



# THE RISE & FALL OF THE NEPHILIM

By Scott Alan Roberts

Somewhere in our darker past, before the days of modern psychological discipline and scientific advance, we believed that our life's fortunes, illnesses and woes were firmly rooted in the spiritual and the supernatural. As we evolved our technology and sciences, we dispensed with our reliance on the ethereal, casting aside our need for gods, devils and every cast of angel and demon in-between. Science and Skeptical Thought successfully supplanted Faith. Quantifiable fact became the surrogate for the misty stuff of myth and legend.

But what if the outmoded, outgrown, discarded spiritualities really do have their basis in some sort of fact? What if the superstitious banalities we brush aside in the broad swath of our skeptical hand, are truly the evidentiary stuff of things not seen; the substance of a very real universe that dwells and operates just below the surface of the visible, tangible world around us? What if there really are living, vibrant beings who dwell and function beyond this dimension, and that a seemingly endless list of angelic and demonic beings are not just the stuffs of ancient faiths, but very real creatures who live and have interaction with mankind since millennia past, despite quantifiable proof?

During my seminary days, one of my professors, Dr. Charles Aling – currently Chair of History at Northwestern College – told me, *“All myth and legend has at its historical headwaters, at least a kernel of truth based in cold, hard fact.”* Over the following twenty-five years, this idea became the mantric teat on which my spiritual philosophies suckled; the motivation to my personal study of biblical and historical mysteries.

**Noah and the Ark** was always a great Sunday school story told with puppets and felt storyboard dioramas. I was taught that God destroyed the entire antediluvian world by a universal flood that covered even the highest mountain peaks, as a result of the “wickedness of Mankind.” As I grew older, it became more and more difficult to wrap my brain around that – pardon the pun – *watered-down* account found in the book of Genesis, especially in light of the fact that other ancient African, Mesopotamian and far

eastern cultures had their own Noah-free versions of what seemed to be the very same ancient flood story. The common thread in the various flood accounts is that a massive, judgmental deluge ravaged the face of the known world as a result of “fallen angels” who impregnated human women, producing offspring. This made me look at the biblical account through very different eyes, and wondering why these features had been omitted from my Sunday school education. The notion that the Genesis flood was Jehovah’s wrath excised on the Earth as a direct result of the wickedness of mankind is a misinterpretation at worst, and a gross misunderstanding of the events, at best. The Genesis text clearly indicates that the watery judgment was directly linked to the intermingling between “*beings who descended from the heavens*” with human women, and the resultant hybrid race that was birthed by that intercourse. In the new testament, Jesus mentioned that angels “neither marry nor are given in marriage,” but the notion that they are sexless is pure political invention on the part of early church fathers.

For the sake of simplicity – and space – let’s look at the biblical text and parse it down to see what’s really contained in the passage:

***Genesis 6:1-4***

*1 When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, 2 the sons of God saw that these daughters were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. 3 Then the Lord said, “My Spirit will not contend with human beings forever, for they are mortal; their days will be a hundred and twenty years.” 4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days--and also afterward--when the sons of God went to the daughters of the human beings and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.*

***(Today’s New International Version)***

These four verses from Genesis Chapter Six appear in the preamble to the account of Noah’s flood. Noah’s name appears for the first time in the text in verse eight where it states that he “*found favor in the eyes of the Lord.*” These four verses comprise a very interesting passage in that it differs in writing style from the rest of the book of Genesis, having earmarks of having been extracted, edited and perhaps even plagiarized - at least in part - from other extant contemporary source material. Dr. David Penchansky, Professor of Theology at the University of St. Thomas, states:

*“This passage has been edited, either by the writer of Genesis, or by later scribes. It most certainly does not match the writing style of the rest of the book, and the language in which it is written is ‘choppy,’ almost as if it is reproduced in the text as snippets from other source material. And the account was, obviously, far too well-known at the time to be omitted completely.”*

## Who are the Sons of God?

In this passage we are told that the "Sons of God" looked upon human women (other translations refer to these women as: "the daughters of men/man; men's daughters; the beautiful women of the human race; and even, 'these girls'") and "saw that they were beautiful." In some translations, the Sons of God "lusted after them," and then "married or cohabited with any of them they chose." In still other translations "they took the ones they liked." The title, "Sons of God," has been viewed several ways, and various translations refer to them as, "God's Sons, heavenly beings, and Sons from the Heavens." It is clear to most biblical scholars that the title, "Sons of God," refers to angelic beings, and this is supported by other passages throughout the old and new testaments, as well as the apocryphal Book of Enoch, and various other historical texts. Even Jesus of Nazareth, himself, was called "The Son of God." Whoever these beings were, the text makes it clear that they were bequeathed by a god who had authority over them. Whether sons by birth, or sons by creative act, their point of origin is clear in all accounts – they came from the heavens and had some claim to being called the Sons of God. The following passage from the Book of Enoch - a book that was banned from the canonical scriptures by The Church, but is part of the Coptic Gospels and was quoted in the New Testament, (making it quite significant and, frankly, worthy of inclusion in the biblical canon) - introduces these Sons of God in a startlingly similar account to the Genesis 6:1-4 passage:

### **1 Enoch 7: 1-11**

*1 It happened after the sons of men had multiplied in those days, that daughters were born to them, elegant and beautiful. 2 And when the angels, the sons of heaven, beheld them, they became enamoured of them, saying to each other, 'Come, let us select for ourselves wives from the progeny of men, and let us beget children.' 3 Then their leader Shamyaza said to them; 'I fear that you may perhaps be indisposed to the performance of this enterprise;' 4 And that I alone shall suffer for so grievous a crime. 5 But they answered him and said; 'We all swear;' 6 'And bind ourselves by mutual execrations, that we will not change our intention, but execute our projected undertaking.' 7 Then they swore all together, and all bound themselves by mutual execrations. Their whole number was two hundred, who descended upon Ardis [during the days of Jared], which is the top of mount Armon [Mt. Herman in present day Israel]. 8 That mountain therefore was called Armon, because they had sworn upon it, and bound themselves by mutual execrations. 9 These are the names of their chiefs: Shamyaza, who was their leader, Urakabameel, Akibeel, Tamiel, Ramuel, Danel, Azkeel, Saraknyal, Asael, Armers, Batraal, Anane, Zavebe, Samsaveel, Ertael, Turel, Yomyael, Arazyal. These were the prefects of the two hundred angels, and the remainder were all with them. 10 Then they took wives, each choosing for himself; whom they began to approach, and with whom they*

*cohabited; teaching them sorcery, incantations, and the dividing of roots and trees. 11  
And the women conceiving brought forth giants.*

According to Enoch, the Sons of God were angelic beings who descended (fell down) to the earthly realm, and atop Mt. Herman, made a pact to produce offspring with human women. To ascribe malevolence to these beings would not be wholly accurate, but Enoch's book does intimate that should they carry out their plan, they were in fear of being held responsible for enacting a "sinful" deed in the eyes of God. Enoch goes on to tell of the attributes they brought down with them to the human race: enchantments, the making of weaponry, meteorology, astrology, astronomy, interpretations of moon phases, herbology and the signs of the sun, stars and moon. With these angelic-taught skills, mankind delved to the lowest common denominator by developing the art of warfare, and pursued wickedness to the point of stirring up Jehovah's wrath. And the Sons of God were, indeed, held to blame, Shemjaza, their leader, and Azazel – who introduced weapons and warfare to mankind - being "scapegoated" as the main culprits.

And then there was their "giant" offspring.

According to scripture, the spawn of the Sons of God and human women were the Nephilim, but I do not believe the term is solely attributable to the offspring only. The Sons of God who descended from the heavens, were also known as the Nephilim once they took up residence in the earthly realm. So they AND their offspring together became known as *The Nephilim*. It's the very same scenario you have when an Irish family comes to America. Their emigrating act has given them the new title of "Americans," subsequently, they and their offspring become known by both titles: Irish and American, possessing a dual identity. But the children born to them in America bear the stronger title.

The writers of the 1611 King James Bible indirectly translated the word Nephilim as "giants," yet the preferred scholarly translation is "*fallen ones*." While there are many scholarly views on the identity of the Nephilim, it would take an entire book to explore the different Hebrew and Aramaic root words that comprise the term. Then you would have to take into consideration their context both textually and in the social interpretation of the day.

The root Hebrew word for Nephilim is the verb *nephal*, meaning: 1) to fall (to the ground); 2) to fall (in battle); 3) to be cast down; 4) to desert a location; 5) to fail. The "*im*" denotes plurality, giving us the "*fallen down ones*," or the "*ones who descended*."

The Nephilim can best be defined as: A race of beings who descended – or "fell" – to the earth, abandoning their existence and habitation in the "heavenly (not of this world)

realms." They were angelic in origin, birthed by God, and they brought to the human inhabitants of the earth special skills, as well as an unearthly libido. Their offspring bore the same title of Nephilim, and the propagation of their mixed race on the earth led to the "Judgment of God" in the form of a cataclysmic flood as described in Genesis and other ancient accounts. That judgment was meant to wipe out the race, but as the passage indicates, "...the Nephilim were on the earth in those days – *and also afterward...*" So the judgment seems to have been somewhat ineffectual, in the long term.

The Book of Enoch states that these beings descended to the earth during "the days of Jared," the father of Enoch, whose name means, literally, "Descent." He was re-named thus because the descent of the Sons of God to the earth took place during his lifetime.

It is interesting at this point, to note that both Jared and Enoch are also mentioned in the bible. *Genesis 5:18-24 says:*

*18 When Jared was 162 years old, his son Enoch was born. 19 After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 20 He died at the age of 962. 21 When Enoch was 65 years old, his son Methuselah was born. 22 After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived another 300 years in close fellowship with God, and he had other sons and daughters. 23 Enoch lived 365 years in all. 24 He enjoyed a close relationship with God throughout his life. Then suddenly, he disappeared because God took him.*

*(New Living Translation)*

**Cultural traditions from all around the world** have myths and legends telling of angelic beings descending to the earth and interacting with human beings, ushering in some sort of cataclysmic, world-wide destruction of humanity that left scant, few survivors. When analysis of the languages used in the various accounts is compared, blatantly similar facts emerge, revealing a commonality between the varied cultural tales, substantiating a corporate mythos: *flesh and blood beings who were revered as gods, interacted with humanity in the most intimate of ways.* Can these things be quantified by the Scientific Method? Does this establish any sort of verifiable proof of a crossover between inter-dimensional races? I believe yes. While the data is not repeatable for experimentation, the historical annals speak loudly and clearly. When there exists such localized myths in geographical regions, repeated by other localized myths in far away geographical regions, over and over again, there is a certain scientific methodology at play. There is a message revealed. It is my belief that this it is a subject of great importance in understanding our past, both historically and spiritually. There was a time where history leapt the established boundaries and intermingled with the spiritual,

and if we look hard enough, and dig deep enough, we can find the wonderfully exciting buried treasure of discovery.

In light of the earlier mentioned verse in the Genesis passage that states the Nephilim were also on the earth "*afterward*," there is an incredibly revealing verse found in the New Testament book of Hebrews. It is an engagingly mystical, yet somehow frighteningly admonishing passage in light of all we have explored above...

***Hebrews 13:2***

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*Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for in doing so, some have entertained angels without knowing it.*

*Scott Alan Roberts is the author of "The Rise and Fall of the Nephilim",  
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