Who are the "Sons of God" in Genesis 6

Genesis 6:1-13

v. 1
"Men began to multiply" – Due to the pre-flood conditions on the earth and the longevity of human life (5:4-31), the earth became full of people.

The main theme of 6:1-13 is the wickedness of the human race.

The times of Noah - SEE Gen. 6:1-7, 11-13

The sins of Noah's day -

1. Inter-marriage between the Godly and ungodly (6:1-2)

   v. 2
   "the sons of God" – There are different views as to who these personages were:

View #1 – Fallen angels; demons or demon-possessed men co-mingling with women, producing enormous offspring.

--Supposed evidence for this view:

1) The phrase "sons of God" is used almost exclusively of angels in the Old Testament (Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7)

2) II Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 describes angels that sinned who were cast down into hell (*tartarus*) and are now chained in darkness to await the final condemnation. Because these demons are not allowed to roam free like so many other demons (EX: Mark 5:1-20), it is assumed that these fallen angels must have "sinned grievously by cohabiting with women as described in Gen. 6:1-4" (Ryrie).

--Evidence to disprove this view:

1) The phrase "sons of God" is used of angels in the Old Testament but never of fallen angels. Demons are never referred to as "sons of God."

2) Angels do not have sex and cannot reproduce offspring (Mt. 22:30). God ordained that life can only reproduce "after its kind" (Gen. 1:24).

3) Such a view would minimize the virgin birth. There are four ways God brought human beings into the world:

   (1) With neither male nor female (EX: Adam)
   (2) With only male but no female (EX: Eve)
   (3) With only female but not male (EX: Christ)
   (4) With both male and female (the whole human race)

4) If giants were produced by demons having sexual relations with women, how would we explain the giants who lived in David's day?

5) God in the context is showing the sin of man, not the sin of fallen angels. He is showing reasons why He would destroy mankind by a flood.

6) The "fallen angels" view strips the contrast of chapters four and five of any real significance.

   In the context prior to chapter 6, God had shown the corrupt lineage of Cain, in chapter 4:1-24, in contrast to the more God-conscious lineage of Seth (4:25-chap. 5). Now in chapter 6, God shows how the godly part of the race gradually became assimilated into the ungodly part of the race. A natural degeneration of the godly would gradually result.

*View # 2 – Children of God/ Believers

The phrase "sons of God" refers to believers. People related to God by faith. Perhaps those who called "upon the name of the LORD" in the godly line of Seth (Gen. 4:26)
(proponents: Leupold, W.H.G. Thomas, J. Murray)

--Proofs for this view:

1) The phrase "sons of the living God" is used of people who belong to God in the Old Testament (Hos. 1:10, 11:1; Dt. 14:1)

2) The contrasting phrase "daughters of men" contrasts those who belonged to God with those who belonged to men.

   The phrases "sons of God" and "daughters of men" are Hebrew idioms used to describe a prevailing characteristic of the people involved. (EX: the Hebraisms: "son of consolation" (Acts 4:36); "sons of Belial" (Jud. 19:22; I Sam. 2:12) convey the idea of "to be identified with."

   "Sons of God" describes people identified with God.

   "Daughters of men" – describes people identified with men (mere human flesh, nothing spiritual about them)

   "Daughters of men" – had no spiritual life in them; that is why they are identified with men and not God. They were lost, worldly, corrupt seed, yet very attractive to the eye.

3) The "Sons of God" were attracted by what they "saw." Demons do not care what a person looks like, but people do. Men are attracted to beauty in women. These sons of God saw the external beauty (KJV – "fair" – good looking) of the ungodly women and fell into Satan's trap. By inter-marrying with the pagans, they would become corrupted and their offspring (which God wanted to be a "holy seed" – Ezra 9:2; cp. Mal. 2:15) would also be reared with an ungodly influence in the home. Such intermarriage would speed up the rate at which society and the world would become corrupt and ripe for judgment.

"Wives of all which they chose" – There may be a hint here of polygamy or harems.

"Wives . . . they chose" – Rather than seeking God's choice in a mate, so many (even Christians) choose for themselves without consideration of God's will.

As far back as the Mosaic Law, God forbade His people from intermarrying with ungodly pagans (Deut. 7:3-4 - Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.
4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.)

Intermarriage with foreigners led to the corruption of Israel after they entered Canaan land (Jud. 3:5-6 - And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites:
6 And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

Solomon's intermarriage with foreign wives led to his ruin (Neh. 13:25b-26 - saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.
26 Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin.

In Ezra's day, the same intermarriage occurred (Ez. 9:2 - For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.

Unequal yokes (cp. Deut. 22:10) between a saved person and an unsaved are a direct violation of God's Word!

II Cor. 6:14 - Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

Unequal yokes make for bad marriages because . . .

1) The couple does not share a common relationship with God (He should be the center of every Christian marriage)

2) The couple has a different world view, different standards of ethics and morals

3) The couple is destined for problems due to different goals, different motives and methodologies, different basic understandings regarding the home. Such as:
   (1) Roles and responsibilities
   (2) Convictions regarding the permanence of marriage
   (3) Love and submission
   (4) Child rearing and discipline