

The Nephilim & The Cosmic War

A Biblical Theology of the "Sons of God," Giants, and Demons

1. The Nephilim Explicitly Named

The Antediluvian Context

Genesis 6:1–4

“The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.”

Key Exegetical Points:

- **Etymology:** The word *Nephilim* (נְפִילִים) likely derives from *naphal* (“to fall”). It is often understood as “fallen ones” or, in a causative sense, “those who cause others to fall” (tyrants).
- **Identity:** “Sons of God” (*bene ha’elohim*) is the precise technical phrase used elsewhere in the Old Testament (e.g., Job) for divine beings/angels.
- **Timeline:** The phrase “and also afterward” implies that this phenomenon was not limited to the time before the Flood but reappeared later.
- **Significance:** This is the foundational text. All other references either explain, echo, or respond to this event.

The Post-Flood Context

Numbers 13:32–33

“...the land... devours its inhabitants... and there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim); and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers...”

Key Exegetical Points:

- **Confirmation:** Occurs post-Flood, confirming the Genesis 6:4 phrase “and also afterward.”
- **Lineage:** Explicitly links the Nephilim to the “sons of Anak” (Anakim), giant clans residing in Canaan.

- **Psychology:** The Israelites associated the Nephilim with intense territorial fear and military impossibility.
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2. Related Giant Clans (Post-Flood)

While the term "Nephilim" is not always repeated, the following groups are directly associated with them by description and lineage.

The Anakim

- **References:** Deuteronomy 2:10–11; Joshua 11:21–22; Joshua 14:12–15.
- **Description:** "Great and tall... like the Anakim." They were the standard by which other giants were measured.

The Rephaim

- **References:** Deuteronomy 2:20–21; Joshua 12:4; Joshua 13:12.
- **Og of Bashan:** Described in Deut 3:11 as the "remnant of the Rephaim." His iron bedstead was approximately 13 feet long.
- **Crucial Linguistic Note:** In later Hebrew usage, *Rephaim* evolves to also mean "spirits of the dead" (see Isaiah 14, 26). This linguistic bridge strongly supports the view: **Nephilim → disembodied spirits → demons.**

Zamzummim & Emim

- **References:** Deuteronomy 2:10–12, 20–21.
- **Traits:** Described as "Great," "Many," and "Tall as the Anakim."

Philistine Giants

- **Goliath:** (1 Samuel 17).
 - **The Four Descendants:** Lahmi, Ishbi-Benob, Saph, and the "Six-fingered/toed" giant (2 Samuel 21:16–22).
 - **Lineage:** Scripture notes, "these four were descended from the giants (*Rapha*) in Gath."
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3. "Sons of God" – The Divine Context

These texts define the identity of the perpetrators in Genesis 6.

Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:4–7

"The sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD..."

- **Insight:** These are clearly heavenly, non-human beings who have access to the divine court.

Psalm 82

“God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment.”

- **Theology:** This Psalm is crucial for understanding the rebellion of divine beings, their judgment, and why their hybrid offspring would be targeted.

Deuteronomy 32:8–9 (Dead Sea Scrolls / LXX Reading)

“...He fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.”

- **Cosmic Geography:** This connects territorial spirits to specific nations (the Table of Nations), later giant clans, and the conquest narratives.

4. Flood Judgment & The Corruption

Genesis 6:12

“All flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.”

- **Ontological Corruption:** The text implies the corruption was not merely moral choices, but *ontological*—a corruption of “flesh” (genetics/nature).
- **Total Evil:** “Every intention... was only evil continually” (Gen 6:5).
- **The Solution:** The Flood was a preservation act to save the human genome (Noah was “perfect in his generations”) from hybridization.

5. New Testament Commentary

The Apostles viewed Genesis 6 as historical fact, not mythology.

2 Peter 2:4–5 & Jude 1:6–7

“God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into Tartarus...”

“...angels who did not stay within their own position of authority... strange flesh...”

- **The Link:** Jude explicitly links the sin of Sodom ("strange flesh") to the sin of the angels.
- **Tartarus:** Peter uses a specific Greek term (*Tartaroo*) indicating a special holding place for these specific divine rebels.

1 Peter 3:18–20

- Jesus proclaimed victory to "spirits in prison" who were disobedient "in the days of Noah." These are the Watchers of Genesis 6.

6. Demons: The Spirits of the Nephilim

The Bible distinguishes between "Fallen Angels" (incarcerated) and "Demons" (roaming).

The Scriptural Evidence

- **Isaiah 26:13–14:** "They are dead, they will not live; they are *Rephaim*, they will not rise..." (Implying a lack of resurrection, but a lingering spiritual existence).
- **Isaiah 14:9:** "Sheol beneath is stirred up... it rouses the *Rephaim*..."
- **Matthew 12:43–45:** "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest..."

The Logic of Possession:

Angels have their own "bodies" (Jude 1:6). They do not generally seek inhabitation. **Demons**, however, are the disembodied spirits of the Nephilim (human/angel hybrids). Having lost their physical bodies in the Flood (or by the sword), they seek embodiment to interact with the physical world again.

7. Second Temple Context (Historical Background)

How the Jewish people in Jesus' day understood these texts.

- **1 Enoch 6–16:** Describes the "Watchers" descending on **Mount Hermon**.
- **1 Enoch 15:** Explicitly states that the spirits of the dead giants (Nephilim) shall be called "evil spirits upon the earth."
- **Jude's Endorsement:** Jude 1:14–15 directly quotes 1 Enoch 1:9, validating the book's theological relevance to this topic.

8. Theological Summary: The Cosmic War

Concept	Biblical Definition
Nephilim	Offspring of the divine rebellion (Gen 6).
The Flood	Divine reset to preserve the human lineage/image of God.
Giants	Post-Flood resurgence of the Nephilim bloodline.
Demons	Disembodied spirits of dead Nephilim seeking rest.
The Great Commission	Reclaiming the nations and territories once ruled by rebel powers.

Conclusion:

This worldview fits seamlessly with Paul's assertion that we will "judge angels" (1 Cor 6:3) and that our warfare is against "cosmic powers over this present darkness" (Eph 6:12).