

## 74 THE NEPHILIM

*“The sons [Heb #1121] of God saw that men’s daughters were beautiful, and they took any that they wanted for themselves as wives. Yahweh said, “My Spirit will not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; so his days will be one hundred twenty years.” The Nephilim [giants] were in the earth in those days, and also after that, when God’s sons came in to men’s daughters and had children with them. Those [Nephilim, giants] were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.” Gen 6:2-4*

**INTRODUCTION:** Genesis 6 is often thought to verify the ancient Canaanite myth of gods or fallen angels taking human wives with demigods or giants being their offspring. This viewpoint has recently been revived by Old Testament author Michael Heiser. However, this passage says nothing about gods or fallen angels nor does it support any other details of the popular polytheistic narrative. In his writing of Genesis, Moses instructed the children of Israel in strict monotheism and corrected the all-pervasive mythological polytheism of the surrounding cultures. We will seek to show this passage teaches an exclusive monotheism, with the One Creator God as ruler of all things and intimately concerned with the hearts and activities of men.

**1. CULTURAL BACKGROUND:** The surrounding influencing cultures of Israel — Canaan, Mesopotamia and Egypt — were thoroughly polytheistic and awash in the idea of aloof gods involved in their own concerns and dramas. People were incidental, and often at the mercy, to their exploits. The presence of giant populations in the land was thought to be due to the gods mating with human women and producing gigantic demi-gods. All manner of imaginative stories were attached to these over-sized human populations.

**2. BIBLE BACKGROUND:** Genesis chapters 1 to 5 sets the stage for Genesis 6. Two parallel genealogies arose. The Cain lineage, insistent on self rule, resulted in city building, polygamy, entertainment, metal works and revenge killing. In contrast, the Seth lineage was marked by its desire for relationship with the Creator and therefore “called on the name of the Lord”. The Seth line was also the lineage of the Messiah. Regardless of causing the fall into sin, Adam still carried the likeness of God (Gen 5:1) and Luke 3:38 tells us Adam and his offspring were sons of God. However, the moral order was hopelessly corrupted when the Cain and Seth offspring intermarried. Only Noah remained faithful.

**3. A LOOSE PARAPHRASE OF OUR PRESENT UNDERSTANDING:** The Seth lineage became corrupt and began to intermarry with Cain’s offspring. They violated the Divine order by taking wives based on desire without regard to a shared devotion to the Creator. They apparently indulged in polygamy (“took any women they wanted”), a further affront to the sacred order of two becoming one flesh. The Divine Logos of living in relationship with God was lost and wickedness increased as they adopted the ways of Cain. As a consequence, 120 years remained until the flood judgment. Giants were on the earth in those days and subsequently when the Seth lineage became corrupt. These giants are the mighty men everyone has heard so much about.

### 4. ADAM, SETH AND THEIR OFFSPRING WERE “SONS GOD”.

A. “A son was born to Seth, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call on Yahweh’s name.” Gen 4:26

B. “...the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.” Lk 3:38

### 5. “SONS (#1121) OF GOD” MOST OFTEN PERTAINS TO PEOPLE.

A. **People:** “Israel is my son [#1121], my firstborn, and I said to you, ‘Let my son [#1121] go...’” Ex 4:22-23

B. **People:** “You are sons [#1121] of the Lord your God.” Deut. 14:1

C. **People:** “Sons of God presented themselves before the Lord.” Job 1:6 and 2:1. (See Preterist Paper #62)

D. **Celestial Beings:** “...all the sons [#1121] of God shouted for joy?” Job 38:4-7

E. **People:** “Bring my sons [#1121] from far away...” Is 43:6-7

F. **People:** “‘Surely, they are my people, sons [#1121] who will not deal falsely;’ so he became their Savior.” Is. 63:8

G. **People:** “Is not Ephraim my dear son [#1121], the child in whom I delight?” Jer.31:20

H. **People:** “... they will be called ‘sons [#1121] of the living God.’” Hos 1:10

### 6. GENESIS 6 STATES REPEATEDLY THE FLOOD WAS DUE TO SINFUL MEN, NOT SINFUL ANGELS OR GODS.

**Gen 6:1** “...when humankind began to multiply on the face of the earth...”

**Gen 6: 3** “My Spirit will not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh.”

**Gen. 6:4** “[Nephilim] were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.”

**Gen 6:5** “Yahweh saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth...”

**Gen 6:5** “Every imagination of the thoughts of man’s heart was continually only evil.”

**Gen 6:6** “Yahweh was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him in his heart.”

**Gen 6:7** Yahweh said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the surface of the ground.”

**Gen 6:12** “All flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.”

**Gen 6:13** “God said to Noah, ‘I will bring an end to all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them.’”

## 7. EARTHLY CREATION REPRODUCES “AFTER ITS KIND”. THIS PRECLUDES THE PAGAN BELIEF OF GODS OR ANGELS MATING WITH HUMANS.

**Man:** “Yahweh God formed man from the dust of the ground...” Gen 2:7

**Man:** “Male and female he created them...God said to them, ‘Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth....’” Gen 1:27-28

**Celestial angels:** “He makes his messengers [celestial angels] winds, and his servants flames of fire.” Ps 104:4

**Celestial angels:** Angels are “all ministering spirits, sent out to serve those who will inherit salvation.” Heb 1:14

## 8. HUMANS ARE SUBJECT TO THE ORGANIZATION OF SEX. ANGELS ARE OF A DIFFERENT ORDER AND DO NOT REPRODUCE.

**The binary sexual order requires pairing:** “The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh... a man will leave his father and his mother, and will join with his wife, and they will be one flesh.’” Gen 2: 23-24

**The binary sexual order does not pertain to angels.** “Those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage... for they are like the angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection.” Lk 20:35-36

## 9. CELESTIAL “SONS OF GOD” DO NOT DIE SO THEY COULD NOT PERISH IN A FLOOD. DEATH IS THE RESULT OF SIN SO IMMORTAL ANGELS DON’T SIN.

“Those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. For they can’t die any more, for they are like the angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection.” Lk 20:35-36.

## 10. NUMBERS 13 REINFORCES THE FACT THE NEPHILIM WERE GIANT HUMANS, NOT DEMIGODS.

“Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, ‘Let’s go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it!’ But the men who went up with him said, ‘We aren’t able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.’ They brought up an evil report of the land which they had spied out to the children of Israel, saying, “The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that eats up its inhabitants; and all the people who we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim. We were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.” Num 13:30-33

## 11. SEED OF THE WOMAN VS SEED OF THE SERPENT

**Eden Prophecy:** “I will put hostility between you [the serpent] and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel.” Gen 3:15

**Conflict throughout history:** “But as then, he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now.” Gal 4:29

**Examples: Cain/Abel, Jacob/Esau, Joseph/his brothers, Saul/David, Prophets/Israel, believers/temple leaders, etc**

**Division within the human heart:** Paul declared: “I do not do what I want – instead, I do what I hate. But if I do what I don’t want, I agree that the law is good. But now it is no longer me doing it, but sin that lives in me. For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For I want to do the good, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but I do the very evil I do not want! Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer me doing it but sin that lives in me.” ... Rom 7:14-20 etc.

**Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn:** “The battle-line between good and evil runs through the heart of every man.”

**SUMMARY:** The only supernatural being in Genesis 6 is God Himself. Replacing pagan myths with monotheism, the Genesis 6 narrative reveals it was the moral failings of men that caused the flood. Moses diminished the importance of the famous Nephilim as only incidental to the real story of human wickedness causing the flood. He only mentioned them as a kind of time - stamp to situate the era the Sons of Seth slide into apostasy. The flood centered on man’s moral failure and God’s justice and His mercy in saving Noah.

One way to check unusual interpretations of the flood is to look up passages in the New Testament that allude to it — see addenda #3. We found 6 passages, but none of them mentioned gods, angels or the Nephilim. The flood was all about mankind and his relationship with God.

## NOTES:

**See Preterist Paper #58 for flood background: “Genesis Establishes Essential Spiritual Truths”.**

**See Preterist Papers #59 to #73 for documentation that contradicts the fallen angel mythology.**

## ADDENDA

### 1. **THE UNSEEN REALM BY MICHAEL HEISER**

In his book, *The Unseen Realm*, Michael Heiser claimed there was an almost unanimous consensus, in the extra-Biblical Jewish literature, that the cause for all the suffering in the world, was three-fold. Man, tempted by a rebellious member of God's divine council, sinned and lost Eden. Further devolution occurred when supernatural beings mated with human women and produced a race of giants, the Nephilim. This led to the flood. The downward slide continued with the Tower of Babel. We hold the New Testament does not support these claims. The extra-Biblical Jewish literature was likely adaptations of polytheistic pagan myths, conceivably what Paul referred to as "Jewish fables" in his letter to Titus.

### 2. **PAUL PLACED THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FALL SQUARELY ON ADAM, NOT "SATAN".**

- A. "Sin entered into the world through one man, and death through sin; and so death passed to all men..." Rom 5:12
- B. "Death reigned from Adam until Moses." Rom 5:14
- C. "By the trespass of the one the many died." Rom 5:15.
- D. "By the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one." Rom 5:17
- E. "So then as through one trespass, all men were condemned." Rom 5:18
- F. "Through the one man's disobedience many were made sinners." Rom 5:19
- G. "We will die because of Adam." I Cor 15:21
- H. "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive." I Cor 15:22

### 3. **N.T. REFERENCES TO NOAH/FLOOD DO NOT MENTION ANYTHING ABOUT ANGELS, GODS OR NEPHILIM.**

#### A. **Jesus compared the coming judgment on Israel with the people of Noah's day. No mention of fallen angels.**

"Just as it was in the days of Noah, so too it will be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage – right up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all." Lk 17:26-27

#### B. **Jesus compared the coming judgment on Israel with Noah's day. No mention of fallen angels.**

"As the days of Noah were, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ship, and they didn't know until the flood came and took them all away, so will the coming of the Son of Man be." Mt 24:37-39

#### C. **The flood was due to human moral failure. No mention of fallen angels.**

"By faith Noah... moved with godly fear, prepared a ship for the saving of his house, through which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." Heb 11:7

#### D. **The flood was symbolic of salvation in Christ. No mention of fallen angels.**

"After they were disobedient long ago when God patiently waited in the days of Noah as an ark was being constructed. In the ark a few, that is eight souls, were delivered through water. And this prefigured baptism, which now saves you – not the washing off of physical dirt but the pledge of a good conscience to God – through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who went into heaven and is at the right hand of God with angels and authorities and powers subject to him." 1 Pt 3:20-22

#### E. **Human ungodliness was the cause of the flood. No mention of fallen angels.**

"If he did not spare the ancient world, but did protect Noah, a herald of righteousness, along with seven others, when God brought a flood on an ungodly world, and if he turned to ashes the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah when he condemned them to destruction, having appointed them to serve as an example to future generations of the ungodly, and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man in anguish over the debauched lifestyle of lawless men, (for while he lived among them day after day, that righteous man was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard) – if so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from their trials, and to reserve the unrighteous for punishment at the day of judgment, especially those who indulge their fleshly desires and who despise authority." 2 Pt 2:5-10

#### F. **The coming AD 70 judgment on Israel, caused by human evil, was likened to the flood narrative. No mention of fallen angels.**

Above all, understand this: In the last days blatant scoffers will come, being propelled by their own evil urges and saying, "Where is his promised return? For ever since our ancestors died, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation." For they deliberately suppress this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago and an earth was formed out of water and by means of water. Through these things the world existing at that time was destroyed when it was deluged with water. But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, by being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. 2 Pt 3:3-8

#### 4. GENESIS 6 WAS A CAUTIONARY TALE TO ISRAEL FOR PURITY. THIS CAUTION WAS OFTEN REPEATED.

##### A. Don't make covenant with polytheistic cultures.

"Be careful not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it become a snare among you. Rather you must destroy their altars, smash their images, and cut down their Asherah poles. For you must not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Be careful not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone invites you, you will eat from his sacrifice; and you then take his daughters for your sons, and when his daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will make your sons prostitute themselves to their gods as well." Ex 34:12,15,16

##### B. Alliances with polytheistic nations leads to bondage.

"But if you ever turn away and make alliances with these nations that remain near you, and intermarry with them and establish friendly relations with them, know for certain that the Lord our God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. They will trap and ensnare you; they will be a whip that tears your sides and thorns that blind your eyes until you disappear from this good land the Lord your God gave you." Josh 23:12-13

##### C. Keep yourself and your children from unholy alliances.

"Therefore do not give your daughters in marriage to their sons, and do not take their daughters in marriage for your sons. Do not ever seek their peace or welfare, so that you may be strong and may eat the good of the land and may leave it as an inheritance for your children forever." Ezra 9:12

##### D. Marry only those devoted to God.

"A wife is bound as long as her husband is living. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes (only someone in the Lord)." 1 Cor 7:39

##### E. Do not partner or marry unbelievers.

"Do not become partners with those who do not believe, for what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship does light have with darkness? And what agreement does Christ have with Belial? Or what does a believer share in common with an unbeliever? And what mutual agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, just as God said, *'I will live in them and will walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.'*" 2 Cor. 6:14-16

#### 5. DEFINITIONS: POLYTHEISM AND MONOTHEISM:

**A. Polytheism:** 1. The worship of or belief in more than one god. 2. The doctrine of, or belief in, a plurality of gods. 3. The belief in the existence of many gods. (American Heritage Dictionary)

**B. Monotheism:** 1. The doctrine or belief that there is only one God. 2. The doctrine or belief that there is but one God. 3. The belief in a single god (one God). (American Heritage Dictionary)

#### 6. THE BIBLE IS MONOTHEISTIC.

A. "Hear, Israel: Yahweh is our God. Yahweh is one." Dt 6:4

B. "Jesus replied, 'This is the most important of all the commandments: Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.'" Mk 12:29

C. "It was shown to you... that Yahweh is God and that there is none else besides Him." Dt 4:35

D. "Yahweh, He is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is none else." Dt 4:39

E. "All the peoples of the earth may know that Yahweh, He is God. There is none else." 1Ki 8:60

F. "I am Yahweh, and there is none else. Besides Me, there is no God." Is 45:5

#### 7. PETER AND JUDE CONDEMNED THOSE WHO DEFAMED GOD'S GLORIOUS FAITHFUL ANGELS—THE FALSE TEACHERS WHO ADVANCED THE BOOK OF ENOCH.

A. "Bold and arrogant, they [false teachers] are not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings." 2 Pt 2:3

B. "[The false teachers] reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings." Jude 8

See Preterist Papers: #65 Are There Wicked Angels in Jude? #72 "Angels Kept in Eternal Chains"—Jude