

The Summation of All Things in Christ

Studies in Ephesians with a Local Church Emphasis

LESSON LXXXII : UNITY AND DIVERSITY WITHIN THE CONGREGATION OF BELIEVERS (4:1-16)

‘RISE OR FALL TOGETHER’ — As we approach 1 Peter 3:19f, we note these verses’ connection with Genesis 6:1-8. What one believes about one of these portions of Scripture is dependent upon the other, and vice-versa. For that reason we will look at Genesis 6 in conjunction with today’s lesson.

NOT AN AREA OF DOGMATISM — More than any passage of which I can think (including the difficult Eph 4:9 passage), the questions surrounding these portions of Scripture are many and the answers evasive. While I am comfortable with my understanding (that Genesis / 1 Peter is referring to the sins of men and not angels), I have a great respect for the opposite viewpoint. It would be wrong to castigate those who do not agree with us on these points.

THE MAIN THEORIES SURROUNDING GENESIS 6 — While there are always minor outgrowths, Genesis 6:1-8 is generally recognized to have three main interpretations, one of which has mainly been set aside through the centuries.

● **THE ‘SONS OF ELOHIM’ WERE SONS OF KINGS AND NOBLES** — This view is found in the Samaritan, Jonathan (Targum), Onkelos (Targum), Symmachus, Aben Ezra, Rashi, Varenius, etc. Per Lange, this view ‘may now be regarded as exploded.’ [Lange, 280] *“Of these three views, the first [that the ‘sons of elohim’ were the sons of nobles and kings], although it has become the traditional one in orthodox rabbinical Judaism, may be dismissed at once as not warranted by the usage of the language, and as altogether unscriptural.”* [K&D, vol 1 p128]

One might immediately ask, ‘How did the Jews make the leap from ‘sons of God’ to ‘sons of kings and nobles’?

- The Hebrew for ‘sons of God’ here is ‘bene elohim’. We are familiar with the Hebrew word for son (‘bene’ or some form of that word); according to the Blue Letter Bible website, the word is used 4,906 times in the KJV. Very familiar word and not controversial.
- The Hebrew word ‘elohim’ is the plural masculine form of ‘el (the most basic root) which means ‘power, mighty, great, strong’ and when the root ‘el is used of God it has the sense of ‘Strong One.’ It is often combined in proper names: Isra-EL, Shmu-EL (Samuel), EL-ijah, Immanu-EL, Dani-EL, Beth-EL. Several of the names of God is found as a compound of this word: *El Shaddai* (God Almighty), *El Elyon* (the Most High God), *El Roi* (the God Who Sees), *El Olam* (the Everlasting God).
- When used in the plural form (the form used in Gen 6:2) it is used of ‘gods, rulers, judges’ but specifically (especially with the definite article) to refer to the supreme God (as in Gen 1:1). It is the word used most often for God and is found 2,602 times in the Hebrew Bible.

‘In the beginning God [‘elohim’] created the heavens and the earth.’ (Gen 1:1 NKJV)

‘Hear us, my lord: You are a mighty [‘elohim’] prince among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places. None of us will withhold from you his burial place, that you may bury your dead.’ (Gen 23:6 NKJV, the reference is to Abraham)

‘Entreat the Lord, that there may be no more mighty [‘elohim’] thundering and hail, for it is enough. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer.’ (Exod 9:28 NKJV)

‘Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods [‘elohim’], and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the Lord; they did not do so.’ (Judges 2:17 NKJV)

‘And when they left their gods [‘elohim’] there, David gave a commandment, and they were burned with fire.’ (1 Chron 14:12 NKJV)

‘For You have made him a little lower than the angels [‘elohim’], and You have crowned him with glory and honor.’ (Ps 8:5 NKJV)

‘And it will be when you say, Why does the Lord our God [‘elohim’] do all these things to us? then you shall answer them, Just as you have forsaken Me and served foreign gods [‘elohim’] in your land, so you shall serve aliens in a land that is not yours.’ (Jer 5:19 NKJV)

We can therefore see how the Jewish reader could render ‘elohim’ as a king, prince or noble.

● **THE ‘SONS OF ELOHIM’ WERE ANGELS** — This view is most strongly represented in the old synagogue and early church. [Lange] Some manuscripts of the LXX appeared to have accepted this view, translating the words ‘sons of God’ as ‘angels of God’ (note: BibleWorks v9 lists the LXX of Gen 6:2,4 = ‘sons of God’ [huioi tou theou]; per Lange, the manuscripts vary.) The church fathers which favored this view: Justin, Clemens Alex., Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, Lactantius. Church Fathers against it: Chrysostom, Augustine, Theodoret, Philastrius. Rabbi Simeon Ben Jochai pronounced a ban against all who

held to it. In more modern times, it is adhered to by many who consider the early history of Genesis as mythical.

● **THE ‘SONS OF ELOHIM’ WERE THE PIOUS (THE SETHITES) IN CONTRAST WITH THE LINE OF CAIN** —

Church Fathers that adhered to this: Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret. Held by almost all later theologians.

Interestingly, Keil (of Keil and Delitzsch fame) disagreed; Keil held to the ‘*sons of Seth*’ view while Delitzsch favored the ‘*sons of angels*’ view.

REASONS FOR 1 PETER / GENESIS 6 TO BE REFERRING TO MEN, NOT FALLEN ANGELS

● **THE REASON GIVEN IN GENESIS FOR THE FLOOD IS THE SINS OF MEN, NOT ANGELS** — *‘Then 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.’* [Gen 6:5,6 NKJV] **“Though there are different views on whether Genesis 6:1-4 refers to the sin of angels when it talks about the ‘sons of God’, there can be no dispute that the entire section immediately preceding the command to build the ark (Gen. 6:5-13) clearly emphasizes human sin, and human sin alone, as the reason God brings the flood upon the earth. God is not sorry that he has made angels, but that he made man (v. 6). He does not decide to blot out fallen angels, but man (vv. 6, 13); it is not the violence and corruption of angels which arouses his anger, but the violence and corruption of man (vv. 5,11,12,13)....** Furthermore, Jewish literature frequently mentions human, not angelic sin, as the reason why God brought the flood on the earth. The texts are too numerous to cite here but it is sufficient to give the references: Targums Onkelos, Pseudo-Jonathan, Neofiti, and the Fragmentary Targum on Genesis 6:5 and 6:11-13; Gen.R. 26.5 (on 6:2); 26.7 (on 6:4); 28:8 (on 6:7); 31.1-5 (on 6:13); 31.6 (on 6:13); Eccl.R. on 2:23, sect; Num.R. 5.3 (on 4:18); 9.18 (on 5:21); 9.24 (on 5:27); B.R.H. 123; b.Sanh. 108 a; Philo, Q. Gen. 1.99, 100; 2.13; Abr. 40-41; Josephus, Ant. 1.74-75, 98; CD 2.20-21; 1 Enoch 65.6,10-11; 67.8-10; 2 Enoch 70.4-8; 3 Enoch 4.3; Jubilees 5.2-4, 7-9; Apocalypse of Adam 3.3; Pseudo-Philo, Biblical Antiquities, 3.2, 6; Sib. Or. 1.130-131, 150-179; 3 Maccabees 2.4. And the phrase ‘the generation of the flood’ is used frequently in Rabbinic writings as a paradigm of extreme human wickedness: Mishnah, Sanhedrin 10:3; Eccl.R. on 2:23, sec.1; SongR. on 1:4, sec.3; Num.R. 9.18 (on 5:21);14.6 (on 7:54); 20.2 (on 22.2), etc.” [Grudem, 224, 226] “That it spread throughout the earth, wherever it was inhabited by men, both among the posterity of Cain and Seth, and who indeed now were mixed together, and become one people: this respects actual transgressions, the wicked actions of men, and those of the grosser sort, which were ‘multiplied,’ as the word also signifies; they were both great in quality and great in quantity; they were frequently committed, and that everywhere; the degeneracy was become universal; there was a flood of impiety that spread and covered the whole earth, before the deluge of waters came, and which was the cause of it.” [Gill, vol 1 p47]

● **1 PETER SPEAKS OF GOD ‘PATIENTLY WAITING’ FOR REPENTANCE, BUT NOWHERE IN SCRIPTURE DOES GOD OFFER REPENTANCE TO ANGELS** —

‘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.’ (1 Pet 3:20 NKJV) “For whom was the patience of God waiting? That the ‘spirits in prison’ are further stated to be those ‘who ... [disobeyed] when God’s patience waited, strongly suggests that God was waiting for them to repent, otherwise there would be no point in Peter’s mentioning God’s patience. Furthermore, the word *apekdechomai*, ‘waiting’, has the nuance of hopeful or expectant waiting for something to happen. **The ‘angelic’ interpretation of this passage does not seem appropriate here, because neither the Old nor New Testaments teach that fallen angels ever have a chance to repent (cf. 1 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). But if Peter is referring to human beings who disobeyed, the statement is entirely consistent with repeated instances, throughout the Bible, of God’s patient waiting for repentance before bringing judgment (Gen. 6:3; Ps. 103:7-12; 106:43-46; Hos. 11:8-9).** In extra-biblical Jewish literature also, God’s patience is specifically connected with the years leading up to the flood. Targum Neofiti on Genesis 6:3 reports God saying to Noah, ‘Behold I have given you 120 years, hoping that they might do repentance.’ The same idea is repeated in Targum Onkelos, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, and the Fragmentary Targum on Genesis 6:3. Mekilta, Shirata 5:38-39 (on Exod. 1 5:5-6) says that God gave an extension of time ‘to the generation of the flood that they might repent’. The Mishnah (Aboth 5.2) says that all the generations from Adam to Noah continued to provoke God, thus making known how ‘long-suffering’ God is, until he finally brought upon them the water of the flood. Similar statements about God’s waiting for men to repent are found in Gen.R. 32.7 (on 7:10); Num.R. 14.6 (on 7:54). And Philo (Q.Gen. 2.13 on Gen. 7.4,10), in discussing the delay of the flood, says that God ‘grants repentance of sins ... in order that when they see the ark ... they may believe the announcing (to *kerygmata*) of the flood ... and that they may turn back from impiety’. Thus, with respect to the background for Peter’s phrase when God’s patience waited, the extra-biblical literature gives frequent and diverse witness to God’s waiting for human repentance, but it is entirely silent regarding any waiting for angelic repentance – something the New Testament even seems to deny as a possibility (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).” [Grudem, 226f]

● **THE ‘SONS OF GOD’ ARE ALSO USED TO REFER TO MEN IN THE OT** — One of the so-called ‘strongest’ arguments used by those believing the flood was caused by the cohabitation of fallen angels with women is that the OT only uses the term ‘*son of God*’ (*‘ben elohim*’) to refer to angels, not men. Support for that is Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7 where the ‘*sons of God*’ are unquestionably angels (some would add Dan 3:25; see below).

‘Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.... Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord.’ [Job 1:6; 2:1 NKJV]

'When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?' [Job 38:7 NKJV]

"Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." [Dan 3:25 NKJV; note this could refer to angels, a 'son of god' in the pagan pluralistic understanding, or 'the Son of God' in the sense of a theophany]

While not the exact words, a couple other references which are pertinent:

'Give unto the Lord, O you mighty ones, Give unto the Lord glory and strength.' [Ps 29:1 NKJV, 'mighty ones' = 'ben el']

'For who in the heavens can be compared to the LORD? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened to the LORD?' [Ps 89:6 NKJV, 'sons of the mighty' = 'ben el']

As commented by Keil & Delitzsch: "Apart from the context and tenor of the passage, these two points [i.e., the 'sons of God' referring to angels in the OT and the antithesis of 'sons of God' with 'daughters of men'] would lead us most naturally to regard the 'sons of God' as angels, in distinction from men and the daughters of men. **But this explanation, though the first to suggest itself, can only lay claim to be received as the correct one, provided the language admits of no other. Now that is not the case. For it is not to angels only that the term 'sons of Elohim,' or 'sons of Elim,' is applied.**" [K&D, vol 1 p128] They continue to list the following examples where the terms are used in reference to men:

'If I had said, "I will speak thus," Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children.' (Ps 73:15 NKJV, while addressing Elohim, the godly are called 'the generation of Thy sons,' i.e., the sons of Elohim)

'Then you shall say to Pharaoh, Thus says the Lord: Israel is My son, My firstborn.' (Exod 4:22 NKJV, i.e., 'thus says Jehovah, Israel is My beni')

'You are the children of the LORD your God; you shall not cut yourselves nor shave the front of your head for the dead.' (Deut 14:1 NKJV, 'children of the Lord your God' = 'ben Jehovah elohim')

'They have corrupted themselves; They are not His children, Because of their blemish: A perverse and crooked generation.' (Deut 32:5 NKJV, the Israelites are called His (God's) sons)

'Yet the number of the children of Israel Shall be as the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass In the place where it was said to them, "You are not My people," There it shall be said to them, "You are sons of the living God."' (Hos 1:10 NKJV, 'sons of the living God' = 'ben chay el')

'Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself.' (Ps 80:17 NKJV, where Israel is spoken of as the son whom Elohim as made strong)

Wiersbe doesn't know how this is related to Noah but rejects the 'sons of God' were fallen angels because good angels are called the 'sons of God' but never fallen angels (Job 1:6; 2:1; note Satan is distinguished from the 'sons of God'). [Wiersbe, 106]

● **THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN 'THE SONS OF GOD' AND 'THE DAUGHTERS OF MEN' WERE NOT RAPE NOR FORNICATION BUT RATHER MARRIAGES** — Keil says "It cannot be denied that the connection of chap. vi. 1-8 with chap. iv. necessitates the assumption, that such intermarriages (of the Sethite and Cainite families) did take place about the time of the flood (cf. Matt. xxiv. 38; Luke xvii. 27); and the prohibition of mixed marriages under the law (Ex. xxxiv. 16; cf. Gen. xxvii. 46, xxvii. 1 sq.) also favours the same idea.' But this 'assumption' is placed beyond all doubt, by what is here related of the sons of God. In ver. 2 it is stated that 'the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose,' i.e. of any with whose beauty they were charmed; and these wives bare children to them (ver. 4). **Now [*'laqach ishshah', Hebrew for 'to take a wife'] is a standing expression throughout the whole of the Old Testament for the marriage relation established by God at the creation, and is never applied to [porneia, Greek for 'fornication'], or the simple act of physical connection.***" [K&D, vol 1 p131]

● **GENESIS ALREADY DIVIDES THE LINES OF CAIN AND SETH** — "According to the angel hypothesis, angels alone are here to be understood, notwithstanding that there is no mention of angels immediately before this, to stand as its antecedent, but only of the pious race of Sethites. Chap. 5 gives us an account of pious *men*, of chosen *men*, of a wonderfully glorified man of God; but of angels, on the contrary, there is not a word, even to this place, except the mysterious language respecting the cherubim, in which we cannot at all recognize any personal angel-forms. The single apparent ground for a supposition, at first view wild and abrupt, is found in the fact, that in the later books of the Old Testament, not the pious are called [sons of Elohim], but the angels. It is, however, simply incorrect to say that anywhere in the historical scriptures the angels are called sons of God without anything farther; only in a few poetical places, and in one nominally prophetic are they so called; and then, too, beside the poetical language, there comes into view the elucidating context [elucidating = 'to make lucid or clear, throw light upon, explain']. In Job i. they form the council of God represented as administering government, and in fact in contrast to Satan. In the same way in chap. ii. In chap. xxxviii. 7, they hail the laying the foundation of the earth and the creation of man. Ps. xxix. 1, they are called upon to glorify the Lord in the thunder-storm, and in the restoration of His people. Ps. lxxxix. 7, are they thus denoted by way of contrasting their dependent state with the glory of the Lord. Dan. iii. 25 hardly belongs here, but is, perhaps, to be interpreted according to chap. vii. 13. In respect to this, Hengstenberg has already shown that the name *bne Elohim* belongs to the poetic diction.... Thus, too, in the easiest way does our section connect itself with both the preceding chapters. In the fourth chapter there is described the line of the Cainites as still divided from the line of Seth; in the fifth chapter we have the

line of the Sethites in its devotedness and elevation; then, finally, in the section before us, the mingling of both lines, and the universality and flagitiousness of corruption, as, according to the programme of the Cainitic Lamech, it culminates in the two fundamental features of carnality and cruelty. *Whoever reads Genesis, to the passage before us, without any prejudice derived from opinions alien to it, would never think of understanding by the bne Elohim [sons of God] anything else than the pious Sethites, and by their connection with the daughters of men anything else than a corruption of marriage and a mingling with the Cainites. This would especially appear from the fact, that in this section the sharp contrast between the two lines, which is so prominent in the previous chapter, wholly disappears.*" [Lange, 281 ff]

● **WHILE NOT CULMINATING IN A FLOOD, THIS SIN IS NOT UNIQUE TO ISRAEL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

— "Further on, Ishmael, who is a 'wild man,' and whose 'hand is against every man,' appears as the offspring of Abraham and 'the maid,' a copy, as it were, giving us a clear idea of the Gibborim ['strong, mighty', used in Gen 6:4], and of the way in which they originated, although the connection of the patriarch was from a purer motive, and more excusable. Hence the traditional and legal abhorrence of untheocratic marriages in the theocratic race; as we find it in Gen. xxiv. 3; xxvi. 34, 35; xxvii. 46; xxxiv. 9; Deut. vii. 3; Josh. xxiii. 12; Judg. iii. 6; 1 Kings xi. 1; Ezra ix. 2; Nehem. x. 30. The falling away of the Israelites in the desert came not from any amour between angels and the daughters of men, but from an unlawful intercourse between the Israelites and the women of Midian (Numb. xxv.). So the apostasies of Israel in the time of the Judges were derived from the mingling of the Israelites with the daughters of the Canaanites (Judg. iii. 6). The fall of Solomon, and the falling away of the people that followed it, came from Solomon's connection with foreign wives (1 Kings xi. 1). So the ten tribes sunk into the worship of Baal in consequence of the connection of Ahab with the Sidonian Jezebel, whose horrible significance goes on even to the Apocalypse (1 Kings xvi. 31; Rev. ii. 20); and so, too, Ezra and Nehemiah, after the great visitation, know no other way to secure their people against a new degeneracy, than by contending earnestly against foreign marriages. Thus again and again do the theocratic mesalliances [*a marriage with someone who is considered socially inferior*], here spiritually-speaking] of one section reflect themselves in the Israelitish history, without the angels playing any part therein." [Lange, 283]

● **THERE WERE 'NEPHILIM' BEFORE THE 'SONS OF GOD' COHABITED WITH THE 'WOMEN OF MEN'** —

One of the arguments from those believing the flood was caused by fallen angels cohabiting with women was that the offspring of these unions were 'nephilim' = 'giants, half-demon and half-human.' But the Scriptures state there were these 'nephilim' prior to the sin of the 'sons of God':

'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.' (Gen 6:4 NKJV)

"[A]nd also afterwards — clearly intimating that some of these Nephilim, or wondrous men of violence, had existed before this event, or from old (a time comparatively ancient, going back to the days of old Cain), and that after these mesalliances, whatever they be, there was an increase of such persons.... There were Nephilim, it is said, in those same days, not there became or came to be." [Lange, 280, 282] "*And also after that,*' which shews that the preceding clause respects giants in former times, '*when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men,*' came into their houses and chambers, and lay with them: '*and they bare children unto them,*' or giants unto them, as may be supplied from the former clause: *for the sense is, as there were giants before this general defection, so there were at this time,* when there was a mixture of the Cainites and Sethites; which were the offspring of the sons of God, or the posterity of Seth, mixing with the daughters of men, or the posterity of Cain." [Gill, vol 1 p47] Note the pronouncement of judgment upon man (v. 3) is given before the mention of the Nephilim (v. 4).

● **IF THE NEPHILIM WERE SPAWNS OF THE ILLEGITIMATE UNION OF DEMONS AND WOMEN, HOW ARE THERE 'NEPHILIM' AFTER THE FLOOD?** —

'There we saw the giants ['nephilim'] (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.' (Num 13:33 NKJV) Per Lange, "The Nephilim were gigantic, — or, more accurately, the distinguished, the prominent or overpowering." [Lange, 282] Per Lange, "The derivation of this word from [npl], 'to fall', cannot be sustained, either in the sense of 'fallen' (from heaven) or in that of invaders. It is evidently the ancient name they took to themselves, and that would not be, in the beginning, either of degeneracy or reproach. It's connection with [glh], [gl'], is much more clear and consistent." ... Lange quotes Ps 139:14, Ex 33:16 where the word is translated 'distinguished'. He talks about how the word could have evolved in spelling, and concludes: "*Thus viewed, we may regard the expression at the end of the verse, ['men of renown'], as the intended exegesis of the word itself — distinguished men, wonderful men, men of name, men of renown. That this same name should have been given afterwards to gigantic robbers, as in Numb. xiii. 33, is very natural, whether regarded as applied from a tradition of these wonderful men of old or from inherent fitness.*" [Lange, 280]

● **THE SIN DESCRIBED WAS TAKING INDISCRIMINATELY WITHOUT REGARD FOR MORALITY** — "Their first transgression, however, would consist in this, that in the choice of wives they let themselves be determined by the mere charm of sensual beauty. From this follows the second transgression, that they took them wives of all whom they chose, that is, of all that pleased them. On the word [mikol, 'out of all'], therefore, rests the emphasis of the expression. *Instead of looking at the spiritual kinsmanship, they had an eye only to the pleasure of sense. That was the first thing. Then there is nothing said here of any moral satisfaction in beauty. This appears from the fact that they took them wives of all that pleased them, of all that they desired. Instead of holding pure the Sethic line, they took wives indiscriminately, and that was the second and decisive transgression. By this was the dam torn down which stood between the Cainites and the Sethites, — that is, the dam which kept back the universal corruption, and which hitherto had protected the race of the blessing. Therefore it is, ver. 3, that the corruption which now comes is charged upon men, and not at all upon the angels.*" [Lange, 282]

● **WHILE THERE ARE APOCRYPHAL WORKS ASCRIBING THE FLOOD TO THE SIN OF FALLEN ANGELS (E.G., ‘THE BOOK OF ENOCH’), THERE ARE ALSO APOCRYPHAL WORKS ASCRIBING THE SIN TO MEN ALONE** —

John Gill (1697–1771), a scholar familiar with the Eastern languages, quotes repeatedly from Eastern writers which give the reason for the flood as a sin of man, not fallen angels (Gill references Elmacinus, Patricides, Hottinger and Smegma. ‘Elmacinus’, according to Wikipedia, is Georgius Elmacinus (or George Elmacin, 1205-1273), a Coptic Christian historian that wrote in Arabic and Latin. His sole surviving work is a world chronicle in two parts which, when translated, means *‘The Blessed Collection.’* His first volume covers from Adam to 586 BC. From my web searches, Hottinger appears to have been an Arabic historian. I could not find information on the others.). According to John Gill:

“According to the Arabic writers, immediately after the death of Adam the family of Seth was separated from the family of Cain; Seth took his sons and their wives to a high mountain (Hermon), on the top of which Adam was buried, and Cain and all his sons lived in the valley beneath, where Abel was slain; and they on the mountain obtained a name for holiness and purity, and were so near the angels that they could hear their voices and join their hymns with them; and they, their wives and their children, went by the common name of the sons of God: and now these were adjured, by Seth and by succeeding patriarchs, by no means to go down from the mountain and join the Cainites; but notwithstanding in the times of Jared some did go down, it seems; ... and being taken with the beauty of the daughters of Cain and his posterity, they did as follows: ‘and they took them; wives of all that they chose’ ... they intermarried with them, which the Cainites might not be averse unto; they took to them wives as they fancied, which were pleasing to the flesh, without regard to their moral and civil character, and without the advice and consent of their parents, and without consulting God and his will in the matter; or they took women as they pleased, and were to their liking, and committed fornication, to which the Cainites were addicted; for they spent their time in singing and dancing, and in uncleanness, whereby the posterity of Seth or sons of God were allured to come down and join them, and commit fornication with them, as the Arabic writers relate.” [Gill, vol 1 p46]

“Those who favour [the view that the spirits in prison are fallen angels] point to the many places in extra-biblical Jewish literature where the ‘sons of God’ who married ‘the daughter of men’ in Genesis 6:2,4 and begot children by them, are understood to be sinful angels who married human women. This understanding of Genesis 6 is frequent in extra-biblical literature, being attested in at least the following nine texts: Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 1:73; Philo, *On the Giants* 6; *Questions on Genesis* 1.92; *Qumran Damascus Document (Dead Sea Scrolls)* 2.18; 1 Enoch 6.2,6; 106.13-14; Jubilees 5.1; 10:1-6; 2 Baruch 56.12-15. However, *it is often not appreciated that such an interpretation of Genesis 6 is far from uniform in Jewish tradition.* The following list shows nine other texts where non-angelic interpretations are held:

While Philo himself calls these ‘sons of God’ angels in one place, he later calls them ‘good and excellent men’ (Philo, *Questions on Genesis* 1.92). Moreover, the Targums and the Rabbinic literature are unanimous in viewing the ‘sons of God’ as human beings. Targum Onkelos on Genesis 6:2 and 4 reads ‘sons of princes’ (or, ‘great men’), and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan has the same. Targum Neofiti has ‘sons of the Judges’ in both verses. Tosefta, Sotah 3.9a interprets ‘sons of God’ as men of the generation of the flood. In the Midrash Rabbah, they are understood as ‘sons of judges’ (dyyn) and as ‘leaders’ (*Midrash Rabbah on Genesis* 26.6 on Gen 6:2, quoting Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai, c. AD 140), or as the generation of men at the time of the flood (*Midrash Rabbah on Numbers* 9.24, on 5:27). The Babylonian Talmud at *Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin* 108a understands them as men at the time of the flood. Symmachus translates Genesis 6:2 as ‘the sons of the rulers’.

Although this material is admittedly somewhat later than 1 Enoch and Jubilees, which are both to be dated in the second century BC, the citations from Philo and the Targums are certainly not irrelevant for New Testament exegesis – indeed, the Rabbinic material generally represents a stream of Jewish tradition which is certainly relevant as a background for New Testament studies. And the citations in this second group are divers and frequent enough to give strong indication of the existence of a ‘non-angelic’ view of the ‘sons of God’ in Judaism, especially more orthodox Judaism, before or during the time of the New Testament.... *All of these texts (forty-five listed here, from every strand of Jewish tradition) must be seen in contrast to the slight evidence of a tradition of angelic sin at this time: one text (Jubilee 10:4-5) which mentions angelic sin in Noah’s day and two (T.Naph. 3:5; 1 Enoch 67:8-13) which say angels were punished at the flood (one of which, T.Naph. 3:5, also says the earth was made ‘without dweller or produce’ because of angels’ sin). Not one text from any strand of Jewish tradition mentions angels disobeying ‘during the building of the ark’. The overwhelming weight of extra-biblical tradition – as well as the biblical evidence itself – emphasizes human sinners, not angels, as the most likely to be meant by Peter’s phrases, ‘who formerly [disobeyed] ... in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark.’”* [Grudem, 220f, 226]

● **‘DAUGHTERS OF MEN’ AS AN ANTITHESIS OF ‘SONS OF MEN’ DOES NOT DEMAND ‘SONS OF GOD’ WERE NOT HUMAN** — “From the expression “daughters of man,” it by no means follows that the sons of God were not men; any more than it follows from Jer. xxxii. 20, where it is said that God had done miracles “in Israel, and among men,” or from Isa. xliii. 4, where God says He will give men for the Israelites, or from Judg. xvi. 7, where Samson says, that if he is bound with seven green withs he shall be as weak as a man, or from Ps. lxxiii. 5, where it is said of the ungodly they are not in trouble as men, that the Israelites, or Samson, or the ungodly, were not men at all. In all these passages [‘adam’ = Hebrew for ‘men’] denotes the remainder of mankind in distinction from those who are especially named.” [quoting Dettinger] *Cases occur, too, even in simple prose, in which the same term is used, first in a general, and then directly afterwards in a more restricted sense.* We need cite only one, which occurs in Judg. xix.-xxi. In chap. xix. 30 reference is made to the coming of the children of Israel (i.e. of the twelve tribes) out of Egypt; and directly afterwards (chap. xx. 1,2) it is related that ‘all the children of Israel,’ ‘all the tribes of

Israel, 'assembled together (to make war, as we learn from vers. 3 sqq., upon Benjamin); and in the whole account of the war, chap. xx. and xxi., the tribes of Israel are distinguished from the tribe of Benjamin; so that the expression 'tribes of Israel' really means the rest of the tribes with the exception of Benjamin. And yet the Benjamites were Israelites. ***Why then should the fact that the sons of God are distinguished from the daughters of men prove that the former could not be men?*** There is not force enough in these two objections to compel us to adopt the conclusion that the sons of God were angels." [K&D, vol 1 p130f]