

Gen 6:3 and Paul's Epistle to the Romans

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INTRODUCTION

Genesis 6:3

³Then 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."

This verse is very difficult and has generated much scholarly debate as to what it actually means. I believe that this paper adds new elements to this discussion that help give clarification that is consistent with the greater message of scriptures. I propose that this passage is messianic and that it describes God's plan for the incarnation and ultimately His millennial rule on earth as a man, Jesus Christ. In this verse God decrees that His rule will transition from spirits ruling over men to men ruling over men and ultimately, God as man ruling over all men in the millennium. I have heard God's promise to the woman in Genesis 3:15 called the proto-gospel, a prophetic announcement of the incarnation that was fulfilled with Jesus' virgin birth and death on the cross. In the same way, I am proposing that this is the proto-kingdom announcement concerning the incarnation of Christ and His millennial rule on earth.

Who were the sons of God?

The verse is God's response to the "sin of the sons of God" described in verse 2.

¹Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, ²that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.

To put Genesis 6:3 in context we need to know who the sons of God were and the nature of their sin. There are several theories regarding the identity of the sons of God including:

1. fallen angels, beings created directly by God Himself and mentioned elsewhere in scripture.
2. Rulers, civil rulers presiding over a geographical area or groups of men.
3. descendants of Seth, the founder of the righteous line that included Noah

The oldest Jewish commentaries¹ as well as the early Christian writers favored the first option. I believe that the evidence supports the literal interpretation that these sons of God were angels, spirit beings created directly by God. Reasons for this include that they are also mentioned in Job 38:4 as existing and celebrating the creation of the world

"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
... When the morning stars sang together
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

They are also mentioned in the first 2 chapters of Job and in these passages include the fallen angels.

Again there was a day when **the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them** to present himself before the LORD.

While they were angels, in a certain way, these spiritual beings could also have been "rulers" over men which would combine the first two interpretations regarding their

¹ The Hebrew manuscripts all read "sons of Elohim." That this meant angels was understood by the Hebrew scholars that translated the Hebrew into Greek. The theory that angels mated with mortal woman is present in the Septuagint. The Codex Alexandrinus of the fifth century offers the word "angels" in Genesis 6:2 instead of "sons of Elohim."

identity. This rule is evident in the statement, “whomever they chose” which demonstrates that the sons of God had authority. James Montgomery Boice makes a strong case in his book *Genesis* regarding this passage and the implications are similar to what will be discussed in the body of this paper. His conclusion is, “However, there are reasons for rejecting this interpretation (*that the sons of God are descendents of Seth*) in favor of the angelic or supernatural view, and to these we now come. The first reason is linguistic. That is, so far as the biblical use of the phrase “the sons of God” is concerned, there is every reason to it as referring to angels.”² Boice explores all the major objections to interpreting that “sons of God” refer to angels and concludes that the phrase “sons of God” indeed refers to angels.

I believe that the strongest interpretation is that the sons of God mentioned in Gen 6:3 were angels ruling or in a position of authority over men. Based on this, the sin of the sons of God in Genesis 6:2 is when fallen angels corrupted the seed of women through physical intercourse. This spirit/human interaction was so real and tangible that these women gave birth to half-breeds described as giants and later found in Canaan at the time of the Exodus. Thus Genesis 6 we find angels corrupting the seed of women and threatening the promise of God that He gave to Even in chapter 3 – the proto-gospel. So pervasive was this temptation that all Noah’s living uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, nieces or nephews were seduced and corrupted. Noah alone was listed as “pure in his generations.” This understanding of the sin of the sons of God and their sin in Genesis 6:2 is the basis for my explanation of the following verse 3.

² **Genesis**, James Montgomery Boice, Baker Books, 1998

TRANSLATION ISSUES

Because the meaning of the passage itself is disputed, there are at least two major translation issues in the first phrase that need to be resolved before the verse is understood. The NASB translates the first part of the verse as shown below:

³Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not **strive** with man forever, because **he also is** flesh;

This is a difficult phrase in the Hebrew with several legitimate options regarding its intended meaning. What is certainly presented in this phrase is a contrast between spirit and flesh. There is also an implied parallel between a righteous God being strictly spirit and man being spiritual, but also erring in his flesh given the context. The Hebrew verb יָרִיב , translated “to strive” in the New American standard, is the link, the key understanding what is being said. Because the meaning here is somewhat obscure, there has been extensive research done on what this word יָרִיב means. The New International Version translates this as *contend with* whereas other possibilities including *remain in*, *abide in*, or *corrupt*. There have been scholars such as Luther³ who have proposed other more obscure possibilities but, nonetheless the verb primarily conveys the concept of *striving with* and *contending with* or *pleading with* in the sense of one in authority ruling over someone lesser. The verb has more to do with government than something mystical. I agree with Keil and Delitzsch when they affirm that the Hebrew verb יָרִיב signifies *to*

³ Luther writes concerning this verse, “Sanctes quotes Rabbi David and derives the verb יָרִיב from יָרִיב ‘a sheath.’” Luther, M. (1999, c1960). *Vol. 2: Luther's works, vol. 2 : Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 6-14* (J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (Gen 6:4). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House.

rule.⁴ Thus, God is declaring in Genesis 6:3 that His Spirit will not rule over men forever.

The passage also describes the reason that His Spirit will not always rule over men. The NASB translates it “because he also is flesh.” As with the Hebrew וְיִן above, there is a difficult Hebrew verb, *shagag*. Scholars have long debated the meaning of this verb⁵ in this verse and the major positions include:

- because he also is flesh
- because he strays in his flesh
- because he errs in his flesh

I propose that the context of the verse and the contrast to the verb “to rule” make either erring or straying stronger than simply the fact that man is composed of both spirit and flesh. This is consistent with Young’s literal translation which translates this, “in their erring they are flesh.” This paradigm is not unique in this verse. The concept is found throughout scriptures, namely that humanity has fallen in their flesh and they no longer desire the rule of God nor do they wholly submit to it. Romans 7:18 states this,

¹⁸For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not. ¹⁹For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

⁴ (C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary On The Old Testament*, Vol. I, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959, p. 134)

⁵ The Codex Hilleli makes it the Inf. Kal. of *shagag*, to transgress, go astray, and means, "because that in their going astray, he (Adam) also is flesh".

Psalm 78 also conveys this concept,

- ³⁷ For their heart was not steadfast toward Him,
Nor were they faithful in His covenant.
³⁸ But He, being compassionate, forgave *their* iniquity and did not destroy *them*;
And often He restrained His anger
And did not arouse all His wrath.
³⁹ **Thus He remembered that they were but flesh,**
A wind that passes and does not return.
⁴⁰ How often they rebelled against Him in the wilderness
And grieved Him in the desert!
⁴¹ Again and again they tempted God,
And pained the Holy One of Israel.
⁴² They did not remember His power,
The day when He redeemed them from the adversary,

The passage in Genesis prefigures the words of Isaiah, “All we like sheep have gone astray.” In our flesh we wander and do not keep the commandments of God to follow His rule. Thus, we have the first part of Genesis 6:3 translated as:

**“My Spirit shall not rule man forever,
because he errs in his flesh.”**

THESIS

This verse consists of 2 main parts:

1. My Spirit shall not rule man forever, because he errs in is flesh;

I believe that the first part describes the nature of the problem of the “sin of the sons of God” and involves spiritual rule over men in a tangible way. This is a parallel of Paul’s words in Romans 7:14, “For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.” In this part God determines to change the nature of

His rule, from spirits to men, bringing a separation and eliminating tangible interaction between the two kinds of beings.

2. nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years

I propose that the second part of this verse is God's means of accomplishing the separation between spiritual beings and humans.

PART 1

My Spirit shall not rule man forever, because he errs in his flesh;

Based upon this translation, to better understand what is being said I would like to consider this same idea, God's rule over men, from the perspective of Paul in his epistle to the Romans. I propose that that God's rule over humanity described in Genesis 6 is both very similar to and radically different than the rule of God over men that we see described in Romans chapter 7 and 13.

Romans 13

¹Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For **there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.**

²Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

DELGATED SPIRITUAL RULE

Firstly, I believe that Romans 13 presents something very similar to Gen 6:3; the rule of God's Spirit was actual and yet delegated to spirits. Moreover, like the human rulers of

Romans 13, the spiritual beings God's authority was delegated to were not necessarily righteous. Nero was the emperor on the throne as a "minister of God" when Paul was writing Romans, one of the most violent persecutors of the Church and considered corrupt even by secular standards. Nevertheless, Rome's authority had been established by God and God had delegated to the man Nero the authority to rule over the humanity that He created, including His church. Christians were taught not to rebel against civil authorities, even evil ones, but to look at them as God's ministers. It was Paul's personal goal to make his confession of the gospel to Caesar, speaking of a coming kingdom to God's chosen authority as Daniel had done with Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon.

Romans 13 is far from unique in supporting this concept. God delegated His authority to rule even to the corrupt leaders and High Priests that killed His own Son; they were established by God. Paul's actions in Acts 23 confirm this,

²The high priest Ananias commanded those standing beside him to strike him on the mouth. ³Then Paul said to him, "God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Do you sit to try me according to the Law, and in violation of the Law order me to be struck?" ⁴**But the bystanders said, "Do you revile God's high priest?"** ⁵**And Paul said, "I was not aware, brethren, that he was high priest;** for it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT SPEAK EVIL OF A RULER OF YOUR PEOPLE.'"

Moreover, when the Son of God was before the Roman governor being condemned to die he stated in John 19,

¹⁰So Pilate said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?" ¹¹Jesus answered, **"You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above;** for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."

I propose that in this same way, at the time of Genesis 6:3, God delegated His authority to spirit beings—not necessarily “righteous” spirit beings anymore than the ruling men He established afterwards were righteous.

This concept of God giving evil rulers authority is also very clear in the Old Testament. Throughout the history of Israel we find God raising up kings and empires to judge and afflict His people when they strayed and pursued sin; God used wicked men to execute His rule and punish other wicked men. Examples include God raising up Jeroboam to afflict Solomon when he sinned; God raising up Jehu to kill evil Jezebel and the entire family of wicked Ahab; even God raising up wicked kings of the enemies of Israel to afflict His people as we find in 2 Kings 8,

Ben-hadad king of Aram has sent me to you, saying, ‘Will I recover from this sickness?’”¹⁰ Then Elisha said to him, “Go, say to him, ‘You will surely recover,’ but the LORD has shown me that he will certainly die.”¹¹ He fixed his gaze steadily *on him* until he was ashamed, and the man of God wept.¹² Hazael said, “Why does my lord weep?” Then he answered, “**Because I know the evil that you will do to the sons of Israel: their strongholds you will set on fire, and their young men you will kill with the sword, and their little ones you will dash in pieces, and their women with child you will rip up.**”¹³ Then Hazael said, “But what is your servant, *who is but* a dog, that he should do this great thing?” And Elisha answered, “The LORD has shown me that you will be king over Aram.

These spiritual authorities of Genesis 6 were not necessarily any more righteous than the human rulers God delegated authority to at the time of Israel, Daniel or Paul.

One of the major themes in the book of Daniel is that God alone rules His creation and delegates His authority to whomever He wills. In speaking of Nebuchadnezzar in Dan

4:31, we see God's decree carried out and ultimately Nebuchadnezzar's revelation of God's sovereign rule.

...a voice came from heaven, saying, "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, ³²and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place *will be* with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes." ... ³⁴"But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever;
For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
And His kingdom *endures* from generation to generation.
³⁵"All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,
But He does according to His will in the host of heaven
And *among* the inhabitants of earth;
And no one can ward off His hand
Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'"

The above statement by the king of Babylon is one of the summary conclusions God reveals in the book of Daniel. Interestingly, it also reveals a spiritual facet of God's sovereignty that is pertinent to Genesis 6; God's rule over the hosts of heaven. The "host of heaven" is composed of spiritual beings in God's court and includes good and evil spirits. The following passage in 1 Kings 22 describes an event that is strikingly similar to the account of the "sons of God" found in the first two chapters of Job. God delegating authority to a deceiving spirit and sending it to seduce wicked Ahab to his demise.

¹⁹Micaiah said, "Therefore, hear the word of the LORD. **I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right and on His left.** ²⁰"The LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said this while another said that. ²¹"Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.' ²²"The LORD said to him, 'How?' And he said, 'I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' Then He said, 'You are to entice *him* and also prevail. Go and do so.'

The hosts of heaven commanded by God, Lord of Sabaoth, include wicked spiritual beings that receive their authority from God and whom God allows to act wickedly. This is what is claimed regarding the rule of God's Spirit spoken of in the first part of Genesis 6:3. Interestingly, the fate of the wicked angels in the host of heaven and the wicked kings of the earth is the same when God, the man Jesus, comes to establish His kingdom on earth as shown in Is 24:21. Both the spiritual and the fleshly rulers will share a common judgment.

²¹ So it will happen in that day,
That **the LORD will punish the host of heaven on high,
And the kings of the earth on earth.**

²² They will be gathered together
Like prisoners in the dungeon,
And will be confined in prison;
And after many days they *will be* punished.

UNMEDIATED SPIRITUAL RULE OVER HUMANKIND

Secondly, I believe that the rule described in Genesis 6:3 is different from Romans 13 in that God delegated His authority to purely spiritual beings, the sons of God, who were not flesh. God Himself had not yet appeared in the flesh. Kingdoms, empires or nations ruled by men are not introduced until much later, four generations after Noah, in Genesis 10. No rulers or authorities over humans are mentioned at all unless one counts the sons of God. I propose that the first part of Genesis describes the tangible rule of humanity by spiritual beings (good or bad) who are given their authority by God and who participated in His heavenly council as well as descended to earth to interact with humanity. In Genesis 6:3 God degrades a transition from God ruling men directly through spirit beings to God delegating His rule of men to men—because they err in their flesh. This

transition was not immediate and the decree itself implied a transition over time, “My Spirit will not strive with man **forever**.” This change is documented throughout Genesis as God transitions His delegated rule from spirits to men. He decreed that it was His plan that God rule over humanity through humans; ultimately God will rule over humanity as a Man. God had decided that He would no longer rule men directly by spirits because humanity erred and so God established rulers of flesh over men, and these rulers also erred.

At the time of Genesis, God contended with men face to face in their battle against sin as seen in God’s dialogue with Cain before he slew his brother Able. When Cain was being tempted by sin, God Himself spoke to Cain tangibly. There was no threat from a human ruler. When Cain later murdered Able his brother, God again spoke to Cain and directly imposed His punishment. Genesis 4 records God’s conversation with Cain.

⁹Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” And he said, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” ¹⁰He said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to Me from the ground. ¹¹“Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. ¹²“When you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you; you will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth.” ¹³Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is too great to bear! ¹⁴“Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.” ¹⁵So the LORD said to him, “Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will

be taken on him sevenfold.” And the LORD appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one finding him would slay him. ¹⁶Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

There are several interesting concepts that underscore the concept of God ruling through spirits in a way that is different than we find now. As part of God’s punishment, Cain left a physical place and “went out from the presence of the LORD” to the land of Nod. I propose that the land of Nod, where Cain settled, was under the God’s delegated rule but no longer God Himself; it was through other spirits. There was no “void” where God’s Spirit did not rule. In addition, God prohibits humans from punishing Cain themselves for the murder of his brother, threatening any vigilantes with sevenfold retribution. God and God alone dealt with punishing murder. This was made so clear in the worldview of this time that another murderer, Lamech the descendent of Cain took comfort and protection in this concept, boasting in Gen 4:23,

²³Lamech said to his wives,
“Adah and Zillah,
Listen to my voice,
You wives of Lamech,
Give heed to my speech,
For I have killed a man for wounding me;
And a boy for striking me;
²⁴ If Cain is avenged sevenfold,
Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.”

God had exclusive jurisdiction over murder and did not leave it to humans to execute judgment among themselves or over each other. There is no concept of one human having authority over another. However this changed after the flood when God explicitly delegated the punishment for murder to men in Genesis 9 when He commanded men to fill and populate the earth.

- 6 “Whoever sheds man’s blood,
By man his blood shall be shed,
For in the image of God
He made man.
- 7 “As for you, be fruitful and multiply;
Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it.”

In Genesis 9 God delegates His authority to men to have them judge each other and execute His punishment for murder—capital punishment. This transition is in stark contrast to God’s direct rule demonstrated over the murderer Cain. Men now have God’s authority and are commanded to judge their fellow man; failure to do so would be a sin. We also find in Genesis 10 that men begin to establish human kingdoms with the appearance of Nimrod, only four generations after Noah, who actually lived long enough to witness this transition. Genesis 10 refers to Nimrod as the founder and king of Babylon.

⁸Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth.
⁹He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD.” ¹⁰**The beginning of his kingdom** was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Initially, the first single unified human empire fragments at Babel when God Himself descends and divides the rule of men across multiple nations and fragmented kingdoms as He chooses. Daniel speaks of this in Daniel 2 when he declares,

- “Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever,
For wisdom and power belong to Him.
- 21 “It is He who changes the times and the epochs;
He removes kings and establishes kings;

God’s Spirit still rules directly at the time of Babel; intervening in human history on a global scale to see His will accomplished. As we see God acting at the time of the flood to judge the entire world and we see also God descending at Babel to enforce his decree that people scatter to populate the earth abundantly.

PART 2

nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years

LOOKING TO MOSES

I propose this rather odd statement describes the means by which God will execute His decree that spiritual beings will no longer tangibly rule over humans. We see later in Genesis 6 that the result of God's spiritual rule was "that the wickedness of man was great on the earth." Interestingly, Genesis and the book of Job tell us that at one time human life was measured not in decades but in centuries. God's decree limiting man's lifespan to 120 years changed this and I believe that this provides resolution of the sin of the sons of God. Jacob mentions this degradation of life in Gen 47:9--

So Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant have been the years of my life, **nor have they attained the years that my fathers lived** during the days of their sojourning."

I propose that God's decree in Genesis 6:3 set in motion a timeline, something like turning over an hourglass of life spans, when the sand ran out whatever tangible interaction there was between spirits and humans changed forever. On this key point, scriptures provide us with a thread of genealogies that record this transition. This thread of history is unique in scriptures in that once we reach the predicted 120 year lifespan, the genealogies cease to record lifespan and they are no longer considered important elsewhere in the Bible. Let's examine the lifespan of each generation from Adam to Jacob; the numbers support Jacob's conclusion that his lifespan was nothing compared with that of his fathers.

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

I believe that living long lives was somehow linked to humans tangibly experiencing what we call the “spiritual” with their five senses. In other words, I believe that the Bible describes a time when humankind once had the ability to objectively and physically interact with spirits in ways that have been lost—I would say genetically lost—in conjunction with the degradation of their lifespan described in Genesis. It was through this “tangibility” that spiritual beings ruled over humanity, the spirits were in charge. “The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, **whomever they chose.**” At this time, the physical intercourse between spiritual beings and women was so real that half-breed offspring were produced called

the Nephilim, both before and after the flood when Israel went up to Canaan in the Exodus. These Nephilim also oppressed over men.

Genesis 6:4, “The **Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward**, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore *children* to them.”

Number 13:33, “**There also we saw the Nephilim** (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”

This rule by the sons of God was evil and seductive – so much so that by the time of Noah, he was the only righteous man of pure lineage left in the entire earth; his seed had not been corrupted. His fathers and grandfathers had raised other sons and daughters but they had all strayed. We see God’s assessment, “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Ironically, this observation is the same as God’s assessment of the rule of anti-Christ and his subjects at the end of time; only evil and wickedness. Therefore, God determined to change His method of human rule, eliminated this unmediated tangible interaction between man and spirits and established human authorities in their place. As we see in the passage in Numbers 13 above, the flood was not the means and did not accomplish this; the Nephilim from verse 4 reappeared after the flood meaning that this tangible intercourse between women and fallen angels also continued after the flood. The memory of this time is found in the myths of various cultures, including the Greek and Babylonian, passed down over many generations and written in their archives. More than the flood was needed and to accomplish this separation between humans and spirits, therefore God physically changed humanity and reduced human lifespan to 120 years.

Before this change was completed, scripture records God the spirit tangibly striving with men including: Adam, Cain, Enoch, and Noah. God spoke to and even walked with these men in a tangible way; not subjective mystical experiences but objective reality experienced with physical senses of hearing and touch. The Scriptures also record God tangibly contending with the Patriarchs after the flood. God ate with Abraham and discussed His plans concerning the judgment of Sodom as Abraham interceded for Sodom and his nephew Lot. God's angels grabbed Lot by the arm and dragged him from the city to rescue him from the coming judgment God had decreed. Jacob physically wrestled with God face to face. These men were not mystics; they contended with spirits with their physical bodies – eyes, ears and fingers. After this decree, however, things began to change; life spans approaching 1000 years rapidly declined as Noah's sons reached barely half the age of their father. I believe that the Scriptures indicate that this objective rule of man by spirits also changed and the rule of God was delegated to men as the lifespan of men declined.

As we saw in the "lifespan genealogy," Moses was the last man to have an unbroken lineage back to Adam of fathers who lived for more than 120 years. Moses was also the last man who spoke to God face to face as the patriarchs had before him. He is the pivotal character in the entire Old Testament. With Moses all things change and the promises God made to Abraham begin to be manifest. God's values and God's will are written down by Moses for all to read and understand. By the time of Moses, the peoples of the earth all had human kings to rule over them. God's rule over His specific chosen people, the descendents of Abraham, also changed at the time of Moses when they were

delivered from the rule of Pharaoh to the rule of God. God's rule was divided into three offices; prophet, priest, and king. God's spiritual rule over His people evolved from unmediated revelation as it had been with the Patriarchs, to a written codified Law observed and participated in through God's High Priest. This Law was applied to the people of God through the voice of God's Prophet. Ultimately the Law was enforced by the arm of God's king. God, through Moses, made provision for all three offices of authority to be delegated from God to man. Through Moses and the document he wrote, God delegated His rule over His people to men. Jesus, the man, ultimately filled and combined all three offices of God's authority over man as the Son of David, priest of the order of Melchizedek, and the Great Prophet Moses predicted.

MEDIATED RULE THROUGH MAN

Whereas in the time of Genesis God revealed His will directly to Adam, Cain, and Noah; we find that at the time of the one who lived 120 years, God recorded it in writing once and for all through Moses. Deuteronomy records the passing from direct spiritual rule to a mediated rule of the Law and Prophets. In Deut 5:3 God speaks to His people face to face from the midst of the fire and gives them His commandments directly as He had to earlier generations of their forefathers.

³“The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *with* all those of us alive here today. ⁴“The LORD spoke to you face to face at the mountain from the midst of the fire, ⁵*while* I was standing between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain.

The people asked that this “face to face” rule of God stop; they asked for a mediator, a man who would speak to them the words of God instead of receiving them directly.

Contrary to what is commonly imagined, God is pleased with their request and grants them a mediator, Moses. In addition, God tells them that He would send another and greater man as a mediator and that His people were to listen to Him.

^{15c}“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. ^{16c}“This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, ‘**Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.**’ ^{17c}“The LORD said to me, ‘**They have spoken well.**’ ^{18c}“I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ^{19c}“It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require *it* of him.

In support of His intention mentioned in Gen 6, God tells Moses the people have spoken well to ask for a man. This passage irrevocably establishes God’s mediated spiritual rule on this earth and actually points to Jesus, whom Peter in Acts 4 claims is indeed the Great Prophet that Moses predicted in this passage. (Jesus’ ministry was greater than that of Moses, as God Himself confirmed by speaking from the cloud on the mountain as He had at Sinai; telling the 3 witnesses in the presence of Moses to listen to the man Jesus) Moses wrote down God’s Law and gave it to the people on tablets of stone. It is this Law of Moses that Paul calls “spiritual” in Romans 7. God’s Law written by Moses became the objective spiritual rule over His people – objective words to be read and understood by all of every generation. However, according to Paul in Romans 7, this Law had no more success in making men righteous than the direct rule of God’s Spirit found in Genesis 6.

¹⁴For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

God, after leading His people out of Egypt as an independent nation, established men, His prophets and judges, to rule until Samuel anointed a man as king as Jacob and Moses had prophesied. The rule of God on earth had passed to humans and kings. Moses predicted the coming of a king in Deut17:14.

¹⁴“When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,’ ¹⁵**you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses, *one* from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves;** you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your countryman.

However, much earlier in Egypt, Jacob prophesied about a coming king from the tribe of Judah in Genesis 49,

¹⁰ “The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet,
Until Shiloh comes,
And to him *shall be* the obedience of the peoples.

Moses and Jacob had before him, prophesied that the direct rule of God the Spirit would end for Israel. God would establish a human king over His people and His kingdom. During a transition period after Moses, God ruled over Israel through judges and prophets until Samuel. Ultimately David was chosen, although even he looked forward to a greater ultimate king who would rule forever from among his descendents as we see in Psalm 110,

- 1 The LORD says to my Lord:
 “Sit at My right hand
 Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”
- 2 The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, *saying*,
 “Rule in the midst of Your enemies.” ...
- 5 The Lord is at Your right hand;
 He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath.
- 6 He will judge among the nations,
 He will fill *them* with corpses,

Beginning in verse 5, Psalm 110 looks forward to the millennium when God comes as man and executes His wrath on the earth and establishes His kingdom—ruling as a man over men. Jesus fulfills Jacob’s prophecy concerning the coming king in that it is He alone who to whom “shall be the obedience of the peoples” on the whole earth. The book of Revelation closes with this concept and is the fulfillment of the decree first given in Genesis 6:3.

Rev 19
 He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Rev 20:6
 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

CONCLUSION – GOD AS MAN RULES

We have established that when scriptures indicate that God rules over men, this may not be directly in a “righteous rule” but through flawed and even wicked rulers whether they are spiritual beings or humans. This explains why Peter calls it sinful to “revile angelic majesties” in 2 Peter 2:10 because even evil spiritual powers have been set in place by God. In Genesis 6:3 scripture looks to a time when God will rule the earth as a man, the

righteous King, instead of delegating His rule through either fallen angels or fallen men. While God Himself never gives up His ability to intervene directly, after Moses He doesn't interact face to face but through visions, nature, and other men. This will change again in the millennium but His face will be that of a real man in a tangible body ruling on a real throne on the earth. I propose that a theme of scripture is the concept of God transitioning from His Spirit ruling to God ruling over all men as the man, Jesus, the righteous king whose rule is righteous and is the kingdom of God. This is what we pray for when we proclaim, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." We pray that the rule of men God has delegated to erring rulers of flesh will manifest itself in God ruling over men Himself as the righteous King Jesus.

I would like to close by comparing the parallels between Genesis 6:3 with in Romans chapters 7 and 8 where Paul describes humans erring in their flesh and the solution to this problem. In Genesis 6 we see God ruling by His Spirit. Similarly, in Romans 7 Paul calls the rule of God's Law "spiritual." Ironically, the parallel of the inability of the rule of the Spirit over man to accomplish righteousness in erring flesh is identical.

¹⁴For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.... ²²For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, ²³but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁴Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

In Romans 7, Paul declares that spiritual rule is ineffective in creating righteousness in erring fleshly humans – the very claim in Genesis 6:3. The answer God gives in Genesis is the same one that Paul proclaims in Romans—God becoming man. In Romans 8 Paul describes God transitioning from the "rule of Law which is spiritual" to the rule of the

man Jesus, God come in the flesh. God's answer to erring flesh is found in becoming man; not only becoming man and ruling but becoming man and dying. Jesus coming as ruler first would have meant the judgment and death of every sinner—all humanity. Instead, God came as man and died on behalf of sinners to bear the just punishment for the sins of all humanity. In this way and only in this way could God's spiritual rule be effective. In the death of the man Jesus Christ, those who enter His kingdom have put to death their flesh, dying with Him, and thus the rule of God's Spirit in them is effective and they act righteously. The "mystery of God" hidden since the foundation of the world is that His Son needed to become a man, taking on flesh, and die as a man for all men—so that the rule of God's Spirit would bring life and not death because the erring flesh of mankind was crucified with Christ on the cross.

¹Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³**For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,** ⁴so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, ⁷**because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so,** ⁸**and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**

The incarnation of Jesus resolves the problems God identified in Genesis. Jesus, the man, is the literal king ruling over the whole world. He is now in heaven reigning in the midst of His enemies awaiting to return and establish His kingdom on earth and tangibly rule mankind as a man. In addition, all those humans who have received glorified resurrected bodies and put their faith in him and are now ruled by the Spirit, these human

followers will rule with Jesus Christ as men ruling over fleshly humanity. Angels will not rule but men will and proclaimed in Revelation 20:6.

⁶Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.