

## **SONS OF GOD AND DAUGHTERS OF MEN.**

**"The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all, which they chose...And they bare children to them, the same became mighty men, which were of old men of renown." (Gen. 6:2,4.)**

The Scriptures not only point us to the future age and call the spiritual government of Christ which shall then exist a "new heavens," and earthly society and institutions under it a "new earth;" but the present spiritual rulership [under Satan, "the prince of this world,"] and earthly institutions under it are termed "The present evil world," dispensation or epoch. Moreover, we are informed that the present dominion of evil has not lasted forever, but that it was preceded by a still different dispensation or epoch spoken of as "the world that was before the flood," which also had a heavens or spiritual ruling power, and an earth, or condition of men subject to that spiritual dominion.

These three worlds mentioned by Peter (2 Pet. 3:6,7,13) designate these three great epochs of time, in each of which, God's plan with reference to men has a distinct and separate outline, yet each is but a part of the one great plan which, when complete, will exhibit the divine wisdom, though considered separately these parts would fail to show their deep design.

Since that first "world" (heavens and earth," or that order of things) passed away at the time of the flood, it follows that it must have been a different order from the present, and hence the prince of this present evil world was not the prince of that which preceded this – not the prince of the world or dispensation before the flood.

That angels were the rulers of that epoch is not only indicated by all references to that period, but may be reasonably inferred

from the Apostle's remark when contrasting the present dispensation with the past and the future. He endeavors to show both the righteous and the enduring character of the future rulership of the world, saying, "The world to come hath He not put in subjection to the angels" – no, it is put under the control of Jesus and his joint heirs, and hence it shall not only be more righteous than the present, but it shall be more successful than that of the angels was. (See Heb. 2:2,5.)

In their original estate all the angels seemed to possess the ability to appear in earthly forms – Satan appeared to Eve as a serpent, other angels frequently appeared as men, thus performing their ministry, appearing or disappearing as the work demanded.

It was at this time, we believe, that the fall of some of the angels occurred. It is a common supposition, though we think without foundation, that the fall of Satan and his angels occurred before man's creation. We are told that Satan was a murderer [man killer] from the beginning (Jno. 8:44.) Certainly not from the beginning of his own existence, for every creation coming from God's hand is perfect, nor can we think any other beginning referred to than man's beginning in Eden.

The ambition of Satan to become a ruler seems to have developed as he beheld the first human pair with their procreative powers. He probably reasoned that if he could obtain the control of this man he should have the dominion over all his offspring, and be in power and influence above others, a rival of Jehovah, and his growing ambition said, "I will be like the Most High." (Isa. 14:14.)

Measurably successful, Satan gained a great influence over the race, but not complete, for in competition with him was the great company of angels who as guardians, instructed and ruled mankind for a time in harmony with the will of God. But presently came a great degeneracy among those rulers of men. Man's

corruption was contagious, and some of the angels left their own habitation or condition as spiritual beings, keeping not their first or original estate. They misused the powers which they possessed of assuming a human form and became of a reprobate and licentious mind, copying after the degenerate man, and according to our text started a new race of men in the world.

Just what was God's plan and method under that first dispensation has not hitherto been so clearly understood. Recently, however, several scriptures have been brought to our attention which seem to throw light on God's dealings during that time, and we think give a further and clearer insight into his plan and purpose as a whole. The thought suggested by these is that the first world (the dispensation before the flood) was under the supervision and special ministration of the angels; that these were man's governors and overseers commissioned to communicate God's will and to rule over the fallen and degenerating race, which, because of sin needed this government.

Some have endeavored to apply the Scripture at the beginning of this article to two classes of men – one class more righteous than the other, called "Sons of God," but such a position is utterly untenable, for why should it be considered a grievous sin for one man to take for a wife another man's daughter. Marriage among men is never condemned as sinful in the Scriptures. Again, if it were merely a union of two classes of the same race why should the offspring be "GIANTS" and specially "MEN OF RENOWN." If the righteous and the wicked marry to-day are their children therefore giants or renowned men?

Through the deterioration of several hundred years, mankind had lost much of its original vigor and perfection of mind and body, but with the angels it is different. Their powers were still perfect and unimpaired, hence it is clear that their children would

partake of that vitality and much more resemble the first perfect man than those around them, among whom they would be giants both in physical and mental strength.

Those angels which kept not their first condition but sought the level of sinful men and left their own habitation or spiritual condition God placed in age-lasting chains. That is, God restrained or limited their powers, taking from them the power and privilege of appearing in any earthly form, human or brute. Hence, though we know that they did thus appear before the flood, there is not one instance recorded in which they have been able to free themselves from this restraint or chain since. On the contrary, the angels who left not their first estate are not so restrained, and have appeared frequently as men, as a flame of fire and as a pillar of cloud, etc., as recorded in both the old and new testament Scriptures.

Having become depraved in their tastes and given over to a reprobate mind, and being debarred from all association with God and his works and plans, these fallen angels have no longer any pleasure in things on the spiritual plane, but crave association with depraved mankind and a participation with him in every form of evil. How wise and kind the Almighty hand which has restrained their power and influence over men by preventing their personal intercourse! Now they may indeed enter and act through any who invite their companionship, but no more can they do. Thus far shalt thou go, saith the Almighty, but no farther.

Some of this class, possessed by devils, Jesus and his disciples met in their ministry. Out of one he cast a legion of devils (Mark 5:1-15). Anxious in some manner to be associated with humanity, yet unable to assume human form because of their restraints, (chains), when they found a man willing to have such company, a legion crowded into him, making him thereby a maniac. Even when they perceived that Jesus would release the

man from their possession, they in despair requested as a favor that they might be permitted to inhabit and use the bodies of a herd of swine near by. But the swine were crazed thereby, and madly rushed into the sea.

But our subject would be incomplete if we should omit the testimony of Jude (vs. 6,7.) After mentioning the angels who sinned, he says, Even as Sodom and Gomorrah...IN LIKE MANNER giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh." Is not this conclusive evidence on the subject?

That God deprecates any mixture or blending of human and spiritual natures, and designs that each should keep its own original or first estate, we need scarcely remark is clearly taught here. (See also Lev. 18:23, and 20:15,16.) And that our race as it exists to-day, coming through Noah, is purely Adamic stock, and contains no mixture, is shown by the expression – "These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation, i.e., not contaminated in the manner before described (Gen. 6:9.)

Glancing back then we see the first epoch under angelic control, and the result, man's continued degradation, and its degrading influence upon some of the angels. The angels were utterly unable to accomplish the great work of man's recovery. Doubtless they were anxious to do it, for they sang and shouted for joy at his creation. And God let them try it, but sadly they failed. Some joined the ranks of evil and the rest stood by and witnessed the terrible course of sin. Later we find them still interested and desiring to look into the plan which God has since been working out, and ever ready to do his bidding in our service. (1 Peter 1:12.) Thus was proven both to men and angels the futility of angelic power to save men.

In the beginning of this present evil world, notwithstanding Noah's endeavor to serve God and to teach his posterity to follow his example, and the exhibition of God's anger at the deluge, the tendency was still downward, and soon the wickedness of a Sodom brought its destruction. Mankind was bent on an evil course, and God permitted them to take it. Then the ministration of angels, except to the few of God's children, was withdrawn. In this second dispensation God permits the world to select and obey the prince of its own choosing, to feel his galling yoke and to realize the real character of evil while he is selecting from among them a little flock, whose desire to do the will of God has led them to sacrifice the human interests and present things to share as joint heirs with Christ, the glories and honors of the new ruling power (new heavens). And when the prince of this world is cast out, and he whose right it is shall take his power and reign, then in him shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

God has now demonstrated to all his creatures that his plan was the only one which could accomplish the great work; and his plan has ever since the fall been gradually and quietly developing, and in due time will bear abundant fruit unto eternal life.

If, then, we are candidates for so high an honor, is it not fitting that the Gospel church must be carefully tried and tested now to insure their fitness for the new dominion? Let us then with the Apostles rejoice that we are accounted worthy of being tested and tried, and laying aside every weight and every besetment, let us run with joy and patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus our forerunner, the author and finisher of our faith.

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