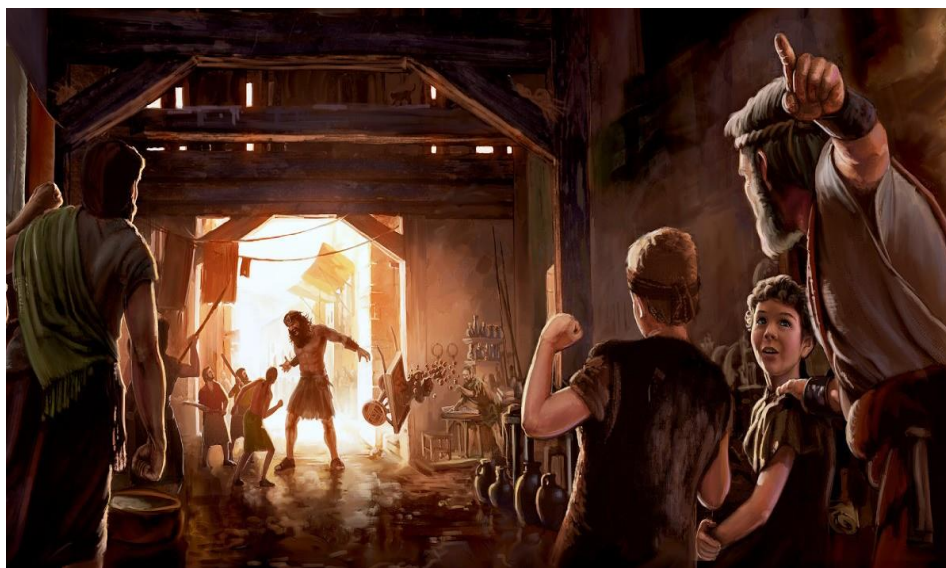


Who Were the Nephilim?



Let's read the Bible account describing the situation in the days before the Flood—**Gen 6:1-4:**

“Now when men started to grow in number on the surface of the ground and daughters were born to them, 2 the sons of the true God began to notice that the daughters of men were beautiful. So, they began taking as wives all whom they chose. 3 Then Jehovah said: “My spirit will not tolerate man indefinitely, because he is only flesh. Accordingly, his days will amount to 120 years.” 4 **The Neph'i·lim** were on the earth in those days and afterward. During that time the sons of the true God continued to have relations with the daughters of men, and these bore sons to them. They were the mighty ones of old times, the men of fame.

From this account there are two sets of individuals that we want to identify – **“The sons of the true God”**, and **“the Nephilim”**.

Who were “*the sons of the true God*” that were involved? Were they humans who were worshipers of Jehovah? Evidently not. The Bible implies that the consequences of these marriages resulted in an explosion of wickedness in the earth. **Gen 6:5**

Before this time, people routinely got married and had children, so by specifically mentioning the relations between “*the sons of the true God*” and “*the daughters of men*,” the account clearly refers to something unique, but also very abnormal.

The sons of God must have been angels, spirit sons of God. This expression is applied to angels at **Job 1:6; 38:7**. This view is supported by Peter (**1 Pet 3:19, 20A.**)

Jude also writes of "*the **angels that did not keep their original position but forsook their own proper dwelling place.***" (Jude 6)

Angels had the power then to materialize in human form. (**Gen 19:1-3**)

But heaven is the proper home of spirit creatures. Leaving heaven to dwell on earth and to forsake their assigned service, to have fleshly relations was a rebellion against God's laws, and a perversion.

So who were "**the Nephilim**"? Many Bible commentators, taking into consideration the context of Genesis chapter 6, conclude that the Nephilim were the offspring resulting from materialized angels having intercourse with women. These were not ordinary children, they were half human and half angel.

Let's read the opening account again, from another Bible translation (Gen 6:1-4)

"More and more people were born, until finally they spread all over the earth. Some of their daughters were so beautiful that supernatural beings came down and married the ones they wanted. Then the LORD said, "I won't let my life-giving breath remain in anyone forever. No one will live for more than one hundred twenty years." The children of the supernatural beings who had married these women became famous heroes and warriors. They were called Nephilim and lived on the earth at that time and even later".

What kind of creatures were the Nephilim? They were **hybrids** who grew up to be giants. The record mentions only males being Nephilim, and it seems that the offspring were hybrids, unable to reproduce, which is often the case. Consider for example a mule, which is a hybrid offspring of an ass and a horse. Generally, mules are sterile and cannot reproduce, as their parents chromosomes are not compatible.

The Nephilim were also vicious bullies. In fact, the Hebrew word for Nephilim means "*those who fall upon*" or "*those who cause others to fall down*", in the sense of hostile and violent men. Most scholars trace the word Nephilim to the Hebrew root "*Naphal*" meaning "*to fall*." This could be a reference to the fallen angels who fathered them. Interestingly, other scholars say the Hebrew word "*Nephele*" is possibly the root word from which Nephilim is derived, which means: "*abortion*" or "*miscarriage*". The Nephilim were characters who literally caused others to fall, through violent acts. It is not surprising because the Bible account says: "*The earth became filled with violence.*" (Genesis 6:11)

What do you think it was like living back then?

Notice that the Nephilim were called "*mighty ones*" and "*men of fame*." Unlike the righteous man Noah, who lived in the same period, the Nephilim were not interested in promoting the fame of Jehovah. They were interested in their own fame, glory, and reputation. Through mighty acts, which undoubtedly involved violence, they earned the fame they craved from the ungodly world around them. They were the superheroes of their day—feared, maybe even respected, and seemingly invincible.

The reputation of the Nephilim resulted in many myths among pagan people. Sometime after the flood, Jehovah confused the languages at Babel. The people were then scattered throughout the earth and took their ideas and stories about the Nephilim with them. Although the original Genesis account was distorted and exaggerated, there is a strong resemblance in the myths of ancient Greeks, Egyptians and others. Gods and goddesses mated with humans to produce superhuman heroes and fearsome demigods.

"Heroes" like Achilles and Hercules were said to be of both divine and human descent and were endowed with superhuman ability. So, what Genesis says of the Nephilim sheds light on the possible or even probable origin of such myths.

The Nephilim and their fathers took wickedness to new lows. **Gen 6:11**

Humans adopted the violent, depraved ways of the Nephilim and the fallen angels. Finally, Jehovah destroyed that world in a global Deluge. He only spared righteous Noah and his family. **Gen 6:9, 13, 17**. Although they were superhuman, the Nephilim could not escape the flood waters. The materialized angels, however, shed their human bodies and returned to the spirit realm in disgrace. It appears that from that time on, God prevented these wicked spirits from materializing. **Jude 6**

In addition, Jehovah did something else; The apostle Peter tells us what this was.
2 Peter 2:4, 5. Another translation puts it this way:

"God spared not the angels who had sinned, but [has] cast them down to the deepest pit of gloom [and] has delivered them to chains of darkness to be kept for judgment."

So the disobedient angels are now "*spirits in prison*," having been thrown into **Tartarus**, awaiting their judgment.

Tartarus is mistranslated "hell" in some Bibles, but it is a **condition** rather than a location. It is a prisonlike condition to which the wicked spirits are confined. It is a state of dense mental darkness, their being cut off from the radiance of Jehovah, with only a dark outlook as their destiny.

What is going to eventually happen to them? They will be **completely destroyed**, along with Satan, their master.

(References: it-2 pp. 491-492 w01 11/15 p. 30, w07 6/1 p. 5, w00 4/15 pp. 27-28, w97 6/15 p. 15 par. 6)

