

The Truth about Giants & Nephilim

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All Scriptures are from the New King James translation unless otherwise noted.

The book of Genesis records many astounding events that took place during the first age of human history. Some believe that, during that time, angels came down from heaven and took women as wives. Even within the Church of God, there are some who believe that unnatural relationships between angelic beings and women produced a race of giants called “nephilim.”

Could this be true? Did God allow angels to mate with humans and create a race of giants? What Scriptures do people use to infer such an event? The answer is that their bizarre tale is extrapolated from a few sentences found in the first book of the Bible:

Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, 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. 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.” 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 (Genesis 6:1-4).

To understand what is being related in this section of Scripture, several questions must be answered. For example: Who are the sons of God? Who are the daughters of men? Who are the mighty men of renown? Can angels marry? Were there literal giants on the earth in those days, and were they children of angels? Finally, can we trust apocryphal writings to help explain the Scriptures?

Who Sons of God Are

Some have assumed that the “sons of God” mentioned in Genesis 6:2 are angels who saw the daughters of men and took wives for themselves. Such a belief is related to the fact that there are three places in the book of Job where the expression “sons of God” refers to angels (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). However, we must recognize that only faithful angels are known as sons of God. The angels that disobeyed God are called angels that sinned, wicked angels, demons, devils, and angels that did not keep their proper domain (2Pet. 2:4; Mat. 13:49; Lev. 17:7; Mark 5:12; Jude 7).

In addition, the fact that righteous angels are called sons of God does not mean that every time the Bible uses those terms it is referring to angels. Consider the following verses which use the same or similar expression, but do not refer to angels. Instead, they refer to human beings:

The son of Enosh, *the son* of Seth, *the son* of Adam, *the son* of God (Luke 3:38).

Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising (Acts 17:29).

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26).

These Scriptures clearly speak of people who are called sons of God. In addition, consider an undeniable fact of our existence. Adam and Eve were created by God. He breathed a spirit of life into their nostrils (Gen. 2:7). Technically speaking, they are His children and every human being since then are truly sons and daughters of God. The prophet Malachi was aware of this fact and wrote:

Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? (Malachi 2:10).

Understanding that the expression “sons of God” can mean angels or human beings, which ones are spoken of in Genesis 6:2? The answer is found when we consider events leading up to the flood. A previous verse explains how descendents of Adam and Eve began to call themselves by God’s name:

And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, “For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.” And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. **Then men began to call on the name of the LORD** (Genesis 4:25-26).

This verse is not speaking about people who suddenly began to worship God and thus call on His name. The worship of God was already taking place. This is evidenced by Adam and Eve’s sons making an offering to God (Gen. 4:3-4). The above verses indicate that people began to call themselves by God’s name. In others words, the descendants of Seth were called the sons of God. It is the men of his descent that are spoken of in Genesis 6:2. These sons of God are human men who took multiple wives; all of whom they chose. But this is not the only evidence supporting the truth that it was men who took many wives—not angels.

Angels Cannot Marry, and Do not Copulate

The Scriptures declare that kind reproduces after its own kind (Gen. 1:11-25). This is common knowledge and a fact of all physical existence. Further, Jesus indicated that angels cannot take women as wives:

The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection (Luke 20:34-36).

These words explain that those who will become spirit beings will be like the angels who do not marry. While marital relations fulfill more than one purpose, the main reason is to procreate. That is something angels are incapable of—which is one of the reasons they do not marry. Matthew also quoted Jesus and wrote:

For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven (Matthew 22:30).

Angels not only do not marry each other; they cannot marry human beings! If they could, then Jesus would be considered a liar and we would have no Savior. Nevertheless, those who enjoy

fanciful tales may attempt to say that, because Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, His divine conception is proof that angels can reproduce in a similar way. Such an argument is unfounded. Jesus' conception was unique and a one-time event. Also, God the Father did not have intercourse with Mary. Christ was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Just because angels are spirit beings does not mean that they can do anything that God can do. Angels can only do what God allows. The Scriptures never indicate that God has allowed anyone to misuse the power of His Holy Spirit. In fact, those who stray from God actually lose access to it (1Ths. 5:19). For a more complete understanding of an angelic power, read our free booklet—*Satan's Fate*.

The Daughters of Men

The expression “daughters of men” is used by those who believe angels married women to advance another line of reasoning. Some believe that, if the historical account is only speaking of men marrying women, there would be no need to point out that the women were daughters of men. In other words, if the sons of God and the daughters of men were both human, it would be unnecessary to state the obvious. Based on this reasoning, some conclude that the statement “daughters of men” indicates that those who married them were not human.

However, this expression has an altogether different purpose. The reason the Scriptures make a difference between Sons of God and daughters of men comes from a seldom regarded genealogy found in the first chapters of the Bible.

Of all the people that existed from Adam to Noah, there are only two genealogies mentioned—the progeny of Cain and descendants of Seth. But why only mention these two when dozens, or even hundreds, of other genealogies existed? The reason stems from two ways of life that people chose to live.

Cain chose to disobey God and killed his righteous brother Abel. Consequently, God cursed and banished Cain (Gen. 4:11-16). Genesis four traces Cain's progeny to Lamech who had married two women. The Scriptures indicate that Lamech was wicked like his forefather Cain. Lamech murdered a man undeserving of death and was afraid of being avenged by others. Notice his admission and a bold threat:

For I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold (Genesis 4:23-24).

This seldom regarded statement indicates that Lamech not only murdered a man, he presumptuously assumed god-like authority. God had put a mark of protection on Cain to assuage his fear of retribution and death. Lamech took it upon himself to declare his own mark of protection. This behavior indicates that Lamech did not revere the Eternal, and the genealogy of Cain reflects a lineage of wicked men who ultimately became renown in human history.

The next verses in this chapter detail the descendants of Seth. Seth replaced Abel in the heart of his parents (Gen. 4:25). The fact that Abel was a man God respected indicates that Seth revered God. Seth's progeny in this chapter is documented unto Noah. Noah worshipped God and was later called a preacher of righteousness (2Pet. 2:5). In fact, the ancestry of Christ recorded in the third chapter of Luke goes all the way back to Seth. This indicates that his lineage was composed of those who revered God. In other words, these were sons of God.

Though this theory is speculative, the Scriptures seem to indicate that the reason only two genealogies are mentioned in these first chapters of the Bible is because God was documenting two groups of men that influenced the course of history. One changed history in

an evil way while the other impacted history for good. The God-fearing men of Seth called on the name of YHWH and were known as sons of God. The opposing way of life was found in those who included “daughters of men.” These women gave birth to “tyrants” that became mighty men of renown.

The long span of life, combined with the increasing number of wicked people during those times, makes it clear that both of these groups had many other sons and daughters that are not mentioned. There were also many others generations related to these men that are not even mentioned. Those not listed in the lineage of Seth would also be considered sons of God. However, many of them gave in to their desire to have many wives and began to marry multiple daughters of evil men—all whom they chose.

This scenario may be speculation, but it is not without merit. The book of Genesis indicates that the behavior of these sons of God led to the degradation of humanity. For this reason, the following was recorded:

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... 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 (6:2-5).

The Giants of Those Days

In order to understand what the first chapters of Genesis say, we should also recognize what they do not say. The verses in question do not say that giants were the children of angels. In fact, verse four explains that these people existed prior to the matrimony in question:

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 (Genesis 6:4).

The individuals called “giants” existed both before and after the sons of God came in to daughters of men. The next question is, what exactly does the term “giants” refer to?

There were many who called themselves sons of God that were not good people. There were just as many women who did not revere God. This led to many corrupt societies that grew to vast numbers. The Bible indicates that there were giants among them prior to the marriages in question, and also afterward. However, the term “giants” is not to be understood in the way that many have assumed.

Most consider a giant to be a human of enormous size disproportionate to the rest of humanity. The assertion is that these “giants” of Genesis were a race of human hybrids that were extraordinarily large. This belief even led to a television series in 2014 called *Search for the Lost Giants* where two brothers examine folk-tales and search the planet for giant skeletons. Not surprisingly, no tangible evidence was ever found. The reason is because such giants never existed. In fact, the term “giants” does not mean what most think.

The word translated as “giants” in Genesis 6:4 is the Hebrew *nephil*. It is the expression which has led some to call these people nephilim. However, *nephil* does not describe a humanlike being of enormous stature and strength. It means a “*feller*, that is, a *bully* or *tyrant*” (*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, H5303). *Nephil* refers to men who were tyrants both brutal and oppressive. As we can see, this descriptive term fits perfectly with the very next verse explaining what God thought of these men and the societies they ruled over:

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 (Genesis 6:5).

Notice that God did not say that He beheld the wickedness of angels. He considered only the wickedness of “man that *was* great...” at that time, and went on to say:

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 (Genesis 6:7).

God did not mention angels at this time because they did not marry daughters of men. The wicked angels had already been dealt with before the creation of man, and they are now awaiting the execution of their final judgment (2Pet. 2:4; Mat. 25:41).

If this were not enough evidence proving what the Bible means by a giant, *nephil* is used one other time in the Scriptures. In Numbers 13:33, two frightened spies describe sons of Anak as “giants.” The giants these spies saw were not human half breeds. Though some of these people may have been tall and muscular, they did not literally make the Israelites seem like grasshoppers in comparison. The spies were fearful and the exaggeration reflected their angst. This misconception caused the entire assembly to panic. God was angered by such lack of confidence and cursed that adult generation to die in the wilderness (Num. 32:11).

Was Goliath a Giant?

The book of Samuel describes a duel between David and a star warrior of the Philistine army—Goliath. The depiction of this heathen warrior indicates that he was almost 10 feet tall. He is said to have worn a coat of chain mail weighing 125 pounds, carried a spear upwards of 20 feet long, and its spearhead alone weighed 15 pounds. This is clearly abnormal, but Goliath’s size is not unique. There are records in recent history of various men and women ranging from 7½ feet to almost 9 feet tall. Such stature is rare, but it is not the result of spirit beings mating with humans. Abnormally sized people are the result of genetic anomalies, and it appears that some of these irregular folk were paired to generate offspring that had similar genes.

The Amorites

Some believe that the Amorites were a race of enormously sized people. Even the noted scholar Albert Barnes wrote, “The giant sons of Anak were among the Amorites.” This belief is born out of a statement God made through the prophet Amos, who wrote:

Yet *it was* I *who* destroyed the Amorite before them, whose height *was* like the height of the cedars, and he *was as* strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit above and his roots beneath (Amos 2:9).

These words do not literally mean that there were giant Amorite warriors that were 30 feet tall. The words God chose to use were an illustration. The Amorites were a physically powerful fighting force who was strong like the wood of an oak tree. They were highly regarded for their accomplishments in conquering other people. This is what the expression “height of the cedars” means. Consider another example when God used this same expression to describe the nation of Assyria:

Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his multitude: “Whom are you like in your greatness? Indeed **Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon**, with fine branches that shaded the forest, and of high stature; and its top was among the thick boughs... Therefore **its height was exalted above all the trees of the field**; its boughs were multiplied, and its branches became long because of the abundance of water, as it sent them out... Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Because you have increased in height, and it set its top among the thick boughs, and its heart was lifted up in its height, therefore I will deliver it into the hand of the mighty one of the nations, and he shall surely deal with it; I have driven it out for its wickedness (Ezekiel 31:2-11).

Describing a people who are like cedars is an illustration referring to a nation or tribe exalted because of their accomplishments. Just as a cedar is set apart from other trees because it grows taller than most, so was the nation of Assyria.

However, it is possible that there were some Amorites that were abnormally sized. In fact, it is believed that Og king of Bashan was one of these individuals with a genetic anomaly (Deu. 3:11). Therefore, the illustrative portrayal of the Amorites does NOT mean that they were a race of giants. If anything, there may have been some who were taller than most just as Goliath was a star warrior of the Philistines.

Mighty Men of Renown

The sons who took multiple wives greatly multiplied. Their children became much like their fathers and worse. Genesis 6:4 describes them as, “mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown.” These terms depict “powerful, warrior, tyrants” who made names for themselves through violence, war, and acts of depravity (*Strong’s*, H1368; H8034). They became legendary through tyranny and delusions of grandeur. At this point God saw that the heart of nearly every human being on the planet was continually evil. The societies built by these renowned men were so vile that God found it necessary to destroy everyone except for Noah and his family.

Because of a lack of biblical evidence supporting the idea that angels married women who gave birth to a race of giants, believers of this unbiblical scenario have turned to extra-biblical books as evidence for their belief. One source is a brief statement made by the renowned historian Josephus who wrote:

For many angels of God accompanied with women, and begat sons that proved unjust, and despisers of all that was good, on account of the confidence they had in their own strength; for the tradition is, that these men did what resembled the acts of those whom the Grecians call giants (Book 1, ch. 3, 1).

It must be understood that Josephus was a Jewish general and a member of a sect of the Pharisees. Though he recorded many events that were accurate accounts of history, what Josephus wrote about angels having sex with women was not based on historical fact. This was a tradition of Judaism born out of myth from the ancient Greek era. The concept of sexual relations between deities and women comes from Greek myth, and the idea that angels married women was only found in the spurious *Book of Enoch*. Holy writ does not support such a view. Not only is there no biblical evidence to support a supernatural race of giants, neither is there any physical evidence. After much research, notice what the National Center for Science Education wrote:

We have seen that there is no scientific evidence for the existence of pre-flood human giants. But, perhaps more surprisingly, there is no support for pre-flood giants in the Bible, either.

The notion that Adam and Eve and most of the people who lived before the Flood grew to great sizes is nowhere stated in the Bible and can in no sense be supported by the few biblical references to various hated and feared “giants” (J.R. Cole, *Creation Evolution Journal*, Issue 15, p. 52, 1985).

Despite the lack of legitimate information supporting a belief in angelic marriages to women, some claim that there is an extra-biblical book containing accurate information about the pre-flood age of human history.

The Books of Enoch

Children generally do not enjoy true history books as much as stories of strange creatures, spaceships, and faraway places of the mind. Many adults are not much different. Therefore, some will look to ideas of men which are categorized as spurious writings of those who do not know the true God. Even within God’s Church there are some who have turned to studying pseudepigraphical works—writings that falsely claim to be authored by a true biblical character.

Books that claim to be written by the righteous great grandfather of Noah have been quoted by many as credible writings. However, it must be understood that these manuscripts, known as the book or books of Enoch, are not legitimate sources of truth. Throughout their pages, you will find esoteric stories comparable only to the fables of ancient Greek gods. In fact, the *Books of Enoch* repeatedly contradict the Bible. Consider some of the subject matter found in these spurious writings declaring that:

- Heaven consists of seven levels
- There are spiritual portals all around the earth from which the sun, moon, wind, and rain come into contact with the earth’s atmosphere.
- There exists a “holy angel” named “Uriel” that led Enoch around heaven.
- Enoch was used by God to reprimand wicked angels.
- There exists a supernatural prison filled with the light of massive fires.
- A group of wicked angels known as the watchers had sex with women as well as with animals and are currently incarcerated in a third level of heaven.
- Many demons will be cleansed of their sin after 10,000 years of incarceration.

So outrageous are the stories found in the supposed books of Enoch that some have connected the work to witchcraft and UFOs. One of the most respected Church of God authors had the following to say about the books of Enoch:

Some have made claims that the Book of Enoch should be a part of the Bible. But the so-called “Book of Enoch” was not written by the Patriarch Enoch who lived before the Noachian Flood. The book was the product of *first-or second-century B.C.* mystical writers, thousands of years after Enoch had died... Jude did not quote from it. Jude obtained his information *directly* from Jewish tradition, which this Book of Enoch also drew on. Obviously, all such tradition is not correct. But the information Jude used is accurate because God had it incorporated into inspired Scripture. The Book of Enoch, on the other hand, contains such unbiblical myths as angels marrying women, and the “fall” of Adam. The spurious Book of Enoch was *definitely not* regarded as inspired by New Testament writers (*Do We Have the Complete Bible*, Herbert W. Armstrong, p. 5).

Spurious is the correct word to describe these books. They are a work written in the name of a famous man to foist false doctrines upon those who seek the sensational. It is blatantly obvious these books cannot be trusted, and to use such writings to teach doctrines that pretend to be Biblical is nothing short of heresy!

Some might think that Jude quoted a supposed writing of Enoch in verse 14, but such a belief was never taught by the Church of God. As Herbert Armstrong stated, there is no genuine book that was ever written by Enoch, and Jude penned words that were handed down through oral tradition. Thus, it is obvious that we cannot use spurious books to explain events found in the Bible. As the Apostle Paul warned:

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, **not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us** (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2).

Although some might claim that the books of Enoch actually complement the Bible, Paul cautioned Christ's disciples not to be moved by false writings that profess to be written by Church leaders. In addition, many credible scholars, and God inspired men, have concluded that the book in question was not written by the patriarch Enoch.

In fact, many scholars agree that the books of Enoch are products of the Qumran community and cannot be trusted as authoritative. Gabriele Boccaccini wrote an extensive book on this subject titled *Enoch and Qumran Origins* which represents the collaborative efforts of 47 specialists from eleven countries. Boccaccini summarized their conclusion saying:

The contributors demonstrate that the roots of the Qumran community are to be found in the tradition of the Enoch group rather than that of the Jerusalem priesthood... Documents like 1 Enoch, which in Jewish eyes had always remained the bizarre product of marginal sects detached from normative Judaism, appeared now more and more irrelevant also to the many Christian scholars (Jacket, p. 2).

Notice a few additional quotes from scholars regarding these books bearing the name of Enoch:

The *Book of Enoch* is a pseudepigraphical work [a work that claims to be by a biblical character] (J.T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4*).

The materials in 1 Enoch range in date from 200 B.C.E. to 50 C.E... Pseudepigrapha is a Greek word meaning "falsely superscribed," or what we moderns might call writing under a pen name. The classification, "OT Pseudepigrapha," is a label that scholars have given to these writings (Craig A. Evans, *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation*, pp. 22-23).

The book we refer to is the Book of Enoch, an ancient composition known from two sets of versions, an Ethiopic one that scholars identify as "1 Enoch," and a Slavonic version that is identified as "2 Enoch," and which is also known as *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*. Both versions, of which copied manuscripts have been found mostly in Greek and Latin translations, are based on early sources that enlarged on the short biblical mention that Enoch, the seventh Patriarch after Adam, did not die because, at age 365, "he walked with God"—taken heavenward to join the deity (Zecharia Sitchin, *When Time Began*, p. 127).

Both 1 Enoch and Jubilees are unmistakable products of Hellenistic civilization. A world view so encyclopaediac that it embraced the geography of heaven and earth, astronomy, meteorology, medicine was no part of Jewish tradition - but was familiar to educated Greeks, but attempting to emulate and surpass Greek wisdom, by having an integrating divine plan for destiny, elaborated through an angelic host with which Enoch is in communication through his mystical travels (Norman Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come*, p. 178).

We may, therefore, with reasonable certainty assign the composition of our text to the period of 1-50 A.D... The author was a Jew who lived in Egypt, probably in Alexandria. He belonged to the Hellenistic Judaism of his day... In questions affecting the origin of the earth, sin, death, etc., he allows himself the most unrestricted freedom and borrows freely from every quarter. Thus, Platonic, Egyptian, and Zend elements are adopted into his system. The result is naturally syncretistic [a combination of different forms of belief] (R. H. Charles, *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, Introduction, p. xxvi).

Religious authorities caution readers against trusting the books of Enoch, and for good reason. Describing that pseudepigraphical work as a journey of “mystical travels” is accurate. The text was written from the perspective that Enoch did not die, but was taken to heaven at age 365 to join God. This alone should be sufficient evidence to recognize that the book is filled with myth (John 3:13).

Pseudepigraphs are composed of extra-biblical, mystical, religious writings of uncertain origin. They are rejected by the Church of God and most other biblical authorities. We should never use them in an attempt to interpret the Scriptures. The anecdote mentioned by Josephus also cannot be trusted having the same scenario and likely coming from the same false source.

The biblical evidence does not support a theory of angels marrying women and begetting supernatural humans. What the Scriptures describe are men who called themselves sons of God who chose to take many wives of unbelievers. Tyrants existed in those days and more were born who built societies that were wicked. These men laid a foundation of iniquity which ultimately caused God to destroy all human life except for eight individuals.

Our conclusion is that there is not any credible evidence indicating that angels can, or did, marry women and generate a race of oversized or supernatural humans.