

The Sons Of God And The Daughters Of Men (Gen 6:1-5)

Introduction

1. Several people mentioned that the thoughts presented last week concerning the two offerings and the murder of Abel got them thinking.
2. In fact, those events set off a train of actions which led to God's destruction of mankind (save eight souls) by the flood.

I. The Setting (6:1-5).

A. The behaviour of those living at the time (6:1-2).

1. Men had become quite numerous and it is recorded against this background that at this point of time- "when" - that "daughters were born to them" (1). This birth of daughters is not said to introduce something that was new, daughters were being born from the time of Cain and Abel to the present. It is stated because the fact was relevant to the situation to be described.
2. The new development was "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" (2).
 - a. Who were these two groups of individuals? We will consider that shortly.
 - b. For the moment notice that the choice of spouse was made primarily on looks with no moral discrimination being exercised.

B. The reaction of God (6:3).

1. God then, as now, sought to restrain these tendencies to do wickedness through the teaching of the Spirit, as instanced by Noah, "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Pet 2:5).
2. But the time would come when that influence would be withdrawn - after 120 years of probation. Noah would be instructed to enter the ark, the Spirit breathed teaching would cease and then after seven days the rain would come (7:4).

C. The nature of the age (6:4).

1. The verse describes what the times were like.
2. We will return to this.

II. Who Were These Two Groups.

A. Approach.

1. The groups are "the sons of God" and "the daughters of men" (2).
2. We will identify the sons of God first.

B. Explanations to be rejected.

1. The "sons of god" equates to mythical beings. They came in to mortal women who bore mighty men, men of renown unto them (4).
2. The sons of God rather refers to fallen angels who co-habited with men producing the above results.
3. There is a more reasonable explanation that fits the context and other Bible teaching.

B. The context.

1. The expression has two applications.

- a. To refer to God's people. True, while the exact expression isn't used this way, similar phraseology which would be identical in meaning is found.
 - 1) "They have corrupted themselves; They are not His children, Because of their blemish..." (Dt 32:5).
 - 2) "If I had said, 'I will speak thus,' Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of your children" (Ps 73:15).
 - 3) ""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 1:9-10).
 - b. Used in reference to angels.
 - 1) "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them" (Job 1:6; similarly, 2:1).
 - 2) Job challenged "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding" (Job 38:4)... "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (7)
 - c. Which meaning applies to Gen 6:1?
 - 1) Was it mythological figures/angels? There is no reference to angels in the context. The closest reference is back when man was expelled from Eden (Gen 3:24).
 - 2) There is an explanation much closer to hand. Note the connection between verses 1-2 and 3. The action was performed by the sons of God but the judgement would fall upon man.
 - 3) Such an explanation would be at odds with other Biblical passages (Mt 22:30).
- C. Now who were "the daughters of men?" If "the sons of God" refers to the people of God, then "the daughters of men" refers to the daughters of those who were not God's people. As we will see, these groups would correspond to the descendants of Seth and Cain's offspring.

III. The Two Lines Of Human Development (Gen 4:17-5:32).

- A. The connection between the banishment of Cain and the mingling of the two strands of human development and the flood.
- B. The lines of development explored.
 - 1. Two strands can be seen after Cain's sin and banishment – the descendants of Adam through Cain (4:17-24) and those of Seth (4:25-5:32).
 - a. This separate development would seem inevitable since contact was limited.
 - 1) Cain's descendants contributed positively in several ways — they pioneered building and construction (17), introduced a nomadic way of life (20), and demonstrated creativity through music (21) and tool-making (22).
 - 2) So considerable progress was made but without regard to God. The sins of polygamy (19) and the spirit of revenge (23-24) are also seen.
 - b. It was among the descendants of Seth that people first began to call on the name of the Lord (4:26). Within this lineage, worship emerged.
 - 1) It is said of Enoch that he walked with God (5:24).
 - 2) Noah was "a just man, blameless among his generation, and he walked with God" (6:9).

IV. The Reason For Judgement.

A. The moral indifference that came to characterize the Sethites (6:1-2).

1. Up until 6:1, the two strands remained separate but then came the mixing of the two lines by marriage which led to the corruption of the whole human race.

B. The violence upon the earth (6:4, 11).

1. "There were giants (05303; 'Nephilim' ESV) 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" (6:4).
2. The Hebrew meaning is unclear appearing only on one other occasion (Num 13:33).
 - a. The Hebrew root is "naphal". "One meaning of this verb is to "fall upon = attack"" (Leupold). Hence, they were violent men which would fit the on-going description – "Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown." This was a fame fuelled by notoriety and not heroism.
 - b. The descendants of the godly patriarchs abandoned their spiritual heritage (1, 2) so that God was moved to determine their destruction (3); and there were also violent attackers and robbers abroad in those days (4).
3. The presence of these men was not confined to the time of the intermingling of lines; they were already there and were there "afterwards" (4). They were not a product of the misalliance of v. 2.

C. The depth and extent of the wickedness upon the earth - not just isolated cases (6:5, 11-12).

1. Depth: "... that every intent of the thoughts of his heart [was] only evil continually" (5).
2. Extent: "... the earth was filled with wickedness" (11).

V. Application For Today.

- A. The male descendants of Seth chose wives purely on the basis of looks. They made no discrimination concerning spiritual qualities with the disastrous consequences that followed.
- B. The lesson for us is obvious. If a Christian makes his/her choice for a life partner purely on the basis of looks, then the prospects for success are not high. If our marital partner has no respect for God, then Godly respect will not be passed on.