

Genesis 6:1-4

An Historical Survey of the Old Testament , Eugene H. Merrill, p. 60.

The parallel races of humanity described in Genesis 4 and 5, those of the Cainites and Sethites, continued to multiply through many generations. As long as there was separation between them, the knowledge of the true God could be maintained even in the face of increasing wickedness on earth. The time finally came, however, when that division was no longer preserved, for Genesis 6:1-2 relates that intermarriage took place between the two, resulting in absorption of the covenant race. Only Noah and his family retained their faith. Some would suggest that the "sons of God" in this passage were angels, while the "daughters of men" were human beings, and that there was, therefore, marriage between angels and men.²⁷ Though this interpretation appears to have some support, especially from Job (1:6), Peter (2 Pet. 2:4), and Jude (6, 7), the overall arguments against it seem to outweigh it. Jesus described the angels as sexless (Mark 12:25). Moreover, the purpose for carefully outlining the fortunes of the Cainites and Sethites in Genesis 4 and 5 is meaningless apart from assuming that Cainites and Sethites are intended in Genesis 6 and that their intermarriage was the occasion of God's judging man by the flood.

Regardless of the identification, the narrator observes that the world was a place in which none followed after God. God decided to alter his procedure (which is the meaning here of "repent") and to destroy man from off the earth within a period of 120 more years (6:3). One man alone found grace in his eyes. Noah, whose name means "comfort" or "rest," was chosen to be saved from the flood and to be the means of reestablishing the human race in a post-deluge world.