

# GENESIS 6 - WHO WERE "THE SONS OF GOD"?

GENESIS 6:1 Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, 2 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. 3 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." 4 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. (*NKJV*)

There has been much speculation about who these "sons of God" mentioned in the sixth chapter of Genesis were. Three basic interpretations of this passage have been advanced.

The first, and oldest, belief is that "the sons of God" were fallen angels who consorted with human women, producing giant offspring called *nephilim* (Heb. ?????). This view was widely held in the world of the first century, and was supported by Flavius Josephus, Philo, Eusebius and many of the "Ante-Nicene Fathers," including Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Irenaeus, Athenagoras and Commodianus.

The second view is one which was first suggested by Julius Africanus and later advocated by Saint Augustine, the Catholic Bishop of Hippo. Augustine rejected the concept of the fallen host having committed fornication with women. In his early fifth century book *The City of God*, he promoted the theory that "the sons of God" simply referred to the genealogical line of Seth, who were committed to preserving the true worship of God. He interpreted Genesis 6 to mean that the male offspring of Adam through Seth were "the sons of God," and the female offspring of Adam through Cain were "the daughters of men." He wrote that the problem was that the family of Seth had interbred with the family of Cain, intermingling the bloodlines and corrupting the pure religion. This view has become the dominant one among most modern biblical scholars.

The third view is that "the sons of God" were the sons of pre-Flood rulers or magistrates. This belief became the standard explanation of rabbinical Judaism after Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai pronounced a curse in the second century C.E. upon those Jews who believed the common teaching that the angels were responsible for the *nephilim*. This interpretation was advocated by two of the most respected Jewish rabbis of the Middle Ages, Rashi and Nachmanides, and became the standard explanation of rabbinical Judaism. However, it is not widely accepted by modern scholars.

To determine who these "sons of God" were, we'll first examine what various outside sources have to say about this topic. Then we'll examine the ultimate authority, the Bible, to see its position.

Let's start with a quotation and footnote from William Whitson's translation of the respected first century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus' history of the Jewish people:

Now this posterity of Seth continued to esteem God as the Lord of the universe, and to have an entire regard to virtue, for seven generations; but in process of time they were perverted, and forsook the practices of their forefathers, and did neither pay those honors to God which were appointed to them, nor had they any concern to do justice towards men. But for what degree of zeal they had formerly shown for virtue, they now showed by their actions a double degree of wickedness; whereby they made God to be their enemy, 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 called giants. But Noah was very uneasy at what they did; and, being displeased at their conduct, persuaded them to change their dispositions and their acts for the better; but, seeing that they did not yield to him, but were slaves to their wicked pleasures, he was afraid they would kill him, together with his wife and children, and those they had married; so he departed out of that land. (p. 32; bk. 1, ch. 3, ??72-74, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, translated by William Whitson)

# GENESIS 6 - WHO WERE "THE SONS OF GOD"?

\* This notion, that the fallen angels were, in some sense the fathers of the old giants, was the constant opinion of antiquity.

As you can see, Josephus believed and recorded that "the sons of God" mentioned in Genesis 6 were fallen angels. As Whitson's footnote acknowledges, this belief was standard in the ancient world.

Another well-known first century Jewish writer, Philo of Alexandria, shared Josephus' views on this topic. In his work "On the Giants," Philo wrote:

"And when the angels of God saw the daughters of men that they were beautiful, they took unto themselves wives of all them whom they chose." Those beings, whom other philosophers call demons, Moses usually calls angels . . . (p. 152, **The Works of Philo**, "De Gigantibus," translated by C.D. Yonge)

The **Book of Enoch** (also called **I Enoch**) is a collection of pseudepigraphic writings by various authors which dates to the first or second century B.C. This book was well-known by the early church; in fact, Jude, the brother of Jesus, quoted Enoch 1:9 in verses 14 and 15 of his epistle. Obviously Jude felt that the **Book of Enoch** he had access to in the first century was trustworthy. This work, which survived to our day against great odds, deals extensively with the fall of the angels. It was viewed favorably by some early "Christian" writers also (Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and others). However, it was never universally accepted as inspired Scripture. Below is a selection from the **Book of Enoch** which records the sin of angels:

1 ENOCH 6:1 And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto 2 them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another: 'Come, let us choose us wives from among the children of men 3 and beget us children.' And Semjaza, who was their leader, said unto them: 'I fear ye will not 4 indeed agree to do this deed, and I alone shall have to pay the penalty of a great sin.' And they all answered him and said: 'Let us all swear an oath, and all bind ourselves by mutual imprecations 5 not to abandon this plan but to do this thing.' Then swore they all together and bound themselves 6 by mutual imprecations upon it. And they were in all two hundred; who descended in the days of Jared on the summit of Mount Hermon . . . (From **The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament**, translated by R.H. Charles)

A similar passage is also found in the pseudepigraphic **Book of Jubilees**:

JUBILEES 5:1 And it came to pass when the children of men began to multiply on the face of the earth and daughters were born unto them, that the angels of God saw them on a certain year of this jubilee, that they were beautiful to look upon; and they took themselves wives of all whom they 2 chose, and they bare unto them sons and they were giants. And lawlessness increased on the earth and all flesh corrupted its way, alike men and cattle and beasts and birds and everything that walks on the earth - all of them corrupted their ways and their orders, and they began to devour each other, and lawlessness increased on the earth and every imagination of the thoughts of all men 3 (was) thus evil continually . . . (From **The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament**, translated by R.H. Charles)

The **Genesis Apocryphon**, one of the texts uncovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls, also contains references to the angels interbreeding with human women. In this text, a conversation between Lamech, the father of Noah, and his wife Bathenosh is detailed. Lamech questions his wife because he thinks that the conception of Noah was due to either an angel or one of their offspring, a **nephilim**. The **Book of Enoch**, the **Book of Jubilees**, and the **Genesis Apocryphon** all clearly show that the common understanding at the time of Christ was that the fallen host had committed fornication with women in the period before the flood.

# GENESIS 6 - WHO WERE "THE SONS OF GOD"?

As stated previously, many early Christian writers accepted the story told in Enoch as fact. Let's examine the writings of two of them, beginning with Justin Martyr, who lived from 110 C.E. to 165 C.E. Here is what he had to say in chapter 5 of his **Second Apology**, entitled "'How the Angels Transgressed":

God, when He had made the whole world, and subjected things earthly to man, and arranged the heavenly elements for the increase of fruits and rotation of the seasons, and appointed this divine law - for these things also He evidently made for man - committed the care of men and of all things under heaven to angels whom He appointed over them. But the angels transgressed this appointment, and were captivated by love of women, and begat children who are those that are called demons; and besides, they afterwards subdued the human race to themselves, partly by magical writings, and partly by fears and punishments they occasioned, and partly by teaching them to offer sacrifices, and incense, and libations, of which things they stood in need after they enslaved by lustful passions; and among men they sowed murders, wars, adulteries, intemperate needs, and all wickedness. . . . (p. 363, vol. 1, **The Ante-Nicene Fathers**)

Now let's examine chapter 3, "The Worship of Demons," from **The Instructions of Commodianus**, a North-African bishop who lived about 240 C.E.:

When Almighty God, to beautify the nature of the world, willed that that earth should be visited by angels, when they were sent down they despised His laws. Such was the beauty of women, that it turned them aside; so that, being contaminated, they could not return to heaven. Rebels from God, they uttered words against Him. Then the Highest uttered His judgment against them; and from their seed giants are said to have been born. By them arts were made known in the earth, and they taught the dyeing of wool, and everything which is done; and to them, when they died, men erected images. But the Almighty, because they were of an evil seed, did not approve that, when dead, they should be brought back from death. Whence wandering they now subvert many bodies, and it is such as these especially that ye this day worship and pray to as gods. (p. 435, vol. 4, **The Ante-Nicene Fathers**)

The idea that the **nephilim** or giants were the offspring of the fallen host and human females was not unique to Judaism. This understanding was likely behind the Greek, Roman, and Egyptian mythologies, as well as those of India and the near east. All these beliefs resulted not as mere inventions of fertile human imagination, but as a corruption of antediluvian truths which were distorted as their origin was forgotten over time.

Take, for example, the legend of the Titans. In Greek mythology, the Titans were a family of giant gods who were the offspring of Uranus (heaven) and Gaea (earth). The most famous of the Titans was Cronus, who killed his father. Cronus later led the Titans in their losing war against Zeus and the Olympian gods. After their defeat, the Titans were imprisoned in a section of the underworld called Tartarus.

In his second epistle, the apostle Peter uses part of this Greek myth to explain the fate of some of the fallen angels. He states that for their sins, these angels had been **tartarosas**, which **The NKJV Greek English Interlinear New Testament** translates literally as "confining *them* to Tartarus" (also known in the Bible as "the Abyss").

II PETER 2:4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but **cast them down to hell** [*tartarosas*] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; (**NKJV**)

This is the same Tartarus where Greek mythology says the Titans were imprisoned. It's highly unlikely that Peter would have used such an analogy if this pagan legend wasn't based on at least some grain of truth which his readers would have knowledge of. The idea that evil angels mated with human women and had offspring (the **nephilim**) appears far-fetched to us in this modern era, but it seems to have been widely accepted as fact in the ancient world.

# GENESIS 6 - WHO WERE "THE SONS OF GOD"?

As we've seen above, the word translated "giants" in Genesis 6:4 is *nephilim*. Let's look at what *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* has to say about the possible origins of this Hebrew word:

The etymology of *nephilim* is uncertain, the following explanations have been advanced with mixed reception. First, it may derive from the niph'al of the verb *pala*, meaning "be extraordinary," i.e., "extraordinary men." Second, it may be derived from the verb *napal*, "fall," in one of the following senses: (1) the "fallen ones" - from heaven, i.e., supernatural beings; (2) morally "fallen men"; (3) "those who fall upon," in the sense of invaders or hostile, violent men; (4) "those who fell by" the sword (cf. Ezk. 32:20f.); (5) "unnaturally begotten men" or bastards (from cf. *nepel*, "abortion" or miscarriage"). (pp. 518-519, vol. 3)

The Greek version of the Old Testament, the *Septuagint*, renders the Hebrew term *nephilim* as *gigantes*, which literally means "earth-born." This is often misunderstood to mean "giants" - which the *nephilim* apparently were also.

From the sources we've just examined, it's readily apparent that the general understanding of Genesis 6:1-4 at the time of Christ was that the angels had sinned by committing fornication with human women. But does the Bible support this theory?

First, let's look at all of the Old Testament references to "sons of God." This phrase is translated from the Hebrew *beney 'elohim* (??? ?????), *beney ha'elohim* (??? ??????) and *beney 'elim* (??? ?????):

GENESIS 6:1 When men began to increase on earth and daughters were born to them, 2 the **divine beings** [*beney ha'elohim*] saw how beautiful the daughters of men were and took wives from among those that pleased them. 3 The Lord said, "My breath shall not abide in man forever, since he too is flesh; let the days allowed him be one hundred and twenty years." 4 It was then, and later too, that the Nephilim appeared on earth when the **divine beings** [*beney ha'elohim*] cohabited with the daughters of men, who bore them offspring. They were the heroes of old, the men of renown. (*Tanakh*, the new Jewish Publication Society translation according to the traditional Hebrew text)

DEUTERONOMY 32:8 When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of men, he fixed the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the **sons of God** [*beney 'elohim*]. (*RSV*)

JOB 1:6 Now there was a day when the **sons of God** [*beney ha'elohim*] came to present themselves before the Lord and Satan also came among them. (*NKJV*)

JOB 2:1 Again there was a day when the **sons of God** [*beney ha'elohim*] came to present themselves before the Lord and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. (*NKJV*)

JOB 38:4 "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. 5 Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? 6 To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, 7 when the morning stars sang together, and all the **sons of God** [*beney 'elohim*] shouted for joy? (*NKJV*)

PSALM 29:1 O give the Lord you **sons of God** [*beney 'elim*], give the Lord glory and power; 2 give the Lord the glory of his name. Adore the Lord in his holy court. (*The Psalms: A New Translation*)

PSALM 89:5 The heavens proclaim your wonders, O Lord; the assembly of your holy ones proclaims your truth. 6 For who in **the skies** can compare with the Lord or who is like the Lord among the **sons of God** [*beney 'elim*]? (*The Psalms: A New Translation*)

As you can see, each reference above is to angels. There are no instances in the Old Testament where the phrase "sons of God" refers to men. Let's see what E.W. Bullinger has to say about these "sons of God" in Appendix 23 to *The Companion Bible*:

"The Sons of God" in Gen. 6.2, 4.

# GENESIS 6 - WHO WERE "THE SONS OF GOD"?

It is only by the Divine specific act of creation that any created being can be called "a son of God." For that which is "born of the flesh is flesh." God is spirit and that which is "born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3.6). Hence Adam is called a "son of God" in Luke 3.38. Those "in Christ" having the "new nature" which is by the direct creation of God (2 Cor. 5.17; Eph. 2.10) can be, and are called "sons of God" (John 1.13; Rom. 8.14, 15; 1 John 3.1).

This is why angels are called "sons of God" in every other place where the expression is used in the Old Testament. Job 1.6; 2.1; 38.7; Ps. 29.1; 89.6; Dan. 3.25 (no art.). We have no authority or right to take the expression in Gen. 6.4 in any other sense. Moreover in Gen. 6.2 the Sept. renders it "angels". (pp. 26, 27, **Companion Bible Appendixes**)

Now let's look at Genesis 6:9, which discusses Noah's genealogy. This Scripture is further proof that fallen angels had interbred with humans.

GENESIS 6:9 This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, **perfect** [*tamim*] in his generations. Noah walked with God. (**NKJV**)

In Genesis 6:9, the Hebrew word **tamim**, here translated "perfect," means "physically without blemish." As the first sentence makes clear, it's referring to the genealogy of Noah; it does not refer to moral perfection. Below is what Appendix 26 of **The Companion Bible** has to say about this word as used in verse 9 of Genesis 6:

The Heb. word *tamim* means *without blemish*, and is the technical word for bodily and physical perfection, and, not *moral*. Hence it is used of animals of *sacrificial purity*. It is rendered without blemish in Ex. 12.5; 29.1; Lev. 1.3, 10; 3.1, 6; 4.3, 23, 28, 32; 5.12, 18; 6.6; 9.2, 3; 14.10; 22.19; 23.12, 18; Num. 6.14; 28.19, 31; 29.2, 8, 13, 20, 23, 29, 32, 36; Ezek. 43.22, 23, 25; 45.18, 23; 46.4, 6, 13.

Without spot: Num. 19.2; 28.3, 9, 11; 29.17, 26.

Undeified: Ps. 119.1.

This shows that Gen. 6.9 does not speak of Noah's moral perfection . . . (p. 28, **Companion Bible Appendixes**)

Now let's examine what Jude said about the fallen angels in the New Testament:

JUDE 6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. 7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. (**KJV**)

Because of the punctuation of verse 7, this Scripture appears to say that Sodom and Gomorrah, **as well as** the cities around them, gave themselves over to sexual immorality. However, the underlying Greek text does not support this interpretation. Kenneth Wuest writes of verse 7:

This verse begins with *hos*, an adverb of comparison having meanings of "in the same manner as, after the fashion of, as, just as." Here it introduces a comparison showing a likeness between the angels of verse 6 and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha of this verse. But the likeness between them lies deeper than the fact that both were guilty of committing sin. It extends to the fact that both were guilty of the same identical sin. The punctuation of the A.V. [**KJV**] is misleading, as an examination of Greek text discloses.

# GENESIS 6 - WHO WERE "THE SONS OF GOD"?

The A.V. punctuation gives the reader the impression that Sodom and Gomorrha committed fornication and that the cities about them committed fornication in like manner to the two cities named. . . . The words "in like manner" are related to the verbal forms, "giving themselves over to fornication" and "going after strange flesh." In addition to all this, the Greek text has *toutois*, "to these." Thus, the translation should read, "just as Sodom and Gomorrha and the cities about them, in like manner to these, having given themselves over to fornication and having gone after strange flesh." The sense of the entire passage (vv.6, 7) is that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha and the cities about them, in like manner to these (the angels), have given themselves over to fornication and have gone after strange flesh. That means that the sin of the fallen angels was fornication. (pp. 241-242, vol. II, **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament**)

The underlying Greek text indicates that the fallen angels left their own domain and indulged in sexual immorality, going after "strange," or "other" flesh. The **KJV** obscures this fact, probably because the view that the fallen angels were "the sons of God" spoken of in Genesis 6:2, 4 was not accepted when it was translated in 1611. However, some translations do more clearly show the meaning of this passage. The **New English Bible** better presents what Jude was saying:

JUDE 6 Remember too the angels, how some of them were not content to keep the dominion given to them but abandoned their proper home; and God has reserved them for judgement on the great Day, bound beneath the darkness in everlasting chains. 7 Remember Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbouring towns; **like the angels, they committed fornication and followed unnatural lusts**; and they paid the penalty in eternal fire, an example for all to see. (**NEB**)

It's clear that Jude wrote of the fornication of the angels as a fact. In verse 7 of his epistle, he compares the sexual wickedness in Sodom, Gomorrah, and the surrounding cities to the sin of the angels.

The nature of the angels' fall is also clearly stated in Jude 6, where it is said that they left their own "abode" (Gr. **oiketerion**). This word occurs in the New Testament only here and in II Corinthians 5:2, where it is used of the spiritual body of a resurrected saint.

II CORINTHIANS 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our **habitation** [*oiketerion*] which is from heaven, (**NKJV**)

There is a great deal revealed in the Bible about angels. Angels could and did assume human form and even eat men's food (Gen. 18-19). Although the Bible doesn't tell us how, Jude 6 shows that some angels left their proper abode (their spiritual bodies) and took on fleshly bodies so as to marry and produce offspring by the daughters of men.

Although the angels committed sexual sins and corrupted the human lineage to some extent, they did something else that threatened to foil God's plan for humanity. Let's go back to 1 Enoch to see what these fallen angels did that affected the human race enormously:

1 ENOCH 8:1 And Azazel taught men to make swords, and knives, and shields, and breastplates, and made known to them the metals of the earth and the art of working them, and bracelets, and ornaments, and the use of antimony, and the beautifying of the eyelids, and all kinds of costly stones, and all 2 colouring tinctures. And there arose much godlessness, and they committed fornication, and they 3 were led astray, and became corrupt in all their ways. Semjaza taught enchantments, and root-cuttings, Armaros the resolving of enchantments, Baraqijal (taught) astrology, Kokabel the constellations, Ezeqeel the knowledge of the clouds, Araqiel the signs of the earth, Shamsiel the signs of the sun, and Sariel the course of the moon. And as men perished, they cried, and their cry

# GENESIS 6 - WHO WERE "THE SONS OF GOD"?

went up to heaven . . . (From *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, translated by R.H. Charles)

As the text above shows, the angels brought with them knowledge which humanity did not have beforehand. This information led to a rapid advance in the knowledge base of the antediluvian society, including the invention of advanced methods of waging warfare. In the **NKJV** translation of Genesis 6:4, the **nephilim** are called "mighty men who were of old, men of renown;" however, the **NRSV** translates that same phrase as "heroes that were of old, warriors of renown."

Genesis 6:11 shows that the earth was filled with violence; this is very likely the direct result of the **nephilim**, who apparently were mighty warriors. If the ancient legends are indeed based in fact, as they appear to be, these angelic offspring were superhuman in size and great in strength. There is also an indication from the ancient text known as the **Book of Jasher** that this corruption of bloodlines extended to the animals also.

JASHER 4:18 And their judges and rulers went to the daughters of men and took their wives by force from their husbands according to their choice, and the sons of men in those days took from the cattle of the earth, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and taught **the mixture of animals of one species with the other**, in order therewith to provoke the Lord; and God saw the whole earth and it was corrupt, for **all flesh had corrupted its ways upon earth, all men and all animals**. 19 And the Lord said, I will blot out man that I created from the face of the earth, yea from man to the birds of the air, together with cattle and beasts that are in the field . . . (From **The Book of Jasher**, published by J.H. Parry & Company, 1887)

The **Book of Jasher** is mentioned twice in the Bible (Jos. 10:13; II Sam. 1:18). While it's evident the copy of this book that has survived to our time has been corrupted to some extent, the Scriptures seem to confirm the information contained in this section of **Jasher**.

GENESIS 6:7 So the LORD said, "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." (**NKJV**)

It appears likely that the objectives of the Flood were the destruction of the polluted human and animal bloodlines and the eradication of the forbidden knowledge that humanity had learned from the fallen host.

There is one other New Testament passage which hints at the sin of the angels before the flood. It is an enigmatic scripture found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church.

I CORINTHIANS 11:7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. 8 For man is not from woman, but woman from man. 9 Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. 10 For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, **because of the angels**. (**NKJV**)

In I Corinthians 11, Paul states the position of women in relation to men and says that the symbol of authority on a woman's head is needed "because of the angels." Without an understanding of what took place anciently between the fallen host and women, this verse is cryptic at best.

There is opposition to the view that the fallen angels are the "sons of God" referred to in Genesis 6. Some cite Matthew 22:29-30 and Mark 12:24-25 as objections, saying that these Scriptures clearly teach that angels do not marry.

# GENESIS 6 - WHO WERE "THE SONS OF GOD"?

MATTHEW 22:29 Jesus answered and said to them [the Sadducees], "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven." (**NKJV**)

MARK 12:24 Jesus answered and said to them, "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God? 25 For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven." (**NKJV**)

First, these verses do not state whether angels can marry or procreate. Here Christ was referring only to the way things will be after the first resurrection of the dead. Additionally, the angels in heaven who did not sin are the example cited, not the angels confined to Tartarus because they sinned by marrying humans and producing offspring. To get a better perspective of what Christ was saying, let's look at the parallel account of this conversation in Luke's Gospel.

LUKE 20:34 And Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. 35 But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; 36 nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection." (**NKJV**)

Christ's primary purpose in his answer was to affirm the reality of the resurrection to these questioning Sadducees, who did not believe that there would be a resurrection. As you can clearly see from Luke's account of this confrontation, Christ is making two points about the age to come: (1) Resurrected humans will not marry, and (2) resurrected humans will be given eternal life, which the holy angels now have. Interpreting these Scriptures to mean that angels have never been able to marry or procreate reads more into them than was intended by Jesus.

Some also object by saying that Genesis 6:4 shows that there were **nephilim** on the earth **before** "the sons of God" came in to "the daughters of men" and also afterward; therefore, these giants cannot be the offspring of this union. Does the phrase "in those days, and also afterward" mean that the **nephilim** were present before the the sons of God cohabited with the daughters of men?

"In those days" plainly means the time after the "sons of God" had come down to earth; the fact that they had taken wives is disclosed in Genesis 6:2. In time sequence, chapter six of Genesis should follow chapter four; the fifth chapter is an inset into the story flow. "Afterward" specifies after the flood, when we see another instance of giants appearing, this time in the land of Canaan which the Israelites were to inherit (Num. 13:33). Satan once again tried to thwart God's plan by using these savage hybrids to occupy the land of Canaan and keep Abraham's offspring out. Obviously none of the **nephilim** survived the flood.

These giants are often mentioned in the early books of the Old Testament until the last of them were finally killed off. The word **nephilim** only appears twice in the Old Testament (Gen 6:4; Num. 13:33), but these giants are also referred to as **gibbor** (Gen 6:4; Num. 13:33; Job 16:14) and **rephaim** when they reappear in a more limited fashion after the flood (Gen. 14:5; 15:20; Deu. 2:11, 20; 3:11, 13; Jos. 12:4; 13:12; 15:8; 17:15; 18:16; II Sam. 5:18, 22; 21:16, 18, 20, 22; 23:13; I Chr. 11:15; 14:9; 20:4, 6, 8; Isa. 17:5; 26:14). They were known by the proper names of Rephaim, Emim, Anakim, and Zamzummim.

## CONCLUSION

As shown above, the evidence that "the sons of God" mentioned in Genesis 6 are fallen angels is substantial. By their sexual immorality, these angels produced offspring which were strong and violent. The concept of a race of giants which resulted from the union of gods and humans is virtually universal in the world's early civilizations.

# GENESIS 6 - WHO WERE "THE SONS OF GOD"?

The original intent of the angels may have only been to satisfy their forbidden lust. Yet the knowledge they brought with them and taught mankind caused society to develop at a more rapid technological pace than God had intended. This societal development was not positive, and it gave rise to a very violent society, one in which the **nephilim** apparently played a large role. God was forced to restrain in the Abyss the wicked angels that produced the **nephilim**, and cleanse the earth of them and the violence they brought with the great Flood.

Bryan T. Huie

December 26, 1996

*Updated: February 1, 2002*

The Sons Of God