

How Are We To Interpret Genesis 6:1-4

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If one were asked to make a list of the most puzzling passages in the Bible, Genesis chapter six verses one through four would without a doubt be at the top of such a list. This passage, though somewhat obscure, has been given much attention by scholars, laymen, and unbelievers alike:

When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal, his days will be a hundred and twenty years.” The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

Regarding this passage, one commentator has stated “Unquestionably, 6:1-4 is the most demanding passage in Genesis for the interpreter. Every verse is a source of exegetical difficulty. Also disconcerting is its trappings of mythological story, which make it, if myth is to be sought, the most likely candidate in the Bible.”¹ Indeed, within ancient mythology, one can find many parallels to this passage. In the Babylonian Atrahasis, dated to approximately 1600 B.C. we read that “The land became wide, the peop[le] became n]umerous,/The land bellowed like wild oxen./The god was disturbed by their uproar.”² This rise in the human population both strained the land and angered the god Enlil thus threatening humanity’s survival. Though there are indeed many significant differences between the Genesis account and those found throughout the ancient Near

¹ Matthews, 320

² ANET, 104 cited in Matthews, 323

East literature, the similarities have caused many scholars to deem the passage mythological rather than historical. Others, maintaining the inerrancy of Scripture have taken the position that Genesis 6:1-4 represents an accurate, historical account of the conditions that lead to humanity's judgment by the flood described in the following chapters.

Though there are many different interpretations of this passage, they basically fall into one of three categories. The purpose of this paper is to summarize the three major views, examining their strengths and weaknesses. We will also look at the possibility of a combination view. Finally, we will conclude by stating which view seems most plausible given the available data as well as offering some general remarks about this passage.

The three major interpretive views are the 1) cosmologically mixed races view, 2) the religiously mixed races view, and 3) the sociologically mixed races view.³ In the first interpretation angels are said to have desired human females because of their beauty. These angels came down from heaven and took women as wives, having sexual relationships with them and producing giant offspring, and thus incurring God's wrath. The second interpretation posits the "sons of God" as being men from the line of Seth and the "daughters of men" being women outside their family line, some coming from the line of Cain. In this view, intermarriage between the Godly Sethites and the wicked Cainites produced an immoral society that God judged severely. The third view sees the "sons of God" as being tyrant rulers and the "daughters of men" being common women. Those who hold to this view claim that humanity's judgment was the result of the reign of these despotic kings and the corruption that ensued.

³ Kaiser, 106

The “Cosmologically Mixed Races” or “Angels” view

The idea that the “sons of God” are to be understood as angelic is the oldest of the three views. The Jewish historian Josephus tells how “Many angels accompanied with women and begat sons that proved unjust.”⁴ Also, the intertestamental book of 1 Enoch, dating from around 200 B.C. tells of two hundred angels in heaven were led by the angel Semayaz to go down to earth and take human wives on account of how beautiful these women were. The angels taught their wives in the ways of magic and healing. The women gave birth to giant offspring who ate all the food, animals and even people.⁵ For critical commentators, the passage is seen as the remnant of an old myth that was historicized by the Yahwist or a later editor. Because ancient literature is full of stories in which gods or other deities mate with beautiful women and give birth to demigods (i.e. Hercules, Gilgamesh, etc.), the original intent of this passage is to explain the origins of these super-humans.⁶ Probably the most confident proponent of the “angels” view is von Rad, who asserts, “The question, which has been asked from the time of the early church down to our won day, whether, namely, the “sons of God” are to be understood as the angelic beings or as men...can be considered as finally settled.”⁷ He then proceeds to cut up the text in critical fashion so as to demonstrate that “The Yahwist wanted to show man’s general corruption. He wanted to represent the mixing of superhuman spiritual powers with man, a kind of ‘demonic’ invasion, and thus point out a further disturbance

⁴ Josephus, Antiquities 1:3:1 cited in Kaiser, 106

⁵ 1 Enoch 6:1-7:6 summarized in Kaiser, 106

⁶ Mathews, 324

⁷ von Rad, 114

caused by sin.”⁸ However, not all commentators who hold to the “angels” view are of liberal persuasion. Many evangelicals hold this view while still maintaining the integrity of the text. Hartley summarizes: “Consumed by lust, angels cohabitated with human women, thereby transgressing the boundary between the divine and the human realms. The offspring from these unions possessed extraordinary abilities. Lacking moral constraints, they used their abilities to promote wickedness.”⁹ But what evidence would lead one to conclude that the “sons of God” were angels?

The following linguistic features have led many to hold this view: In the three other instances where the exact phrase “sons of God” is used (Job 1:6, 2:1, and 38:7), it refers to angels.¹⁰ The Septuagint renders the Hebrew for “sons of God” as *ajggeloi* > *tou* > *qhou* >, the standard OT term for angels. Also, “*b’ne-ha elohim*” is the same linguistically as the Ugaritic “*bn il*”, or “the sons of El.” In Canaanite mythology, the *bn il* are gods who form part of the pantheon of which El is the head.¹¹ Thus, the term might easily carry divine or supernatural connotations in Hebrew as well.

Another point in favor of the “angels” view is its tradition. As noted earlier, the intertestamental authors favored this interpretation in their writings, of which 1 Enoch is a prime example. Many notable early Christians also held this position, a few examples being Justin, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Commodianus, and Ambrose.¹² The strongest line of evidence to which people of this view point is the sixth and seventh verses in the book of Jude, which read:

⁸ *ibid.*, 115

⁹ Hartley, 96

¹⁰ Walton, 291

¹¹ Hamilton, 262

¹² Mathews, 326

And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their won home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

It is maintained that the angels Jude is referring to are the “sons of God” in Genesis 6 because the phrase “in a similar way” associates the angels’ sin with that of Sodom and Gomorrah—the transgression of sexual boundaries set forth by God.

But why would angels want to take humans as wives? Proponents of the “angel” view have put forth many reasons, one of which is this: Angels who have fallen have lost the unity, oneness, and pleasure of heaven. Such loss of relationship might tempt them to seek human relationships to fulfill this desire.¹³ Furthermore, it is argued that interest in sexuality on the part of demons seems consistent with many of the documented reports of occult sexual practices.¹⁴ And the fact that angels were often mistaken for men (but never women)¹⁵ as well as the bold anthropomorphisms associated with the angel of the Lord¹⁶ suggest that angels could take on human form, possibly to the extent of being able to impregnate a woman. In fact, the birth of Jesus was the result of the supernatural impregnation of a mortal woman.

There are, however, many objections to the “angel” view. First, it should be noted that outside of Genesis 6, Moses refers to angels 15 times in the Pentateuch by using the Hebrew word for angels: “*mal’ak*.” He never uses “*be’ne-ha elohim*” to refer to heavenly beings.¹⁷ Also, not everyone identified as divine in the OT is supernatural. For instance, Davidic rulers are identified as being in a father/son relationship with God. In 2

¹³ Ross, 130

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ Hamilton, 263

¹⁷ Ross, 128

Samuel 7:14, God speaks of Israel's king stating, "I will be his father, he will be my son." As for the three other occurrences of "sons of God" explicitly referring to angels, Walton makes the following observation: "The fact that there are only three other occurrences of the phrase "the sons of God" and that they all occur in the linguistically isolated book of Job give significant pause for concluding that this Old Testament lexical base is sufficient to dictate exclusive meanings. This is the weak link in the armor of the 'angels' view."¹⁸ Furthermore, Kaiser notes that though the Septuagint translated the expression as being equivalent to "angels", it is in fact only the Alexandrian manuscript that does so. Alfred Rahlfs' critical edition does not reflect an angelic interpretation.¹⁹

As for the claim of the long tradition of holding this view, it must be noted that tradition does not always equal proof and is certainly not infallible. Critical scholars had a tradition of thinking the Hittites to be a mythological people created by the writers of Scripture. Many Christians had a tradition of believing in a geocentric universe. Both of these traditions were proved wrong by later discoveries. Outside of the Canon, tradition cannot be seen as authoritative.

We must also note that Jesus himself said that angels do not marry.²⁰ This should give us considerable pause for taking Genesis 6 to refer to angels, even fallen angels. Though they may desire to, there is no evidence in Scripture of supernatural beings, apart from the Holy Spirit himself, ever impregnating anyone. The passage in Jude never actually identifies the sin of the angels. The phrase "in a similar way" is used to introduce the third illustration of judgment, namely the fact that God will see to it that the

¹⁸ Walton, 292

¹⁹ Kaiser, 106-107

²⁰ Mark 12:25

unrighteous will be consigned to eternal punishment on judgment day.²¹ Mathews states “since the NT line of evidence remains unclear, it cannot have undue influence in our reading of the Genesis account.”²² Archer gives the following critique of the “angels” view

If we were to concede that spirits could somehow enter into sexual relations with human beings—which they cannot—then they could not have been referred to as “sons of God.” Demons of hell would never be so designated in Scripture. Nor could they have been angels of God, since God’s angels always live in total obedience to Him and have no other yearning or desire but to do God’s will and glorify His name. A sordid involvement with godless young women would therefore be completely out of character for angels as “sons of God.”²³

Though a bit dogmatic, this observation represents a strong challenge to the “angels” view. Having looked at the pros and cons of the “angels” view, we now turn our attention to the second interpretation of Genesis 6.

The “Religiously Mixed Races” or “Sethites” view

Some commentators, seeking to evade the seemingly mythical elements of the “angels” view, claim that the “sons of God” were men in the line of Seth while the “daughters of men” were ungodly women, possibly from the line of Cain. Archer summarizes:

What Genesis 6:1-2,4 records is the first occurrence of mixed marriage between believers and unbelievers, with the characteristic result of such unions: complete loss of testimony for the Lord and a total surrender of moral standards. In other words, the “sons of God” in this passage were descendants of the godly line of Seth. Instead of remaining true to God and loyal to their spiritual heritage, they allowed themselves to be enticed by the beauty of ungodly women who were

²¹ NIV study note on Jude 7. Barker, 1919. Also Walton notes that this punishment is cited elsewhere in 1 Enoch, Jude’s source, as applying to disruptive angels (1 Enoch 21; 54:3-6) and that while the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was sexual immorality, Genesis 6 speaks of sexual relationships within the context of marriage. Walton, 297

²² Mathews, 327

²³ Archer, 80

“daughters of men”—that is, of the tradition and example of Cain. The natural result of such marriages was a debasement of nature on the part of the younger generations, until the entire antediluvian civilization sank to the lowest depths of depravity.²⁴

The following arguments are given in support of the “Sethites” view. First, Such notable Christians as Augustine, Luther, and Calvin have held this view.²⁵ (However, as noted above, tradition is not a strong proof.) Secondly, *Elohim* can be rendered as a genitive of quality.²⁶ Words in the genitive case can serve as adjectives describing their antecedent.²⁷ If this is the case, then “sons of God” should be rendered “godly Sons.” The case for this rendering is strengthened if we consider three minor, but significant facts: 1) Gen. 4:1-14 says nothing good about Cain’s line while Gen. 4:25-5:32 says nothing bad about Seth’s. 2) Seth’s son Enosh and his associates “called on the name of the Lord (Gn. 4:26).” Considering that throughout Scripture one’s name represents one’s character, this passage may show Enosh and those after him ‘calling on the character of the Lord’ or conforming their character to His. 3) Lamech’s daughter’s name, Naamah, means “beautiful” (Gn. 4:22).²⁸ Given these three factors that seem to contrast the godly line of Seth with the ungodly line of Cain, the “Sethites” view seems plausible.²⁹

Also, it is noted that the scenario of righteous men chasing or marrying beautiful, foreign women and being led into the worship of other gods in a recurring theme in the OT.³⁰ Examples would be the Baal-Peor incident in Numbers 25:1-2 and Solomon’s apostasy recorded in 1 Kings 11:1-13. Mathews, in arguing for the validity of the

²⁴ *ibid*

²⁵ Mathews, 329-330

²⁶ *ibid*

²⁷ For example, “sea of glass” can be rendered “glassy sea” or a “suit of armor” as an “armored suit.” These are but few examples.

²⁸ Ross, 125

²⁹ Mathews, 329-330

³⁰ Hartley, 96

“Sethites” view claims that “Genesis typically invites Israel to see itself in the events of their parents by employing the language and imagery of institutional life and of events later experienced by Israel.”³¹ Therefore, this passage fits easily into the motif of intermarriage resulting in judgment recorded throughout scripture.

Some charge the “Sethites” view with inconsistently using “men” in verse one to mean humans, but in verse two to mean Cainites. As Kidner notes: “If the [angels] view defies the normalities of experience, the [Sethites view] defies those of language...nothing has prepared the reader to assume that “men” now means Cainites only.”³² Hamilton counters this objection by stating “the OT does not lack instances of a shift from a generic to a specific use of a word in one context. Thus, “*adam*” as “mankind” in verse one and as “Cainites” in verse two is not impossible.”³³ However, many proponents of the “Sethites” view avoid this objection altogether by claiming that the “daughters of men” are to be understood not just as Cainites, but as women regardless of parentage with Cainites being among them. Thus by taking “any of them they chose,” the Sethites were guilty of embracing the unrighteous.³⁴ However, there are still more problems with the “Sethites” view.

The “Sethites” view seems to imply that the entire line of Seth is Godly and the entire line of Cain is wicked;³⁵ yet this is never stated in the text. Furthermore, as Walton notes, “it is difficult to extrapolate the warnings against elect Israel intermarrying and apply them to a group (Sethites) that has not been designated elect and has not even been

³¹ Mathews, 330

³² Kidner, 83-8

³³ Hamilton, 264

³⁴ Mathews, 330-331

³⁵ Walton, 292-293

identified as ethically isolated.”³⁶ In other words, we have no sufficient reason in this case to “read back into” the Genesis text what is presented later in the canon because the situations appear to be quite different. Finally, the word rendered as “beautiful” to describe the “daughters of men” is “*tobot*.” This same word is used to mean “morally good” in the primeval account in the opening chapters of Genesis (1:31, 2:9).³⁷ If this is the case in Gn. 6, then the “daughters of men” would be morally upright rather than wicked or ungodly. The final view we will look at indeed takes this to be the case.

The “Sociologically Mixed Races” or “Tyrant kings” view

This view holds that the phrase “sons of God” is better translated as “sons of the god(s).” Kaiser, holding this position, states:

Genesis 6:1-4, therefore, is best understood as depicting ambitious, despotic and autocratic rulers seizing both women and power in an attempt to gain all the authority and notoriety they could from those within their reach. Their progeny were, not surprisingly, adversely affected, and so it was that God was grieved over the increased wickedness on planet Earth. Every inclination of the hearts and thoughts of humanity was evil.”³⁸

Human kings and rulers, referring to themselves as divine, used their military might to take any woman they chose as a wife for the purpose of sexual fulfillment as well as offspring. One commentator who holds to this view sees the offense of the “sons of God” as being the practice of the “right of first night.”³⁹ This involved a ruler partaking sexually of a bride on the first night of her wedding. This practice was common in the ancient Near East and was the “most telling evidence of Gilgamesh’s tyranny.”⁴⁰ The

³⁶ *ibid.* 293

³⁷ Hartley, 98-99

³⁸ Kaiser, 108

³⁹ Walton, 293

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

wording in Gn. 6:2, it is argued, would be an apt description of such practice.⁴¹ Though this idea of the “sons of God” practicing the “right of first night” is only a theory, there are many more reasons given for holding the “tyrant kings” interpretation.

In defense of the “tyrant kings” view, the following are offered as evidence: 1) The ancient Aramaic Targums of Onkelos render “sons of God” as “sons of nobles.”⁴² 2) the word “*elohim*” doesn’t always refer to God in Scripture. Sometimes it is used as a title for human rulers or judges (Ex. 21:6, 22:8, Ps. 82:1,6).⁴³ 3) The account of the “sons of God” in Genesis 6 resembles the account of Lamech the Cainite in Genesis 4—both describe the taking of wives, the bearing of children, and dynastic exploits. Lamech practiced bigamy and enforced his will by tyranny.⁴⁴ If this is indeed a comparative account, then like Lamech, the “sons of God” are to be seen as evil mortal rulers.

Probably the most compelling evidence offered for the “tyrant kings” view is the ancient Near East practice of rulers using divine titles to lend authority or clout to their reign.⁴⁵ Examples of this type of divine claim abound—a few being the claims of Eannatum, Gudea (Sumerian), Hammurabi (Old Babylonian), Tukulti-Ninurta (Middle Assyrian), and Ashurbanipal (Neo-Assyrian).⁴⁶ Gilgamesh was described as being two-thirds god and one-third man;⁴⁷ and in the Ugaritic *Keret* epic, the king, Keret was referred to as “*bn il*” or “son of El”.⁴⁸ These and many other examples lend much force to the idea of “sons of God” being a reference to antediluvian kings whom the ancients

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² Kaiser, 108

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ Walton, 294

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ Mathews, 328

believe to be divine.⁴⁹ This was common rhetoric in the ancient world.⁵⁰ We even find examples of this in Scripture: Psalm 82:6b reads, “you are all sons of the Most High.” The phrase used is “*bene elyon*” which is analogous to “*bene he elohim*.”⁵¹

None of this is meant to imply that the Biblical author borrowed from pagan mythology to create the account of Genesis 6. But the use of divine titles in ancient Near East culture should support the idea that such a concept would not be foreign to the Biblical world. Walton makes this point: “As always, the ancient literature is a window to the culture,” and that, “the elements in [Gn.] 6:1-4 fit comfortably into what we know of the ancient Near Eastern culture.”⁵² The only major objection to the “tyrant kings” view is the fact that while individual kings are referred to as divine, there is no evidence for groups of kings in the ancient Near East being called ‘sons of the gods.’⁵³

A “Combination” or “Possession” View

One final view needs to be examined briefly. The “Possession” view interprets the “sons of God” to be demons who possessed humans leading them into unnatural unions with women. Though not holding this particular view himself, Geisler summarizes it by stating, “[The sons of God] were angels who ‘did not keep their proper domain’ (Jude 7) and possessed real human beings, moving them to interbreed with ‘daughters of men,’ thus producing a superior breed whose offspring were the ‘giants’ and ‘men of renown.’” he then goes on to offer a defense of the “possession” view by

⁴⁹ Kline notes that elsewhere in the OT gods of nations are referred to by the Biblical authors as though they are real. Kline’s statement is noted in Mathews, 328.

⁵⁰ Walton, 294

⁵¹ Mathews, 328

⁵² Walton, 294

⁵³ Mathews, 329 and Hamilton, 264

noting that, “This view seems to explain all the data without the insuperable problems of angels, who are bodiless (Heb. 1:14) and sexless spirits (Mt. 22:30), cohabitating with humans.”⁵⁴ Though this view may be appealing to some, it is completely theoretical, for nowhere in the passage is such possession implied.

Of the three major views examined above, as well as the combination view, it is the opinion of this author that the view that best fits the text is the “Sociologically Mixed Races” or “tyrant kings” view. This interpretation seems to fit best with the ancient Near East languages and cultures. The perpetrators of the crimes were most likely humans rather than angels or demons due to the fact that the punishment of the “120 years” is directed against humanity. Also, as Mathews points out, the use of the terms “sons” and “daughters” recall the formulaic phrase “others sons and daughters” attributed to each patriarch up until the time of Noah. Furthermore, the language of Genesis 6:1-4 parallels the language used to describe the events that took place involving human sin in Eden (i.e. saw, beautiful/good, married/took).⁵⁵ Finally, as noted previously, the NT passages used to support a supernatural interpretation are not clear enough for one to base such an interpretation upon. That being said, the “Sethites” view seems deficient as well. Though the it is a bit more plausible than the “angels” view, to regard the “sons of God” as referring to the only Sethites seems to be an exegetical leap of sorts; for even if the line of Seth remained genealogically isolated (which we have no reason to believe it did), nowhere in the text is there a prohibition against marrying outside of one’s genealogical

⁵⁴ Geisler, 40

⁵⁵ Mathews, 321

line. In light of these points, it seems that the “tyrant kings” view offers the least amount of difficulties, while still accounting for all of the events recorded in this passage.

So who were the Nephilim and to what did the 120 years refer? All of the views looked at maintain that God’s judgment came in the form of limiting man’s days to 120 years. However, there is disagreement as to whether these 120 years refer to human life spans, or a period of 120 years before the judgment of the flood. There is also disagreement as to the identity of the Nephilim. Were they the offspring of the “sons of God” and the “daughters of men”, or were they their contemporaries? We will look first at the most likely identity of the Nephilim and then to the meaning of the 120 years.

The word “Nephilim” is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The word most is most likely related to the word “*napal*,” meaning “to fall.”⁵⁶ Thus the term “Nephilim” probably means “fallen ones” or something similar and is referring to mighty warriors who were renowned for their fierceness and cruelty in the ancient world. Some versions of the Bible such as the King James Version, translate “Nephilim” as “giants” because of the description of the people referred to as the Nephilim in the spies’ description of the promised land in the book of Numbers. Those holding the “angels” view uphold this interpretation arguing that the interbreeding of angels and humans would yield giant or supernatural offspring and that the Nephilim in the spies’ account, as well as the giants such as Goliath and spoken of later in Scripture, were the descendants of these beings. This view seems insufficient due to the fact that the flood of Genesis 7 wiped out everyone except Noah and his family. If the Nephilim of Numbers are descendants of the Nephilim in Genesis then that means that they somehow survived the very flood that God sent to destroy them. It must be noted that nowhere in the Genesis 6 passage does it say

⁵⁶ *ibid*, 336

that the Nephilim were the offspring of the “sons of God” and the “daughters of men.” The reference to the Nephilim is merely parenthetical, serving two purposes: 1) to give the identity of the “heroes of old, the men of renown” who were known throughout the ancient Near East (i.e. Gilgamesh) and 2) to show that the events involving the “sons of God” and the “daughters of men” took place during this heroic age.⁵⁷ The presence of the Nephilim functioned as another piece of evidence to depict the wickedness of the antediluvian society. As to the identity of the Nephilim in the spies’ account, Mathews posits that, “it is better to understand the allusion to the Nephilim in Numbers 13 as figurative, cited by the spies because of the violent reputation of “Nephilim” from ancient times.”⁵⁸ If this is the case, then the spies’ use of the term Nephilim is seen as a “scare-tactic” intended to instill fear in the Israelites who were familiar with stories of these ancient warriors.

What then are we to make of the judgment of the limiting of man’s days to 120 years? Some take this to mean that God limited the life spans of humans by withdrawing His Spirit from inside them, thereby giving them much less time to commit such evil deeds before dying. However, in the genealogies that follow in chapter 10, as well as in the rest of the book of Genesis, everyone mentioned lives much longer than 120 years. Proponents of the 120 year life span counter by claiming that God supernaturally prolonged the years of many people as an exception, possibly due to their faith in Him. Others see the 120 years as the period of time God gave humanity to repent before sending the flood upon the earth. They liken this to the 40 days given to Ninevah by God for repentance in Jonah 4:5. Some claim that the 120 years was the amount of time it

⁵⁷ Walton, 295

⁵⁸ Mathews, 337

took Noah to build the Ark, however this is pure speculation and finds no support in the text. Both the “life span” view and the “grace period” view are plausible. In either case, mankind’s days are limited by God withdrawing His Spirit. Hamilton makes the following insightful observation: “The withdrawn Spirit of 6:3 calls to mind the hovering Spirit of 1:2. Where it hovers there is order and chaos is restrained. Where it is withdrawn, chaos flourishes unchecked.”⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Hamilton, 267

Conclusion

In summary, the phrase “sons of God” is to be understood as a title chose by the Biblical author, possibly facetiously, to describe tyrannical rulers who ruled unjustly and took whoever they wanted as wives. The judgment of 120 years probably refers to the period preceding the destruction of wicked humanity by the flood; though it may also just as easily apply to the limiting of sinful humanity’s life spans. The Nephilim, or “fallen ones” are most likely fierce warriors, of whom many stories and legends were told throughout the ancient world. Having looked at Genesis 6:1-4 and the different views pertaining to it, and having chosen as most plausible the interpretations stated above, a few comments must be made. First, the exact meaning of this passage has eluded scholars for millennia. Thus, one should be careful in approaching it. It is impossible to rule out, entirely, any of the above views. It is particularly important not to rule out the “angels” view on account of it’s “mythical” feel. If this is one’s criteria for interpreting Scripture then much of the Bible must be reinterpreted as well, for events such as Jonah’s ordeal inside the fish, the speech of Balaam’s donkey, the fiery furnace of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednigo, as well as most of the miracles of Jesus have just as much of a “mythical” feel to them. The job of the interpreter is to find out what the text says and let it speak for itself rather than imposing unnecessary, outside restrictions upon it. That was the author’s purpose in writing this paper, and hopefully, that purpose was accomplished.

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