

## Who are the “sons of God” in Genesis 6? How does that relate to the “sons of God” in other passages?

*(Genesis 6:1–2)<sup>1</sup> Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, <sup>2</sup> that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.*

Many Christians think that the term “sons of God” refers to fallen angelic beings that veered off course to mate with female human beings to form a race of giants that existed before the flood. A review of the text shows that this is not what happened.

How do we know?

The term “sons of God” refers to several different groups. Let’s go through each one.

1. The term “sons of God” is used 10 times in the Bible (NKJV)—three times in Job.

This passage gives us a universal or cosmic perspective.

*(Job 1:6–7)<sup>6</sup> Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. <sup>7</sup> And the LORD said to Satan, “From where do you come?” So Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.”*

- Also Job 2 with almost the same wording.
- Satan appears with the “sons of God” twice in this passage.
- The “sons of God” here refers to a counsel heavenly beings who represent the planets they came from. They do not permanently reside in Heaven, but on planets they represent.
- We also see here a picture of the government of God. This counsel comes to discuss the administration of the universe and the inhabited planets that are a part of it.

*(Job 38:4–7)<sup>4</sup> “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. <sup>5</sup> Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? <sup>6</sup> To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, <sup>7</sup> when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*

- The “sons of God” were present during creation week, meaning that they pre-existed creation.
- The “morning stars” and “sons of God” are the same group described differently. This is a case of synonymous parallelism.

Morning stars: *(Revelation 12:3–4, 9)<sup>3</sup> And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.*

<sup>4</sup> *His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. ... <sup>9</sup> he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

- (The Great Controversy, p. 518) The Scriptures declare that upon one occasion, when the angels of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them (Job 1:6), not to bow before the Eternal King, but to further his own malicious designs against the righteous. With the same object he is in attendance when men assemble for the worship of God.

The reception of Christ into glory after His resurrection is described by Ellen White:

(The Desire of Ages, p. 834) The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled. The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,—all are there to welcome the Redeemer.

- The 24 elders in Revelation 5 are the “sons of God” and representatives of other worlds.

Ellen White also refers to the elder talking with John in Revelation 7:13 was an angel:

(Signs of the Times, December 22, 1887) John beholds an innumerable company, precious, refined, purified, around the throne of the Majesty of Heaven. The angel inquires of John, “What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?” and John answers, “Sir, thou knowest.” Then the angel declares: “These are they which came out of great tribulation...”

The “sons of God” in Job refers to commanding angels.

NOTE: This does not mean that the term has the same meaning in Genesis 6.

2. It’s used twice in Genesis.

*(Genesis 6:1–4) <sup>1</sup> Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, <sup>2</sup> that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. <sup>3</sup> And the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” <sup>4</sup> There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.*

Before we define the term in Genesis, we need to look at the context of this passage.

- Chapter 3 describes the fall.
- Chapter 4–5 first describes the murder of Abel by Cain his brother. It then makes the point of noting Cain’s and Seth’s descendants.
  - Cain was rebellious, along with his descendants.
  - Seth was a “replacement” for Abel (v25). His descendants are depicted in the genealogy of Adam, and were counted as the faithful line.
- Chapter 6 describes the mixing of these two lines of descendants.
  - Mixing between the two always ends up corrupting the faithful.

- This is what happened to the human race leading up to the flood. God's people became corrupt because they mixed together:  
*(Genesis 6:5) Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

The "sons of God" in Genesis refers to the line of Adam, which started off faithful but then were corrupted by the "daughters of men" from Cain's line.

Other issues:

- The angels of God are never given the ability to pro-create.  
*(Hebrews 1:14) Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*
- They are for the purpose of carrying out the purposes of God. They have no planet to populate after their own race. In fact, angels were created higher than human beings.  
*(Hebrews 2:5–8)<sup>5</sup> For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.<sup>6</sup> But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him?"<sup>7</sup> You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands.<sup>8</sup> You have put all things in subjection under his feet."* ...

### 3. Other places in the Bible.

Other passages seem to follow the same distinction as Genesis 6.

*(Luke 20:34–36)<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage.<sup>35</sup> But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage;<sup>36</sup> nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.*

- There is no reason for marriage in heaven because we are like angels that have no use for pro-creation.
- Notice also that God elevates the faithful people of God to being equal with angels.

*(Romans 8:14) For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

- Only those who have the Spirit of God dwelling in them are "sons of God."
- Every day we demonstrate our inheritance.

*(Galatians 3:26–29)<sup>26</sup> For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.<sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.<sup>29</sup> And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

- The sons of God are Abraham's seed by faith in the Seed, Jesus Christ.
- Sons of God include Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free, men and women.

Paul refers to the need to keep separate the “sons of God” and the wicked.

*(2 Corinthians 6:14–18) <sup>14</sup> Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? <sup>15</sup> And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup> And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” <sup>17</sup> Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.” <sup>18</sup> “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.”*

- The sons of God are faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

#### 4. Children of God.

*(1 John 3:1–3) <sup>1</sup> Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. <sup>2</sup> Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. <sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

- The church has become the “children of God” as was the “children of Israel” in the OT.
- We are His children by virtue of our character. We have allowed God to transform us in His image. Our part is to cooperate with this process every day.

#### 5. In the inclusive sense.

The sons of God might also be considered all of creation. But many have separated themselves from God and are no longer His children.

This also means that there may be many who have yet to choose their inheritance. God loves them as His created beings and is doing everything He can to draw them to Himself. Then they will become sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ.