

The Nephilim were in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown. – Genesis 6:4

This Lesson Outline was prepared by John M. Wharton

June 26, 2006

SOURCES -+-

All bible text, unless otherwise indicated, is from the Public Domain World English Bible Translation. ASV indicates the American Standard Version, with KJV indicating the King James Version. Quotations are often included from various classic Christian commentaries such as John Gill's Expositor, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures, and others. Greek and Hebrew word definitions are often included from the Strong's Concordance, unless otherwise indicated. All of these sources, both the bible text's, commentaries, and Strong's definition's are taken from the e-Sword Bible program unless otherwise indicated.

Introduction -

The phrase “the sons of God” in Genesis 6:2, 4 may not at first glance seem to have any depth of meaning. It may be, and I suspect it is so, that most Christians have simply had the mystery and majesty in much of God's word programmed out of them until they are almost afraid to see any discovery waiting to happen. Let's take a closer look at these sons of God through some Old Testament verses and see what we find out about them.

Lesson Text – Genesis 6; Job 1, 2, and 38; Psalms 29 and 89; Daniel 3

6:1 It happened, when men began to multiply on the surface of the ground, and daughters were born to them,

6:2 that God's sons saw that men's daughters were beautiful, and they took for themselves wives of all that they chose.

Gen 6:2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose. - ASV

Comments -

Notice the definitions of the sons of God below. There may be more mystery in this verse than we would think at first glance.

Definitions for some 6:2 words -

the sons - H1121 [פ](#) *bēn bane* From H1129; a **son** (as a *builder* of the family name), in the widest sense (of literal and figurative relationship, including *grandson, subject, nation, quality* or *condition*, etc., (like H1, H251, etc.): - + afflicted, age, [Ahoh-] [Ammon-] [Hachmon-] [Lev-]ite, [anoint-]ed one,

appointed to, (+) arrow, [Assyr-] [Babylon-] [Egypt-] [Grec-]ian, one born, bough, branch, breed, + (young) bullock, + (young) calf, X came up in, child, colt, X common, X corn, daughter, X of first, + firstborn, foal, + very fruitful, + postage, X in, + kid, + lamb, (+) man, meet, + mighty, + nephew, old, (+) people, + rebel, + robber, X servant born, X soldier, son, + spark, + steward, + stranger, X surely, them of, + tumultuous one, + valiant[-est], whelp, worthy, young (one), youth.

of God - H430 אלהים 'elohîym *el-o-heem'* Plural of H433; **gods in the ordinary sense**; but specifically used (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of **the supreme God**; occasionally applied by way of deference to *magistrates*; and sometimes as a superlative: - angels, X exceeding, God (gods) (-dess, -ly), X (very) great, judges, X mighty.

6:3 Yahweh said, "My Spirit will not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; yet will his days be one hundred twenty years."

6:4 The Nephilim were in the earth in those days, and also after that, when God's sons came in to men's daughters. They bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

Gen 6:4 The Nephilim were in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown. - ASV

Gen 6:4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and **they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. - KJV**

Definitions for some 6:4 words -

Nephilim - H5303 נפל נפיל n^ephîyl n^ephil *nef-eel', nef-eel'* From H5307; **properly, a feller, that is, a bully or tyrant:** - giant.

the sons - H1121 בן beⁿ *bane* From H1129; **a son** (as a *builder* of the family name), in the widest sense (of literal and figurative relationship, including *grandson, subject, nation, quality or condition*, etc., (like H1, H251, etc.): - + afflicted, age, [Ahoh-] [Ammon-] [Hachmon-] [Lev-]ite, [anoint-]ed one, appointed to, (+) arrow, [Assyr-] [Babylon-] [Egypt-] [Grec-]ian, one born, bough, branch, breed, + (young) bullock, + (young) calf, X came up in, child, colt, X common, X corn, daughter, X of first, + firstborn, foal, + very fruitful, + postage, X in, + kid, + lamb, (+) man, meet, + mighty, + nephew, old, (+) people, + rebel, + robber, X servant born, X soldier, son, + spark, + steward, + stranger, X surely, them of, + tumultuous one, + valiant[-est], whelp, worthy, young (one), youth.

of God - H430 אלהים 'elohîym *el-o-heem'* **Plural of H433**; **gods in the ordinary sense**; but specifically used (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of the supreme *God*; occasionally applied by way of deference to *magistrates*; and sometimes as a superlative: - angels, X exceeding, God (gods) (-dess, -ly), X (very) great, judges, X mighty.

mighty men - H1368 גבר גבור gibbo^r gibbo^r *ghib-bore', ghib-bore'* Intensive from the same as H1397; **powerful**; by implication **warrior, tyrant:** - champion, chief, X excel, **giant**, man, mighty (man, one), strong (man), valiant man.

men - H376 אִישׁ 'iysh *eesh* Contracted for H582 (or perhaps rather from an unused root meaning to *be extant*); **a man as an individual or a male person**; often used as an adjunct to a more definite term (and in such cases frequently not expressed in translation.) : - also, another, any (man), a certain, + champion, consent, each, every (one), fellow, [foot-, husband-] man, (good-, great, mighty) man, he, high (degree), him (that is), husband, man [-kind], + none, one, people, person, + steward, what (man) soever, whoso (-ever), worthy. Compare H802.

of renown - H8034 שָׁמָה shēm *shame* A primitive word (perhaps rather from H7760 through **the idea of definite and conspicuous position**; compare H8064); **an appellation**, as a mark or memorial of individuality; by implication *honor, authority, character*: - + base, [in-] fame [-ous], name (-d), renown, report.

Comments on Genesis 6:1-4 -

These verses are taken by most readers to refer to the Godly sons of Seth's line beginning to marry the daughters of the worldly descendent's of Cain. That would have resulted in their descendent's following Cain's children further into rebellion, away from true knowledge of God. There is no denying that this has always been a concern for God's people. Too much interaction with the Canaanites caused the children of Israel to follow them completely into idolatry. Some Jewish sages have also understood these verses this way.

Another understanding, among both Christian and Jewish sages and commentators is that the sons of God are magistrates or rulers of the people who began to misuse their authority taking any women they wanted as wives, even against the wishes of the women.

Yet another understanding of the passage is that angels, sons of God, came down from their proper estate God had made for them, and mated with the women of earth. This is also seen as a specific attempt in Satan's plan to corrupt the genes of humanity preventing God from developing the chosen lineage to produce the people of Israel, and eventually the Messiah.

The Companion Bible notes, in Appendix 23, indicate that this expression "the sons of god" occurs in the Old Testament six other times besides those occurrences in Gen 6:2, 4, giving a total of eight such occurrences of that phrasing, and that it refers to angels in all the other six cases. The six locations given are - Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7; Psalm 29:1, 89:6; and Daniel 3:25. It is also noted that the Greek Septuagint translation (of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek) translates the phrase "the sons of god" here in Genesis 6:2 as "angels". If true all of that would be significant in supporting the idea that Genesis 6:2, 4 refers to angels. Let's look at these six verses and see what we can discover about them.

Let's review those six possibly related Old Testament passages -

Now let's review these six verses in the Old Testament that the Companion Bible says all have the same phrasing and which, it says, all clearly refer to angels. Again, the passages are - Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7; Psalm 29:1, 89:6; and Daniel 3:25. We will review each verse and some of the context around it to get a better sense of the passages meaning. First, before reviewing the verses a search was done using the Bible Program e-Sword set to search the KJV+ Old Testament for occurrences of the Strong's numbers 1121 and 430 in the same verse. Refer to the definitions above under Genesis 6:2 and 4 to see these numbers and their definitions. Given that The Companion Bible says this phrasing occurs in only those eight verses, it seemed proper to search

for the specific numbers representing the two words in Genesis 6. The search found 285 verses with both of these Hebrew words in them. These 285 verses were copied to a word processor to allow a find to locate each occurrence of 1121. Then it was easy to see if the next word number was 430. Using that method allowed the review of all 285 verses to go quickly. There were only five such occurrences of these two Hebrew word numbers in order in the entire Old Testament. They are Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7; and Daniel 3:25. The two Psalms verses were not in the search. It was found in digging further, that the words in Daniel 3:25 are the exact Aramaic language equivalents of the Hebrew words per Strong's. For an explanation of what else was discovered about Psalm 29:1, 89:6; and Daniel 3:25 see the comments under the verses in the following studies.

Job 1:6-12, esp. 6

Job 1:6 *And there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah; and Satan came also among them.*

the sons - H1121 בן beñ bane From H1129; a son....

of God - H430 אלהים 'elohîym el-o-heem' Plural of H433; gods in the ordinary sense; but specifically used (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of the supreme God....

also - H1571 גם gam gam By contraction from an unused root meaning to gather; properly assemblage; used only adverbially also, even, yea, though; often repeated as correlation both... and: - again, alike, also, (so much) as (soon), both (so) . . . and, but, either . . . or, even, for all, (in) likewise (manner), moreover, nay . . . neither, one, then (-refore), though, what, with, yea.

Job 1:7 *And Jehovah said to Satan, Whence comest thou? And Satan answered Jehovah and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.*

Job 1:8 *And Jehovah said to Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and abstaineth from evil?*

Job 1:9 *And Satan answered Jehovah and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?*

Job 1:10 *Hast not thou made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is spread abroad in the land.*

Job 1:11 *But put forth thy hand now and touch all that he hath, and see if he will not curse thee to thy face!*

Job 1:12 *And Jehovah said to Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy hand; only upon himself put not forth thy hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of Jehovah.*

Here the writer refers to an event in God's presence when all of the sons of God, clearly angelic beings, appear before Him. Satan, already in rebellion, comes into the assembly just as the others do, as the Darby version puts it, "...and Satan came also among them". These are beyond doubt angelic beings.

Job 2:1-6, esp. 1

Job 2:1 *And there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah, and Satan also came among them to present himself before Jehovah.*

the sons - H1121 בן beñ bane From H1129; a son....

of God - H430 אלהים 'elohîym el-o-heem' Plural of H433; gods in the ordinary sense; but specifically used (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of the supreme God....

also - H1571 גם gam gam By contraction from an unused root meaning to gather; properly assemblage; used only adverbially also, even, yea, though; often repeated as correlation both... and: - again, alike, also, (so much) as (soon), both (so) . . . and, but, either . . . or, even, for all, (in) likewise (manner), moreover, nay . . . neither,

one, then (-refore), though, what, with, yea.

Job 2:2 And Jehovah said to Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered Jehovah and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

Job 2:3 And Jehovah said to Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and abstaineth from evil? and still he remaineth firm in his integrity, though thou movedst me against him, to swallow him up without cause.

Job 2:4 And Satan answered Jehovah and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life;

Job 2:5 but put forth thy hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and see if he will not curse thee to thy face!

Job 2:6 And Jehovah said to Satan, Behold, he is in thy hand; only spare his life.

Here the writer again refers to an event in God's presence when the sons of God, again clearly angelic beings, came together into God's presence. Satan again came just as the other angels into God's presence "... and Satan also came...". These beings are clearly angels coming right into the physical presence of God. They are not men.

Job 38:4-11, esp. 7

Job 38:4 Where wast thou when I founded the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding.

Job 38:5 Who set the measures thereof--if thou knowest? or who stretched a line upon it?

Job 38:6 Whereupon were the foundations thereof sunken? or who laid its corner-stone,

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

the sons - H1121 בן beñ bane From H1129; a son....

of God - H430 אלהים 'elohîym el-o-heem' Plural of H433; gods in the ordinary sense; but specifically used (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of the supreme God....

Job 38:8 And who shut up the sea with doors, when it burst forth, issuing out of the womb?

Job 38:9 When I made the cloud its garment, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it;

Job 38:10 When I cut out for it my boundary, and set bars and doors,

Job 38:11 And said, Hitherto shalt thou come and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?

Here the writer refers to an event in the heavens when God was creating the earth. God chides Job by asking him if he was present when He did this "...Where wast thou when I founded the earth...". The answer obviously is that he, Job, did not even exist at that time. The clear implication is that no human was there at that time. God then mentions that the sons of God shouted for joy at the beauty and perfection of the creation they were witnessing. But no mere man was there at that time. These sons of God were clearly angelic beings.

Psalms 29:1-2, esp. 1

Psa 29:1 A Psalm of David. Give unto Jehovah, ye sons of the mighty ones, give unto Jehovah glory and strength;

Psa 29:2 Give unto Jehovah the glory of his name; worship Jehovah in holy splendour.

ye sons - H1121 בן beñ bane From H1129; a son....

of the mighty ones - H410 אל 'el ale Shortened from H352; strength; as adjective mighty; especially the Almighty (but used also of any deity): - God (god), X goodly, X great, idol, might (-y one), power, strong. Compare names in "-

el.”

Here the writer encourages the “sons of the mighty ones” to give Jehovah God glory and praise for His works. The passage does not seem to me to make it clear beyond doubt that this must be angels. The word for “ye sons” is the same Strong's number 1121 as we have seen in the previous three verses. However, the Hebrew word translated “of the mighty ones” represents the Strong's number 410 which is not the same word as number 430 that we have searched for in the previous verses including Gen. 6:2, 4. The word may be related, and I am not a scholar and able to determine that. But I can note that Strong's relates 430 as a plural of 433, and it relates 410 as derived from 352. We may have some room for debate on this verse Psalm 29:1. Though, John Gill's comments and those of Adam Clarke following are very interesting on this debate.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible from the e-Sword Bible Program -

“Psa 29:1 - Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty,.... The Targum refers this to the angels,

"give praise before the Lord, ye companies of angels, sons of the Mighty;"

these are mighty ones, and excel all other creatures in strength; and are the sons of the Mighty, or of God; it is their duty and their business to glorify and to worship him and his Son Jesus Christ, as they do continually; but rather the princes and great men of the earth are here meant, who are so called....”

John Gill does not believe that Psalm 29:1, or the phrase in question for that matter, refer to angels, but rather to men of position and authority. Interestingly, as we can see, Gill does still record that the Jewish Targum understands this verse to be specifically referring to angels. That is significant because the people of Israel were given these scriptures to keep and their sages have studied them in great detail through the ages.

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible from the e-Sword Bible Program -

“Psa 29:1 -

O ye mighty - בני אלים beney elim, “sons of the strong ones,” or “sons of rams.” The Chaldee has, “Ye hosts of angels, sons of God.” The Vulgate has, “Offer to the Lord, ye sons of God; offer to the Lord the sons of rams;” in this rendering agree the Septuagint, Ethiopic Arabic, and Anglo-Saxon. The old Psalter has, *Bringes til Lord ye goddes sonnes; brynges til Lord sonnes of wether:* which it paraphrases thus: that es, yourself, sonnes of apostles, that war leders of goddes folk; qwam ye study to folow....”

Clarke's insights from the ancient writings make it even harder to dismiss outright the thought that these mighty beings here referred to are angels.

Psalm 89:5-8, esp. 6

Psa 89:5 *And the heavens shall celebrate thy wonders, O Jehovah, and thy faithfulness in the congregation of the saints.*

Psa 89:6 *For who in the heaven can be compared to Jehovah? who among the sons of the mighty shall be likened to Jehovah?*

ye sons - H1121 בן beñ bane From H1129; a son....

of the mighty ones - H410 לך 'el ale Shortened from H352; *strength*; as adjective *mighty*; especially the *Almighty* (but used also of any *deity*): - God (god), X goodly, X great, idol, might (-y one), power, strong. Compare names in “-el.”

*Psa 89:7 *God is greatly to be feared in the council of the saints, and terrible for all that are round about him.*

Psa 89:8 Jehovah, God of hosts, who is like unto thee, the strong Jah? And thy faithfulness is round about thee.

Here the writer again refers to the sons of the mighty, and the wording according to Strong's is the same as that just noted for Psalm 29:1. The wording of both Psalm 29:1 and 89:6 is not the specific two Hebrew words, Strong's numbers 1121 and 430 found in the other verses before. Rather, they are 1121 and 410. That seems very significant in itself. Beyond that, in looking at the passage that Psalm 89:6 is in, we can see a few interesting things.

“...who among the sons of the mighty shall be likened to Jehovah?” The thought of this even being possible for these beings referred to in verse 6 to be compared at all to God the Father, implies strongly that they must be angels, not men.

“...and terrible for all that are round about him” They must be the same as those mentioned in the next verse 7, who are gathered around God. No man, while still in this life is gathered that close to God the Father.

“...Jehovah, God of hosts...” the idea emphasized here is that God the Father, the only true God, has a great host of beings around Himself, and these powerful beings are not mere men. There is a connected thought in these verse 6 and 7, concerning powerful beings who cannot be compared to God, but they must have been very powerful for the obvious point to even need to be stated. They are directly in God's presence which is clearly impossible for mortal man. And further, a great host of these very beings is around God, the Father all the time. These are not men. They are angels.

Overall Comments on the wording differences in both Psalm 29:1 and 89:6 -

Interestingly, using e-Sword to search for Old Testament occurrences of the Hebrew words 1121 and 410 (which is the two words occurring in Psalms 29:1 and 89:6) in that order to signify the phrase “the sons of the mighty”, or “the mighty”, or some similar wording, gives findings that seem to support the opinions of The Companion Bible afterall on these six verses. There are exactly twelve such occurrences in the Old Testament of the two Hebrew words, Strong's numbers 1121 and 410, both within the same verse. Of those twelve, only two have the two specific Hebrew words, 1121 and 410, in consecutive order within the verse. These two verses are Psalms 29:1 and Psalms 89:6. They are the very two verses we have just had to look at so closely in our study. So it does, in fact, seem that the two Hebrew words 1121 and 410, are essentially the same phrasing in meaning and uniqueness, as the words numbers 1121 and 430 we searched for earlier.

Daniel 3:24-26, esp. 25

Dan 3:24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste; he spoke and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said to the king, True, O king.

Dan 3:25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of God.

*H1247 בר bar **bar** (Chaldee); corresponding to H1121; a son, grandson, etc.: - X old, son.*

*H426 אלה 'elāh **el-aw'** (Chaldee); corresponding to H433; God: - God, god.*

Dan 3:26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the opening of the burning fiery furnace; he

spoke and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the Most High God, come forth, and come *hither* . Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego came forth from the midst of the fire.

Here the writer, the prophet Daniel, refers to an event on this earth when Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, had the three Hebrew men thrown into an oven as punishment for refusing to worship an image of god he had made. The king looked into the furnace, blazing at full blast, and saw the three Jewish men as well as a mysterious fourth being whom he referred to himself as “like a son of God”, clearly sensing that he was not an ordinary human, but rather an angelic being from beyond the realms of mortal man. The wording here is the Aramaic word equivalents of the Hebrew words that have occurred in three of the five previous passages. Here we need to note that the specific words used are not Hebrew but rather Aramaic)Strong’s calls them Chaldean), it being a related Semitic language of the region. We might say, from what I have read, that Hebrew was a western Semitic language and Aramaic was the eastern Semitic equivalent. The word for “a son” is Strong’s number 1247 which Strong’s notes is the Chaldean equivalent for the Hebrew word number 1121, which is the word being searched for in these verses. Also, the word for “of God” is the Chaldean Strong’s number 426, which it notes is the Chaldean equivalent for the Hebrew word number 433. Now number 433 is not exactly the word number 430 we have been searching for. But it is essentially the same word. The point to note here is that the second word we have been looking for is number 430, which Strong’s notes is the plural form of the word number 433. So we are looking at the same wording essentially and the point is made adequately that Daniel 3:25 has the same phrasing “the sons of God” as most of the earlier verses reviewed. The reference is clearly to angelic beings.

Conclusion -

Of the six verses reviewed, five seem clearly to refer to angelic beings. That is not to say that Psalm 29:1, does not. In fact, significant ancient scriptural sources did take the verse as a reference to angels. Not matter how Psalm 29:1 is taken, the other five verses all clearly refer to angelic beings of immense power and not mortal men. So the Companion Bible’s sense there is some uniqueness about the specific wording of these eight verses (including Gen. 6:2, 4) and a commonality of meaning that runs through the eight verses seems legitimate. The point is well made that if these six verses, using the same essential phrasing, refer to angelic

**b
e
i
n
g
s
,

t
h
e
n

i
t

s
e
e
m
s**