

Genesis 6:1-6 HCSB When mankind began to multiply on the earth and daughters were born to them, (2) the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were beautiful, and they took any they chose as wives for themselves. (3) And the LORD said, "My Spirit will not remain with mankind forever, because they are corrupt. Their days will be 120 years." (4) The Nephilim were on the earth both in those days and afterwards, when the sons of God came to the daughters of man, who bore children to them. They were the powerful men of old, the famous men. (5) When the LORD saw that man's wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every scheme his mind thought of was nothing but evil all the time, (6) the LORD regretted that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

While pronouncing God's curse upon Satan through the intermediary vessel of the serpent, God mentioned that Satan would have offspring (Genesis 3:15). Apparently, there would be two separate lines of descendants, the Devil's and Eve's.

In this passage, we see again those two lines mentioned, the "sons of God" and the "daughters of man." There is a popular theory that the (sons of god) refers to the "godly" line of Seth (the third named son of Adam and Eve born after Cain slew Abel) rather than actual "angels". Seth was supposedly curious and desiring of knowledge of God. The Daughters of Man are thought to be the descendents of Cain. However, if this theory is so, why would the sons of Seth produce only giants? Why would they all be male? Why were they universally wicked?

Interestingly, the very same name is used by Job to describe angels – specifically naming Lucifer (Job 1:6; 2:1). Some may argue that Jesus taught that angels are sexless (Matthew 22:30; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:34-36), but I suggest the reader take a second look at those passages and determine if Jesus is saying angels are without gender, or if He is saying that they are not bound by human marriage traditions.

We know that angels can appear in the form of ordinary people (Genesis 18:2-10; Hebrews 13:2), and there is at least one passage that I know of that seems to describe a female angel (Zechariah 5:9).

Isaiah stated that at one point *"other lords than You have ruled over us, but we remember Your name alone. The dead do not live; departed spirits do not rise up. Indeed, You have visited and destroyed them; You have wiped out all memory of them."*¹ The word used is "rephaim" which is one of the names of the giants and in verse 14 of chapter 26, Isaiah seems to imply that they will suffer eternal death, which would be hell.

This concept is affirmed by Moses who described the Ammonites' land saying, *"This too used to be regarded as the land of the Rephaim. The Rephaim lived there previously, though the Ammonites called them Zamzummim, a great and numerous people, tall as the Anakim. The LORD destroyed the Rephaim at the advance of the Ammonites, so that they drove them out and settled in their place."*² Again, we see a race of giants who are universally wicked, driven out of their land and destroyed utterly.

I believe this whole situation is what Jude was alluding to when he said, *"And He has kept, with eternal chains in darkness for the judgment of the great day, angels who did not keep their own position but deserted their proper dwelling. In the same way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them committed sexual immorality and practiced perversions, just as they did, and serve as an example by undergoing the punishment of eternal fire."*³ Note that these angels left their proper dwelling. Also, a similarity is drawn between their sin and Sodom and Gomorrah's. That sin was sexual in nature and resulted in

¹ Isaiah 26:13-14

² Deuteronomy 2:20-21

³ Jude 6-7

these angels being bound in eternal chains in darkness for the judgment of the great day. So once again, we have angels descending, practicing sexual immorality and being utterly destroyed for their hubris.

Maybe this is why Paul stated that a woman should either allow her hair to be long or to wear a covering in prayer warning, *"This is why a woman should have a symbol of authority on her head: because of the angels."* (1 Corinthians 11:10)

The Nephilim were apparently a race of giants that were produced by the sexual union of the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men". I find it is striking that the Hebrew word "Nephilim" means "fallen ones." They were renowned for their strength, prowess, and a great capacity for sinfulness.

The Bible mentions several names for the Nephilim. The diverse kinds of these giants are cited in several passages. They are variously referred to as:

- Emim, or "Terrors" (Genesis 14:5; Deuteronomy 2:10-11)
- Rephaim, or "Weakeners" or "Dead Ones" (2 Samuel 23:13; 1 Chronicles 11:15)
- Zamzummim, or "Achievers" (apparently another name for the Rephaim) (Deuteronomy 2:10, 21)
- Gibborim, or "Giant Heroes" (Genesis 6:4; 10:8-9)
- Anakim, or "Long-necked" (Deuteronomy 2:10, Joshua 11:21-22; 14:15)
- Avvites or "Devastators" (Gesenius supposes the name to mean "dwellers in the desert," but it was more probably the name of some pre-Semitic tribe. The Avvim are described as living in Chatserim or "encampments" and extending as far as the outskirts of Gaza.) (Deuteronomy 2:23; Joshua 13:3-4)

Other giants are mentioned in these texts as well, such as Goliath (2 Samuel 21:19), a giant with twelve fingers and twelve toes who is mentioned as one of the Rephaim (2 Samuel 21:20), and a tall Egyptian (1 Chronicles 11:23). Joshua and the other Hebrew spies also reported sightings of giants (Numbers 13:26-33).

I'm not interested in debating controversial subjects simply for the purpose of debate. Paul instructed Timothy: *"As I urged you when I went to Macedonia, remain in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach other doctrine or to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies. These promote empty speculations rather than God's plan, which operates by faith. Now the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith."*⁴

Again he instructed Titus: *"This saying is trustworthy. I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed God might be careful to devote themselves to good works. These are good and profitable for everyone. But avoid foolish debates, genealogies, quarrels, and disputes about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless."*⁵

There must be a point to any exegesis and its instruction must lead to love from a good heart, a good conscience, a sincere faith, and good works. So, what is the lesson to be learned from the Nephilim? Their wicked arrogance carried with it a heavy toll. Genesis 6:5 alludes to the corruption that the Nephilim had caused amongst humans and themselves: *"The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become..."* Their evil rebellion had incurred both the wrath and grief of God. The ensuing result was a devastating flood.

Our conclusion must be that if even powerful angels and whole civilizations of giant warriors cannot resist El Gibhor, then we should quickly bow the knee to our rightful King and humbly keep our place.

"For if God didn't spare the angels who sinned, but threw them down into Tartarus and delivered them to be kept in chains of darkness until judgment; and if He didn't spare the

⁴ 1 Timothy 1:3-5

⁵ Titus 3:8-9

ancient world, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others, when He brought a flood on the world of the ungodly... then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.”⁶

⁶ 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9