

On the “Sons of God” in Genesis 6: St. Gregory Palamas



St. Gregory Palamas, (AD 1296 - AD 1359), Archbishop of Thessalonika, monk, writer, and great defender of Hesychasm

Icon (Fresco from 1271)

Source <http://knol.google.com/k/unity-in-the-image-of-the-holy-trinity#>

Homily Fifty-Two: Delivered on the Feast of the Entry of our Exceedingly Pure Lady, the Mother of God, into the Holy of Holies

St Gregory Palamas

[Note: Genesis 6: 2-4 Lxx: *And it came to pass when men began to be numerous upon the earth, and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of God having seen the daughters of men that they were beautiful, took to themselves wives of all whom they chose. 3 And the Lord God said, My Spirit shall certainly not remain among these men for ever, because they are flesh, but their days shall be an hundred and twenty years. 4 Now the giants were upon the earth in those days; and after that when the sons of God were wont to go in to the daughters of men, they bore children to them, those were the giants of old, the men of renown.*]

9. Note the starting-point of God's election. The excellent Seth was chosen by God from among Adam's children (*cf.* Gen. 4:25-5:8). By his orderly conduct, his control over his senses and his magnificent virtue, he showed himself to be a living heaven, and so he became one of God's chosen (Luke 3:38), from whom the Virgin would appear as a chariot fit to bear God who transcends the heavens, to call men back to adoption as sons of the heavenly Father.

10. That is why all Seth's descendants were called God's sons (Gen. 6:2,4), because from this race the Son of God was to be born the Son of man. The name Seth can be interpreted to mean "resurrection", or rather "a rising up from", which actually refers to the Lord, who promises and gives everlasting life to those who believe in Him. How appropriate a figure Seth was to represent Christ! Seth was born to Eve, as Eve herself says, "instead of Abel" (Gen. 4:25), whom Cain envied and murdered, whereas the Virgin's son Christ, came to the human race instead of Adam, whom the prince and patron of evil killed out of envy. Seth, however, did not raise up Abel, as he was merely a prefiguration of the resurrection, but our Lord Jesus Christ resurrected Adam, for He is the true life and resurrection of mankind (*cf.* John 11:25), through whom Seth's descendants were deemed worthy, in hope, of divine adoption, being called sons of God (*cf.* Gen. 6:24). That they were referred to as God's sons on account of this hope, is demonstrated by the first man to be so called and to attain God's election. This was Seth's son Enos who, as Moses wrote, "was the first

who hoped to be called by God's name" (Gen. 4:26 Lxx). Do you see that it was through hope that he came to be called after God?

Source: Christopher Veniamen, translator, **Saint Gregory Palamas**
The Homilies, Mount Thabor Publishing, Waymart, PA, 2009,
pp.410-11.