

The Bible in Context Ep 18: The Sons of God and Pre-Flood Gen 6:1-13

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Welcome back to the Bible in Context.

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If everybody's still hanging with us after the genealogies last week, I'm glad you're back. This week we're going to talk about the sons of God, so that's a fun topic. I think probably given our direction so far, you can probably guess where we're at on this. Yeah, yeah. I mean, this is one of those topics that's very controversial. Yeah. And for some reason it can rub people the wrong way, but I think there's a pretty solid argument for the sons of God to be spiritual beings. Yeah, for sure.

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So yeah. Well, we've already talked about the Apkalu last time, these demi-gods that, you know, the gods came down and mated with women and produced the Apkalu, these givers of knowledge. Well, and... What story was that from? Because that's not a biblical story. It's actually quite a few. Gilgamesh, he's two-thirds god, one-third man. He's an Apkalu. Okay. So it was pretty typical to call...

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Like in the ancient Near East, that was common language. The Apkhalel were particularly Mesopotamian. I think that's what, at least per the books we're going to talk about, that's who they're jabbing in the eye with this story. Okay. All right. So yeah, their story, the Mesopotamian story.

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What's like contrast them? What's the difference between the Mesopotamian story versus what we have here in Genesis chapter 6? Yeah, so these Apkalu in some cases they're they're bad because they're giving these magic practices that can hurt society and so sometimes they're they're villains a lot of times. They're heroes. They're cultural heroes in this story. They're not heroes. They're definitely not heroes. They're kind of the bad guy. Yeah and instead of the sons of God coming down and creating these demigod children who are giving the

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wonderful knowledge to humanity, they just bring violence. They produce these mighty warrior nephilim. So maybe a common example, is Hercules an example of like a hero that is a demigod? I don't know if anybody's done like a study of like comparative mythology there, but I'm not sure. It's not Mesopotamian. That's the category I guess. But it's the same category. Or here's another one, maybe Moana. Oh, you're welcome dude.

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Yeah, the rock. Yeah, whatever it is. He's a demigod, so it's the same kind of category. I should know that name. So these are Nephilim. Maui. Maui, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Anyway. So the Nephilim are these demigod, kind of that category of part human, part.

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divine or some kind of small g god. And they're not these great heroes in the culture, they're not these awesome teachers, they're bringing violence and death and helping the world to spiral into being completely ruined. Yeah, yeah, that's the men of renown.

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mighty men who are of old. Now, isn't there some places in scripture where like that phrase is used in a positive way though? So, the mighty men, gibbream, David, his warriors are gibbream. So, it just means mighty. It's not like necessarily a bad word. But here it's just applied in such a way that they're bad. Yeah. Okay. I did want to make a couple notes real quick on the sons of God just to say, you know, if you want to check out a few verses just to see.

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not on the the sons of God are spiritual beings boat. Here's some places you can go to read about that if you're curious to learn that. So, Job 38, 7 where it talks about the sons of God being parallel to the morning stars. And then you also have Psalm 89, 6 where the sons of God are talked about as divine beings on the divine council. You have Job 1 and Job 2 where the sons of God are coming before God and Satan comes amidst them and is having

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Satan, the Satan, the Satan is having a conversation with Yahweh in the midst of this gathering of the sons of God. This seems to be something more than the sons of God, the faithful humans at a church service or at their local synagogue or whatever, and then Satan comes among them to talk to God. Yeah, and weren't the Jewish tradition, early Christians even, viewed the sons of God as spiritual beings? Like we were talking about earlier, the book of Enoch. Yeah. Also, I believe the book of Jubilee.

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I noted that guys like Josephus and Philo, also in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian origin, they all understood the Sons of God to be spiritual beings. So this is not something that we've come up with in recent times. This is a very old traditional understanding of who the Sons of God are.

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But yeah, I mean that's the standard interpretation in antiquity. People understood that the sons of God were spiritual beings. And there's other stories like this in comparative mythology where you've got like Prometheus who brings fire, this kind of divine knowledge down to humans and

he's a bad guy for that sort of sense. Yeah. Well, and even in the New Testament it seems that Peter and Jude talk about what's going on here in Genesis 6. These are...

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spiritual beings. Yeah, they definitely do. If you want to read more about that, check out Michael Heiser's *Unseen Realm* or the article that he pulls a lot from. It's like a 40-page article. It's almost a book itself. Is *Amar Onus On the Origin of the Watcher's Comparative Study of Antediluvian Wisdom in Mesopotamian Jewish Traditions*. So another mouthful, but it's a good one too if you want to really dive super deep into this. Yeah, those are two really good resources. Mainly I would say for most people just go to Heiser.

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realm or his less footnoted version, *Supernatural*. Yeah. Yeah, those would be really good books to go over the sons of God and just the ancient worldview in terms of spiritual beings and what they are. Whether you're trying to learn about this subject or just spiritual beings in general, I recommend that one. So anyway, these sons of God, these spiritual beings, they came down and I think most translations say they took wives. The word for wife in Hebrew is the same word for woman. So this may not be...

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you know, all these gods came down and got white picket fences and set up, you know, had a marriage covenant with all these women. This may have been something a little darker. Yeah, and I'm trying to remember the idea that they took. This is very similar language to what we see back in Genesis with Eve, that she saw the fruit was desirable and she took it and she ate. And so here what do we have that's similar to that?

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take as they choose. So it's automatically linking these spiritual beings back to Eve's Fall narrative.

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in the same way that the woman is deceived by the serpent, which is actually a spiritual being, to look and see and to take. So now spiritual beings are taking women, and that's part of their fall. So you see this kind of inversion here. And then something else that's going on is that the author is showing us the second problem with the world. So we often think of Genesis 3, the fall, as like the only problem with the world is our fallenness and sin.

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That is a big problem, it's a true problem. But there is also the rebellion of the spiritual beings, some of which happened here. And that's part of why the author mirrors Eve's fall or humanity's fall with this occurrence of the sons of God taking women for themselves. Humanity is spiraled into polygamy and violence, and now these spiritual beings have come and just amplified that and given them tools and warriors to carry out that violence even better.

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lives. And this is where I think I did a, when I was researching this, I remember them saying that if these were wives, the implication here is that in that day, it was common for the father of the daughter to give his wife. So it's like this idea that humanity had become so corrupt that they were willingly giving their daughters to these gods as a gift or

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and that maybe they were hoping that they would receive these sons who would be... Establish their name. Establish their name and power and stuff. So I don't know if that's going on here or not, but that's a possibility I think. Another background of this could actually be, and that might be what's going on. I mean it doesn't really give us a lot of detail. No. It kind of just says, hey, you know that Mesopotamian tradition? We're just letting you know we're keying into it and then running with it to give you a different narrative.

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the king would go and meet with, I think at the top of a ziggurat, I can't remember, but would go and meet with a cult prostitute. I think it's like a yearly festival. Now the king, by nature of being king, he's a god. The cult prostitute, she is human, but she's also at that point possessed with a god in a sense, and so they have an offspring that is two-thirds god, one-third man, like Gilgamesh. So that may also be part of the background to this, is this practice

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ship and things like that. Isn't there a connection though to the Nephilim being giants somewhere? Yeah so numbers 1333 they are connected to all the sons of Anak in Canaan. Yeah so let me read that numbers 131 because that's a pretty direct connection.

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starting in verse 32 of Numbers 13. So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land, and they had spied out saying the land, so this is in the context of like Caleb and Joshua and the spies going into the promised land to check it out. And so they bring back this report. The land through which we have gone spy out, it's a land that devours its inhabitants and all the people that we saw in it are of great height.

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all the Nephilim, the sons of Amek who came from the Nephilim. And we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them. And so there's the direct connection between the Nephilim and being these very tall giants.

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Yeah, in Deuteronomy 2 you actually see where these Anakim who are related to the Nephilim are also related to the Emim, the Horites, the Rephaim, and some other people groups. So there's all these different giant clans in the land of Canaan and elsewhere. Whenever you see giants in scripture, it's these Nephilim dudes. If we ever go far enough to make it into the conquest, we'll be talking a lot about them actually.

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this world that's described as being completely demonized. Yeah. Wickedness. Verse 5, the Lord saw the wickedness of man was great in all the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. It's just this over-the-top description of a world that's gone completely rebellious. Yeah, I mean, really the idea here is that we started with the world in Tohu Vavohu in chapter 1. It's in a state of ruin.

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And now, once again, we are back into a state of ruin. So we see in verse 12, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And then verse 13, I think, is significant. And God said to Noah, in the ESV version says, I have determined to make an end of all flesh. And that kind of makes God seem like this vengeful guy. But if you look at the footnote, it's interesting. Another alternative translation to that.

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verse 13, and God said to Noah, the end of all flesh has come before me, which implies that God looks down at the world, it's corrupt, it's rebellious, and they're about to destroy themselves. And that's what God is looking at in this moment. And so the flood in the story of Noah especially is meant to be a story of God.

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not out of anger destroying the world, but out of a broken heart. I mean, it even talks about that God grieved this. It doesn't use a word that implies that he was over the top angry at what's going on, but he's brokenhearted. And the flood is basically a reset on creation because everything had gotten so corrupt.

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This is God's way of cleaning the slate and starting fresh with Noah. Yeah. Yeah, I mean, the world started with Tohu Vovohu and now we're back into it. He tried to take it from ruin into a working temple where he lived with the humans in a good place. Now, he's had to... he's withdrawn from creation and the humans have completely ruined it. And so, like you said, he's not just up there like, I don't like what they're doing. I'm going to get rid of it.

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in a sense. Well this is his way of saving creation. He does save humanity. Yeah, saving humanity, not saving creation. He's decreating through the flood everything that we saw in Chapter 1 kind of reverses itself. We'll get into that I'm sure in a little bit. But yeah, this is God very much.

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saying let's start over. I'm gonna save humanity, and this is how I'm gonna do it. Yeah, he made a promise in Genesis 3 to stick with this family, and so he's staying true to that promise. Right. So let's close out this session just with a quick summary of what we've talked about. And so we

talked about the context of what's going on in chapter six, and we talked specifically about the sons of God and how there's a strong argument that the sons of God

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spiritual beings that came and saw were attracted to the daughters of man or the women and they produced these giant nephilim and this is kind of a poke in the eye to the other pagan stories that were there in their day and these nephilim were not heroes, they were evil and it

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just continue this spiral of humanity and the world becoming this place that was totally wicked and God sees this and is broken hearted and decides to save humanity through Noah because he remembers Noah.

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And once we get to chapter 8, that's like the center of the chiasm of the whole flood story. That God remembers Noah and remembers his promise ultimately that he made back in Genesis chapter 3 to Adam and Eve that he would one day use the offspring of the woman to...

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to redeem humanity. And so with that, next week we will pick back up again with the flood narrative and work our way a little bit further. We're going to talk about the boat. The temple boat. Well, yeah. I'm just going to give them, I'm just going to leave that hang. Yeah, we'll talk about that later. Cool. Alright, looking forward to it.