it comes through a window in the sky in the east, and then sets through a window in the west. Then once the sun sets in the west, it takes a hard right turn, and moves around the earth by way of the north until it gets back to its place in the east, where it repeats the cycle daily.²¹
- The revolution of the stars causes lightening. Other stars change their form into lightening.²²
- God has a place of torment for punishing some of the stars of heaven because they failed to rise in the night sky at their appointed times.²³ Like the pagans, the writer of Enoch thought the visible stars were living beings.

17. Book of Enoch, 7:2

18. *ibid.* 7:3-5

19. *ibid.* 19:2

20. *ibid.* 33:1-3

21. *ibid.* 72:1-5

22. *ibid.* 43:2, 44:1

23. *ibid.* 18:14-16

Other blatant inaccuracies:

- There are exactly 364 days to a solar year.²⁴
- The last judgment would occur 70 generations from Enoch. That puts it at about 110 BC.²⁵ (It was 77 generations from Adam to Christ).

The book of Enoch is a blend of Jewish apocalypticism, paganism (evident in the claim that the wives of the fallen angels became “sirens” and the similarity of the “fallen angels” to pagan gods), and even Eastern mysticism. “*And all the waters shall be joined with the waters: that which is above the heavens is the masculine, and the water which is beneath the earth is the feminine.*”²⁶

VII. Jude and the Book of Enoch

It is commonly taught that Jude quoted the Book of Enoch as Scripture, and he taught that angels mated with human women. The first claim is supported by Jude’s alleged quote of chapter one of the Book of Enoch.

Jude 14-15 NKJV

14 Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, 15 to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

While these words do indeed appear in the first chapter of the Book of Enoch, this is not proof that Jude quoted from this book. Rather, it only indicates that both Jude and the author of the Book of Enoch were familiar with a genuine prophecy of Enoch. No doubt, the author of the Book of Enoch included a genuine prophecy of Enoch’s to add credibility to his book of fiction. It is important to note that Jude did not say, “it is written,” but “Enoch prophesied saying...” This very likely referred to an oral tradition.

The second claim is that Jude made reference to angels committing fornication with women. This claim is drawn from a misreading of Jude 1:5-7.

24. Book of Enoch 74:12

25. *ibid.* 10:12

26. *ibid.* 54:8. For more information regarding the masculine and feminine principles of Eastern Mysticism, see the following website: <http://www.transpersonal.com.au/masculine-feminine.htm>

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Jude 1:6-7 NKJV

6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;

*7 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.*

The key clause is “in a similar manner to these.” The demonstrative pronoun, “these,” needs an antecedent. And those who promote this myth claim the antecedent is “the angels” in verse 6. While this is a grammatical possibility, it is not the only possibility. A careful reading of verses 3-19 shows that Jude used the demonstrative pronoun “these” seven times. And in every case, “these” referred back to the apostates in verse 4. Jude also identified the apostate teachers as being sexually immoral people six times. They “turn the grace of God into lewdness” (v. 4). They “defile the flesh” (v. 8). They “corrupt themselves” like “brute beasts”(v. 10). They walk “according to their own lusts” (v. 16). They are “sensual persons” (v. 19).

In verse 7, Jude wrote: “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...” The demonstrative pronoun “these” refers to the apostate men whom Jude was warning his readers about, whom he had described as being sexually perverted. He merely likened the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to the apostates of his day, not to angels.

While Jude did mention angels that fell, he did not identify their sin as being sexual. Their sin was that they “*did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode.*” The Greek word translated “domain” refers to rank. The fact that Scriptures identifies some angels as “arch-angels” strongly implies that the angelic realm is organized by rank. The Greek word translated “abode” means one’s house or assigned station. Essentially, the sin of these angels according to Jude is that they violated their rank and left their assigned stations. This strongly implies a revolt or mutiny of some sort.

We learn from Revelation 12 that Satan “drew” a third of the angels who became his own angels.²⁷

27. Rev. 12:4&7

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Jesus also referred to “the Devil and his angels,” as though some angels had rebelled against God and chosen a new allegiance to Satan.²⁸ And these are no doubt the ones to which Jude referred.

A careful reading of Jude 4-8 identifies the sin of the angels in verse 8. First, notice that Jude was comparing the apostate teachers to three examples of rebellion against God, and God’s reaction to all three.

- The Israelites at Kadesh Barnea: “*the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.*” (v. 5)
- The Angels who sinned: “*who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day*” (v. 6)
- The Sodomites: “*having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*” (v. 7)

Then in verse 8, he likened the sin of the apostate teachers to all three of these sins, in reverse order.

Jude 8 NKJV

*8 Likewise also these dreamers **defile the flesh** [Sodomites], **reject authority** [angels], and **speak evil of dignitaries** [Israelites].*

Each of these three examples were guilty of one of the sins summarized in verse 8. The Sodomites “defile the flesh.” The sin of the angles was that they “reject authority.” The sin of the Israelites was that they spoke evil against God and the authority of Moses when they refused to go into the land. Joshua and Caleb brought back a good report. But the other ten spies convinced the people otherwise.

Num 13:30-14:4 NKJV

30 Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, “Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.”

31 But the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.”

32 And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, “The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature.

28. Matt. 25:41

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33 *There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."*

1 *So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.*

2 *And **all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron**, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness!*

3 *Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"*

4 *So they said to one another, "**Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.**"*

The sin of the Israelites was that **they spoke against the Lord and against his appointed ruler – Moses**. Jude contrasted the Israelites' arrogance with Michael's humility. "Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!'" Jude's point was to show a stark contrast between Michael and the Israelites' respect for authority. In Michael's dispute with Satan over Moses' dead body, he did not even speak evil of Satan! Yet, the Israelites spoke evil of Moses himself while He was carrying out his divinely appointed office! Never mind his dead body!

It becomes quickly apparent, from the structure of Jude's argument, that the sin of the angels was not sexual at all, but rebellion against their appointed rank and dominion. In no way did Jude endorse the myth found in the Book of Enoch, that angels took human wives and produced giants.

VIII. Angels are Not "Sons of God"

The only verses in the Bible that call angels "sons of God" are three verses in Job. And this occurs only in the modern Hebrew text. The much older Greek Septuagint does not refer to angels as "sons of God" in Job or anywhere else. And as we have already seen, the Septuagint has proven quite helpful and reliable regarding this issue.

Genesis 6:2 LXX

2 *ιδόντες δὲ **οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ** τὰς θυγατέρας τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὅτι καλαί εἰσιν, ἔλαβον ἑαυτοῖς γυναῖκας ἀπὸ πασῶν, ὧν ἐξελέξαντο. (the sons of God)*

Job 1:6 LXX

6 *Καὶ ἐγένετο ὡς ἡ ἡμέρα αὕτη, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἦλθον **οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ Θεοῦ** παραστῆναι ἐνώπιον τοῦ Κυρίου, καὶ ὁ διάβολος ἦλθε μετ' αὐτῶν. (the angels of God)*

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Job 2:1 LXX

1 Εγένετο δὲ ὡς ἡ ἡμέρα αὕτη καὶ ἦλθον οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ Θεοῦ παραστῆναι ἔναντι Κυρίου, καὶ ὁ διάβολος ἦλθεν ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν παραστῆναι ἔναντίον τοῦ Κυρίου. (**the angels of God**)

Job 38:7

7 ὅτε ἐγενήθησαν ἄστρα, ἤνεσάν με φωνῇ μεγάλη πάντες ἄγγελοί μου. (**all the angels of mine**)

Nowhere in the entire Greek Old Testament or Greek New Testament are angels referred to as the “sons of God.” It must be remembered that in Hebrew culture and the Scriptures “sons” automatically implies an inheritance.

Every Old Testament quotation in the book of Hebrews is from the LXX. In Hebrews, Paul argued strongly for a dichotomy between the sons of God and angels. His argument rests entirely on the fact that the Greek LXX nowhere refers to the angels as “sons of God.”

Heb 1:5-7,14 NKJV

5 For to which of the angels did He ever say: “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You”? And again: “I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son”?

6 But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” [Deut. 32:43 LXX, this statement does not appear in the Hebrew text]

7 And of the angels He says: “Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire.” ...

14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? [lit. “those about to become heirs of salvation”]

Notice in verse 14 Paul wrote that ALL angels are servants to the real sons of God, that is, the “heirs” of God. The angels are NOT “heirs” of God and are therefore not “sons of God.”

Paul’s entire point in this passage rests on the Greek Old Testament. Had he or his audience been familiar with the reading we find in our modern Hebrew text of Job, they would have immediately challenged his argument, that angels are not sons of God.

Heb 2:5-18 NKJV

5 For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.

6 But one testified in a certain place, saying: “What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him?”

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7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands.

8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing **many sons** to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them **brethren**,

12 saying: "I will declare Your name to **My brethren**; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."

13 And again: "I will put My trust in Him." And again: "Here am I and **the children** whom God has given Me."

14 Inasmuch then as **the children have partaken of flesh and blood**, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

16 For indeed **He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham**.

17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made **like His brethren**, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

There is no question that Paul drew a clear dichotomy between the angels of God and the "sons" of God. Jesus Christ was "the Son of God," and those who are in Christ are also "sons of God" and "children of God." Paul's point in verses 16-17 is that angels are not Jesus' "brethren" and are therefore not "sons of God." Jesus and believers are all "brethren" (fellow "sons" and "daughters" of God). He is the "only begotten Son of God" because He was literally conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit. We are "sons of God" by adoption. The angels could never be "sons of God." And this passage proves it beyond a shadow of doubt. Paul's entire point rests on the fact that the Old Testament always distinguishes between the "sons of God" and the "angels of God." We are therefore compelled to follow the readings in the LXX (particularly in Job), otherwise Paul's whole argument is destroyed.

Time and time again, the Greek Old Testament (LXX) proves superior to the Masoretic Hebrew text in those places where the text reflects on the person of Christ,²⁹ and many other important doctrines of Scripture. As noted earlier, the book of Hebrews quotes the LXX exclusively, and several of the points made in Hebrews depend on the Greek version, and cannot be made from the Hebrew text in existence today.³⁰

IX. Josephus & the Sons of Seth

The Jewish historian, Josephus, is frequently quoted in support of the “fallen angels” theory. Unfortunately, he is almost always quoted out of context. A careful examination of his work shows that Josephus held the theory that is espoused in this paper. Note the following facts from Josephus’ quotation below:

- The sons of Seth were a righteous line that feared the Lord.
- They lived apart from the rest of the population.
- This tribe was known for the science of astronomy.
- They built two massive “pillars” in Egypt, and encoded in them their knowledge and wisdom for humanity after the flood.
- The 8th generation (Noah’s generation) became apostate
- The cause of their apostasy was that their fathers had taken foreign women.
- Noah preached repentance to these men, but they rejected his message.

“Now this Seth, when he was brought up, and came to those years in which he could discern what was good, became a virtuous man; and as he was himself of an excellent character, so did he leave children behind him who imitated his virtues. All these proved to be of good dispositions. They also inhabited the same country without dissensions, and in a happy condition, without any misfortunes falling upon them, till they died. They also were the inventors of that peculiar sort of wisdom which is concerned with the heavenly bodies, and their order. And that their inventions might not be lost before they were sufficiently known, upon Adam’s prediction that the world was to be destroyed at one time by the force of fire, and at another time by the violence and quantity of water, they made two pillars, the one of brick, the other of stone: they inscribed their discoveries on them both, that in case the pillar of brick should be destroyed by the flood, the pillar of stone might remain, and exhibit those discoveries to mankind; and also inform them that there was another pillar of brick erected by them. Now this remains in the land of Siroiad to this day.”

29. Compare Psalm 22:16 in the Hebrew and LXX. The Hebrew says, “As lions, they surround my hands and my feet,” while the LXX has, “they pierced my hands and my feet.”

30. See my article, “The Kingdom Hope in Hebrews,” <http://www.oasischristianchurch.org/articles/hebrews.pdf>

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Now this posterity of Seth continued to esteem God as the Lord of the universe, and to have an entire regard to virtue, for seven generations; **but in process of time they were perverted, and forsook the practices of their forefathers;** and did neither pay those honors to God which were appointed them, nor had they any concern to do justice towards men. But for what degree of zeal they had formerly shown for virtue, they now showed by their actions a double degree of wickedness, whereby they made God to be their enemy. **For many angels of God accompanied with women, and begat sons that proved unjust,** and despisers of all that was good, on account of the confidence they had in their own strength; for the tradition is, that these men did what resembled the acts of those whom the Grecians call giants. But Noah was very uneasy at what they did; and being displeased at their conduct, persuaded them to change their dispositions and their acts for the better: but seeing they did not yield to him, but were slaves to their wicked pleasures, he was afraid they would kill him, together with his wife and children, and those they had married; so he departed out of that land."³¹

According to Josephus, the sons of Seth remained faithful to God for seven generations. But, the 8th generation (Noah's generation) forsook the practices of their forefathers and became vile. Josephus tells us the major cause of the apostasy of the 8th generation of Seth's sons. "**For many angels of God** ³² *accompanied with women, and begat sons that proved unjust, and despisers of all that was good, on account of the confidence they had in their own strength; for the tradition is, that these men did what resembled the acts of those whom the Grecians call giants.*" The little word, "for," introduces and explanation of what comes before. The clause, "*for many angels of God accompanied with women...*" is an explanation of "*in the process of time they were perverted, and forsook the practices of their forefathers.*" Josephus DID NOT use the term "angels" here in reference to celestial beings, but to the sons of Seth! This is proven by the next statement. "*But Noah was very uneasy at what they did; and being displeased at their conduct, persuaded them to change their dispositions and their acts for the better.*" Did Noah preach repentance to fallen angels? Hardly! He preached to his relatives who were taking foreign wives and producing ungodly offspring! It is also important to notice that Josephus tells us why the term "nephilim" was used in this passage. It had to do strictly with actions, not size.

It is virtually certain that Josephus used the term "angels" in reference to the sons of Seth and not heavenly beings. So, the question is, why? The term "angels" in Scripture simply means "messenger." It is used of men many times in Scripture. The "angels" of the 7 churches" in Revelation are the messengers each church sent to bring correspondence to John on Patmos. In Matt. 11:10, John the Baptist is called "αγγελον."

31. Josephus, Antiquities, Book I, ch. 2-3.

32. Compare "angels of God" to 2 Chron. 32:15-16 LXX. The same term refers to the prophets.

James 2:25 refers to the spies who encountered Rahab as “αγγελουζ.” It is used in this sense in the LXX as well, for example:

Gen. 32:3,6 LXX

3 And Jacob sent messengers [αγγελουζ] before him to Esau his brother to the land of Seir, to the country of Edom....

6 And the messengers [αγγελοι] returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and lo! he comes to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

In what sense would Seth's sons be called “messengers?” That is answered in Josephus' previous comments that the tribe of the sons of Seth built the two “pillars” to survive the flood in order to preserve all of their knowledge and wisdom. They were “messengers” [αγγελοι] to the generations after the flood, according to Josephus! ³³ These two monuments are most likely mentioned in Isaiah's prophesy of the Kingdom.

Isaiah 19:19-20 NKJV

*19 In that day there will be **an altar** to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, **and a pillar** to the LORD at its border.*

20 And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt.”

X. The Early Church

It is indisputable that some of the early Christians believed the “fallen angels” view. The earliest Christian writers to espouse this theory were Justin and Tertullian. However, it was by no means the universal view of early Christianity.

Origen (AD 185-254), writing against Celsus, pointed out that Celsus had derived “fallen angels” theory from the Book of Enoch, not Christian documents. “*For he does not appear to have read the passages in question, nor to have been aware that the books which bear the name Enoch do not at all circulate in the churches as divine...*”³⁴ That the meaning of the “sons of God” taking the “daughters of men” was somewhat disputed in the early churches is clear a few sentences later. Origen wrote, “*that even before us [that is the Christians] there was one who referred this narrative to the doctrine regarding souls, which became possessed with a desire for the corporeal life of men, and this, in metaphorical language, he said, was termed ‘daughters of men’.*”³⁵

33. It is believed by some that the two “pillars” mentioned by Josephus in Egypt, which were still seen in his day, are the Great Pyramid and the Sphinx. Both date to about the time of the flood. The Great Pyramid contains a great deal of precise astronomical data, not the least of which is its precise orientation to the points of the compass, something virtually impossible to achieve merely by observing the stars.

34. Origen, *Against Celsus*, Book V, liv

35. *ibid.* lv

Here Origen seems to argue for a metaphorical understanding of the passage. Yet he admits uncertainty, “but whatever may be the meaning of the ‘sons of God desiring to possess the daughters of men,’ it will not at all contribute to prove that Jesus was not the only one who visited mankind as an angel.”³⁶ He then repeated his charge that Celsus was quoting from the Book of Enoch, a document not held as authoritative in the Christian churches. “Then mixing up and confusing whatever he had at any time heard, or had anywhere found written – whether held to be of divine origin among Christians or not – he adds ... (as from the book of Enoch without naming it).”³⁷

Alexander of Alexandria (AD 300), the orthodox bishop who excommunicated Arius for his heretical view claiming Jesus Christ was a created being, clearly did not hold the “fallen angels” view. In fact, in arguing against Arius’ heresy, he used Genesis 6:1-4 to prove that Jesus was the only one who could genuinely be called God’s “Son,” all other “sons of God” being adopted human beings (exactly as we have articulated in our treatment of Hebrews in section VIII of this paper). Alexander wrote, “Moreover, in the Psalms the Saviour says: ‘The Lord hath said to Me, ‘Thou art my Son’.’ Where, showing that He is the true and genuine Son, He signifies that there are no other genuine sons besides Himself.”³⁸ Alexander continues by showing that other mentions of “sons of God” refer to humans who are sons by adoption. “Wherefore, the only begotten Son of the Father, indeed, possesses an indefectible Sonship; but the adoption of rational sons belongs not to them by nature, but is prepared for them by the probity of their life, and by the free gift of God. And it is mutable [corruptible] as the Scripture recognizes, “For when the sons of God saw the daughters of men, they took them wives, etc.”³⁹ Alexander considered the “sons of God” in Genesis 6 to be “adopted” sons of God who had received this adoption as “the free gift of God.” He used their fall as evidence that “adopted” sons do have a changeable nature. We should also point out that the belief in angelic “sons of God” was largely responsible for the rise of the Arian heresy. Arius held that Jesus and the angels were similarly “sons of God” by creation. And the church’s subsequent denouncement of this myth was largely because it so readily led to Arianism.

An earlier work, titled, *The Recognitions of Clement*, claimed to be the work of Clement of Rome who lived in the first century. The authorship is disputed by some scholars. However, it certainly predates Origen, since he quoted parts of it.³⁸ That would place it somewhere between AD 70 and AD 230.

36. *ibid.*

37. *ibid.*

38. Alexander, *Epistles on the Arian Heresy*, Epistle I, 8

39. *Recognitions of Clement*, Introduction

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*“All things therefore being completed which are in heaven, and in earth, and in the waters, and the human race also having multiplied, in the eighth generation, **righteous men**, who had lived the life of angels, being allured by the beauty of women, fell into promiscuous and illicit connections with these.”*⁴⁰

Finally, Julius Africanus (AD 200-245) was aware of both points of view.

*“When men multiplied on the earth, the angels of heaven came together with the daughters of men. In some copies I found “the sons of God.” **What is meant by the Spirit, in my opinion, is that the descendants of Seth are called the sons of God on account of the righteous men and patriarchs who have sprung from him, even down to the Savior Himself; but that the descendants of Cain are named the seed of men as having nothing divine in them, on account of the wickedness of their race and the inequality of their nature, being a mixed people, and having stirred the indignation of God. But if it is thought that these refer to angels, we must take them to be those who deal with magic and jugglery, who taught the women the motions of the stars and the knowledge of things celestial, by whose power they conceived the giants as their children, by whom wickedness came to its height on the earth, until God decreed that the whole race of the living should perish in their impiety by the deluge.**”*

It is apparent that the early Christians were far from unanimous in accepting the “fallen angels” myth or the authority of the Book of Enoch.

Conclusion

Our conclusion from all of the evidence is that the “sons of God” in Genesis six were the descendants of Seth.

- This view is best supported by the context of Genesis 1-6.
- It was clearly the view held by the LXX translators, since they always distinguished between “angels” and “sons of God.” They referred to the “sons of God” in Genesis 6:2 as “these men” in the next verse. And the LXX translators are at least as ancient as all known sources which promote this myth.
- Paul’s argument in Hebrews, drawing a clear dichotomy between angels and “sons of God,” proves our case beyond doubt.
- This view answers some historically problematic texts in 1 Peter and Revelation.
- It was the opinion of some of the earliest Christians. Whether it was the majority opinion is impossible to say, and irrelevant to the question.

40. Recognitions of Clement, ch. xxix