

Sin of the Sons of God – Does the Punishment fit the Crime?

Genesis 6:3

Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”^a

Genesis 6:3 is an enigmatic passage that describes God’s decree of punishment for the sin of the sons of God. The sin itself is described in the verses both before and after, creating a sandwich around the God’s proclamation of judgment in verse 3.

² the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.... ⁴ The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.^b

This paper assumes that the sons of God were indeed angels, spiritual beings created by God. All passages are from the ESV unless otherwise noted. Dr. Gordon Wenham does a wonderful job detailing the case for this interpretation in his commentary on Genesis. Wenham states:

The “angel” interpretation is at once the oldest view and that of most modern commentators. It is assumed in the earliest Jewish exegesis (e.g., the books of 1 Enoch 6:2ff; Jubilees 5:1), LXX, Philo *De Gigant* 2:358), Josephus (*Ant.* 1.31) and the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QapGen 2:1; CD 2:17–19). The NT (2 Pet 2:4, Jude 6, 7) and the earliest Christian writers (e.g., Justin, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen) also take this line.^d

In background, the unanimous interpretation until approximately 200 AD was that that the sons of God were angels and the daughters of men were simply that, the daughters of the descendants of Adam. The concept of human/god hybrids in early history is recorded in the mythology of civilized cultures worldwide, cultures separated by vast distances with no known means of communication. Around 200 AD some rabbinical scholars sought to reinterpret the identity of the sons of God and distance themselves from the religions of the cultures around them. These

^a *New American Standard Bible : 1995 Update*. LaHabra, CA : The Lockman Foundation, 1995, S. Ge 6:3

^b *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Ge 6:2–4). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

^c Wenham, Gordon J.: *Word Biblical Commentary : Genesis 1-15*. Dallas : Word, Incorporated, 2002 (Word Biblical Commentary 1), S. 139

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

Ant. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*

NT New Testament

rabbis promoted a new interpretation claiming that the sons of God were human royalty or decedents of Seth and that the “daughters of men” are actually only female descendants of wicked Cain. Later, Christian scholars left the interpretation of the church fathers and adopted the new rabbinical ideas that the sons of God are descendants of Seth. Reformed Christian scholars, including Luther, adopted this interpretation observing that angels and women do not currently have intercourse producing tangible offspring. However, Luther’s objection was based more on his distaste for catholic mysticism than the pagan myths.

I agree with the scholars claiming that physical copulation between humans/spirits is not now possible and that we find no Nephilim “half breeds” being produced today. I believe there was a time in history before the flood, however, when this actually happened and this is documented in Genesis 6:2, as well as in the myths and proto-history of many cultures worldwide. In addition, we see in verse 6:4 that the offspring, the Nephilim, were present both before and after the flood. Furthermore, Numbers 13:33 claims that the Nephilim were in Canaan when Israel left Egypt.

³³ And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.”^e

These passages document that the Nephilim, and presumably physical intercourse between angels and women that birthed them, continued to be an issue after the flood. In other words the flood did not resolve the problem nor was it intended to according to Gen 6:3. God tells us that He sent the flood to judge the violence and corruption of mankind as we see in Gen 6:11, not the sin of the sons of God. Post-flood Nephilim present a significant problem with the sons of Seth and the daughters of Cain interpretation in that the descendants of Cain were not present after the flood to intermarry with the descendants of Seth to create more Nephilim; they were part of the “all flesh” that was destroyed in the flood. It is clear that only the “Sethite line” of Noah was saved through the flood in the ark therefore the rabbinical “sons of Seth/daughters of Cain” interpretation is weak, failing to address the reappearance of the Nephilim. The narrative reads that the sons of God sinned before the flood and Nephilim were born, the flood occurs, and more Nephilim appear, presumably because the sons of God continued sinning after the flood. The flood did not stop the sin of the sons of God because the flood was not intended as either the punishment or the cure; God’s solution regarding the sin of the sons of God was decreed in Genesis 6:3.

God’s decree concerning the sin of the sons of God

Genesis 6:3, “Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”^f

Theologians have long complained that God’s decree of punishment concerning the sin of the sons of God does not fit the crime. The purpose of this paper is to explain how the punishment decreed in Genesis 6:3 actually does fit the crime and provide an explanation as to how the Nephilim, proof of human/spirit copulation, could have existed both before and after the flood but not now. This paper also attempts to show that God’s decree in Genesis 6:3 protects humanity from the corruption of the sons of God after the birthing of the nation of Israel.

^e *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Nu 13:33). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

^f *New American Standard Bible : 1995 Update*. LaHabra, CA : The Lockman Foundation, 1995, S. Ge 6:3

In considering the decree itself, there has been considerable speculation as to what it actually means. The Hebrew is enigmatic and while the broad concepts are fairly straightforward, the nuances are varied and this diversity is evident in the many translations. There are four main clauses to be considered. The first is “Then the LORD said.” This indicates that God’s decree is the result of the sin of the sons of God in the preceding verse. There is not much dispute concerning this. The second phrase, however, has been the subject of considerable debate, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever.” The reason for God’s Spirit “not striving” with man is given in the following clause, “because he also is flesh.” The meaning of this phrase seems obscure but I believe that it is straight forward and literal. I propose the core issue concerns the way or “means” that God governs humanity to prevent or mitigate sin – whether He chooses to use the fear of God or the fear of man. The Hebrew verb is most often translated “strive with” but also is translated “judge,” “contend with” or even “abide with.” If we consider this Hebrew verb in the context of “spirit” governing man, the range of meaning fits the concept. The Spirit “abides with,” “remains with” and “is available to” mankind tangibly at that time to “strive with” and “contend with” them concerning their actions and deeds. In essence, this can be viewed as the “fear of God.” It seems from the narrative that before Noah left the ark in Genesis 9, spirits (God and angels) had jurisdiction to contend with mankind against sin and only righteous men like Abel, Enoch and Noah feared God and obeyed them. Spirits, not other men, had sovereignty over mankind to strive with them to live according to God’s laws as members of a righteous society. In the scriptural record of this era they did this tangibly, physically interacting with man through his five senses and generally not through mystical experiences. Moreover, the spirits were so physically tangible to the five senses that wicked angels could copulate with human women who then bore them hybrid Nephilim offspring.

In simple terms I propose that this phrase reflects the concept that before the flood a tangible God and tangible spirits (sons of God) ruled over humanity and in Genesis 9, as the implementation of the decree in Gen 6:3 unfolded, God’s rule of humanity evolved to be mediated through human kings – from the direct rule of the “fear of God” to the delegated rule of the “fear of man.” God/spirit contended with flesh to mitigate evil before Genesis 9; carnal man contended with flesh to mitigate evil afterwards. There is ample evidence for this paradigm. In the early Genesis narrative, God is speaking to humans directly in tangible form as their ruler giving them the law. At the first sin in the garden, God speaks directly to the culpable and decrees His judgment as their ruler. Before the second recorded sin, God himself speaks to Cain, exhorting him to conquer temptation and act righteously. Cain’s deeds are evil, and not fearing God, he refuses to obey. Then God speaks face to face to the first murderer and pronounces his judgment. Clearly, at this time, God opposes human vigilantes enforcing His justice. Here is God’s decree to wicked Cain in Genesis 4:11-15:

¹¹ And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. ¹² When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.” ¹³ Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is greater than I can bear. ¹⁴ Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.” ¹⁵ Then the LORD said to him,

“Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him.^g

A major point to consider is that after God decrees a curse and banishment as Cain’s punishment for murder, Cain’s reaction is the fear of man. In response, God gives Cain a sign to prevent others from killing Cain – a sevenfold threat built upon the fear of God. This concept of no human intervention is so strong, even among the violent men themselves, that God’s interdiction against human vigilante justice is presumed upon by the second recorded murderer, Cain’s descendent Lamech, in Genesis 4:24. Spirits, not men, judged murderers before the flood and relationship with God was at stake. By God’s decree, Cain was not allowed to remain in God’s presence and toil the ground for his food. As a consequence of his sin, Cain was exiled from God’s presence/face found in God’s land near Eden; God’s territory under His jurisdiction. Cain traveled east to leave God’s land to territories governed by other spirits, the sons of God.

I propose that in that era before Genesis 9, God providentially ruled wicked man dwelling outside His land near Eden through wicked spirits in the same way He ruled over the Gentile nations around Israel through wicked kings at the time when He Himself was king over the new nation of Israel. This is the same way God now providentially rules all wicked mankind, since the exile/captivity of Israel, carnal human rulers mitigating evil of other men (Romans 13: 1-4). All authority is from God and this was just as true then as it is now, only at that point in time I propose that God delegated His authority over man to spirits instead of other men. However, we find in the narrative that these sons of God, the elohim, did not govern justly before the flood even as wicked human kings do not rule justly – they corrupted those under them. Psalm 82 (see endnote 1) indicates that the elohim governed wickedly, encouraging evil and incurring God’s wrath. The corruption and violence that resulted in the antediluvian world is evidence that the sons of God did not encourage deeds consistent with the fear of God but instead they promoted violence; rejecting the fear of God themselves they exploited those under their rule taking women as wives, whomever they chose.

When Noah left the ark in Genesis 9, God clarifies the obscurity of His initial decree in Gen 6:3 and declares a change in government delegating authority from spirits to other men such that fleshly man mitigates the evil of other fleshly men. Beginning in Genesis 9:2, the fear of man is imposed on “on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea.” Genesis 9:5b-6a then goes further and extends this fear of man over men with a few simple words.

From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed,^h

After the unfolding of God’s decree in Genesis 9, the authority to oppose sin was invested in humans and ultimately their governments. Spirits continued to have the potential for tangible interaction with humans and kings served their nations’ “gods” but God removed the “gods” jurisdiction to govern them directly. In effect, God transitions carnal humanity from a “fear of God” system to a “fear of man” system. The “fear of God” system was only effective at mitigating evil with “God fearing” people living by faith. Therefore, God imposed a “fear of

^g *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Ge 4:11–15). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

^h *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Ge 9:5–6). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

man” system on carnal humanity that was effective in mitigating evil in a society that didn’t fear God.

We see that before this decree only the hybrid Nephilim are the “mighty men” (gibbor in Hebrew) and “men of renown.” Whereas after the decree in Genesis 9; men now become “gibbor” and we find the first mention of human kings and kingdoms with Nimrod the first king and Babel the first kingdom in Genesis 10:10. By Genesis 14 we find many kings ruling different territories and fighting and subjugating one another – mitigating each other’s evil. The dividing of a unified humanity into incompatible nations at Babel in Genesis 10 is also described in Deut 32:8 – God allocating the various wicked nations according to the territories of the wicked sons of God.

⁸ When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.ⁱ

In this passage God allocates geographical territories of the earth as the inheritance of the different peoples He scattered at Babel. After the destruction of the flood, there is no longer any visible Eden or “God’s territory.” God no longer has a special land or peoples associated with His presence as we find in Genesis 4:16. The entire world is divided among humans according to the sons of God who are looked to as territorial gods, but humans rule as kings accomplishing God’s purposes, a picture reflected in Daniel 9:13, 20. After Genesis 9 these spirits exert mediated influence over the nations through human kings who served them, and perhaps built their temples, but these spirits no longer directly govern the men themselves or mitigate evil. We find, however, by the resurgence of the Nephilim after the flood that this spiritual “influence” of the sons of God over mankind was still tangible and even physical. It was possible for people to speak with their gods as they spoke with other men to obtain guidance and advice. The scriptures affirm this concept in the relationship between God and the patriarchs during that era. We find God speaking with men and the angel of the Lord physically wrestling with Jacob. However, human kings now dispense God’s justice and are responsible to punish murderers. Thus I propose the second clause, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever,” is fulfilled after the flood in Gen 9 as man is commanded to strive with man because God delegated judgment to human kings instead of spirits.

Psalm 82 (see endnote 1) describes a scene in which God judges his own council of gods (elohim) and condemns spirits ruling humans for showing favor to the wicked and not defending the weak; the situation before the flood. God’s judgment of the gods in verse seven is spoken of again in 1 Peter 3:18-22 and Jude 6.

Psalm 82

- ¹ God has taken his place in the divine council;
in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:
- ² “How long will you judge unjustly
and show partiality to the wicked? *Selah*
- ³ Give justice to the weak and the fatherless;
maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.

ⁱ *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Dt 32:8). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

- ⁴ Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”
- ⁵ They have neither knowledge nor understanding,
they walk about in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.
- ⁶ I said, “You are gods,
sons of the Most High, all of you;
- ⁷ nevertheless, like men you shall die,
and fall like any prince.”
- ⁸ Arise, O God, judge the earth;
for you shall inherit all the nations!^j

Historically, the rise of kings coincides with the decline of Nephilim as the “mighty ones” (gibbor in Hebrew). The man Nimrod, the first king mentioned, is also the first human “gibbor” and called a mighty hunter before the Lord. What he hunted is the subject of speculation but I propose that he hunted post-flood Nephilim, interlopers who physically and violently sought to retain their domination of humanity in spite of the decree in Genesis 9. Coincidentally, the next mention of kings after Nimrod is about four kings from Nimrod’s territory of Shinar beginning a military campaign against Sodom and hunting the Nephilim in Canaan. This is the first war and organized battle mentioned in scripture and it begins with Nimrod’s legacy vs. Nephilim. These four kings from Nimrod’s territories are going to battle against the five kings of Canaan, including Sodom and Gomorrah. However, they begin their campaign against Sodom by first attacking and defeating Canaan’s tribes of Nephilim.

⁵In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim,⁶ and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the border of the wilderness.^k

According to Deut 2:10-22^l, the Rephaim, Zuzim, Emim and the Horites were all Nephilim. I propose that the narrative seems to link Canaan in general and Sodom in particular with the

^j *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Ps 82:1–8). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

^k *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Ge 14:5–6). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

^l Deut 2:10-22:

¹⁰ (The Emim formerly lived there, a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim.

¹¹ Like the Anakim they are also counted as Rephaim, but the Moabites call them Emim.

¹² The Horites also lived in Seir formerly, but the people of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them and settled in their place, as Israel did to the land of their possession, which the LORD gave to them.)...²⁰ (It is also counted as a land of Rephaim. Rephaim formerly lived there—but the Ammonites call them Zamzummim—

²¹ a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim; but the LORD destroyed them before the Ammonites, and they dispossessed them and settled in their place,²² as he did for the people of Esau, who live in Seir, when he destroyed the Horites before them and they dispossessed them and settled in their place even to this day.²³ As for the Avvim, who lived in villages as far as Gaza, the Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them and settled in their place.)^l

reemergence of the sin of the sons of God; firstly by association as allies in the war and secondly by the behavior of the people. God ordains that wicked kings from Nimrod's lands destroy the Nephilim on their way to Sodom. After Sodom failed to repent, God made Sodom an example that their sin would not be allowed to continue by coming down Himself to investigate and then decreeing divine judgment for "going after strange flesh" as Jude says. It is at least ironic that when the Godly angels came to investigate, the men of Sodom tried to rape them by force. Was this their common practice? At a minimum, the human kings of Canaan tolerated these Nephilim around them and apparently gave their daughters to the sons of God willingly (because the sons of God no longer had jurisdiction to take whomever they chose). Restoring or tolerating the sin of the sons of God after the flood made Canaan a supremely wicked place (a resurrection of antediluvian wickedness) – worse than the merely common wickedness of the four kings who fought against them. In any case, during this period in the biblical narrative the sin of the sons of God continued to create more Nephilim, however, God spoke to Abraham in Genesis 15:16 of a time four generations later when iniquity was complete and this would come to an end.

¹³ Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years....¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." ^m

I propose that four generations later was the time when the era of "tangible spirits" closed forever and no new Nephilim would be born – a time specified in the decree of Gen 6:3. Moreover, it is at the end of this era that God sent His nation Israel into Canaan to establish His own territory and commanded them to exterminate all that they found there and obliterate the descendants of the Nephilim and their allies from the earth. This was God's answer to the sin of the sons of God and its legacy.

The New Testament clarifies and expands on the concept described in the third clause, "because he also is flesh." God's spiritual law is only effective and it only produces righteousness in spiritual men, those born of the spirit by faith. Noah was a righteous man being found with the righteousness by faith and God's spiritual law was effective in Noah. In contrast, at the time before the flood spirits contending against sin in fleshly men failed to mitigate sin and every intent and thought was only evil resulting in uncontrolled violence found of Genesis 6:5,13:

¹⁰ The Emim formerly lived there, a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim. ¹¹ Like the Anakim they are also counted as Rephaim, but the Moabites call them Emim. ¹² The Horites also lived in Seir formerly, but the people of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them and settled in their place...²⁰ It is also counted as a land of Rephaim. Rephaim formerly lived there—but the Ammonites call them Zamzummim—²¹ a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim; but the LORD destroyed them before the Ammonites, and they dispossessed them and settled in their place,²² as he did for the people of Esau, who live in Seir, when he destroyed the Horites before them and they dispossessed them and settled in their place even to this day.

^m *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Ge 15:13–16). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

⁵The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually... ¹³And God said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.” ⁿ

This is not surprising in that Romans tells us that fleshly man is not even able to obey God’s spiritual rule. Therefore in Genesis 9, God’s governance was delegated to fleshly man to effectively control evil in unspiritual wicked fleshly mankind. In fact, I propose that Romans 8:3-8 is a commentary on the weakness described in Gen 6:3 as to why the rule of God’s Spirit did not produce righteousness in fleshly man.

³For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ^o

To illustrate with a graphic example consider the result of God Himself contending with Cain in Genesis 4:3-8:

³In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, ⁴and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, ⁵but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. ⁶The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? ⁷If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.” ⁸Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. ^p

We know that Cain offered a fleshly sacrifice without faith and remained fleshly. Cain’s deeds were evil and, when God refuses to accept his evil deeds, instead of doing well and repenting Cain becomes angry. God Himself tangibly “strove with” Cain and commanded him to win the battle over the sin that was tempting him and standing at the door. However, being fleshly, Cain was hostile to God’s command and instead succumbed to temptation and became the first murderer. Abel’s murder did not result because God’s spiritual rule over Cain was somehow defective. It was not because the Spirit did not strive enough with Cain. God’s spiritual rule was perfect. Abel’s murder occurred because Cain’s flesh refused to submit to the rule of God and indeed, according to Romans, he could not. In other words, Cain’s flesh made God’s striving ineffective and it was Cain who was at fault. In contrast Abel was righteous and “of the spirit” on the basis of offering an acceptable sacrifice as seen in Hebrews 11:4a. By faith, Abel submitted to the spiritual rule and was found righteous and spiritual.

ⁿ *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Ge 6:5–13). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

^o *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Ro 8:3–8). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

^p *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Ge 4:3–8). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. ⁹

This is exactly the point Paul is making in Romans 8. Instead of the Spirit, the answer God gives to establish an orderly society on Earth among fleshly men is detailed in Romans 13, human rulers and authorities. What prevents murder among fleshly men is the threat of punishment from other men, the police, and the judicial system. The rule of the Spirit over fleshly men is ineffective because fleshly men refuse to obey and, in fact, they are incapable of obeying the Spirit because they are ruled by the flesh.

Wicked flesh ruled only by spirits produced violent anarchy. The flesh must be ruled by the flesh if evil is to be mitigated and some kind of order be maintained in a fleshly world. According to Genesis 6:11-13, this uncontrolled and unmitigated human violence was the sin that the flood punished, not the sin of the sons of God.

¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence.

¹² And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. ¹³ And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴ Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ^r

After the flood, I propose that the narrative shows that God prevented uncontrolled violence and evil from reoccurring by subjugating men to man instead of spirits. Men striving against other men imposed God's judgment. Paul affirms this concept in Romans 13:1-5 when he writes to Christians about human government.

¹ Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ^s

So God fulfilled "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh" by removing the direct rule of spirits over humanity. In other words, while the spiritual beings still existed, they exerted their influence in their territories indirectly through human kings. Fleshly man judged fleshly men and the influence of the sons of God towards wickedness had been degraded. The punishment is beginning to fit the crime.

We begin to better understand the sin of Babel once we see that after His decree in Genesis 9, God intended that fleshly humans should mitigate and limit the wickedness of other humans. After the flood, mankind's first project was to build a city and tower to reach into heaven and create a name for themselves – apart from God and the spirits. While it is sinful, I don't believe

⁹ *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Heb 11:4). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

^r *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Ge 6:11–14). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

^s *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Ro 13:1–5). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

that this “making a name for themselves” apart from God is the core issue that caused God to descend and decree special judgment upon Babel; mankind continues to pursue these goals to the present day, creating secular kingdoms for the glory of man without God’s direct intervention. A stronger explanation seems to be that this unified wicked humanity failed to execute God’s command to mitigate evil so God came and divided the peoples into nations who will mitigate the evil of other nations. After the flood and before Babel we had a wicked humanity, the intent of his heart evil from his youth, unified in their pursuit of wickedness. God states of this unified people, “Nothing they purpose to do will be impossible for them.” The point of the passage in Genesis 9:6 is not that a unified humanity has no limits and can do the miraculous. The point is that a unified humanity will find it possible to be as wicked as they possibly can be – with no restraint. This was contrary to the intent of the sovereignty God granted in Genesis 9 when God states after the flood, “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” Wars and battles between human kingdoms ruled by wicked kings have been God’s providential means to mitigate human evil from that time to the present day. We see God using the nations around Israel to limit their sins from the time of the judges through Jeremiah; ultimately using Babylon to bring His judgment and then using the Medes to judge Babylon. In the modern day, Hitler arises and mobilizes the nation of Germany to destroy the Jews. God orchestrates England, the United States and the rest of the allies to oppose and defeat Hitler, ending his evil plans. In Genesis 9, God has just finished judging the antediluvian violence the spirits had failed to mitigate before the flood. At Babel, in separating the nations, God guarantees that wicked nations will oppose the wickedness of other nations and mitigate evil so that man will not become as evil as he possibly can become. Man will strive against man. This transition from direct to indirect rule is part of the punishment on the sons of God. Human kings now rule nations and peoples to mitigate evil, not spirits. Seen from this perspective, the punishment decreed in Gen 6:3 is beginning to fit the crime, but this will be dealt more completely in the fourth clause.

The last clause is, “Nevertheless his days shall be 120 years.” For scholars, this is the part of the decree where there seems to be the greatest disconnect between the sin of the sons of God and the punishment God imposes on men. Scholars explain this clause two ways. The weakest explanation is that the 120 years is referring to timing of the flood and this is what will limit the days of mankind. It appears from the narrative that Noah was 500 years old when God spoke to him of the flood which then occurred when Noah was 600 years old, one hundred years later. In any case, wicked mankind continued to exist after the flood and only the days of those who died in the flood would have been limited. We have also seen the sin of the sons of God continued after the flood – more Nephilim were produced. Taking this clause to mean the timing of the flood misses the point. Why punish mankind for what the sons of God did? Ultimately, this explanation is weak and we can search for a stronger interpretation of what it means.

The classic interpretation of the fourth clause is as a decree limiting the lifespan of humans to a maximum of 120 years and this reflects what actually happened. When God uttered this decree, men’s lives were measured in centuries, not decades, with many lives reaching 800 or 900 years. At this time, limiting a man’s life to a mere 120 years would have been a radical change. The fact that lifespans begin to decrease immediately following this decree is compelling evidence that the classic interpretation of this clause is valid. Noah lived 950 years, his son Shem lived only 600 years and his grandson only 438 years. While this interpretation

seems strongest, severely limiting the length of human life raises the question about the punishment fitting the crime; wicked angels sin and humans are condemned to a shorter life. It doesn't seem to make sense, especially if humans were actually the victims of wicked angelic rulers as seems to be the case, because the sons of God took wives, whomever they chose. I propose that there is a logical answer and that the punishment does, indeed, fit the crime as we look at the next section.

Proposed solution to this problem

There is a common element in the second and fourth clause, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever," and, "Nevertheless his days shall be 120 years." Both these clauses look to the future and are not completed immediately as seen in the terms "forever" and "shall be." Both clauses are linked together as a single response to the sin of the sons of God. I propose that God's decree sets in motion a process affecting spirit/human intercourse that is manifested in and linked to the declining lifespans of humanity. In other words, we can measure the progress of "My Spirit will not strive with man forever," by how long people were living at a given point in history. At the conclusion of the era, when their lives declined to the prescribed 120 years, spirits (both God's Spirit and the sons of God) would no longer "strive with," "abide with" or relate to humans in the same manner as they did up until that point.

I propose that in Genesis 6:3 God is setting in motion a "gulf of separation" between mankind and spirits that could be measured against that timeline of declining lifespans. Physical human/spirit copulation and the birth of Nephilim would be ending at a finite period in time once the decree was fully implemented. All spirits, both God and the sons of God, would become "unphysical" to humans and human/spirit interaction would become less tangible. Once this gulf was fully implemented, there could be no more Nephilim because the wicked sons of God were no longer able to copulate with the daughters of men – the gulf rendered them incapable of sexual spirit/human intercourse. In fact, I propose this clause reflects God establishing incremental protection for mankind – a chasm limiting the influence of wicked spirits. Looked at in this light the punishment does fit the crime. Because the sons of God exploited those under their rule instead of contending with them against sin as we have see in Genesis and Psalm 82, God removed their ability to tangibly interact with humanity and corrupt them directly. God changed humanity and this change somehow was linked to a shortened life. I am not claiming that spirits were totally prevented from continuing to influence humanity. Spirits do continue to influence mankind. I am claiming that their influence was weakened and became "unphysical." After human lives had degraded to 120 years, instead relating to humans tangibly through the 5 physical senses, the sons of God interacted with humans in their minds through mystical spiritual experiences, spiritism, and divination as listed in Deut 18.

According to this paradigm, God's decree in Genesis 6:3 set in motion a process to restrict direct human/spirit interaction that was only fully complete when human life spans decreased to 120 years. According to this view, the time from the flood to Moses was a unique time of spirit/human interaction, an era that was coming to an end just as certainly as the birthing of Nephilim was coming to an end. It was during this unique period we find the patriarchs; God tangibly giving them His promises regarding Israel and the establishment of God's territory in Palestine. In fact, at the end of this time even God's interactions with His people would fundamentally change as we will see later. It was during this era that God came and physically

Sin of the sons of God – Does the Punishment fit the Crime?

spoke to Abraham. God and two angels sat and ate with Abraham before giving Abraham the promise, a promise of words that were heard with real human ears. God also met with Isaac. In a separate account, it was during this era God came and spoke to Job and his friends. We are certain of this time because Job lived 140 years after God restored his fortunes and his lifespan places him in this era. The patriarchs were not mystics but men who actually spoke, touched and ate with spirits - and lived longer than 120 years with an unbroken lineage of fathers who did the same. Following the “lifespan genealogies” we see a direct line of father/son in which each and every father lived longer than 120 years without exception. The lifespan genealogy begins in Genesis continually narrows, systematically excluding other branches of the family tree as they appear, including the line of Cain, Ham and Japheth and finally the other sons of Jacob. This unique genealogy culminates at the most important person of the Old Testament, Moses. After Moses this lifespan genealogy simply stops; it has fulfilled its purpose.

Age	Man	Ref.
930	Adam	Gen 5
912	Seth	Gen 5
905	Enosh	Gen 5
910	Kenan	Gen 5
895	Mahalale	Gen 5
962	Jared	Gen 5
365	Enoch	Gen 5 (did not die)
969	Methuselah	Gen 5
777	Lamech	Gen 5
950	Noah	Gen 9, 11
600	Shem	Gen 11
438	Apachshad	Gen 11
420	Shelah	Gen 11
464	Eber	Gen 11
239	Peleg	Gen 11
239	Rue	Gen 11
230	Serug	Gen 11
148	Nahor	Gen 11
205	Terah	Gen 11
175	Abraham	Gen 25:7
180	Isaac	Gen 35:28
147	Jacob	Gen 47:28
137	Levi	Ex 6
133	Kohath	Ex 6
137	Amram	Ex 6
120	Moses	Deut 34:7

This decline was observable and recognized by the humans of that era. Jacob specifically mentions this decline of life expectancy in his speech to Pharaoh in Gen 47:9.

⁹ And Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The days of the years of my sojourning are 130 years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojourning.” ^t

Jacobs’ son Joseph dies in Egypt 110 years old and this death is recorded in the last verse of Genesis. Interestingly, Joseph is not recorded as speaking with God or relating to Him as his fathers the Patriarchs but only having dreams and interpreting the dreams of others, and owning a cup of divination – God had become less tangible. With Joseph’s death it is almost as if the trail grows cold. Following the genealogical path we come to a dead end with no hint that the lineage is still alive. We move from Jacob’s 147 years to the 110 of Joseph. Then, after centuries of slavery, at the beginning of Exodus we discover the line is still unbroken and that one son, Levi, lived to be 137 years old and had children and grandchildren that also lived to be over 130. Thus, the era is still alive but has narrowed to exclude even the many children of Jacob pointing exclusively to his great great grandson Moses. In some ways the sons of Levi and Aaron actually were genetically set apart for the priesthood – based upon their lifespans reflecting the ability to tangibly interact with God.

So Genesis and Exodus show us through the lifespan genealogies that God’s decree in Genesis 6:3 was completed with Moses who lived exactly 120 years. With Moses, God Himself came down to Sinai and delivered His Law directly from the flaming mountain to humans with “degraded genetics” that could no longer bear His voice as evidenced by the fact that they no longer lived to the ages that the patriarchs had attained. The rule of God to mitigate sin was revealed and written down for His people, once for all – the attributes of what “living in the fear of God” meant were now documented. The Spirit at Sinai spoke to men who would live less than 120 years and were on the other side of this gulf – spirits to them were now “unphysical.” The people of this new era heard God’s voice speaking from the mountain and pleaded for a mediator between them and the Spirit so they would not die as recorded in Deut 5:24-28. They were not exaggerating; they had lost the capacity to hear God directly as wicked Cain had. God acknowledged their plea and affirmed they were right; His voice alone was simply too great for the humans of this new era to bear as they had formerly done.

²⁴ And you said, ‘Behold, the LORD our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire. This day we have seen God speak with man, and man still live. ²⁵ Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, we shall die. ²⁶ For who is there of all flesh, that has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of fire as we have, and has still lived? ²⁷ Go near and hear all that the LORD our God will say and speak to us all that the LORD our God will speak to you, and we will hear and do it.’ ²⁸ **“And the LORD heard your words, when you spoke to me. And the LORD said to me, ‘I have heard the words of this people, which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken (emphasis mine).** ²⁹ Oh that they had such a mind as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever!^u

At that time, because of this gulf, no more physical human/spirit intercourse is possible and humanity is now protected from the worst influence of the wicked sons of God, however, they

^t *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Ge 47:9). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

^u *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Dt 5:24–29). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

are also distanced from interacting with God as well. Before the flood, wicked Cain spoke with God and saw the face of God (Gen 4:14). Also before the flood Adam, Enoch, and Noah walked “with” God (Gen 3:8, 5:24, 6:9), after the flood Abraham and Isaac only walked “before” God (Gen 17:1, 24:40). As human lifespans shortened even righteous Moses was unable to look at the face of God and live (Exodus 33:20). Finally, the children of Israel living less than 120 years knew they would die if they continued to hear the voice of God directly and God approvingly gave them a mediator who could. Their capacity to interact with God was simply less than that of Moses and the patriarchs. This shift is also manifested in the fact that by this time no new Nephilim were being created either – that was now impossible. It was the end of an era and the sins of the Amorites were now complete. The remaining Nephilim to be destroyed in Canaan were simply the descendants of those produced at an earlier time. Thus by the time of the Exodus as recorded in Numbers 13:22a, 33a we find references only to the descendents of the Nephilim, not the creation of any new ones.

²² When they had gone up into the Negev, they came to Hebron where Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmi, the descendants of Anak were.^v... ³³ “There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim)^w

Like the four kings in Genesis 14, Joshua leads Israel into Canaan on a campaign to destroy the Nephilim. Like Jacob’s son Joseph, Joshua too is part of the next era. After conquering Canaan, Joshua’s death at 110 is recorded in the last verses of book of Joshua when he leaves Israel to be governed by the Law of Moses with God as their king. Joshua’s death harkens back to the death of Joseph at 110 and the closing verse of Genesis and closes a chapter in time.

Scriptures aren’t alone; the literature of many other cultures also documents this same transition. For example, the early literature of the Greeks also begins with direct interaction between humans and the gods and then transitions to indirect influence of the gods on man. In the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Homer bases his writings on a much older oral tradition. These classic epics are full of humans interacting directly with the gods, gods that are not loving and just. In just a few generations, however, this direct interaction fades in the Greek writers. Sophocles’ tragedies of the 5th century BC focus on the human condition of isolation from the gods; drama characterized by an almost total lack of direct human interaction with the gods. Instead, the characters in Sophocles’ plays must try to determine the will of the gods through ambiguous omens, prophecies and oracles and their own understanding of the gods. This is exactly the kind of transition we would expect to find in the historical documents of the world’s cultures if this paradigm were true, and indeed, this is what we find.

God’s spiritual rule is revealed and recorded

At Sinai, because His people could no longer bear to hear His voice directly, God gave the man who lived 120 years the written revelation of the Law; statutes and guidelines of His spiritual rule. Paul affirms this in Romans 7:14 when he says that the Law is spiritual. Moses received the legal code from God for His kingdom on earth. All those in Israel became citizens in the kingdom of God, with God as their king, ultimately living in God’s territory of Palestine.

^v *New American Standard Bible : 1995 update*. 1995 (Nu 13:22). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

^w *New American Standard Bible : 1995 update*. 1995 (Nu 13:33). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

The fear of God is central to this spiritual rule. In this same passage God called His citizens to live in the fear of God, keeping His commandments as the basis for His eternal kingdom.

²⁹ Oh that they had such a mind as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever!^x However, this “spiritual kingship” only lasted from the time of the Exodus when God birthed Israel as His own nation (Deut 32:9-18) until Samuel. During God’s spiritual kingship, His spokesmen were those men He raised up in accordance with the revelation of Moses, prophets like Samuel. God forbids Israel’s citizens from seeking spirits through mysticism and divination like the nations under the sons of God. In fact, Deut 18:9-22 describes the stark contrast between the spiritual rule of the kingdom of God on earth and the other nations.

⁹ “When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations. ¹⁰ There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer ¹¹ or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, ¹² for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD. And because of these abominations the LORD your God is driving them out before you. ¹³ You shall be blameless before the LORD your God, ¹⁴ for these nations, which you are about to dispossess, listen to fortune-tellers and to diviners. But as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you to do this. ¹⁵ “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers— it is to him you shall listen— ¹⁶ just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ ¹⁷ And the LORD said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.’^y

Interestingly, after the creation of the nation of Israel we find the same problems described in Genesis 6 expressed in a microcosm where “a spirit as a king” does not lead to righteousness because of the failings of man’s flesh: the government of Israel also ends up delegated to men. In a replay of Genesis 6 we find that even though Joshua left Israel under the kingship of God, the book of Judges records that Israel continually sinned and did not submit to God’s spiritual government – they did not live in the fear of God. They were fleshly and did not follow God’s Law but the desires of their own wicked hearts and they had no king to rule them and mitigate their sinful desires through the fear of man. In fact the book of Judges closes with the negative assessment in 21:25:

²⁵ In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes^z The reality was that God was Israel’s perfect spiritual king but the fleshly citizens refused to submit to His rule as expressed in His spiritual Law. God tangibly spoke to fleshly Cain and commanded him not to sin and Cain still murders Abel. God speaks to fleshly Israel by the Law through His prophets commanding them not to sin and the pages of Judges are filled with the wickedness of Israel. Their failures reach a crisis under Samuel when fleshly Israel demands a

^x *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Dt 5:29). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

^y *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Dt 18:9–18). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

^z *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Jdg 21:25). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

man to rule them. In fact, instituting a human king in Israel was not a surprise. Moses predicted the transition of rule in God's kingdom from spirit to man in Deut 17:14-15.

¹⁴“When you come to the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, ‘I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,’ ¹⁵you may indeed set a king over you whom the LORD your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.”^{aa}

So God's solution to Israel's wickedness described in Judges is a duplication of his solution to mitigate evil in Genesis where “spiritual rule” evolves to a human king in 1 Samuel 8:5b-8a.

⁵ Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.” ⁶ But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” And Samuel prayed to the LORD.

⁷ And the LORD said to Samuel, “Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.

⁸ According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods,”^{bb}

Israel's refusal to submit to God's spiritual rule as written in the Law ultimately resulted in God delegating His rule of Israel to a man after His own heart in 1 Sam 13:14; a king as Moses had predicted whose job it was to mitigate evil. Looking forward we see that God's rule over His kingdom on earth ultimately evolves into a human theocracy in which God becomes man and rules as a king over Israel and all humanity – the rule of the “fear of God” and “fear of man” unified in the God/man. Luke writes of this in Acts 17:30-31:

³⁰ The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ because **he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man** (emphasis mine) whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”^{cc}

Men who are born of the Spirit submit to God's spiritual rule through faith and are righteous, obeying His commands written on their hearts – living in the fear of God and their lives producing good deeds. Those who are fleshly and refuse to obey His written Laws, responding only to the fear of man, are ultimately judged with a rod of iron held by the hand of a human king who conquered death.

Conclusion

We see that in Genesis 6:3 God judges the sons of God in such a way that the punishment clearly fits the crime. A gulf of separation is imposed between spirit and human such that spirits become “unphysical” to humans – physical copulation is no longer possible and Nephilim are no longer produced. The ability of evil angels to corrupt humanity has been limited by God and they can no longer exploit and corrupt humanity to the extent possible before the flood. While mankind remains sinful and is influenced by wicked spirits, the fear of man is imposed with a divided mankind mitigating the evil of other men; mankind's wickedness does not reach the levels of evil attained before the flood. Once this era ends with Moses' death, the descendants of the Nephilim, are completely exterminated by men. Ultimately, the decree in Genesis 6:3

^{aa} *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Dt 17:14–15). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

^{bb} *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (1 Sa 8:5–8). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

^{cc} *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Ac 17:30–31). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

looking to a rule beyond “spirit” is fulfilled by God becoming a man, Jesus, and bridging the gulf of physical intangibility God imposed between spirits and humans. God the spirit takes on flesh and invades the physical world. The Word became the God/man king to rule and judge all humanity as the fear of God and the fear of man become unified. This man spoke the very words of God with human vocal cords that men heard with human ears. While the spirit/human gulf remained intact and provided protection from wicked spirits, humans could once again see, hear and touch God. Jesus promised mankind eternal life and escape from the wrath of God coming upon all who disobeyed His commands and did not submit to his rule and master the sin that tempted them as Cain had failed to do. This man died offering His own life as the payment of death that God had imposed upon those who disobeyed Him. As He predicted, Jesus was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven and is coming to rule the kingdom of God as a man ruling over all nations and mankind. Psalm 2 describes this rule of God’s anointed over the fleshly nations and peoples of the earth with tangible justice. God establishes His human Son as king on Zion who rules unspiritual mankind with a rod of iron. As this is completed, all the wicked sons of God, the fallen angels, will be eternally punished and they will no longer afflict or influence man as seen in 1 Peter 3:18-22 and Jude 6,

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹ in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ because they formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. ²¹ Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him. ^{dd}

⁶ And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day^{ee}

End Notes:

1. HARVARD SEMITIC MONOGRAPHS edited by Frank Moore Cross, Jr . Number 24 THE DIVINE COUNCIL IN CANAANITE AND EARLY HEBREW LITERATURE by E. Theodore Mullen, Jr . 1973.
Another compelling work on this topic is:
THE DIVINE COUNCIL IN LATE CANONICAL AND NON-CANONICAL SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH LITERATURE by Michael S. Heiser A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Hebrew and Semitic Studies) at the UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON 2004

^{dd} *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (1 Pe 3:18–22). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

^{ee} *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Jud 6). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

2. John Flavel "Treatise on Fear," in *Works* III. 241 "The carnal person fears man, not God; the strong Christian fears God, not man; the weak Christian fears man too much, and God too little."

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