

**The Bible: Strange But True -
“The Sons of God”
Genesis 6:1 – 8**

Growing up one of my most favourite books was published by the Readers Digest called, “Strange Stories - Amazing Facts: Stories that are bizarre, unusual, odd, astonishing, incredible... but true”.

I to loved read through all these different stories, especially the sections called “Intriguing and Unsolved Mysteries” and “Footsteps into the Unknown – Adventures beyond the material world”.

Like the story of the faces that started to appear on the kitchen floor in southern Spain. The owner was so alarmed he had the tiles torn up and replaced with concrete... only for another face to appear. When the local council investigated, they dug up the floor to discover a medieval cemetery...¹

But I digress...😊

So when it comes to the Bible, to Scripture, we do have a times, a book that’s a bit strange – true?

I think the subtitle could also apply to Scripture and that sometimes there are stories that are bizarre and unusual and odd... but true.

I don’t know about you but you a passage of Scripture and you go “Wh...what???”

In fact this morning we’re going to look at one of these.

So...

“What stands out to you?”

Tell the person next to you.

You have a humanity whose “every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.”

There is this response from God is grieved by what he sees and acts with divine judgement.

¹ Strange Stories, Amazing Facts, “Ghost Faces on the Kitchen Floor”, 390- 391.

You have these Nephilim, They are “mighty men”, “heroes of old, men of renown”.

Some Bibles translate this to mean ‘giants’. Men of great power and strength. ‘Nephilim’ literal translates as the ‘the fallen’ – the fallen were on earth in those days and also afterwards.

These giants, men of great power and strength are the offspring – the children – of the sons of God and human women.

So...

“Who were the “Sons of God?””

There are three main views.

- One is that the “Sons of God” were from the godly line of Seth but who intermarried with the ungodly line of Cain.
By intermarrying with this ungodly line, the descendants of Seth became debased and rejected their godly calling.
However, the text does not say the sons of Seth and daughters of Cain but the “sons of God saw the daughters of humans”.
- Another view is that the “sons of God” were nobles, men of high rank, who married into lower classes, often by force. But again the language of the text doesn’t point in that direction.
- The third view is that the sons of God were... who?
Angels, fallen angels.

So where I am up to is this: I do think these were spiritual beings.

There is a contrast between “sons of God” and human beings.

In the *Old Testament*, this exact phrase in the Hebrew – the ‘sons of Elohim’ is used 6 times in total, and each of those times it refers to heavenly beings – angels.

I think they were a special class of angel who had the ability to take up physical form, who were loyal to God but rejected the position and rebelled against God.

In doing so they corrupted human beings through their children.

And human beings welcomed this.

The language is not sexual assault or rape but of welcome by humans.

This was a rejection of God here; of accepting the boundaries of creatures made in his image, that human men and women are made for each other in terms of marriage.

So I think too that by co-habiting with angels this was an attempt to achieve God-like status.²

Instead it debased and degraded humanity.

In rejecting God and choosing to follow other created beings that became wicked to the extent the every inclination of the heart was toward evil.

Now if that happened then why doesn't mean they could do the same today? Where are these angels now?

Well our other readings give us insight - 2 Peter 2:4:

“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to Tartarus, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment...”

And then Jude 6:

“And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.”

In both these passage these rebellious angels are bound up and imprisoned until the day of final judgement; they are prevented from engaging with humans as they did in Genesis 6.

Now how this is possible is beyond the bounds of what we know and so at this point you may thinking,

“Oh come on Reece! It sounds like science fiction. Surely we need an explanation that is less oddball and more palatable!”

You know, I hear you.

We also though need to be very careful that we do not try to tame Scripture.

Thomas Jefferson was the 3rd president of the United States, and towards the end of his presidency and heading into retirement he took up a hobby. So with a razor in one hand and glue in the other he went work and he created his own version of the New Testament.

Anything that offended his rational sensibilities he removed.

² See Genesis 3:1 -4; Genesis 11: 1 – 9 (especially verses 4 – 6)

The supernatural – gone! He sliced and diced and removed all miracles by Jesus. The Resurrection and most other miracles – didn't happen. Any suggestion Jesus was divine – no way.

Jefferson insisted that Jesus never meant to portray Himself as the Son of God and the writers of the New Testament were ignorant and uneducated men.

He called his work *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*.

(By the way this view – the view about the “sons of God” - was *the* view of the Church for the first two hundred years).

You know, we are told in 2 Timothy 3 verse 16 that:

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful...”

This passage is in here for a reason.

If we take Scripture seriously, and even if you think there is a better explanation for Genesis chapter 6, we do have to say there is an another unseen world all around us.

That unseen world is an inhabited world that is full of angels.

That's what the Bible says; that's what the New Testament says.

Who announced Jesus' birth to the shepherds? Angels.

Who meet with Joseph in a dream? An angel.

Who rescued Peter from a prison? An angel.

There are those who serve the Lord and those who are self-serving.

Those who are loyal to God and those who broke faith with Him.

So with that there is a negatives and two positives.

This is a Contested Planet.

There is still a *corrupting influence in the world today*.

There are malignant forces at work and their intention is to corrupt, to pollute and to debase humans who bear the image of God.

There are some aspects of evil that can't be explained at a human or systemic level.

How can you explain why there are 49 million people trapped in modern slavery and human trafficking and roughly a quarter are children?³ An estimated **6.3 million** are in commercial sexual exploitation.

³ What is modern slavery? | Anti-Slavery International (antislavery.org)
<https://www.antislavery.org/slavery-today/modern-slavery/>

How can you explain how the pornography industry makes an estimated \$16.9 billion each year in the United States alone?

How can you explain the horrors of Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union and the Killing Fields of Pol Pott?

How can explain the violence and abuse done toward our most vulnerable – the elderly, the young and the unborn?

Human beings are capable of terrible cruelty and evil but the sheer volume needs further explanations.

This is not simply passive but active evil.

I personally believe that behind these horrors are demonic forces.

At a personal level we've talked about this before.

Scripture tells us:

“In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.”⁴

When you see that word “foothold” it means opportunity, it means a place or dwelling or seat.

If you have something in your life that you're not dealing with like anger or it could be anything, and we're not dealing with it – it's just sitting there festering –you open yourself up and what the devil does... is he finds a place to land.

It could be bitterness. There are bitter Christians but shouldn't be that way.

It could be an unwillingness to be reconciled to a brother or sister in Christ.

It could be an addiction to alcohol, an illicit substance, lust or pornography.

It could be a career drivenness where you've been willing to sacrifice your family and your faith.

⁴ Ephesians 4:26

It could be that you were so mistreated at a certain time in your life and it sowed a seed of hatred in your heart.

Or it could be in the form of accusations that remain from many years ago; the echo of condemnation still carries on.

A something from 10, 20 or 30 years ago that still haunts you.

When areas like this are present, there are these malignant, evil entities – demons – that lurk around us and when we have these present, we provide a space, a landing place for these malignant entities to land.

Where there is stuff lingering and festering in our lives, they come to sit in that place and use it to make stuff worse in our lives.

From that place they seek to influence us to choose unwisely and behave poorly and enter more deeply into sin.

They do so in the hope that they will corrupt and ruin our lives.

The bottom line, no matter which interpretation you prefer for the phrase sons of God, sin corrupts, escalates, and spreads.

And we have role in that and they are other entities who have a role as well.

And another aspect of that is this question around, how can you say to someone, “God loves you” when their lives are marked by tragedy, deep hurt, deep and sorrow?

And of course, there is no one answer that can satisfy.

I do though think a partial answer is found in that this world at times is often a battleground – that humans have an enemy who hates them because they reflect the image of the one who made, the image of God.

That’s the negative.

Judgement

This first positive is the goodness of divine *judgement*.

So there is a warning here – in Genesis, in 2 Peter and in Jude.

Again we’ve talked about this a number of times before.

There is a point where the Lord says, “Enough is enough!”

In Genesis it says God’s heart was deeply troubled, that it was pained with grief and anger.

The judgement here in Genesis 6 was a response to the evil God saw. In fact in verse 11 it says “the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and *full* of violence.”

The world has become grotesque, twisted and warped away God’s original intent.

So God says, their days will be a hundred and twenty years. So either humans lifespan will become restricted or it would be 120 years until flood comes.

Whatever the case, the writers of the New Testament say that this is a warning of the final judgement to come, as much as that grates with our Western 21st Century claim to tolerance.

So of course there are people today who say they cannot imagine that God judges anyone.

But to deny God’s judgement is to deny God’s love.

The *intent* of this judgement is God putting the world to right, restoring its original goodness, purging and cleansing creation of all that is sinful and unjust... and calling to account all that is evil, including fallen angels.

The question we will individually be asked is, “What have you done with my Son Jesus?”

The final point is this: in Genesis 6 verse 8 we read these words:

“But Noah found favour in the eyes of God”

Favour and Grace

Noah, in amongst all the wickedness and evil going on around him, was seen by God, was known to God.

We’re told that he was a preacher of righteousness.

He spoke up and spoke out and warned others of what was to come.

God sees you.

And you have found favour in his eyes – not because of anything you’ve done, or achieved or earned – but through His Son Jesus.

He is on your side.

So God is with you.

Whatever you're facing God is for you and not against you.

God in Jesus chose you to receive his love and favour and grace and acceptance and transformation and pardon and so, so much more.

And your name – *your name* – is written in the Book of Life.

Jesus said, "I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life."⁵

⁵ John 5:25