

Who Were the Nephilim?

by Gary H. Patterson

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There is a craze of emphasis at the present on the Nephilim and their so-called reappearance in the last days as a sign of the end times. According to Genesis 6:4, the Nephilim, translated “giant” or “fallen one” in several Bible translations, existed during the days of Noah before the Great Flood (and after as we will see later). Because Jesus stated that it would be like the days of Noah right before His return, some people believe and teach that the Nephilim will return. Did Jesus make any such statement about their return? What did He say?

WHAT HE SAID...

"But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. (38) "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, (39) "and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Mt 24:37-39).

Jesus was clearly warning us that just as the people were unaware of sudden destruction in Noah's time even so would it be at His return. For everyone but Noah and family, life continued as usual until that Day. Jesus made no further comparisons or parallels. Is it wise to attempt to add to what Jesus said?

THE ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES

"Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, (2) that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. (3) And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." (4) There were giants 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. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. (5) Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (6) And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the

earth, and He was grieved in His heart. (7) So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." (8) But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD (Gen. 6:1-8).

Albert Barnes, a nineteenth century theologian, has the best explanation on that passage of Scripture. I whole-heartedly agree because his explanation does not disregard either spiritual or Biblical common sense. Neither is he attempting to prove what he already believes. He makes conclusions about the passages in agreement with the context and whole counsel of Scripture. His first comment:

“Having traced the line of descent from Adam through Seth, the seed of God, to Noah [in chapter 5] , the author proceeds to describe the general spread and growth of moral evil in the race of man, and the determination of the Lord to wipe it away from the face of the earth.”

That is exactly what Genesis 6 does. It describes “the general spread and growth of moral evil in the race of man, and the determination of the Lord to wipe it away from the face of the earth.”

THE SONS OF GOD

Barnes continues:

“There are two stages of evil set forth in Ge 6:1-4 — the one contained in the present four verses, and the other in the following. The former refers to the apostasy of the descendants of Seth, and the cause and consequences of it. When man began to multiply, the separate families of Cain and Seth would come into contact. The daughters of the stirring Cainites, distinguished by the graces of nature, the embellishments of art, and the charms of music and song, even though destitute of the loftier qualities of like-mindedness with God, would attract attention and prompt to unholy alliances.”

The “sons of God” mentioned in verse two and four could not be fallen angels for several reasons. Here is Barnes again:

“For they [angels] were not created as a race, have no distinction of sex, and therefore no sexual desire; they ‘neither marry nor are given in marriage.’ {Mt 22:30} It is contrary to the laws of nature for different species even on earth to cohabit in a carnal way; much more for those in the body, and those who have not a body of flesh. Moreover, we are here in the region of humanity and not in the sphere of superhuman spirits; and the historian [writer of

Genesis] has not given the slightest intimation [indication] of the existence of spiritual beings different from man.”

Some use so-called writings that supposedly came from Enoch to try to prove that angels mated with humans. There is a good reason those writings were not included in the New Testament. Those books do not have God’s approval. He prevented them from being included. Also making statements that the early Church believed that the “sons of God” were angels is not substantiated anywhere in Scripture. While the writings of *Josephus* are a good source of historical information, such are not infallible, nor are they necessarily divinely inspired (Follow the Answers in Genesis link at the end).

One major flaw exists in this entire view, *neither Jesus nor His apostles taught any such doctrine*. It is not even implied in their teachings. An event of this magnitude and importance would have been clearly taught by Christ and His apostles and not just alluded to anyway. Scriptures used to support such a view do so only within the compromised thinking of those who are trying to make them fit into a preconceived idea.

MEN OR SUPER-HUMANS?

Notice how verse four classifies the offspring of the “sons of God” and the “daughters of men” as *men* and not as supernatural beings of any kind. That would not be the case if angels could reproduce with humans. They would be super-human and not just big humans with six-fingered genetic mutations. Nowhere did Jesus and His apostles teach any such weird doctrine. (By the way, I had a cat that had six toes on his front paws also. It results from a polydactyl genetic mutation. He is bigger than most house cats...Super Cat.)

Barnes also stated, “They are called the sons of God, because they have his spirit or disposition.” According to Genesis, the offspring of the “sons of God” were men and, were, therefore, sired by men. Besides, the term “sons of God” is never used to refer to a fallen being in Scripture as some insist it does in Genesis 6. Does Scripture have greater authority than modern speculation? Possibly, the righteous descendants of Seth and other renowned men, the sons of God, compromised their moral values, became demonized, and settled for women based on their outward beauty and not their inward godliness.

GOD DESTROYED THE EARTH BECAUSE...

Out of modern speculation concerning the Nephilim has sprung a belief that God destroyed the earth with the Great Flood because of the mixture of human and fallen angelic genetics. What does Genesis reveal? God’s written word is clear: the earth was destroyed because every

intent of the thoughts of men's hearts were evil continually (Gen. 6:5-7). Acts 17:26 settles the matter "From one man he has made every nation of humanity to live all over the earth. He has given them the seasons of the year and the boundaries within which to live" (GWV). Every person in every nation (even tall basketball players) came from one man—one genetic source.

How did the "sons of God" produce "giants"? It was an obvious genetic mutation or possibly a preexisting "giant" gene within the gene pool. How do I know? Because Noah produced giants in his lineage. After the destruction of all people except Noah and family, many generations later, we find Nephilim again in Numbers 13:33. Were Goliath and his brothers giants also? Remember, out of one man *came* every person from every nation, including the big guys. Some modern creation scientists speculate that Adam and Eve may have been up to two and a half times taller than the average person today. Speculatively, the "sons of God" may have been taller than all other people because of their pure bloodline from Adam. Unlike other men, they still had physical traits to that of Adam who is called the son of God (Luke 3:38).

THE ABDICATING ANGELS

What about the angels who sinned or left their first estate and are now imprisoned with chains under darkness awaiting judgment (Jude 4-8)? Are they not the "sons of God" of Genesis 6? First, as stated before, the use of the "sons of God" in Scripture never refers to a fallen being and, no, that Scripture passage only indicates that those angels forsook their places of dominion. The reference to "first estate" (KJV) is translated "principality" in other places in Scripture. It is clearly saying: those angels did not keep their position of authority but abandoned their assigned place. It says nothing about them producing baby human-angels with a bunch of pretty but downright silly women. That reference in Jude was a comparison made to warn us that if God did not spare those angels then why would He spare sinful humans?

In conclusion, this erroneous Nephilim teaching is nothing more than an attempt by the devil to get people to unknowingly shift blame for humanities sinfulness and God's resulting judgment on something else. This forms the basis for precarious attitudes such as, "Well, we are not so bad after all. We are victims! Let's blame the Nephilim instead."

Written with love aflame,

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Another excellent source from *Answers in Genesis*:

<https://answersingenesis.org/bible-characters/who-were-the-nephilim/>

*Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotes are from the NKJV of the Holy Bible

All other quotes from outside resources may contain bracketed [] information placed there by the author for clarification.