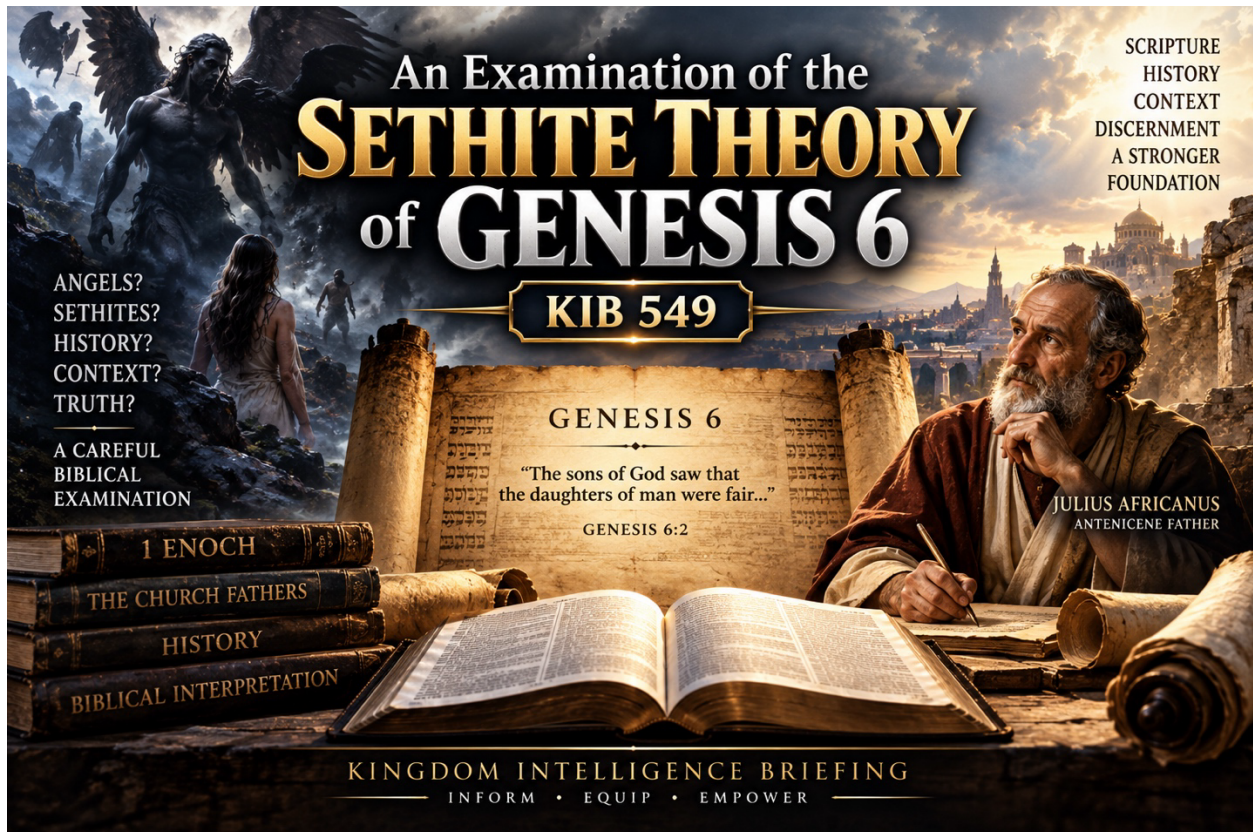




An Examination of the Sethite Theory of Genesis 6 | KIB 549

Kingdom Intelligence Briefing



Introduction

This past week, a major evangelistic ministry released an article endorsing the Sethite Theory of Genesis 6 over the traditionally accepted interpretation that the “Sons of God” were angels. I want to examine this theory systematically and historically to answer some questions.

I. Angels Don't Have the Plumbing

The article in question references a sermon preached by an Eastern Tennessee mountain preacher named Rev. Jackson Boone. I haven't been able to find much more about Rev. Boone, except for references to this one message. I couldn't verify his training for ministry or academic background. So, I want to begin by examining his prooftext drawn from the words of Jesus.

Matthew 22:29–33 (ESV)

29 But Jesus answered them, “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. **30** For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. **31** And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: **32** ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.” **33** And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.

Those who listen to our podcast know that I am a stickler for the proper hermeneutical and exegetical processes necessary for solid biblical interpretation. The first step is establishing the contextual setting of any section of Scripture. Regarding Jesus' response to the “gotta ya” question of the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection, what was the actual topic? The family unit. The earthly concept of the family unit does not exist in Heaven. Why? Because there is no procreation in Heaven, no children to be raised in a loving family environment. Also, the Word implies throughout that the family unit is an earthly concept. Genesis 6 occurred in the first heaven (i.e., earth), so it falls into that category.

What is not said is just as important as what is said. Jesus never refers to the ability of angels to enter into sexual union with human women. Angelical sexuality, or whether they have the right “plumbing,” was never addressed. Historically, all Second Temple scholars (as well as the public) believed that Genesis 6 spoke of angels coming into union with human women and producing children. If this understanding was wrong, wouldn't this have been the perfect time to correct the universal misinterpretation? Yet strong evidence of intertextuality exists between the New Testament and the 1 Book of Enoch. An entire academic community gathers once a year to discuss the connection between 1 Enoch and the New Testament’s teachings on Spiritual warfare and demonology.

I am not trying to tarnish the faithful years of service that Rev. Boone provided to the body of Christ. I am merely pointing out that he did what most of us are guilty of from time to time, unless we are careful. He was reading into Scripture what was not there. We call this trend “Eisegesis.” Biblecall.org defines Eisegesis as “a term often heard in theological and literary circles, refers to a method of interpreting a text by inserting one’s own beliefs, ideas, or personal biases into the text rather than drawing meaning from the text itself.”

¹ The task of a faithful student of the Word is to exegete (exegesis) Scripture, or to draw out only what is revealed in Scripture without adding one’s own beliefs.

II. Julius Africanus

Julius Africanus falls within the Ante-Nicene period. Much of his writing is fragmented, and we do not know what motivated his research beyond a text-critical/exegetical problem. It should be noted that in his day, Christian scholars were increasingly wrestling

¹ <https://biblecall.org/eisegesis-reading-ourselves-into-the-text/>

with the nature of angels and spiritual beings. This is where the historical background becomes potentially significant. Earlier Christian writers such as Justin, Athenagoras, Clement, and Tertullian would speak rather freely about fallen angels lusting after women. At the same time, Christian theology was developing increasingly sophisticated accounts of angels as spiritual beings. Unfortunately, these theologians drew more from Greek philosophy than from the ancient Hebraic worldview.

While Julius proposed his alternative interpretation of Genesis 6, he still suggested that the angelic interpretation might be correct. He even quotes the Book of Enoch many times. None of the other Ante-Nicene fathers took Julius' position as a possibility. Only after the Nicene Council and the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church did some of the Post-Nicene Fathers embrace his alternative view. Investigating the Post-Nicene Period would take us to writers such as **Ephrem the Syrian, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, and especially Augustine**. By Augustine, the argument moved from "*Here is another possible reading*" to "*The sons of God cannot be angels.*" This move by Augustine, in part, was driven by social pressure, because 5th-Century Christians thought that the concept of angels mating with women was morally repugnant.

III. Genesis 6 Examination

Genesis 6:1–4 (ESV)

1 When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, **2** the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. **3** Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years." **4** The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also

afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

Now from the Septuagint.

Genesis 6:1–4 (LES2)

1 And Noah lived five hundred years, and Noah fathered three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And it happened when humans began to become numerous upon the earth, and they had daughters, **2** the angels of God, having seen the daughters of humans, that they were beautiful, took for themselves women from all whom they picked out. **3** The Lord God said, “My breath will certainly not reside in these humans for very long because they are flesh, but their days will be one hundred and twenty years.” **4** Now giants were upon the earth in those days, and after that, whenever the sons of God entered into the daughters of humans, they fathered children for themselves; those were the giants who were from long ago, the people of renown.

ἄγγελοι
<i>angeloi</i>
ἄγγελος
<i>angelos</i>
NNPM
angel; messenger
angels ₂

In the Septuagint, the Greek word “angelos” replaces “sons.” Then, it connects the angels of God with the sons of God.

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²Randall K. Tan, David A. deSilva, and Isaiah Hoogendyk, *The Lexham Greek-English Interlinear Septuagint: H.B. Swete Edition* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), Ge 6:2.

The Hermeneutical Problems of the Sethite Theory.

1. Principle of First Mention

The hermeneutical principle of first mention is important. Here is a basic definition:

The **hermeneutical principle of first mention** states that the first occurrence of a subject in Scripture establishes an unchangeable pattern, with that subject remaining consistent in the mind of God throughout the Bible. This principle is used to interpret biblical texts by highlighting the significance of their initial mention.³

Here is the problem: all other references to “sons of God” in the Old Testament clearly refer to angels and not men. The only exception would be the kings of Israel, who were adopted by God when they were crowned king, and the one reference by the prophets to the new birth in the New Covenant, in which we would be called “sons of God.” This fact either disproves the Sethite theory or requires reinterpreting all other mentions of angels as sons of God (which would violate their contextual setting).

2. Righteous Sons of Seth Marrying the Wild Daughters of Cain

If these “sons of God” were the righteous sons of Seth, why would righteous men marry women that had the curse of Cain on their bloodlines? How did this union produce giants or Nephilim? Such

³ <https://letslearnthebible.com/beginner/definition-of-christian-terms/first-mention-principle>

an idea is genetically impossible. (Something Julius could not have comprehended in his day, nor would Augustine.)

The very nature of the context of these Scriptures requires us to interpret the sons of God as angels, not mere men.

Finally, Dr. Victor P. Hamilton, in his commentaries on the book of Genesis for the New International Commentary on the Old Testament (NICOT), notes:

Nowhere in the OT are Sethites identified as the sons of God.⁴

I would suggest that Israel clearly understood who the sons of God were. Moses chose to concentrate on the two major results of this angelic incursion:

- The production of the Nephilim
- The darkness that engulfed the minds of humanity

It should be noted that in the mythologies of every ancient tribe of people, the flood narrative, the gods coming down and mating with human women, and the giants are present. Therefore, this understanding is not just in the bible but universally held in human memory.

IV. The Problem We Are Facing Today

I have no problem believing that some version of the Nephilim will reappear in the last days. Regardless of who you identify as the “sons of God,” the giants are clearly a part of the “days of Noah”

⁴ Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 264.

narrative. Even credible reports from UFO sources share the fascination with the entities' desire to understand the reproductive process in humans, as if something changed when the canopy was broken over the planet with the flood of Noah. I have always speculated that they were attempting to overcome what the Almighty did to limit their incursion. Before the flood, it was believed that the giants would eventually grow to be over 450 feet tall. By Joshua's time, they were as tall as cedar trees (48 feet). By the time of David, they were more like 9 feet. Can you see the trend?

Several things can muddy the waters regarding the return of the Nephilim, which I assume was the precipitating factor behind the release of the article on the Sethite theory.

- **Members of the Occult Sent in for Counter-Intelligence:**
Many of these reports can also come from those previously involved in occult families. So, mind control and memory manipulation will also be involved. Again, discernment and understanding will be necessary to ferret out truth from disinformation.
- **The Circus/Entertainment Atmosphere of the Church:**
Creating platforms, getting noticed on YouTube, and the general desire for tantalizing stories can also open us up to those who crave attention, either for money or some psychological need. Over time, the stories will become more spectacular and bizarre. Many of the circulating stories are beyond the pale.

The Word tells us:

Luke 21:25–28 (ESV)

25 “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, **26** people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. **27** And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. **28** Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

Understanding the Nephilim agenda will help prepare the Remnant for what will transpire in the Last Days. Our task is to understand, to prepare, and not to get caught up in Satan’s countermeasures, which either distract or overwhelm us!