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WHEN GOD'S HEART BROKE

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A man went to pick up his son from school to take him out to lunch as a special treat. This was to be a complete surprise to the child. When the father arrived, he found out that his son had been misbehaving very badly that day and was in trouble. The father was grieved; he breathed a deep breath, turned around, and left, knowing that he could not give his son the blessing that day that he had intended to give him.

Maybe you've been there before. You remember that deep breath, that heavy sigh. We actually get a picture of God doing this very thing in relation to rebellious humanity in a number of places in Scripture.

We begin Genesis chapter 6 with an ages-long mystery. Let's get right into it:

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown (Genesis 6:1-4).

We look at this and say, "Whoa! Giants and mighty men and sons of God...information overload!" Obviously, a passage like this has been interpreted in all sorts of different ways. Some people have even suggested that the "sons of God" were aliens! I think the Bible is its own best interpreter, and so when we compare Scripture with Scripture, we can really cut through a lot of the speculation and understand the thrust of this passage. When we do that, we can get the full benefit of what God is trying to say to us.

The weight of this passage rests upon the terms the "sons of God" and "giants." First off, who were the sons of God, and how are they related to the giants? Some suggest, as I mentioned, that the sons of God were aliens who interbred with humans and made giants. I think we can set that one aside without really even addressing it. Others suggest, and there are many respectable people in this category, that the sons of God were fallen angels. These fallen angels allegedly took on human form, married human women, and produced freakish, giant offspring.

Before we continue, let's consider that the word *giants* here may actually be a poor choice of wording. The KJV translators came to a word they didn't know how to translate (and indeed, we *still* don't know

exactly how to translate it), and so they looked back at what Jerome had done with that word when he had translated the Bible into Latin. Jerome, in turn, had looked back to an early translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek in which the translators had been rather free in inserting their own ideas. The actual Hebrew word is *Nephilim*, which we *do* know comes from a Hebrew verb which means “to fall.” The Nephilim, the “giants,” are better understood as “the fallen ones.” There is also the fact that we find this word in Numbers 13, in which case it is linked to giants as reported by the ten cowardly spies who entered the Land of Canaan and brought back a bad report. We can discuss this connection later.

Even if we do understand the “fallen ones” to be giants, we shouldn’t be surprised. Some things were just very large before the Flood, as verified over and over in the fossil record. In fact, in 1907 a human jaw was unearthed near Heidelberg, Germany, that is absolutely massive. It doesn’t fit with the evolutionary scheme which says humans have grown up from smaller, inferior creature; and so evolutionists classify it as an anomaly and just sort of leave it at that. They don’t really bother with it.¹

This still leaves open the question of who the sons of God are, and their relationship to these “fallen ones.” Supporters of the fallen angels theory point to a number of places in the Bible in which angels are referred to as the sons of God. That much is undeniable: angels *are* sometimes called the sons of God. However, at this point in the Scriptural record, there is no record at all of angels. Not one angel has been mentioned in Genesis so far. I think it is even more telling that we never find a reference to *fallen* angels as sons of God anywhere else in Scripture. Finally, I don’t find evidence that angels have the ability to reproduce at all. There are certain references which discuss angels appearing in the form of men; but Jesus Himself appears to be the only heavenly being who actually took on human flesh. In fact, Jesus said these words in Luke 24:39:

Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

This is Jesus talking to His disciples after His resurrection. We have no record anywhere of fallen angels materializing; but in this passage, Jesus offers His own appearance in living flesh as proof of His resurrection. In short, I do not believe, as many respectable people do, that the sons of God are fallen angels who produced freakish offspring.

When we look at this passage in its own context, I think it makes much more sense to understand that the sons of God are ordinary human beings who, as Genesis 4:26 says, *called upon, or called themselves by*, the name of the Lord. It makes sense in the overall context of the passage, which traces the godly line from Adam through Seth to Noah. We see shortly that, in the midst of a wicked world, only Noah and his family were spared from judgment. The number of those who called themselves by the name of the Lord had diminished to just one man and his family. Not only does it make sense in this context, but it also fits well with the rest of Scripture, in which we find many instances in both Testaments of godly men being called “the sons of God.”

I think that the proper understanding here is that these “sons of God,” those who loved God and

1 “Heidelberg jaw (hominid)” in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Available online at <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/259549/Heidelberg-jaw>. It is interesting to note that evolutionary scientists have constructed a place in the chain of human evolution for the “Heidelberg man,” including social behaviors (!), without really addressing the enormous and enigmatic size of the supposed sub-species. It’s the elephant in the room.

followed in His ways, took wives who were not interested in God at all. They were the “daughters of men,” men like Lamech who were self-absorbed and self-reliant. Godly people married the ungodly, and the results were tragic: the children brought about by such unions followed the cultural tendencies of the ungodly parent--they became the *Nephilim*, the fallen ones, who may or may not have been very large in size, but were certainly very large in wickedness.

This also fits with the entire record of Scripture, in which we see over and over again the warnings against and the consequences of unions between the godly and the ungodly. Such marriages often break hearts, destroy lives, and produce children who simply aren't interested in the things of God. That is why, after many warnings throughout the entire Bible, Paul gives the command to us in 2 Cor. 6:14:

Be [Become] ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

My purpose today is not to condemn Christians who are married to non-Christians. In my own life, my father became a Christian long before my mother. They were already married at the time. Remember also that Paul forbids divorcing someone on the basis of a Christian/non-Christian relationship. Instead, for those in that situation, he encourages the Christian to stick with it and try to win over his (or her) spouse. If the spouse dies, then Paul makes it clear that the person is free to marry again, “only in the Lord” (1 Cor. 7:39).

My point in this part simply is that *deliberately* entering into a marriage relationship with an unbeliever is asking for trouble; and yet, despite the Bible's many warnings, we see examples of how God's people have struggled with this issue down through the centuries. The fact is that the two people are traveling down different spiritual paths, and that is bound to breed conflict. The conflict, the division, breeds confusion in the children. To be fair, we will find some examples of these unequal yokes that continue harmoniously; but they are the exception rather than the rule. Gambling with your life and the lives of your children is a terrible, irresponsible risk to take. I urge Christians to find an “equal yoke.”

I heard a preacher say, “Don't worry about finding ‘the right one’; BE the right one and you'll find the right one!” I think that is very sensible. Don't fall for the first set of pretty eyes or the first flattering words; look at the heart. Ask God to help you find an “equal yoke,” and then trust Him with your future.

In our passage, then, I truly believe that the sad drama being portrayed here is that the people who believed in God married those who did not believe, and the result was offspring who became increasingly wicked. As fewer and fewer stood for the truth, wickedness increased apace. Men lived to long ages, and increased in their brazenness against God the longer they lived. Some of these children became influential and renowned in their day: “*the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.*” They held the positions of authority and influence within a civilization that increasingly turned against God.

There was a time in American history when America was a “dry” country--no alcohol was allowed. We call that time Prohibition. Alcohol is a proven threat to society, and there was a time when concern regarding alcoholic abuse was so great that our legislators banned it. The problem was that alcohol had such a strong hold on people, and it was so easy and profitable to manufacture, transport, and distribute, that the consumption could not be controlled. With all of the money involved, bribes and

corruption became rife among those who were supposed to suppress the business. Eventually Prohibition had to be repealed because ordinary people were finding out how easy it was to break the law, and more and more citizens began engaging in the illegal trade. In other words, people became increasingly brazen about breaking the law because they could usually get away with it.

That's sort of the situation here, only worse. People lived long lives, and they turned increasingly to wickedness. They saw God's *deferred judgment* as *no judgment at all*. People mistook God's longsuffering nature. Remember,

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise [of judgment!], as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (II Peter 3:9).

The influence of the godly was almost completely removed from the earth by the time of Noah. Men became hardened in their wicked ways. Look with me at the next verse.

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Notice how broad this statement is! Generally, it's not a good idea to use one hundred percent statements such as, "You *never* help me around the house!" or "You *always* lie around like a no-good dog!" Normally we want to stay away from those. Someone put it this way: "Never use broad generalizations. All broad generalizations are bad!" It's an old joke, I know. The truth is that those one hundred percent statements usually aren't true. However, God knows! He shares with us, in this one verse, two such statements: not only is man's wickedness great, but *every* imagination of the thoughts of his heart was *only* evil continually. There was no goodness left in the hearts of men! "*Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*" Pure selfishness prevailed. Folks, you think the world is a harsh place now, but can you imagine what it must have been like then? Indeed, the world is catapulting toward that same level of selfishness, just as the Lord Jesus foretold:

But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

The words of Jesus do not directly reference the corruption. He leaves it to us to look back in Scripture to the conditions of the world in the days of Noah. What was it like then? That is what is coming! We see it happening before our very eyes. We see selfishness overtaking our political processes, our schools, and even our churches. Yes, the church as a whole is becoming very worldly, appealing to men's senses and feelings rather than hewing to the Lordship of Christ. Joel Osteen, a popular preacher, says that he just wants to give people a boost when they come to his church.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears (2 Tim. 4:3).

I want to share with you one last verse that is often misunderstood. In Revelation 3:20, Jesus is talking

to a worldly church, a church that feels rich and self satisfied. This is what he says to that church:

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Where is Jesus in relation to this church? He is *on the outside*, knocking, wanting to be let in! The promise certainly applies to us individually, but in the context, it is directed toward a worldly church. You see, people often attempt to “marry” God’s true worship with worldly influence. We see over and over in Scripture and in history the worship of God being mingled with worldly worship.

Let’s continue in Genesis 6:6:

And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

That word *repented* means literally that God breathed deeply. He sighed. Just like that father who wanted to bless his son by taking him to a special lunch, but could not because the child had been misbehaving, God looked at the world and sighed heavily. God loved those people, yes, even the wickedest among them; but He could not bless them. He could not communicate with them. He is being put into a position that He did not want to hold: a Judge rather than a Father. His heart was grieved. *His heart broke*. Imagine if you will God looking down from heaven, looking for people whom He can bless and with whom He can fellowship. Their numbers have dwindled to the point where there is just one man left, and we’ll talk about him next time.

In the meanwhile, our challenge today is to be the salt and light that we are called to be. We must not compromise our morals with the world’s morals. We must not mingle Scripture with man’s philosophy. We must not buy into the world’s insistence that all roads lead to God. We must not fall into the trap that our method of worship doesn’t matter as long as it’s sincere. We are not here to be judgmental or self-righteous, but merely to do our best to be true to God and show His love in a world that stands in rebellion against Him.

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matthew 5:13-16).