

A RESPONSE TO CHUCK MISSLER
Who Are the Sons of God in Genesis 6? Part 1

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Who Are The Sons of God in Genesis 6? Part 1

Recently I published an article in the Christian Research Journal titled, “Who Are the Sons of God in Genesis 6?” This article started as an examination of the claims of Chuck Missler that are presented in his book, Chuck Missler, *Learn the Bible in 24 Hours* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002), and on his web site, <http://www.khouse.org/articles/prophetic/9960101-43.html>. Due to the space constraints, much of the reasoning and exegesis behind this article could not be published, so I present here the larger content.

The Passage In Question

Genesis 6:2-4

1 וַיְהִי כִּי־הִחֵל הָאָדָם לָרֹב עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה וּבָנוּת יִלְדוּ לָהֶם:
2 וַיִּרְאוּ בְנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם כִּי טֹבֹת
הָנָה וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּחָרוּ:
3 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לֹא־יָדוֹן רוּחִי בָאָדָם לְעֹלָם
בְּשָׁנָם הוּא בָשָׂר וְהָיוּ יָמָיו מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה:
4 הַנְּפֹלִים הָיוּ בָאָרֶץ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וְגַם אַחֲרֵי־כֵן
אֲשֶׁר יָבֹאוּ בְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל־בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם וַיִּלְדוּ
לָהֶם הַמָּוֹת הַגִּבֹּרִים אֲשֶׁר מֵעוֹלָם אֲנָשֵׁי הַשָּׁם:

In an attempt to be very literal without changing the meaning of the verses, the following translation might seem a bit choppy and uneven. Any standard English translation might sound better, but I have tried to retain the word order without changing the meaning. I have also included such things as definite articles where the standard translations tend to eliminate these.

- 1 “And it was when the man began to multiply upon the face of the ground, that sons they brought forth to themselves.
- 2 And the sons of the God saw the daughters of the man that good, behold they took to them women from all whom they chose.
- 3 And the Lord said, ‘My Spirit will not reside in man forever, for also he *is* flesh, and his days will be one hundred and twenty years.’
- 4 The fallen ones were in the land in those days and also after this when the sons of the God came into the daughters of the man, and they bore to them; these *are* the warriors from ancient time, men of the name.”

Response to Missler

I have attempted to go through Missler's claims in the order they have been presented in his book and on his web site, so each numbered paragraph presents a particular claim by Missler with observations and comments following.

1. Missler begins his exposition with the statement, "The understanding of this passage [Gen. 6:1-2] hangs on the Hebrew term that has been translated 'sons of God,' *Bene HaElohim*. In the Old Testament this term refers exclusively to angels."¹ Rather than demonstrate his point before asserting his conclusion, Missler states up front that he believes that the term "sons of God" exclusively refers to angels. Of course this is the very point that must be proven, not simply assumed.

2. As support for his claim, Missler turns to the Septuagint:

Perhaps' our most authoritative source is the Greek translation of the Old Testament from the third century B.C., known as the Septuagint. Greek is a very precise language, and the seventy scholars who produced the Septuagint (a fancy word for seventy) help us understand the Hebrew from which it was translated. The Septuagint clearly translates this term 'angels.'²

There are several problems with these claims. First of all, Missler does not attempt to explain why he believes that "our most authoritative source is the Greek translation of the Old Testament." It is not at all clear why the Greek translation should be considered our most authoritative source. What about the Hebrew text? Orthodoxy has long held that the Hebrew text is the inspired and authoritative text, not the Greek translation. Missler may, however, simply be proposing that the LXX is the most authoritative witness to the ancient form of the Hebrew text. However, even if this is what he intended to say, this in itself is problematic. The LXX has its own history of revision and transcription that has introduced variants. In fact the very passage under discussion contains a textual variant with reference to the very word, "angels," to which Missler so confidently refers.

Karen Jobes and Moisés Silva point out that, "[Alfred] Rahlfs's edition [of the Septuagint], in spite of its provisional character, has since [its completion] been regarded as the standard Septuagint text, even though for many books of the Bible it has now been superseded by individual volumes of the larger project, often referred to as 'the Göttingen Septuagint.'"³ Contrary to Missler's claim, Rahlfs's Septuagint does not read "angels": ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ . . ." (Now beheld the

¹Chuck Missler, *Learn the Bible in 24 Hours* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002), 26.

²*Ibid.*

³Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to Septuagint* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 75.

sons of the God . . .” Rahlfs’s textual apparatus has the following information about this variant: “6² υιοι M] αγγελοι A^r.” The symbols indicate the following:

6² = this refers to the chapter and verse, chapter 6 verse 2.

υιοι M] = indicates that the Massoretic text uses the Hebrew equivalent to the Greek word υιοι, which means “sons.” The Hebrew word is בְּנֵי, *b^eney*.

αγγελοι = this refers to the Greek word that occurs as a variant in certain LXX manuscripts

A = this is the symbol for the Codex Alexandrinus, a fifth century A.D. uncial manuscript that contains all of the books of the Bible with only a few gaps. This is the manuscript in which the reading αγγελοι appears.

^r = this symbol follows the symbol “A.” According to Rahlfs’s explanation, this symbol refers to a “Rescriptor, i.e. one who, in his correction, has so completely set aside the original text that it is no longer recognisable [sic].”⁴

What the notation “A^r” tells us is that the manuscript that has the variant αγγελοι is clearly an alteration of the original reading of the LXX, which contained the word υιοι. So, quite contrary to Missler’s claim, the LXX does not “clearly translate the term as ‘angels.’” In fact, the LXX translates the term “sons.” But, even granting the reading αγγελοι does not guarantee the meaning “angels.” The Greek word αγγελοι can simply mean “messengers” and is sometimes used of human beings. James 2:25 states, “In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers [ἀγγέλους] and sent them out by another way?” It would be a simple matter of going back to the Old Testament passage that recounts this event to discover that the individuals whom Rahab received were not angelic beings, but were men sent by Joshua to spy out the land.

Additionally, the Syriac, another ancient witness to the Hebrew Bible does not support Missler’s claim. The Syriac reads ܒܢܝ ܕܥܠܡܝܢ “sons of God” as does the Hebrew text. Both ancient witnesses, the LXX and the Syriac, agree with the reading of the Hebrew text as we have it. Missler’s statements are incorrect at best and deceptive at worst.

3. Concerning the expression “daughters of mankind,” Missler says, “Another important phrase is ‘the daughters of men’ (*benoth adam*). They are the daughters of Adam, not just the daughters of Cain.”⁵ It is interesting that, although Missler accurately reports the earlier term, “‘sons of God,’ *Bene HaElohim*,” he fails accurately to report this latter expression. The transliteration of the Hebrew expression “sons of God” that Missler gives accurately includes the definite article, *Ha*, (the) before the word “*Elohim*.” However, Missler neglects to include the definite article before the word “*adam*” in the later quote. Yet the Hebrew text reads, *benoth HaAdam* (בְּנוֹת הָאָדָם). Interestingly, Missler’s confidence in the Septuagint text seems suddenly to wain. Although he calls

⁴ Alfred Rahlfs, ed. *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979), LXVII.

⁵ Missler, 26.

upon the LXX to support his understanding of the expression “sons of God,” he conveniently neglects to report that the LXX translates the Hebrew text as, “the daughters of the men” (τὰς θυγατέρας τῶν ἀνθρώπων). The LXX, which Missler claims is “the most authoritative source” does not translate the Hebrew word *HaAdam* as a proper name the way Missler would have it, but translates it with the generic noun “men.” Missler is quick to call upon the LXX when it appears to support his view, but he is unwilling to let his readers know when it contradicts his view.

Hebrew scholars generally recognize that in this context the word *HaAdam* should be translated “men,” not “Adam.” This being the case, Missler’s conclusion does not follow. If the daughters are daughters of “the men,” it remains to be proven whether this can be restricted to the descendants of Cain or broadened to indicate descendants of Adam generally. The point here is not that this disproves Missler’s claim. Rather, the point is that the text does not support Missler’s claim. Missler is simply making unsubstantiated assertions. He cannot simply stipulate that this is the correct understanding of the text, because the text does not support his claim. The text is ambiguous enough in this expression to go either way, and Missler has failed to demonstrate that his understanding is the correct one—or even a reasonable one given the textual evidence.

4. Once again Missler takes liberties with the text. He says, “The word ‘*Nephilim*’ means ‘the fallen ones.’ . . . These were the hybrids that resulted from the mischief between the fallen angels and human women.”⁶ Unfortunately for Missler’s assertion, the word *Nephilim* is never used in the Hebrew Scriptures to mean “hybrids.” From where does Missler get the notion that these were “hybrids”? Obviously he gets this from his belief that the sons of God were “fallen angels” who had sexual relations with women. But, since Missler has not demonstrated that his view is the correct one—he has merely asserted it—any evidence or conclusions he draws are questionable at best and simply wrong at worst.

In fact, there is a serious problem with taking the expression “sons of the God” to indicate fallen angels, as Missler would have it. Additionally there are some serious problems with the Angels view in general.

The “Angels” View

There is no doubt that the most widely held view is that the phrase refers to angels. Umberto Cassuto says, “The interpretation in the sense of angels is the oldest in the history of exegesis . . .”⁷ As early as 400 A.D. “The Book of the Watchers,” which forms the first 36 chapters of 1 Enoch, propagated what has become arguably the most popular understanding of this passage. 1 Enoch tells

⁶Ibid.

⁷Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, vol. 1, *From Adam to Noah*, trans. Israel Abrams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1961), 292.

the story of how the “angels of heaven”⁸ saw the daughters of men and desired them, and they proposed to take wives for themselves from the sons of men. The text of Enoch reports the reluctance of Semyaz,⁹ their ruler,¹⁰ to take action lest his cohorts refuse to participate and he be left to act alone. Semyaz refers to the act that they propose as a “great sin.”¹¹ Clearly the act of having sexual relations with human females was perceived by these “angels of heaven” to be a “great sin.” They bound themselves together with an oath and a curse that none would shrink back from performing the deed. The offspring produced by this union were, according to Enoch, “great giants.”¹²

One way to address the question of whether this refers to angels is to discover whether the phrase is used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. As we observed earlier, Missler rightly points out, “The understanding of this passage [Gen. 6:1-2] hangs on the Hebrew term that has been translated ‘sons of God,’ *Bene HaElohim*.”¹³ He goes on to assert, “In the Old Testament this term refers exclusively to angels.”¹⁴ Most advocates of the angels view, including Missler, refer to Job 1:6, 2:1, and 38:7 to support the claim that “sons of God” always means “angels.” Let’s look at these passages to see if this assertion is justified.

Job 1:6 “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.”

וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים לְהִתְיַצֵּב עַל־יְהוָה וַיָּבֹא גַם־הַשָּׁטָן בְּתוֹכָם:

Job 2:1 “Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord.”

וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים לְהִתְיַצֵּב עַל־יְהוָה וַיָּבֹא גַם־הַשָּׁטָן בְּתוֹכָם לְהִתְיַצֵּב עַל־יְהוָה:

Job 38:7 “When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

⁸J. H. Charlesworth, ed. “1 Enoch,” trans. E. Isaac, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 15. οι αγγελιοι ουρανου.

⁹Ibid., 6:3, Σεμιαζας.

¹⁰Ibid., αρχων αυτων.

¹¹Ibid., αμαρτιας μεγαλης.

¹²Ibid., 7:2, γιγαντας μεγαλους.

¹³Missler, *Learn the Bible in 24 Hours*, 26.

¹⁴Ibid.

בְּרִיְיָחַד כּוֹכְבֵי בֹקֶר וַיִּרְעוּ כָּל־בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים:

The parallelism in 38:7 calls into question the idea that the expression “sons of God” is a reference to angelic beings. The first part of the poetic line refers to “morning stars,” and the expression “sons of God” functions in poetic parallelism to this. This is most probably a more poetic or figurative reference to the heavenly bodies. At least it is not unambiguously a reference to angels. Since the expression here is itself controversial, it cannot be called upon to support any particular view. It seems clear, however, that the remaining passages of Job, 1:6 and 2:1, *are indeed* references to angelic beings.

On the strength of these related passages, Missler and other proponents of the Angels View declare that the expression “sons of God” is “*consistently* used in the Old Testament for *angels*, and it is *never* used of believers in the Old Testament.”¹⁵ But is this accurate? According to Waltke, “Human beings are called ‘sons of God’ in Hos. 1:10 . . . and divine kings in 2 Sam. 7:14 . . .”¹⁶ If Waltke’s note is accurate, it severely diminishes the strength of the support from Job for the Angels position. Hos. 1:10 says, “And in the place where it is said to them, ‘You are not My people,’ it will be said to them, ‘You are the sons of the living God.’” At the level of the English translation, it certainly seems to be the case that “sons of God” is used to refer to believers in the Old Testament. The critical phrase occurs at the very end of the verse; בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים, *bēnē ʾēl hāy*. This passage uses the singular form of the word “God,” ʾēl, rather than the plural form, ʾēlōhîm, which is used in Gen. 6:2. But these two forms are frequently used interchangeably, and there is no doubt that both passages refer to the God of Israel, the God of heaven and earth.

So, even though the passages in Job refer to angels, it is not true that this expression is used exclusively of angels. Of course this does not prove that Gen. 6:2 cannot be a reference to angels. But it does show that it is possible to take the expression “sons of God” as a reference to human beings. That being the case, we need to look more closely at the Angels position. We will consider version 1a, the Fallen Angels view, and then version 1b, the Heavenly Angels view.

Sons of God as Fallen Angels

As we pointed out above, the expression “sons of God” is certainly used in two passages in Job to refer to angels. One interpreter specifically identifies the “sons of God” as fallen angels when he says, “These [Nephilim] were the hybrids that resulted from the mischief between the fallen angels and human women.”¹⁷ But, do the passages in Job support this claim? A closer examination of the Job passages reveals that there is nothing in these verses that would lead one to conclude that “sons of God” refers to fallen angels. In fact, the opposite seems to be the case. Both passages

¹⁵Missler, “Mischievous Angels or Sethites?” <http://www.khouse.org/articles/biblestudy/19970801-110.html>

¹⁶Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001), 116, n19.

¹⁷Missler, *Learn the Bible*, 26.

describe the scene in which the “sons of God” present themselves before the Lord. But, there is someone who comes in among them. The expression, “and the Satan came in the midst of them,” (וַיָּבֹא גַם־הַשָּׂטָן בְּתוֹכָם;) is exactly the same in 1:6 and 2:1. The statement implies that the Satan was not one of the sons of God, but came in *among them* when they came to present themselves before the Lord. This would seem to indicate that the sons of God in Job are not fallen angels, but heavenly angels. It becomes very problematic, then, to assume that the references in Job support the view that the sons of God in Genesis 6 are “fallen angels.” In fact, it would seem to be contrary to the sense of the expression “sons of God” to think that it would be used of fallen angels.

It is not at all clear that the use of the expression “sons of God” in Job offers any support for understanding Gen. 6:2 to refer to fallen angels. If Job offers any support for understanding Genesis, it would seem to indicate that the expression “sons of God” should be taken to refer to angels of heaven rather than fallen angels. In fact, the expression “sons of God” is never used in any other passage of the Old or New Testaments to refer either to fallen angels.

Of course this does not prove that 6:2 cannot refer to angels in general or fallen angels in particular. What it does show, however, is that one cannot simply assume that because a word or phrase is used to mean a certain thing in other passages that it must be understood this way in every passage. Even though “sons of God” is never used of fallen angels does not mean it could not possibly mean this in Gen. 6:2. It is possible that a word or phrase can mean one thing in a single passage even though all other passages use it differently. But, what this does show is that the interpreter cannot rest his interpretation on unproven assumptions. If an interpreter wants to argue that “sons of God” in Gen. 6:2 means “fallen angels,” he must demonstrate this by convincing arguments from the context of Genesis. He must not simply assume that its use in other passages secures its meaning in every passage. Proponents of the Angels View particularly fall victim to this criticism because they often assume that since it means “angels” in Job, it must mean “fallen angels” in Genesis. Although this is conceivable, given the evidence it is highly improbable. And, after looking at the evidence, it seems to be the case that taking “sons of God” to mean “fallen angels” has no support from Job or anywhere else.

Sons of God as Heavenly Angels

The second version of the Angels view is that “sons of God” is a reference to unfallen or heavenly angels. Here the passages in Job would seem to lend support. But, there are some unproven assumptions that plague this view as well. Every commentator who proposes the Heavenly Angels view simply assumes that a sexual relation between angels and human females is somehow sinful. But on what do they base this assumption? Many commentators refer to Jude 6-7 to support this idea: “And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.” From

this passage interpreters conclude, “Jude made an allusion to these events in Genesis 6 and clearly he was writing about angels who, for whatever reason, went after ‘strange flesh.’”¹⁸

The problem with such a conclusion is that it assumes what it must prove. One can see Jude’s statement as an “allusion” to Genesis 6 only if he already accepts the Angels View of Genesis 6. If Genesis 6 is interpreted differently, say to refer to the line of Seth, then Jude can no longer be seen as an allusion to it. So, in order to interpret Jude as providing support for the Angels View, one must assume that his interpretation of Genesis 6 is correct. But this is circular. This is a case of using the interpretation of Genesis 6 to understand Jude, and then using Jude as support for his interpretation of Genesis 6.

In fact, there are no compelling reasons to take Jude as referring to Genesis 6. The analogy between Sodom-Gomorrah and the angels is that each group left its proper abode. In the way humans left their proper sexual abode, so angels left their proper spiritual abode. This could be an allusion to the rebellion of angels against God who set them in their proper place. Human sexual relations are often used as symbolic of one’s dedication to God. In Hosea Israel is depicted as an adulterous wife. So the immorality of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah makes a fitting analogy to the angels who rebelled against God rather than remain His faithful servants. This is at least as reasonable an interpretation as the one proposed in the Angels View. This does not necessarily prove that these interpreters are wrong, but it does bring out into the open their unproven assumptions.

A second serious problem with the Heavenly Angels version of the Angels view is that commentators simply assume that angels can have sexual relations with human women. As Bruce Waltke points out, “This interpretation also contradicts Jesus’ statement that angels do not marry (Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25). It is one thing for angels to eat and drink (see Gen. 19:1-3), but quite another to marry and reproduce.”¹⁹ In Matt. 22:30, in response to a challenge by the Sadducees, Jesus said, “For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.” Some respond to this argument by making Jesus refer only to the marriage contract, not to the marriage bed. But this would make Jesus’ statement nonsensical in its own context. Jesus is responding to the question about a woman who has had seven husbands, but had no children. The question is about having a marital relation issuing in children. Jesus’ response must be taken in this light or it makes no sense. So understood, Jesus clearly denies that heavenly angels can have sexual relations.

Another response to this is to point out that Jesus is referring to angels in heaven, but Genesis 6 is referring to fallen angels. But, this maneuver will not work either. We have already shown that it is highly unlikely that the expression “sons of God” would be used to refer to fallen angels. Secondly, the traditional view holds that these angels fell because they had forbidden sexual relations with human females. But, if they were unfallen prior to their sinful act, then they must have been heavenly angels. But, if they were heavenly angels, according to what Jesus said, they cannot have sexual relations. So, as heavenly angels they could not commit the very act that is supposed to have caused them to fall. Besides this, the advocates of this view simply assume that sexual relations

¹⁸Missler, *Learn the Bible*, 27.

¹⁹Waltke, *Genesis*, 116.

between heavenly angels and human females is forbidden. No commentator has attempted to prove this assumption.

5. Concerning the meaning of the expression “‘the mighty ones,’ the *HaGibborim*,” Missler says, “That was translated into the Greek Septuagint as *gigantes*, which does not mean ‘giant’ but ‘earth-born,’ from the Greek *gigas*.”²⁰ It is unfortunate that Missler does not tell his reader from where he obtained his information about the meaning of these Greek words. The standard classical Greek lexicon reports the meaning “Giants” as the first entry for this Greek word.²¹ The standard Septuagint lexicon also gives “giants” as the first meaning of this Greek word.²² Additionally, none of these standard Greek reference works gives “earth-born” as a possible meaning of this term. Missler goes on to say, “Although the word is translated into English as ‘giants’—and they did happen to be very large—it is not true to the original text.”²³ Not only is Missler’s translation contrary to the original text, but he makes the illicit claim that, “they did happen to be very large.” If the word used in the text does not mean giants, then on what basis does Missler claim that they were “very large.” Such groundless assertions are indicative of the persistent eisegesis that Missler practices.

6. Concerning the term “perfect,” Missler says, “The word *perfect* is a term to mean ‘without blemish,’ ‘sound,’ ‘healthful,’ ‘without spot,’ or ‘unimpaired.’ It is always used with regard to physical defects.”²⁴ Once again Missler has misrepresented the case. The very second occurrence of this word in the OT cannot be taken to refer to physical defects. The verse is Gen. 17:1: “Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless [*tamiym*].’” The idea that God is telling Abram to walk before Him and be without physical defect is patently absurd. Such incompetence should alert the reader to look with suspicion on all of Missler’s expositions. Consequently, Missler’s claim that the text declares that Noah’s “genealogy was not blemished” is shown to be false. In fact, the text simply says Noah himself was blameless before God.

7. If one does not accept Missler’s illicit assumptions and the “bizarre” conclusions that are based upon them, then the statements in Jude do not “confirm” his interpretation. It is not necessary to understand Jude as referring to some cohabitation between fallen angels and women.

²⁰Ibid., 26-27.

²¹*A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1968 ed., s.v. “Γίγας.” The entry reads: “Γίγας [ί], αντος, ό, mostly in pl., *Giants* . . .”

²²*A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 1992 ed., s.v. “γίγας, -αντος.” The entry reads: “Gn 6,4 (bis); 10,8.9(bis) *giant, mighty one* (mostly pl.)”

²³Missler, 27.

²⁴Ibid.

Rather, it is completely consistent with Jude’s context to understand his statements are referring to the original fall and rebellion of Satan and the angels who followed him. Jude can only be understood as “making an allusion to these events in Genesis 6” if one assumes the angelic-cohabitation view and imposes it upon the text of Jude. The reference to “strange flesh” concerns the actions of those in Sodom and Gomorrah who cohabited with the same sex—men with men, and women with women. The angelic-cohabitation view is not a case involving “strange flesh,” because the text indicates that males, “*sons of God*,” took females, “*daughters of men*.” Consequently, the reference in Jude to “strange flesh” cannot properly be an allusion to the cohabitation of male angels with female humans.

8. Missler’s reference to 2 Peter suffers from the same shortcomings. Missler says, “Peter . . . also used a term for hell that was only used in the New Testament: *tartarus*, a term used in Greek literature for ‘a dark abode of woe’ or ‘a pit of darkness of the unseen world.’”²⁵ Missler seems unable accurately to present the facts of the case. The word *tartarus* appears three times in the Greek version of the Old Testament: Prov 30:16; Job 40:20 and 41:24. Discovering the occurrence of this term in the OT is a simple matter of consulting a concordance. Such lack of reliable research on Missler’s part sheds doubt upon the quality of his entire book.

9. Missler’s critique of what he calls “the lines of Seth” view turns out to be a straw-man argument. It is not a necessary part of this view that the sons of God refer to “the leadership of the line of Seth, nor is it even a part of the view that “the sin involved was their failure to maintain separation—the two were not to mix.”²⁶ Missler’s report that this view “started in the fifth century A.D.” is apparently designed to cause the reader to question its validity on the basis of its origin. But, such points are instances of the genetic fallacy. The origin of a truth claim, or an interpretation, does not necessarily disqualify it as a true claim or a correct interpretation. The fact that the angelic-cohabitation view probably finds its beginnings in the mid-second century B.C. in the apocryphal book of 1 Enoch does not mean that the view is necessarily wrong, nor does the fact that the “lines of Seth” view began with Celsus disqualify it.

Missler’s claim that the Sethite view “violates the text” is unsubstantiated. He says, “The phrase, ‘sons of God,’ is never used of believers in the Old Testament.”²⁷ But this fact has nothing to do with the Sethite view since the Sethite view does not make this claim. Also, it is simply false to assert that the phrase is never used this way, because this is the very point that is being contested. Missler’s imaginary opponents are apparently claiming that it is so used in this context. But, as is his practice, Missler does not bother to prove his claims, he simply makes them. To the contrary however, Missler claims that the phrase, “sons of God” refers to “fallen angels,” and yet this phrase does not have this meaning in any of the other places where it is used.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., 28.

²⁷Ibid.

The assertion, “Seth was not God and Cain was not Adam,” is nonsensical and irrelevant since no one claims that they are. Since it is not a part of the Sethite view that the lines were supposed to “remain separate,” Missler’s criticism simply misses the real issues. His assertion, “‘all flesh are corrupted’ . . . include the Sethites” is precisely the point of the Sethite view. However, it is not obvious that a cohabitation between angels and women would constitute a corrupting influence. Additionally, the text clearly says, “they took to them women from all whom they chose.” However, the text does not say that the sons of God took every single woman alive at the time. It follows that there were women who were not taken by the sons of God. Consequently, it does not follow that “all flesh was corrupted.” If Missler’s view is accurate, then the biblical text must not be. How could “all flesh” be corrupted as a result of angels cohabiting with *some* women.

Missler claims that the “real problem” with the Sethite view is the “Nephilim.” He declares, “When believers and unbelievers marry, they do not yield offspring that are physiologically different.”²⁸ But where does the text of Genesis say the Nephilim were “physiologically different”? Missler went to some length to claim that the Greek word *gigantes* does not mean “giant,” but rather means “earth-born.” But, how does he get physiological difference from a word that means “earth-born”? Since the word does not carry the sense of physiological difference, Missler’s criticism of the Sethite view once again misses the mark.

Missler claims that the Sethite view “infers the godliness of the Sethites, which the text does not support.”²⁹ This is a very curious statement since on his own website he declares, “The Flood was preceded by four generations of prophets/preachers warning of the coming judgment: Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah.”³⁰ Does Missler really expect his readers to believe that Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah were ungodly “prophet/preachers warning of the coming judgment”? By Missler’s own admission the text does indeed support the notion of the godliness of the Sethites.

Additionally, the repetition of certain affirmations with reference to certain descendants of Seth can indeed be taken as textual support for the “godliness” of the line of Seth. Gen. 4:26 points out that it was at the birth of Enosh, Seth’s first born, that “men began to call upon the name of the Lord.” Other such observations concerning the line of Seth are made, such as “Enoch walked with God,” “Noah was a righteous man,” “Noah walked with God.”

Additionally, the narrative style sets up a contrast between the descendants of Cain and the descendants of Seth, not the least of these is the contrast between Lamech, the seventh from Adam through Cain, and Enoch, the seventh from Adam through Seth. The text points out that Lamech took two wives. Immediately the reader is alerted to Lamech’s departure from the husband-wife relationship established in the garden—one man and one woman: “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife [singular]; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both [literally “the two of them”] naked and were not ashamed” (Gen. 2:24-25). In his poem, Lamech boasts of killing at least one man, and possibly two. But, rather than

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Chuck Missler, “As The Days of Noah Were,” <http://www.khouse.org/articles/prophetic/19960101-43.html>.

crying out to God for protection from the blood-avenger, as Cain did, Lamech essentially boasts that he does not need God's protection, for he can protect himself. The sense of separation from God, which overtly begins in verse 4:16 with the declaration, "Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord . . ." culminates in Lamech's boastful arrogance and self-righteousness. This picture is in stark contrast to depiction of Seth's descendants. Contrary to Missler's claim, the text does indeed support the notion that the line of Seth was the godly line.

Missler's charge that the Sethite view "infers a Cainite subset of the Adamites" that he claims is a case of "reading into the text" actually misrepresents the Sethite view. It is not necessary to infer any "Cainite" subset in order to conclude that someone's descendants follow a path of separation from God. In fact, the Caanites who dwell in the land at the time of the invasion of Joshua are characterized in the Scripture as a people who, for 400 years, have lived in opposition to the will of God. It is not necessary to claim that the Caanites are a "subset" to view them in this light.

But, let us concede that the Sethite view does propose a Cainite subset of the Adamites. It is only a case of "reading into the text" if one accepts Missler's view. Once again Missler merely declares rather than demonstrates. If one reads the text from the perspective of the Sethite view, one might be able legitimately to argue that the text supports the notion of a Cainite subset. Indeed, what in the world does Missler mean by the term "subset" anyway? Cannot the term be used simply to refer to a genealogical line, which Cain's descendants certainly constitute.

10. On his web site, Missler presents other arguments relating to this issue, one of which is very revealing. Missler says, "Incidentally, the Nephilim didn't completely end with the flood. Genesis 6:4 mentions, '. . . and also after that . . .' We find the sons fo [sic] Anak, the Anakim, later in the Old Testament."³¹ What Missler is claiming is that the text of Genesis is in error. Gen. 6:17 says, "Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy *all flesh* in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish. But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives with you." This seems to make it clear that everyone, every human being, except Noah, his wife, his sons, and his sons' wives, would be destroyed from off the face of the earth. By contrast, Missler claims that not all of the Nephilim were destroyed. In other words, Genesis is wrong. Lest there be any doubt about this contrast, consider the statement in Gen. 7:21-22: "All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and *all mankind*; of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, *died*." Whereas the text of Genesis clearly says *all mankind died*, except for those who were on the ark, Missler just as clearly claims that not all mankind died. There can be no doubt that Missler is ascribing error to the biblical text.

11. Again on his web site, Missler makes reference to the statement by Jesus in Matt. 22:30. Missler says, "There is a great deal revealed in the Bible about angels. They can appear in human form, they spoke as men, took men by the hand, even ate men's food, are capable of direct physical combat, some are the principal forces behind the world powers. They don't marry (in

³¹Ibid.

Heaven), but apparently are (or were) capable of much mischief.”³² Of course, as is his practice, Missler conveniently misrepresents the text. Jesus statement in Matthew is: “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.” Missler makes a subtle change in the text. Missler says, “they don’t marry (in Heaven) . . .” Jesus did not say they don’t marry in heaven. Jesus says, “angels in heaven don’t marry.” Missler restates the text in such a manner as to imply that angels can marry if they are not in heaven. Such an implication is not present in Jesus’ claim.

But, Missler’s reference to this passage introduces a problem into his view that the sons of God are fallen angels. First of all, it is not at all clear that the expression “sons of God” can be used to refer to “fallen” angels. It is not so used in Job. Rather, in Job the expression seems to be a reference to angels in heaven. Secondly, Missler refers to the statements in Peter and Jude as support for the notion that the sons of God were fallen angels. However, assuming that these passages are even talking about the Genesis 6 event, the implication of these NT passages is that these beings became fallen angels because they went after “strange flesh.” In other words, the implication is that they fell as a result of cohabiting with the daughters of men. It was, in other words, the sexual relation between these angelic beings and human women that precipitated the fall of these sons of God. It follows that prior to this these sons of God were not “fallen angels,” but were in fact, angels in heaven. However, according to Jesus’ statement, angels in heaven are not capable of having sexual relations. This is, of course, the point of his response to the inquisition of the Saducees in Matthew 22. But, if angels in heaven cannot cohabit with women, then they could not have become fallen angels, and they could not have been fallen angels prior to their cohabiting, because the expression “sons of God” would be totally inappropriate as a reference to fallen angels.

12. In his argument against the notion that the line of Seth was the godly line, Missler claims that the English translation “masks” the fact that it was Enosh, Seth’s son, who introduced apostasy into society at this time: “In fact, Seth’s son Enosh was the one who introduced apostasy to that world. This is masked by a mistranslation of Genesis 4:25, which should read: ‘. . .then men began to **profane** the name of the Lord.’”³³ The verse to which Missler refers reads as follows: וַיִּלְשֵׁת גַּם־הוּא יֶלֶד־בֶּן וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ אֶנּוֹשׁ אַזְ הוּחַל לְקִרְא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה: . The word in question is הוּחַל, *huchal*, which in English is translated “began.” This is the only occurrence of this word in the Hophal stem in the entire OT. The word occurs in 124 verses of the Old Testament, but only here in this particular form. Several times, however, the word is used to indicate the beginning of an action or condition. An important and interesting instance of the occurrence of this word is in Gen. 6:1. According to Missler, this same word in Gen. 6:1 has the meaning “began.” Also, the LXX does not translate the Gen. 4:26 passage as “profane.” In fact, the Greek word used here is ἡλπίζω from ἐλπίζω, which is usually translated “to hope.”

Sir Lancelot Brenton translates the Greek text as follows: “And Seth had a son, and he called his name Enos: he hoped to call on the name of the Lord God.” According to the *New International*

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

Dictionary of Theology and Exegesis, this word occurs 54 times with the meaning “begin.”³⁴ In fact, the word is used and translated “began” or “became” seven times in Genesis before it occurs with the meaning “defiled” for the first time in Gen. 49:4. None of the standard reference works, nor even the Septuagint, understand the term in Gen. 4:26 as “profane.” Missler consistently misrepresents the facts and engages in selective reporting. Additionally, the expression, “call upon the name of the Lord,” which occurs in 12 verses throughout the OT, is never used in the sense of being profaned.

Conclusion

There are serious problems with Chuck Missler’s handling of Genesis 6 and the question of the identify of the sons of God. He repeatedly misrepresents the text and the facts, and he often reads into the text meanings that cannot be sustained by the context or by the Hebrew language itself. Additionally, the Angels View has problems from which it cannot recover. The failure of the Angels View is evidenced by the rising popularity of what has come to be known as the Tyrants view. More and more contemporary commentators are abandoning the Angels view in favor of the Tyrants view, primarily because they have come to realize that the Angels view cannot be sustained against close examination. There is no questioning Missler’s sincerity and dedication, but on this subject, he has missed the mark.

³⁴Bill T. Arnold, “יָרַדְתִּי,” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 1st ed.

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