



A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE END TIMES

Week 3: Who Are the Sons of God?

May 8, 2022

Instructor: Steve Schmutzer

I. Review

- A. In last week's lesson called "The First Prophecy" we saw how the basic foundation for all Biblical prophecy was laid down in **Genesis 3:14-15**, and more specifically, in **vs. 15**
- B. The events of these two verses, which take place shortly after the creation of Adam and Eve, defined several important issues. These important issues set the tone for prophetic matters which have already happened, for the things we are seeing even now, and for those prophetic issues yet to come. For example...
 1. The coming of a supernatural Messiah is foretold – only a divine Messiah could defeat Satan.
 2. Yet, this Messiah would be born through the physical seed of the woman.
 3. Satan would be ultimately crushed or destroyed by this Messiah.
 4. Conversely, Satan would do little more than figuratively bruise or strike the heel of this Messiah.
 5. Meantime, there would be ongoing enmity or hostility between Satan's physical seed and the woman's physical seed.
- C. Now, various scholars have taken those five points and have put their own language to them, however their essential thrust remains the same.
 1. The future coming of Jesus Christ is made clear in **Genesis 3:15**.
 2. The eventual destruction of Satan is made clear in **Genesis 3:15**.
 3. Jesus Christ will be the one to defeat Satan in **Genesis 3:15**.
 4. And...all through the ages to come, a war between the two physical seeds would evolve (*again - - seen clearly in Genesis 3:15*).

NOTE: These are the points that are made clear from the first two principles of proper Biblical interpretation: (a.) understanding the Biblical language in its original meaning, and (b.) from holding to an interpretation that is in harmony with other passages on the same subject.

II. HOW THE THIRD PRINCIPLE OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION COME INTO PLAY IN THE SUBJECT OF THE SONS OF GOD. Turn to **Genesis 6:1-4**:

- A. Before we read this passage together, I want you to try to imagine Satan's frame of mind after God pronounced judgment on him. Satan received a critical two-part message:
 1. There is a future Messiah coming who will destroy him.
 2. That Messiah is going to come *through the physical seed of the woman*.
 - a. Let's be very clear here:
 - This future Messiah is prophesied to come through the human genome.

- Besides being God himself - this future Messiah must also possess clean, unadulterated, human genetics – there can be no corruption.
 - b. If you are properly imagining what Satan was thinking, he’s already planning to prevent his own destruction.
 - If he can disrupt the arrival of the Messiah, then he can prevent his own destruction.
 - If he can prove God to be a liar in some way or, if he can keep some of the details of God’s prophecies from coming true, then God Himself cannot be trusted and He therefore cannot be God.
- B. With this background, let’s now explore the question, ‘Who are the sons of God?’
(Read Genesis 6:1-4)
1. Let’s remember, we are now looking at the development of the larger context.
 - c. If we interpreted the meaning of the original Biblical language correctly in **Ch. 3:15**, then this context should conform to that.
 - d. If we understood the other passages which underscored the serpent in the Garden of Eden as being a divine being, then this context should also build on that.
 - e. Keep in mind, we can never let go of any of the rules of proper interpretation at any time. They are always in play at all times.
 2. So this naturally raises this question, “What is the original meaning of the term ‘sons of God?’
 - a. The original language of Genesis, as we learned last week, was Hebrew. Hebrew is a language of greater dimension and richer hues than the English language.
 - b. The Hebrew term for “sons of God” is **b’nai Elohim**, which Jewish scholars of the Torah, (the first five books of the Old Testament) define as “heavenly beings.”
 - c. A more technical dissection of **b’nai Elohim** reveals that b’nai is plural for “sons” and Elohim is plural for “God.”
 - It’s important we not miss that key point! It’s plural - for “God!”
 - “Elohim” first shows up in **Genesis 1:1**, “In the beginning, God...” The Bible unwraps the doctrine of the trinity right out of the gates.
 - You won’t see the word “Trinity” there, but the doctrine of the Trinity still IS there.
 - It’s why God said in **Genesis 1:26**, “Let US make man in OUR image, in OUR likeness...” (This is another insight into the Doctrine of the Trinity. That God exists in three parts, and all are One).
 - “Elohim” is used because the divinely-inspired writers of Scripture understood that God exists as a plural being.

- God opens the Scriptures with a proper view of Himself, because a proper view of God always leads to a proper view of everything else.
 - Here's a good reminder for us: When things start going sideways in the Lord's work or in the expressions of our faith and our worship, chances are good that someone somewhere forgot who God really is and how He needs to be properly revered.
- No tiny detail is left to chance in the Bible, so there's no room to teach it or treat any of it casually.

Note: *Two important truths.*

1. *First, Satan HATES the fact that we are made in God's image.*
2. *Second, he HATES the fact that God created only TWO genders in that image: male and female.*
3. *Whatever the devil can do to call into question the value of human life or the clear definitions, and roles of two genders, he is going to do that to create chaos and confusion.*

Further: *Genesis 1:27* underscores both of these fundamental truths: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female, he created them."

- *This dashes to pieces that we evolved from monkeys, or before that from a gob of goo. There is no big bang that put us here – the Bible is clear: God created us!*
- *This also shatters any suggestion that there are more than two genders – by God's design there are ONLY two: males and female.*
- *This also lets us see why Satan and all who are depraved are so motivated to destroy human life. To call murder a 'choice,' to cause death and destruction, to depopulate the planet through any nefarious or deceptive means possible. They argue that there are many different gender types, or that men can get pregnant and the idea there is a need to have tampon dispensers in the boys' bathroom, and so on and so on.*
- *Human life, for both genders, is created in the image of God – and Satan HATES that simple fact.*

3. Back to **Genesis 6:1-4**, where we have already established that ***b'nai Elohim*** means "heavenly beings", there's more to this term that needs to be understood:
 - a. The Hebrew term ***b'nai Elohim*** is also constructed in such a way as to mean a direct physical creation of God.
 - In other words, whoever these heavenly beings – these "sons of God" are - they did not originate through natural processes like you and I who came from human parents.

- Rather, they began as the result of the supernatural, creative, ex nihilo (Latin: “out of nothing”) activity that only God Himself is capable of doing.
 - Here’s how to see the matter: These b’nai Elohim were not present in one moment - but in the next one they fully were. They were supernaturally created.
- b. Now, this limits our options. “Whoever” and “whatever” we are talking about here must meet two essential criteria:
- They must be direct, supernatural, physical creations of God, and....
 - They must also be “heavenly beings” as opposed to “earthly beings,” like ourselves.
- c. Already, in treating God’s Word as it needs to be treated, common sense rises to the surface and makes the case that ‘sons of God’ here in **Genesis Ch. 6** is referring to angels.
- d. This raises another natural question which is this: “Is **‘b’nai Elohim’** used elsewhere in the Bible to refer specifically to angels or heavenly beings?”
- This second question correctly assumes the self-clarifying nature of the Bible.
 - It applies that interpretive principle that passages must be in harmony with other passages on the same subject.
 - One passage of Scripture is always supported by another.
4. If we research this question, we discover that the term **b’nai Elohim** is only ever used in the Bible to refer to angels or heavenly beings - - the latter being in one form or another (more on that in a moment).
- As we’ve just seen, the term first appears in the book of **Genesis (6:2 and 6:4)**.
 - It’s used next in **Job 1:6 and 2:1** to describe occasions when the angels gathered to present themselves before God (**READ**).
- NOTE: There are a couple of key observations we need to make here:**
- First, in these Job texts, Satan is part of this **b’nai Elohim** gathering too. This greatly underscores the angelic nature of this Hebrew term.
 - Second, it reinforces that the term **b’nai Elohim** can accommodate a “fallen” element (as opposed to ‘righteous’). This fallen element, as we will see, is very much a part of the details of *Genesis 6:1-4*.
 - Later on, in **Job 38:7**, the Hebrew term **b’nai Elohim** reappears once more, this time during God’s rebuttal to Job (**READ**).
 - In response to Job’s many complaints, God dialogues with him. He reinforces Job’s humanity while emphasizing His own divinity.
 - It’s a reality check for Job because despite his own significant trials and traumas, he ends up seeing himself as he really needs to, and he ends up seeing God as he really needs to. Our personal trials have a way of doing that.

- Woven into this discussion is a moment where God rhetorically asks Job if he was present during the creation of the earth, an occasion during which “....all the angels (***b’nai Elohim***) shouted for joy?”
- Here the Hebrew term is used to describe be the righteous angels who are celebrating God’s creation, perhaps at a point prior to any of them becoming fallen.

NOTE: So, let’s quickly review what we now know about the Hebrew term ***b’nai Elohim*** which is translated in our English Bibles as ‘sons of God’:

- It refers to “heavenly beings”
 - It is used to describe beings which were directly created by God – via a divine process as opposed to a natural process
 - It is used to describe fallen angels, including Satan himself
 - It is used to describe righteous angels who ‘shouted for joy’ at God’s creation
5. Now – let’s move over to the NT to assess some other considerations
- a. There is, for example, the passage of ***Luke 3:38*** which concludes a record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ. It reads, “*The son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.*”
 - b. It’s the Greek equivalent of ***b’nai Elohim***, and it argues the same dynamics as the Hebrew term.
 - The translators of the Septuagint (the original Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures) understood that.
 - c. This is a point where some liberal commentators and various seminaries try to argue a different case. They see Luke’s passage as evidence that the ***b’nai Elohim*** concept is not confined to “heavenly beings.”
 - Had such people and institutions stuck with the proper principles of Biblical interpretation, they would not have moved in this direction of error.
 - d. As I stated - ***Luke 3:38*** concludes Luke’s genealogical record of Jesus Christ.
 - The whole record’s pattern is consistent with the sole exception of Adam.
 - Every human named in the list is shown to be the direct descendent of another human.
 - The only deviation from this model is Adam who descended directly from God.
 - Adam had no earthly parents like everyone else did. He was instead formed from the dust of the ground by God Himself, and so the original argument of “heavenly beings” is not only sustained by ***Luke 3:38***, but it is reinforced quite well.

- Remember, according to scripture the term “sons of God” (*b’nai Elohim*) is limited to those beings supernaturally and directly created by God.
- Being of “heavenly origin” in his own way, Adam fits these parameters just fine, and so he is the only human in this genealogical record to receive this special designation.

6. Let’s take these NT considerations one final step further.

NOTE: I would be irresponsible to not address the concept of *b’nai Elohim* in those portions of the NT where believers are also thus described:

1. **Cf. John 1:12** – “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (some translations say “sons of God”)
2. **Romans 8:14** – “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”
3. **NOTE:** The same sort of things are stated in passages like: **Galatians 4:4-7 and Ephesians 1:5**.
4. There is no lack of pastors, teachers, and so on that look at these NT passages and argue that it shows the Hebrew term by which we get our English phrase “sons of God” therefore does not mean what it is saying. But not so fast....
5. In a spiritual sense, the parameters of *b’nai Elohim* applies here too because believers are new creatures created directly by God.
 - Seen this way, believers are “heavenly beings” which are born of above through a sovereign and exclusive act of God.
 - Let’s not forget - salvation is a supernatural transaction, executed entirely by God. You and I bring no deed or achievement to the process of our salvation.
 - In other words, our salvation transcends all boundaries of natural and measurable form.
 - **Ephesians 1:4-5** makes several important points here. It reads, “For He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love He predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.”
 - God sovereignly chose us for salvation (This does not remove the role of our free will, but it underscores God’s direct divine intervention).
 - God, by His own design, predestined those of us who have placed our faith in Him to become “sons of God”.
 - This was BEFORE the creation of the world – that means God anticipated our salvation BEFORE Satan showed up in the Garden of Eden to deceive Eve.
 - That means the pronouncement of judgment on Satan that God made in **Genesis 3:15**, the pronouncement of the Messiah to

come, and the ultimate destruction of Satan by the seed of the woman were all known by God long before mankind was ever created.

6. But here – and with respect to our lesson today – **HERE is an extremely important fact to consider:** it is only after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that believers are ever called “sons of God.”
 7. Let me put that another way. **At no time before the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ** are natural humans given this “sons of God” distinction, no matter how faithful they were.
 8. The Biblical record is VERY clear on this. One cannot say Adam was a ‘natural human’ because we’ve just seen how he was not.
 9. This very significant detail warrants careful consideration insofar as the historical timing of **Genesis 6:1-4** is concerned.
 - The context of this passage was thousands of years before the cross.
7. Logical conclusions:
- a. First, we don’t want to argue with what the Bible says, however, I know this is a point in the Scriptures where many pastors and teachers DO. I feel that this is a dangerous, irreverent, and foolish position to take.
 - b. Second, we need to STICK TO THE RULES OF PROPER INTERPRETATION. Go with the original meaning, stay in harmony with other passages on the same subject, and always align with the development of the context. If we do that, we are never steered incorrectly.
 - c. Third, don’t talk out of both sides of your mouth.
 - We learned last week that the Hebrew term ‘zera’ means physical genetic seed, and it means this for both the woman and for Satan.
 - Here, ‘son’s of God’ in **Genesis 6:1-4** means “heavenly beings, supernaturally created by a direct sovereign act of God – and by all Old Testament uses of the term, it means angels (fallen and righteous).” It doesn’t mean anything else, so it’s not proper to force an alternate view here.

NOTE: It is at this point that someone always remarks to me, “Well.... you and I just have different views on this matter, and that’s OK because we’re not supposed to understand everything in the Bible.”

- No...that’s NOT OK. God’s Word makes these particular issues very plain for us.
- Remarking that it’s alright to have different views on something so clear is a grave insight into the spiritual state of one’s heart and mind.
- God’s Word is either the final authority on life and faithful living - - or it’s not. And I say - - no, I KNOW – that it is the final authority.
- Any choice to see these matters differently than we are discussing today boils down to ignorance, indifference, or impudence.

8. So – let’s fly high over the landscape and start grasping the full picture of what’s happening in **Genesis 6:1-4**
 - a. The options are very limited to reasonably fit the meaning of **b’nai Elohim** into the context of **Genesis 6:1-4**.
 - b. Within the Hebrew term in the Old Testament, or within its equivalent Greek term in the New Testament, the greater counsel of Scripture moves this **Genesis** text away from any human definitions.
 - c. If one obstinately insists that **b’nai Elohim** (the “sons of God”) in **Genesis 6:1-4** refers in some way to humans, then they must also accept their choice to overlook the ways the Bible affirms its divine origin.
 - d. That’s a decision to willfully ignore the “proper rules of interpretation”, and this amounts to setting up one’s own will against the will of God. That’s a very bad place to be.

- III. **CONCLUSIONS:** I feel there is only one interpretation of **Genesis 6:1-4** which adheres to the duty of properly engaging the Word of God, which aligns with all the other confirming passages, and which applies the responsible rules of interpretation, and that is this:
 - A. **Genesis 6:1-4** is talking about angels.
 - B. More specifically, as the context of **Genesis 6:1-4** clearly communicates, the **b’nai Elohim** here are fallen angels, which is a specific distinction which **Job** supports.
 - C. The primary pieces of the puzzle are in place now. The plain language of the text makes the picture clear.
 - D. Fallen angels, under the authority of Satan, entered the visible and tangible sphere of earthly life, forcibly “married” human women, and produced offspring with them.
 - E. These offspring were giants. They were very large. In some cases, as we will learn, they were extremely huge!
 - F. They were not just bigger-than-normal people; they were hybrids. They were partly of human origin and partly of angelic origin. They became the stuff of legends.
 - G. Righteous angels ate physical food with Abraham in **Genesis 18:8**, and righteous angels stay within the bounds of heavenly laws according to **Matthew 22:30**. They do not marry.
 - H. However, both of these passages also suggest fallen angels could violate those boundaries and engage in other physical expressions and activities if they chose to.
 - I. According to **Jude 1:6**, that’s exactly what happened. These fallen angels mentioned in **Genesis Ch. 6** “...did not stay within their own domain...” (They abandoned their ‘estate’ and God’s order of things – and they violated His divine constructs).
 - J. We see here that Satan fired the first shot. He began the process of enmity between his physical seed and the woman’s physical seed that God had prophesied back in **Genesis 3:15**.
 - K. This began a ‘seed war’ that continues from this point in **Genesis** forward. It continues even now, and we will learn the ways that is happening.

- L. It will accelerate much more in times to come, and we will examine those issues as well. It's partly why Jesus said the 'days of Noah' are coming back....
- M. Again, all of this is setting up the larger framework around which most Biblical Prophecy pivots....it's important we get this foundational stuff correct.