

Genesis 6:1-4 – Are the "Sons of God" Angels or Faithful Men?

Harmony of Interpretation

- **Genesis 6:2** nearly all translations render "wives," which raises the question of what "sons of God" means in this context. The notion that these "sons" are angels contradicts passages such as **Matthew 22:30**, **Mark 12:25**, and **Luke 20:34-35** (also compare **Hebrews 1:14** with **Luke 24:39**) where angels do not marry.
- Although **Job 1:6**, **2:2** possibly suggest that angels can be called "sons of God," other passages show this term can also refer to faithful men, like in **Deuteronomy 14:1**, **32:5**, **Hosea 1:10**, **Matthew 5:45**, and **Galatians 3:26**. (Job 38:7 seems to personify the creation itself with the phrase "sons of God"; compare Psalm 19:1-6).
- **Luke 17:26-27** does not support the view that angels marry human beings.
- The view of angels marrying humans also raises serious questions, especially regarding the **virgin birth** of Christ (**Galatians 4:4**, **John 8:23**). Could this view potentially diminish the miracle of the virgin birth?

Context of Genesis

- Genesis is structured by "generations" (e.g., **2:4-4:26**, **5:1-6:8**, **6:9-9:29**, **10:1-11:9**, **11:10-26**, **11:27-25:11**, etc.), and the "sons of God" are found in the generations of **Adam** through **Seth**.
- The text of **Genesis 6** is part of a broader narrative showing the strife between the descendants of **Adam**: **Genesis 3:15** (the prophecy of the seed of woman vs. the seed of the serpent), and the tension between **Cain's** line and **Seth's** line, leading to the flood narrative.
- The "**sons of God**" can be understood as the **faithful descendants** of Seth. This reading aligns with the consistent presentation of faithful men throughout Genesis, particularly in the context of apostasy through intermarriage.
- This view would fit with the warnings about the danger of marriage to those outside the faith, as seen in texts like **Genesis 24:3**, **Exodus 34:15-16**, **Deuteronomy 7:3-4**, **Judges 3:6**, **1 Kings 11:1-8**, and **Nehemiah 13:23-27**. These passages illustrate the spiritual danger of such unions.

Summary

The "sons of God" in **Genesis 6:1-4** are best understood as **faithful men**, particularly from the line of **Seth**. The view that they are angels is not supported by the broader biblical context or other scriptural references, and could pose theological challenges, especially when considering key doctrines like the virgin birth. The focus in Genesis 6 is on the dangers of apostasy through intermarriage, a theme that resonates with the rest of Scripture.