

## PETER'S EPISTLES

### 1 Peter: Living In Conflict With The Culture

#### XV. Wise Living In View Of Christ's Perfect Example, 1 Peter 3:18-4:6

##### C. Parenthesis: A Lesson In Bible Interpretation With 1 Peter 3:19-20 (1 Peter 3:19-20)

### I. Introduction

- A. After our study of 1 Peter 3:19-21 last Sunday, someone told me about a major interpretation of the passage that teaches that the 1 Peter 3:19 "spirits in prison" were fallen angels who await judgment in a prison for angels since they led Noah's generation to sin. (cf. bible.org/netbible/1 Peter 3:19) This view holds that those demons in Genesis 6:2, 4 impregnated women who then bore evil men. (gotquestions.org/sonsofGod.html)
- B. Though many evangelicals hold this interpretation, it actually undermines the entire Christian faith!
- C. We thus correct this view and offer an important lesson in interpreting Scripture by revisiting 1 Peter 3:19-20:

### II. Parenthesis: A Lesson In Bible Interpretation With 1 Peter 3:19-20.

- A. The view that 1 Peter 3:19-20 means Christ announced to fallen angels in a prison judgment for their role as "sons of God" in impregnating women to bear the evil men in Genesis 6:2, 4 undermines the Christian faith:
  1. Though a word study of the phrase "sons of God" in the Old Testament shows it is used of angels and demons (Job 1:6; 38:7), for angels to beget children by cohabiting with women counters Christ's Matthew 22:30 claim that angels "neither marry" as male bridegrooms "nor are given in marriage" as female brides.
  2. In reply, defenders of the view that Genesis 6:2, 4 speaks of angels claim that Jesus did **not** say that angels **could** not marry or be given in marriage, **only** that they **did** not do so. (Ibid., gotquestions.org)
  3. However, since Christ said that angels **do** not marry as men nor are they given in marriage as women, if the "sons of God" in Genesis 6:2, 4 who **did** marry and beget sons by women were angels, Christ lied in Matthew 22:30 by claiming that angels **do** not do what Genesis 6:2, 4 claims those alleged angels **did do!**
  4. If Christ lied in Matthew 22:30, He sinned, and He cannot qualify as God's sinless Sacrifice in our behalf on the cross to save us (2 Corinthians 5:21), we are still in our sins and the Christian faith is a false faith!
- B. The **solution** to this entire problem is to heed the **priority** of **context** in interpreting Scripture (as follows):
  1. Though word studies **may** help **if** a passage is **unclear, the literal, grammatical, historical contexts take precedence over word studies in interpretation** -- **especially** so at Genesis 6:2, 4 (as follows):
    - a. Though word studies show the phrase "sons of God" **repeatedly** means angels in the Old Testament, since Christ claimed in Matthew 22:30 that angels do **not marry**, there must be **some other meaning or use** for the "sons of God" phrase in Genesis 6:2, 4 that is **not** supplied by the Old Testament passages!
    - b. Indeed, archaeological evidence has shown that the phrase "sons of the gods" in Ugaritic was used of members of the pantheon of gods as well as great kings, **B. K. C., O. T.**, p. 36. " . . . (F)or the pagans, gods had their origin in copulation between gods and humans. Any superhuman individual in a myth or any mythological or actual giant would suggest a divine origin to the pagans," Ibid.
    - c. Accordingly, the Genesis 6:2, 4 "sons of God" phrase was what **pagans falsely boasted**, Ibid. Moses used the phrase that pagans used of their own great men to display their false, wicked boastings, cf. Genesis 6:5.
  2. The wider Bible context supports this archaeological find and interpretation of Genesis 6:2, 4 (as follows):
    - a. Lamech, a descendant of godless Cain (Gen. 4:17-19), married two women (Gen. 4:19) and slew a man who tried to kill him, falsely boasting to his wives that he would protect himself seventy-sevenfold without needing God's help as Cain had required, Gen. 4:13-15; **Ryrie St. Bible, KJV**, 1978, fn. to Gen. 4:23-24.
    - b. Lamech's example was thus used by later generations until in Genesis 6, men used demon possession, false boasts of partial divinity and massive polygamy to propagate hordes of violent men. (Ibid., **B. K. C., O. T.**)
  3. Also, 1 Peter 1:10-11 notes the Spirit of Christ ministered through Old Testament prophets, so Christ's Spirit ministered through Noah according to 1 Peter 3:19-20 in accord with the contexts of the epistle.
  4. Thus, the literal, grammatical, historical **contexts** of Scripture lead us to see that 1 Peter 3:19-20 refers to Christ's ministry through Noah to his godless generation and that the Genesis 6:2, 4 "sons of God" were those same evil men who greatly sinned in the original pattern of their forefather Lamech!

**Lesson:** *Since the literal, grammatical and historical contexts of Scripture take precedence over word studies, Genesis 6:2, 4 and 1 Peter 3:19-20 refer to the wicked generation of people who lived in Noah's day.*

**Application:** *May we rely on Scripture context and check our interpretation with the rest of Scripture for the truth.*