

Who or what were the Nephilim?

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The term “nephilim” occurs in Scripture only 3 times — once in Genesis 6:4 (spelled נַפְלִיִּים), and twice in Numbers 13:33 (spelled נַפְלִיִּים). That is one occurrence before the Flood and two after (both in the same verse). There are two main theories on who or what they are.

DEMON-SPAWN PRODUCED FROM DEMONS MATING WITH HUMANS

Support:

- The pseudepigraphical (fictional) “Book of Enoch” (dated 1st Century BCE to 2nd Century CE).
- Kabbalist Bahya ben Asher, *Biur al ha Toral* (Venice, 1566), 179.

Challenges:

- Regarding support from Enoch, note that this work is of the same genre which produced Pseudo-Cyril, which claims Yeshua was a shape-shifter and never took the same form twice, the Apocalypse of Adam (not written by Adam), and the Apocalypse of Seth (not written by Seth), and all listed works and more are recognized universally as fiction.¹ Enoch contradicts Scripture, e.g.:

ENOCH	BIBLE
Angels bore giants (7:3)	Word “giants” is absent from Genesis 6:1-4
Destruction because of angels (7:3)	Destruction because of man’s wickedness (6:5)
“Go to Noah and say...” (10:1)	Enoch was raptured at age 365, but would be 434 when Noah was born (Gen. 5:23-24)
Enoch told by HaShem to pray to angels (12:4)	Praying to angels is deprecated (Col. 2:18-19)

- The *shoresh* of nephilim is now known NOT to be נפל (to fall). It is impossible for this to be the root, as no participial form exists where the a-class vowels can both be reduced without the addition of a *mem+patach* prefix (Hiphil). If genetic freaks, how do the same exist after the Flood (Num. 13:33)?
- The word “angel” appears nowhere in the Hebrew text of Genesis chapters 4-6.
- The word “giant” appears nowhere in the Hebrew text of Genesis chapters 4-6.
- How do demons (spirit beings with no material substance, i.e. DNA, procreate with humans?
- Why would the term “sons of G-d” mean demons here when it never does any other place it is used in Scripture?
- Doesn’t the fact that Deuteronomy 32:8 appears in different Hebrew manuscripts as both “people of Israel” (MT) and “people/sons of G-d” (4QDeut^a and 4QDeut^b) tell us it is referring to human beings?
- How can this be harmonized with Genesis 1, which says everything reproduces “according to its kind,” yet every verse surrounding this one refers to “men” or “people” (never a mention at all of angels or demons in all of Genesis 5-6)?
- Was Yeshua wrong when He said angels cannot marry/reproduce (Matthew 22:30)?
- Was Yeshua wrong when He said that angels have no gender (Luke 20:34-35)?
- Alleged “archaeological evidences” of 30-foot giants have proven to be hoaxes.
- No Scriptural support for *fallen* angels ever taking or being able to take human form.
- Jude 4-8 & 2 Kefa 2:1-11, properly understood, refer to the same event as Revelation 12:1-4, i.e. the expulsion of haSatan from Heaven.²

¹ Michael E. Stone, “The Apocrypha & Pseudepigrapha,” *Jewish Virtual Library* (online: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/apocrypha.html>).

² P.S. Alexander, ‘The Targumim and Early Exegesis of the “Sons of God” in Genesis 6’, *Journal of Jewish Studies* 23 (1972): 60-71; John Gill, *Exposition of the Entire Bible*, Notes on Jude 6 and 7; “Sons of G-d in Genesis 6 (online: <http://www.scriptureoncreation.org/#/bible-question-answer>).

HUMANS WHO ARE WICKED DUE TO DILUTION OF RIGHTEOUS INFLUENCE BECAUSE THEY HAVE PAGAN MOTHERS.

Support:

- The *shoresh* of the term “nephilim” cannot be נפל (to fall), as already noted, but *could be* either פלע (to be renowned, heroic), which would align with the description in v. 4b, or (more likely, given the variant spelling in Numbers) from the Aramaic *shoresh* נפיל (untimely birth, not viable) with the Aramaic ןֿ- participial ending “Hebraized” to ןֿ-ים, which can be used to indicate something outside G-d’s will (i.e. mixed marriage between believers and unbelievers³ (cp. Exod. 34:11-16; 2 Cor. 6:14-18).
- Support in ancient sources is well attested: Julius Africanus, Cyril of Alexandria, and even Augustine (who *loved* allegorizing the Scriptures to the point of nonsense).
- Every verse in which the phrase “sons of G-d” is used can be better understood as indicating human worshipers than angels or demons.

VERSE	HEBREW/ARAMAIC	MEANING
Gen. 6:2	בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים	“sons of G-d” as human believers (Gen. 4:26 sets up the context: “ men began to call on the name of YHWH;” and 6:5 calls their offspring “ men ,” not “demons.”)
Gen. 6:4	בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים	
Deut. 32:8	בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים / בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	“children/sons/people of Israel/G-d” (The fact that these terms are interchangeable between MT & DSS tells us human beings are in view.)
Hosea 2:1 ^(1:10)	בְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי	“You are the sons of the Living G-d” (godly humans)
Psalms 29:1	בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים	“godly people” (David to his human audience)
Job 1:6	בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים	Since the fallen haSatan no longer has access to Heaven, this has to be understood as occurring on earth (at an altar perhaps), which would make this a human congregation infiltrated by haSatan.
Job 2:1	בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים	
Job 38:7	בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים	With a <i>waw-of-result</i> understanding, ongoing human rejoicing following creation may be in view.
Matthew 5:9	בְּנוֹתֵי הָאֱלֹהִים	AENT: “Blessed are they who make peace because they will be called <i>sons of Elohim</i> .” (speaking of humans)
John 1:12	בְּנוֹתֵי הָאֱלֹהִים	AENT: “But those who did receive Him He gave to them authority that they might be <i>sons of Elohim</i> , those who have believed in His name.” (human worshipers)
Rom. 8:14	בְּנוֹתֵי אֱנוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים	AENT: “For they who are led by the Spirit of Elohim, they are the <i>sons of Elohim</i> .” (human worshipers)
Rom. 9:8	בְּנוֹתֵי הָאֱלֹהִים	AENT: “That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are the <i>children of Elohim</i> ; but the children of the promise are accounted for the seed. ” (human Israelites , by “adoption as sons” from v. 4)
Gal. 3:26	בְּנוֹתֵי אֱנוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים	AENT: “For you are all <i>children of Elohim</i> by faith in Y’shua the Mashiyach.” (writing to a human audience)
1 John 3:10	בְּנוֹתֵי הָאֱלֹהִים	AENT: “By this are the <i>children of Elohim</i> discriminated from the children of Satan. Everyone that does not practice righteousness and that loves not his brother, is not of Elohim.” (human beings)

³ Marcus Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: Title Publishing, 1943), 924.