

What in the World are Nephilim? And Why are they in the Bible?

1. Read Genesis 6:1-4 and Numbers 13:33. What do these 2 verses tell us about the Nephilim compared to ordinary people. What words are used to describe them? What did they probably look like, what did they do, were they popular?
2. The Hebrew word for Nephilim is **nephil** which can mean *bully* or *tyrant* or *giant* or *fallen ones*.

The Hebrew phrase for “daughters of man” is **bat (daughters) adam (created humans)** and the Hebrew phrase for “sons of God” is **ben (sons) Elohim (gods)**.

Whenever we find the English word “God” used in the Old Testament, it is a translation of this Hebrew word Elohim. The word seems to contain the idea of strength and power. The word is used in the first verse of the Bible (Genesis 1:1). **The noun Elohim is plural** but it is always used with a singular verb when it speaks of the true God. This indicates a unity and diversity within the nature of God (the trinity).

The word Elohim is also used in the Bible to describe false god (Exodus 20:23).

The word Elohim is also used of angels (Psalm 8:6)

On some occasions, Elohim refers to human beings (Psalm 82:6). However, in this instance it is referring to their elevated position of authority in relation to being “children of the Most High God”

3. Do you think Genesis 6:1-4 is referring to sons of the true God, or fallen angels or some sort of extra-ordinary humans? Explain why you believe this. (Don’t worry about having the “right” answer. There are well-respected Christian theologians who hold each of these different views).
4. Compare 2 different commentaries on this verse (Genesis 6:4).

The Hebrew word translated "giants" is nephilim, which literally means "fallen ones." These "fallen ones" are the legendary figures spoken of in many cultures—the giants. Where did these giants come from? There are two schools of thought. Some suggest that the term, "daughters of men," refers to the descendants of Cain. But because a union of the ungodly daughters of Cain and the godly sons of Seth would not inherently produce giants, others—myself included—believe their origin is due to something else.

The phrase "sons of God" is benai elohim. Every time "benai elohim" appears in the Old Testament, it is in reference to angels. Angels are divided into two groups: the exalted angels around the throne of God who do the work of the Lord, and fallen angels, or demons. Lucifer was an exalted angel who led a rebellion against the Lord in heaven. When he fell and became the devil, Revelation tells us one-third of the angelic host joined his rebellion and became demons. I believe it is to these demons that [Genesis 6:4](#) refers. Some of these demons, evidently, had sexual

relations with human women, resulting in nephilim—giants, legendary men, men of renown. That is why every culture contains stories of giants similar to those found in Greek mythology and Roman folklore.

The best explanation for these nephilim, however, isn't found in mythology or folklore, but in the Word. We know that certain demons are held in prison ([1 Peter 3:19](#)) because their deeds were so diabolically dark. I believe the demons who "left their own habitation" ([Jude 6](#)), are the "benai elohim" through whom Satan futilely attempted to pollute the seed of woman to such a degree that the promise of [Genesis 3:15](#) would be thwarted. (Jon Courson)

Vs.

The descendants of Cain had long since forsaken the Lord and His worship and lived according to the lusts of their mind. But in the course of time this corruption spread also to the families of the pious, to the sons of God, to the believers, showing itself first of all in a laxity of morals. In fifteen centuries a most remarkable increase of the human family took place, and it became increasingly difficult to maintain the discipline which the Lord desired. The men belonging to the tribe of Seth permitted carnal considerations to influence them in the choice of their wives. The daughters of men, those that lived only for this world and made the enjoyment of all that this world offers their end and goal, very naturally made the development of mere physical beauty their aim. This beauty proved the snare which captivated the sons of God, the men from the generation of believers. They took wives to themselves of all that they chose, no longer as pious helpmates in a marriage in chastity and honor, but for the mere gratification of their sensual desires. Thus the corruption of the descendants of Cain was brought into the Church of God before the Flood.

Lawless men, tyrants there were on the earth in those days, offspring of marriages that did not meet with God's approval, children of wild passion, men that defied order and authority and became mighty men, whose names were mentioned with bated breath as those of unparalleled champions and heroes. The whole earth was full of outrage and violence.

Popular Commentary of the Bible, The - Old Testament, Volume 1.

What are your thoughts? Do you agree or disagree?

5. Read Genesis 6:5-7. How did God feel about the Nephilim and the actions that led to their birth?
6. Read Genesis 6:8,9. How do you think Noah was able to remain righteous during this wicked time? What hope does that give you?
7. Read Matthew 24:37. How will we know when the return of Christ is getting close?

8. Read Jude 1:4-7. In what ways do false teachers act similar to the “angels who did not stay within the limits of God’s authority”? What is the message they preach (verse 4)? What is the sin that is apparent in their lives and how is it similar to the days of Noah?
9. What does Jude 1:14,15 say will happen to these wicked people? And how does this verse help us better understand Genesis 6.
10. Why on earth do you think God put these short confusing verses in the Bible? What lessons can we take away from these passages about God? About ordinary people? About those with worldly renown and fame? About bullies and tyrants and giants? About wickedness? About God’s children?