

Who are the “Sons of God” in Genesis 6:1-4?

Much has been written about this cryptic passage. There are two main positions – (1) that the sons of God are descendants of the Godly line of [Seth](#) who polluted the Godly line by marrying ungodly non-Sethite women; (2) that the sons of God were [angels](#) who overstepped their bounds and cohabited with women.

In defense of view (1) it can be said a) that a completely human interpretation is the least problematic, and b) that [Jesus](#)' statement that “in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like [angels](#) in heaven” (Matt. 22:30; cf. Mark 12:25) seems to forbid the possibility of angels cohabiting with women.

In defense of view (2) it can be argued as follows: a) In every other use of the Hebrew phrase *bene Elohim* (sons of God) outside this passage (Gen. 6:2, 4) it refers to [angels](#) (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7), so why not here?

b) In response to the claim that angels cannot cohabit with women, [Jesus](#)' statement (Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25) only refers to what [good angels](#), the ones in heaven, do not do. It makes no statement about what [evil angels](#), outside the realm of heaven, may or may not do.

c) Furthermore, the reality is that certain [angels](#) did, indeed, do something very evil. They sinned in such a way that God did not spare them, but rather “cast them into hell” (lit., *Tartaróō*, [5020](#) – the only use in the [NT](#) of this verb, which comes from the noun Tartarus) and committed them to pits (some MSS read “chains”) of darkness, reserved for judgment” (2 Pet. 2:4). Here is a literal translation of 2 Peter 2:4: “For if God, angels having sinned spared them not, but into pits of darkness having Tartarused’ them, He delivered them over, for the purpose of judgment keeping them...” It is my judgment that the place [Peter](#) labeled as “pits of darkness,” to which God “Tartarused” certain angels who sinned, is equivalent to the “[abyss](#),” (*abussos*, [12](#)) a place to which certain [demons](#) begged [Jesus](#) not to send them (Luke 8:31). The [abyss](#) is the place from which certain [demons](#) will emerge during the [Tribulation](#) (Rev. 9:1, 2, 11); it is the place from which the [Antichrist](#) (“[beast](#)”) will emerge (Rev. 11:7; 17:8); and it is the place in which [Satan](#) will be confined for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1, 3). It is unclear from [Peter's](#) statement what sin these angels committed, but a related statement by [Jesus](#)' half-brother [Jude](#) provides more specific information (Jude 1:6-7):

6 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, 7 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.

[Jude](#) made quite a point of saying that the cities of [Sodom](#) and Gomorrah, and cities adjacent to them, committed gross immorality, going after strange flesh (the practice of homosexuality is a

violation of God’s design) in the same way that the angels (had practiced gross immorality), also going after strange flesh! In other words, there were angels who practiced gross immorality and went after strange (human) flesh. In my opinion, both 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 1:6-7 relate back to the incident described in Genesis 6:1-2. This amounted to an attempted [demonic](#) perversion of the entire human race.

d) Something happened to the human race that was vile enough for God to wipe out the entire population of the earth except for [Noah](#) and his family, and the animals entrusted to his care.

Conclusion: View 2 seems to fit the evidence far better than View 1.

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