

Vicarious Sacrifice: Commentaries on Genesis 6:1–4: Robert B. Thieme, Jr., Ronald B. Allen, & Merrill F. Unger; Review: Expanded Translation of John 10:1–16; Jesus Willingly Lays Down His Soul Life; the Father Loves Jesus because He Will Be Resurrected; He Will become One Shepherd over One Flock: Jew & Gentile

Commentaries on Genesis 6:1–4:

I would like to add a final set of references to our study of the Nephilim before we return to John 10. All Bible commentaries address Genesis 6:1–4, but there is not a consensus of opinion about its correct translation.

When it is understood that the curses placed by the Lord on Eve and Lucifer in Genesis 3:15 to the moment of the crucifixion, it was the devil's strategy to first prevent the virgin birth by cutting off the line of Messiah and, having failed that, to prevent the crucifixion. His first effort to pollute the true humanity of mankind is recorded in this passage.

Following the fall in Eden, the Lord issued prophetic warnings to Lucifer, Eve, and Adam. The one to Lucifer is found in Genesis 3:15 and this excerpt is an excellent synopsis of our study of the "sons of God," the "daughters of men," and the "Nephilim":

Genesis 3:15b - "And between your seed [Unbelieving humanity] and her seed [the virgin-born Messiah]; He [Jesus Christ] shall bruise you on the head [Lucifer's final doom], and you shall bruise Him on the heel."

Although detailed information concerning the person and work of the Savior would be revealed progressively, Satan instantly understood the identity and significance of the seed of the woman. The devil was well aware of the divine plan whereby his evil works would ultimately be destroyed (1 John 3:8b). He knew the arrival of the Savior, the greatest manifestation of God's love and justice, would settle the angelic conflict in God's favor. (p. 54)

To prevent the salvation plan from unfolding, Satan designed a counter strategy. Throughout the remainder of the Age of the Gentiles and the Age of Israel, his tactics would vary but his strategy would center on thwarting the coming of the Messiah. (pp. 54–55)

Satan's campaign began by motivating the first recorded murder in human history (Gen. 4:8; cf. 1 John 3:12). Satan fully understood that the future humanity of Christ would come through the regenerate children of Adam and Eve. In an effort to eliminate Christ's genetic line, the enemy made his first strike on the couple's first sons. Satan inspired Cain, an unbeliever, to murder Able, a believer, in order to cut off the line of the Savior.

God personally pronounced Cain's punishment: Cain was barred from farming, the vocation he loved, and was condemned to be "a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth" (Gen. 4:11-12). More importantly, God reestablished the Savior's line in the birth of Seth (Gen. 4:25). Still, Satan was not deterred. He struck again, launching one of his most audacious plans.

The angelic infiltration of the human race is recorded in Genesis 6. In an attempt to contaminate and destroy all true humanity, "the sons of God," or fallen angels, invaded Earth and cohabited with "the daughters of men."

The insidious goal was to corrupt human genetics and thereby foil the virgin birth of the Savior, who had to be true and pure humanity. The union of fallen angels and human women produced a superrace, the "Nephilim," literally "fallen ones" in the Hebrew (Gen. 6:2, 4). If left to continue procreation, the fallen angels would have reduced the human race to a hybrid of man and angel, a corruption that would have rendered impossible Christ's birth as true humanity. (p. 55)

Following the acts of sabotage against His plan, God permanently removed the sexual ability of all angels. He incarcerated the offending fallen angels in Tartarus (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6) to await their ultimate transfer to the lake of fire at the conclusion of the conflict (Matt. 25:41). On Earth, God's justice destroyed the tainted Nephilim and brought judgment upon "all flesh" through a worldwide flood (Gen. 6:13). However, there was one exception. God preserved the pure human race through Noah and his family.¹ (pp. 55-56)

In addition to the Colonel's synopsis, there are two additional articles that support the analysis of Genesis 6:1-4 which we have just completed. First of all we consult *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary*.

The book's general editor is **Dr. Earl D. Radmacher**, president emeritus of Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon. He holds a Th.D. degree from Dallas Theological Seminary.

Editor of the Old Testament is **Dr. Ronald B. Allen**, professor of biblical exposition at Dallas Theological Seminary from which he holds a Th.D. degree.

Dr. H. Wayne House is editor of the New Testament. He is professor of law at the Simon Greenleaf School of Law at Trinity Seminary. He holds a J.D. degree from the Oral Roberts University school of law and a doctorate from Concordia Seminary.

¹ Thieme, *The Angelic Conflict* (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2012), 54-56.

Dr. Allan's commentary on Genesis 6:1-4 follows:

This is one of the most debated Old Testament passages. Three principal interpretations are:

- (1) The sons of God represent the godly line of Seth, and the daughters of men represent the ungodly line of Cain; their intermarriage led to apostasy, compromise, and sin.
- (2) The sons of God are powerful kings who practiced an enforced polygamy by taking wives of all whom they chose, leading to other wicked practices.
- (3) The sons of God are fallen angels who cohabited with human women (the daughters of men), producing offspring that were tyrants.

Whichever view one settles on, it is important to see that this paragraph is a prologue to the story of the Flood. It accounts for the general description of wickedness mentioned in v. 5. The most likely interpretation is that the sons of God were fallen angels. This is the view of Jewish scholars and best explains the text. There are two principle objections to the fallen angel view.

- (1) Angels do not marry (Matt. 22:30), so the whole notion is impossible.
- (2) This idea is so abhorrent to biblical thought that it breaks all analogy.

Yet it is possible that these were angels who left "their proper domain" (Jude 6) and whose sin led to a special divine judgment (2 Pet. 2:4). It may be that in this isolated case, fallen angels did assume human form and marry human women; this was such a monumental breach of God's order that it provoked God's judgment on the world through the Flood.² (pp. 17-18)

The second supporting excerpt is provided by Dr. Merrill F. Unger. He earned Th.M. and Ph.D. degrees from Dallas Theological Seminary where he was professor of Old Testament Studies. He authored over 40 books including *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*:

The sons of God saw the daughters of men ... and took them wives. This extremely puzzling and difficult passage has a very pointed connection with the Flood. It gives the basic example of the fearful moral lawlessness that occasioned the catastrophe. This was the comingling of "divine beings" (literally, "sons of God," which inescapably denote "angels," Job 1:6; 2:1) with "daughters of men," a Hebraism meaning simply "human daughters." "Here ... the main stress is on 'immortals,' as opposed to 'mortals.'"

² Ronald B. Allen, "Genesis," *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary*, Earl D. Radmacher, gen. ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 17-18.

Scholarly efforts to make “sons of God” pious Sethites and “the daughters of men” ungodly Cainites simply do not come to grips with the difficulties of the passage. The simple pin plumbs the depths of pre-Flood wickedness. It was far more serious than mixed marriages between believers and unbelievers. It was a *catastrophic outburst of occultism* such as will precipitate the return of the days of Noah at the end of the present age at the glorious advent of Christ (Matt. 24:24. 37–39).

It is true the elect, unfallen angels are sinless. They neither marry nor are given in marriage (Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25). But who will assert that the fallen angels cannot cohabit with “human daughters” (females of the human race)? (p. 36)

Only through a godly remnant and a new start would the human race be preserved so that the Messiah eventually would come to identify Himself with the *human* race to redeem it. The occult invasion of humanity that precipitated the Flood was a satanic attempt to take over the earth and banish the name of God and His Christ from the planet. This is the basic cause of the Flood given succinctly in this passage, which is introductory to the great cataclysm narrated in detail from 6:5 to 8:22. (pp. 36–37)

There were giants in the earth. Literally, “It was then that the *Nephilim* appeared on earth.” The Nephilim, (*nephilim*, “fallen ones,” from *napal*, “to fall”) were the spirit-human, angelic-demon offspring of the sons of God (angels) and daughters of men (human females). The King James rendering “giants” of the Hebrew *Nephilim* reflects the Septuagint rendering (*gigantes*, “earth born”). The thought is of spirit beings (fallen angels, demonic powers) cohabiting with women of the human race producing what later became known in pagan mythologies as demigods, partly human and partly superhuman.

This is *not* mythology but the truth of the intermixture of the human race with the angelic creation from which later mythology developed “the Titans” (giants, partly superhuman). Greek mythology recalls such beings. Zeus, one of the great gods, had to battle with a group of giants known as Titans. Phoenician lore (earlier than the Greek) also echoes a similar tradition. Hittite texts containing Hurrian myths have been discovered that carry the idea back even earlier to the source of all of this in the revealed facts given in 6:1–4. Gilgamesh, the hero of the Babylonian flood story, was himself a demigod, partly human, partly divine, or superhuman.

The sons of God came in unto the daughters of men. This means it was when the angelic beings had united with human daughters that the human daughters that the Nephilim appeared on earth. And also after that. The Nephilim are mentioned as a giant race later (Num. 13:33).³ (p. 37)

³ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), 1:36–37.

The translation of the Hebrew word נְפִילִים (*Nephilim*) in the King James Version is “giants” which is borrowed from the Septuagint’s γιγαντικός (*gigantikós*): “of the giants” or “monstrous.” *Nephilim* is also translated “fallen ones” from the Hebrew root verb נָפַל (*naphal*).

This concludes our study of the doctrines associated with the work of Christ on the cross and a survey of the various post-resurrection appearances of our Lord from Easter to the Second Advent.

We now return to the Parable of the Good Shepherd in John 10. Here is the expanded translation for as far as we have gone:

John 10:1 - “I am telling you the truth, he who does not enter [**religious leaders**] into the sheepfold by the door [**virgin birth**], but climbs over some other way, he is a thief and a robber [**of another shepherd’s sheep**].

v. 2 - “He who enters [**into the sheepfold**] by the door [**Jesus identifies Himself as the door in vv. 7 & 9**] is the shepherd of the sheep.

v. 3 - “To Him [**Jesus the Shepherd**], the doorkeeper [**the Holy Spirit**] opens the door for Him [**virgin pregnancy**], and the sheep [**those who respond to the gospel**] hear and obey [**by following**] His voice. He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out of the sheepfold to pasture [**the Christian way of life**].

v. 4 - “When he [**the shepherd**] puts forth [**leads them out of the sheepfold**] all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow [**present active indicative of ἀκολουθέω (*akolouthéō*): to follow the teacher**] him because they know his voice.

v. 5 - “A stranger [**false shepherd**] they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers [**false teachers**].

v. 6 - This figure of speech [**παροιμία (*paroimía*): parable**] Jesus spoke to them. But they [**the Pharisees**] did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them [**So the Lord repeats the parable from the beginning.**].

John 10:7 - So Jesus said to them again, [the first door: ingress] “I am telling you the truth, I say to you, I keep on being the door of the sheep [the Incarnation].

v. 8 - [The Pharisees & the first door] “All that ever came before Me [Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes; the Sanhedrin] are thieves [disinformation through false doctrine, 1 Timothy 4:1] and robbers [intimidation through legalism, fear, and violence, i.e., religious persecution], but the sheep did not hear them [souls defended by the FLOT line].

v. 9 - [The second door: egress] “I keep on being the door [the cross]; if anyone enters [free-will decision of faith alone in Christ alone] through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture [discovery of truth inside the bubble].

v. 10 - [The Pharisees and the second door] “The thief advances on a sheep only to indoctrinate him with doctrines of demons, to murder, and to destroy his character and frustrate free will [the satanic strategy to gain mental assent to demonism]; I came into human history so that they may choose to have eternal life, and, in the same way, have it in superabundance.

v. 11 - “I keep on being the unobjectionable, blameless, excellent Shepherd; the good Shepherd, under a contract of suretyship, pays the indebtedness of the sheep with His spiritual life on the cross.

v. 12 - “He who is a hired hand [Pharisees are not qualified to lead Israelites], and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming [Roman political and military encroachment], and leaves the sheep and flees [it was always all about them], and the wolf [Titus Vespasianus] snatches them [the fall of Jerusalem] and scatters them [Diaspora].

v. 13 - “The hired hand [religious leadership] flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep.

John 10:14 - [The second good shepherd passage] “I am, have been, and shall remain the good Shepherd, and I love [γινώσκω (*ginóskō*)], from the source of divine integrity, My own, and My own love [*ginóskō*], from the source of accumulated doctrine, Me,

v. 15 - “even as I have always loved [*ginóskō*] the Father and the Father has always loved [*ginóskō*] Me; and I will sacrifice [τίθημι (*títhēmi*)] My soul [ψυχή (*psuchē*)] as a substitute [ὑπέρ (*hupér*)] for the sheep.

v. 16 - I have other [ἄλλος (*állos*)] sheep of similar characteristics [they are not Jews, but they are sheep], which are not functional in the dispensation of Israel; I must lead these Goyim also, and they will, with certainty in the future, hear, understand, and obey My voice, and they will become one flock, one Shepherd [μία ποίμνῃ, heís poimén].”
(EXT)

John 10:17 - “For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.”
(NASB)

1. This verse begins with the preposition **διὰ** (*diá*) plus the causal accusative of **οὗτος** (*hóutos*): “Because of this.”
2. “This” refers back to the formation of the Body of Christ which the Lord prophesies at the end of verse 16.
3. For the new dispensation to be functional and for the Gentiles to be “grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree” (Israel; Romans 11:24), then the new dispensation must occur to accommodate both groups: “one flock, one Shepherd.”
4. Because of this, the Lord says, “the Father loves Me.” Why does the Father love Jesus? Because Jesus is the lone Personality Who can successfully resolve the Angelic Conflict.
5. Although our original parents were flawless, omniscience knew, if given an opportunity to sin, man would do so.

6. Loss of perfection would require the advent of a Mediator: “One who interposes between parties at variance for the purpose of reconciling them.”⁴
7. The only way the Mediator can “interpose between parties” is for Him to be equal with both parties in the dispute.
8. This required the intervention of undiminished deity into human history.
9. This intervention would be accommodated by the second party in the dispute, the true humanity of Messiah.
10. Taken together this forms what is referred to theologically as the hypostatic union.
11. It is the true humanity of Jesus that is the critical factor in accomplishing God’s objective of forming one flock presided over by one Shepherd.
12. Jesus understood that He was that Shepherd and in order for the flock to be formed, He understood that He must lay down His life physically in order to take it up again.
13. The words “lay down” are the futuristic present active indicative of the verb **τίθημι (tithēmi)**: figurative language for placing one’s life on the line.
14. The futuristic present tense “may be used to describe a future event, though it typically adds the connotations of immediacy and certainty.”⁵
15. The active voice indicates that Jesus, by producing the action, lays down his life willingly in submission to the Father’s plan.
16. The word “life” in the NASB is not **ζωή (zōē)**: “life,” but **ψυχή (psuchē)**: “soul.” This makes reference to the spiritual death of our Lord, a three-hour period when He was being identified with the sins of the world and judged for them.

⁴ Henry Campbell Black, *Black’s Law Dictionary*, rev. 4th ed. (St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1968), 1133.

⁵ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 535.

17. In physical death, the Lord laid down His body. It is the soul of man that is saved, not the body.
18. This is followed by the introduction of a final purpose clause, the conjunction **ἵνα (hína)**: “that.”
19. The purpose of dying spiritual death is so that he might take it, His soul, up again. The verb “take” is **λαμβάνω (lambánō)**: “to receive.”
20. The trichotomous restoration of the Lord’s person occurs at the resurrection, a status that will continue for all eternity and enable Jesus in hypostatic union to function as the risen Shepherd that will lead the unified flock of God’s sheep for all eternity.

John 10:17 - “Because of this, My Father keeps on loving Me because I lay down My soul in spiritual death for the purpose that I may receive it again at the resurrection.” (EXT)