



20 Beliefs Every Christian Should Know

Angels, Satan, and Demons, Part 2

Key Verse: Genesis 6:1–2

“Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.”

Overview

Many people have wondered who the Nephilim were in Genesis 6. Did you know they are also mentioned in Numbers 13? Are they the result of the “sons of God” marrying the “daughters of men?” As we study angels, demons, and Satan, the discussion about the “sons of God” and Nephilim becomes relevant. In this lesson we will look at four different views concerning who the sons of God and Nephilim were.

Definition

Nephilim: related to the Hebrew verb *naphal* which means “to fall.” The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (HALOT) defines it as “giants.”

The definition of Nephilim is not clear but could mean “fallen ones” or “giants.”

Two main issues in Genesis 6:1–4: 1) Who were the “sons of God?” 2) Who were the “Nephilim?”

View #1: The Fallen Angel View (Most Popular View)

Overview: Satan and/or his fallen angels bred with human women and had offspring that were called Nephilim.

Sons of God: Fallen angels

Nephilim: Mix of human and angel

Scriptural Support

- 2 Peter 2:4–5
 - “⁴For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; ⁵and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;”

- Jude 6–7
 - “⁶And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, ⁷just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.”

Other Extra-biblical support for this view: The Book of Enoch chapters 6 and 7. One manuscript (*Codex Alexandrinus*) is a fifth-century Greek translation of the Old Testament that reads “angels of God” in Genesis 6:2.

Criticisms

1. 2 Peter 2:4 just says angels “sinned” but does not tell what the exact sin was.
2. The context of Jude 6–7 is discussing “ungodly persons” (v. 4) and does not specify the sin of the angels other than they “abandoned their proper abode.” NET Bible says they “abandoned their own place of residence.”
3. Angels that appear as men (Gabriel and the two angels of Genesis 19) are never fallen angels.
4. Angels are spiritual and do not have DNA to combine with human DNA. Although they do appear as men, they don’t have physical relations.
5. “Sons of God” never refers to fallen angels in the Bible (see Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7; ref. also Daniel 3:25).
 - a. “Sons of God” in Job 38:7 are angels *before* the fall when God pronounced everything “very good.”
6. Christians are called “sons of God” (see Matt. 5:9; Rom. 8:14, 19; Gal. 3:26).
7. According to Numbers 13:33, the Nephilim (being descendants of Anak) can exist without being offspring of “sons of God.”
8. If Nephilim are the product of fallen angels and humans, why does verse 4 call them “men of renown”? The word for “men” in Hebrew is *iysh*. This is the same word is used to refer to Cain in Genesis 4:1. It is used to refer to *holy* angels (Genesis 18:2), but *never* used to refer to fallen angels in the OT.
9. In verse 2, the sons of God took the daughters of men as “wives.” Marriage in the Bible is always between a human male and female. Some argue that the Hebrew word for wives (*ishshah*) can also mean “women.” They conclude that the sons of God took these women by force instead of through marriage. However, it says the sons of God “chose” the women, not “took them by force.” HALOT says (“to choose; wife”).
10. Christ said in Luke 24:39, “for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have” in reference to His resurrection. Although we see *holy* angels materialize as men, we never see *fallen* angels (spirits) make physical bodies for themselves. Some argue that if this were true, it would call into question the resurrection of Christ. Was He a demon in the flesh? No, because we never see fallen angels materialize.

View #2: The Fallen Angels Overtook Men

Overview: Men (the sons of God) were overtaken by demons and produced Nephilim who were 100% human.

Sons of God: Men overtaken by fallen angels/demons

Nephilim: 100% human

Scriptural Support

- Luke 22:3
 - “And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve.”
- Mark 5:15
 - They came to Jesus and observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the “legion”; and they became frightened.

Criticisms

1. Would people who are overtaken by fallen angels/demons warrant the title “sons of God?” In the NT, many people were overtaken by demons and never called “sons of God.”
2. Are Nephilim still being born today? We never see a demon-possessed man have children in the Bible. If demon-possessed men could reproduce with women, then there could potentially be many “Nephilim” on the earth today.

View #3: The Line of Seth (Second Most Popular View)

Overview: The sons of God were Sethites who married ungodly women of the line of Cain, and their children followed after false gods and rejected the one true God.

Sons of God: 100% human (Men from the line of Seth)

Nephilim: 100% human men who fell away from God (Nephilim = “to fall”)

Scriptural Support

- Genesis 4:25–5:32
 - 4:26: “To Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then *men* began to call upon the name of the LORD.”

Criticisms

1. Although there were men from the line of Seth who were righteous (Seth, Enoch, Lamech, Noah), we cannot say for certain that all the descendants of Seth were righteous.
2. The title “sons of God” is only used in reference to angels. However, those who hold to the Sethite view claim that there has been no mention of angels in Genesis so far. Why would Moses use the term “sons of God” to refer to *fallen* angels when he has only been talking about humans up to this point?

3. If all the descendants of Seth were righteous, why didn't they pass a godly heritage to their "sons and daughters"? Why was only Noah found righteous?
4. In Numbers 13, we see the Nephilim. If everyone Post-flood was a descendant of Seth, where did the Nephilim come from?

(Variant of View #3: Kings/rulers)

Overview: The sons of God were godly kings/rulers.

Sons of God: 100% human kings or rulers

Nephilim: 100% human men who fell away from God (Nephilim = "to fall")

Scriptural Support

- Psalm 82:1–6

View #4: The Fallen Men View

Overview: Some men of the line of Seth, and possibly in other lineages as well, were godly and married women who were not godly (possibly from the line of Cain).

Sons of God: 100% human (godly men)

Nephilim: 100% human men who fell away from God (Nephilim = "to fall")

Scriptural Support

- Genesis 4:25–5:32
 - 4:26: "To Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then *men* began to call upon the name of the LORD."
- Numbers 13:33
 - "There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

Criticisms

1. Same as criticisms of View #3.

Application

1. We must be like Bereans (Acts 17:11) and seek to know God's Word.
2. We must not divide with anyone over a different view on this subject.
3. Although this passage is difficult to understand, this does not change the inerrancy and perspicuity of Scripture. When we don't understand something, the problem is not with the infallible Word of God, the problem is with us fallible people.