

"The Sons of God" in Genesis

6:2, 4

(Appendix 23 of the Companion Bible)

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 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). (The word "offspring" in Acts 17:28 is quite different. It is *genoς* (*genos*), which means merely kin or kind, our genus as being originated by God.)

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, Psa. 29:1, 89:6, Dan. 3:25 (no article)). We have no authority or right to take the expression in Gen. 6:2, 4 in any other sense. Moreover, in Gen. 6:2 the Septuagint renders it "*angels*".

Angels are called "*spirits*" (Psa. 104:4, Heb. 1:7, 14), for spirits are created by God.

That there was a fall of the angels is certain from Jude 6.

The nature of their fall is clearly stated in the same verse. They left their own *oikhthrion* (*oiktērēion*). This word occurs only in 2 Cor. 5:2 and Jude 6, where it is used of the spiritual (or resurrection) body.

The nature if their sin is stated to be "*in like manner*" to that of the subsequent sins of Sodom and Gomorrha, Jude 7.

The time of their fall is given as having taken place "*in the days of Noah*" (1 Pet. 3:20, 2 Pet. 2:4-5), though there may have been a prior fall which caused the end of "*the world that then was*" (Gen. 1:1, 2, 2 Pet. 3:6).

For this sin they are "*reserved unto judgement*", 2 Pet. 2:4, and are "*in prison*", 1 Pet. 3:19.

Their progeny, called *nephilim* (translated "giants"), were monsters of iniquity; and, being superhuman in size and character, had to be destroyed. This was the one and only object of the Flood.

Only Noah and his family had preserved their pedigree pure from Adam (Gen. 6:9). All the rest had become "*corrupt*" (*shāchath*) destroyed [as Adamites]. The only remedy was to destroy it (*de facto*), as it had become destroyed (*de jure*). (It is the same word in v. 17 as in vv. 11, 12.) See further under Ap. 25 on the Nephilim.

This irruption of fallen angels was Satan's first attempt to prevent the coming of the *Seed of the woman* foretold in Gen. 3:15. If this could be accomplished, God's Word would have failed, and his own doom would be averted.

As soon as it was made known that the *Seed of the woman* was to come through Abraham, there must have been another irruption, as recorded in Gen. 6:4, "*and also after that*" (i.e. after the days of Noah, more than 500 years after the first irruption). The aim of the enemy was to occupy Canaan in advance of Abraham, and so to contest its occupation by his seed. For, when Abraham entered Canaan, we read (Gen. 12:6) "*the Canaanite was then* (i.e. already) *in the land*."

In the same chapter (Gen. 12:10-20) we see Satan's next attempt to interfere with Abraham's seed, and frustrate the purpose of God that it should be in "Isaac". This attempt was repeated in 20:1-18.

This great conflict may be seen throughout the Bible, and it forms a great and important subject of Biblical study. In each case the human instrument had his own personal interest to serve, while Satan had his own great object in view. Hence God had, in each case, to interfere and avert the evil and the danger, of which His servants and people were wholly ignorant. The following assaults of the great Enemy stand out prominently:

The destruction of the chosen family by famine, Gen. 50:20.

The destruction of the male line in Israel, Ex. 1:10, 15, &c. Cp. Ex. 2:5, Heb. 11:23.

After David's line was singled out (2 Sam. 7), that was the next selected for assault. Satan's first assault was in the union of Jehoram and Athaliah by Jehoshaphat, notwithstanding 2 Chron. 17:1. Jehoram killed off all his brothers (2 Chron. 21:4).

The Arabians slew all his children, except Ahaziah (2 Chron. 21:17, 22:1).

When Ahaziah died, Athalia killed "*all the seed royal*" (2 Chron. 22:10). The babe Joash alone was rescued; and, for six years, the faithfulness of Yahoveh's word was at stake (2 Chron. 23:3).

Hezekiah was childless, when a double assault was made by the King of Assyria and the King of Terrors (Isa. 36:1, 38:1). God's faithfulness was appealed to and relied on (Psa. 136).

In Captivity, Haman was used to attempt the destruction of the whole nation (Est. 3:6, 12, 13. Cp. 6:1).

Joseph's fear was worked on (Matt. 1:18-20). Notwithstanding the fact that he was "*a just man*", and kept the Law, he did not wish to have Mary stoned to death (Deut. 24:1); hence Joseph determined to divorce her. But God intervened: "*Fear not*".

Herod sought the young Child's life (Matt. 2).

At the Temptation, "*Cast Thyself down*" was Satan's temptation.

At Nazareth, again (Luke 4), there was another attempt to cast Him down and destroy Him.

The two storms on the Lake were other attempts.

At length the cross was reached, and the sepulchre closed; the watch set; and the stone sealed. But "God raised Him from the dead." And now, like another Joash, He is seated and expecting (Heb. 10:12, 13), hidden in the house of God on high; and the members of "*the one body*" are hidden there "*in Him*" (Col. 3:1-3), like another Jehoshaba; and going forth to witness of His coming, like another Jehoiada (2 Chron. 23:3).

The irruption of "*the fallen angels*" ("*sons of God*") was the first attempt; and was directed against the whole human race.

When Abraham was called, then he and his seed were attacked.

When David was enthroned, then the royal line was assailed.

And when "*the Seed of the woman*" Himself came, then the storm burst upon Him.

The **NEPHILIM**, or "Giants" of Genesis 6 &c.

(APPENDIX 25 of the COMPANION BIBLE)

The progeny of the fallen angels with the daughters of Adam are called in Genesis 6, *Nephilim*, which means fallen ones (from *naphal*, to fall). What these beings were can be gathered only from Scripture. They were evidently great in size, as well as in wickedness. They were superhuman, abnormal beings; and their destruction was necessary for the preservation of the human race and for the faithfulness of Yahoveh's Word (Gen 3:15).

This is why the flood was brought "*upon the world of the ungodly*" (2 Pet 2:5) as prophesied by Enoch (Jude 14).

But we read of the Nephilim again in Numbers 13:33: "*there we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak, which come of the Nephilim*". How, it may be asked, could this be, if they were all destroyed in the flood? The answer is contained in Gen. 6:4, where we read: "*There were Nephilim in the earth in the earth in those days* (i.e. in the days of Noah); *and also AFTER THAT, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of Adam, and they bare children unto them, the same became [the] mighty men* (Heb. *gibbor*, the heroes) *which were of old, men of renown*" (lit. *men of the name*, i.e. who got a name and were renown for their ungodliness).

So that "*after that*", i.e. after the flood, there was a second irruption of these fallen angels, evidently smaller in number and more limited in area, for they were for the most part confined to Canaan, and were in fact known as "*the nations of Canaan*". It was for the destruction of these, that the sword of Israel was necessary, as the flood had been before.

As to the date of this second irruption, it was evidently soon after it became known that the seed was to come through Abraham; for when he came out from Haran (Gen. 12:60 and entered Canaan, the significant fact is stated: “*The Cananite was then (i.e. already) in the land*”. And in Gen. 14:5 they were already known as “*Rephaim*” and “*Emim*”, and had established themselves at *Ashteroth Karnaim* and *Shaveh Kiriathaim*.

In ch. 15:18-24 they are enumerated and named among the Canaanite peoples; “*Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, and the Amorites, and the Gergashites, and the Jebusites*” (Gen. 15:19-21; cp. Ex. 3:8, 17; 23:23; Deut. 7; 20:17; Josh. 12:8).

These were to be cut off, and driven out, and utterly destroyed (Deut. 20:17; Josh. 3:10). But Israel failed in this (Josh. 13:13; 15:63; 16:10; 17:18; Judg. 1:19-20, 28-36; 2:1-5; 3:1-7); and we know not how many got away to other countries to escape the general destruction. If this were recognized it would go far to solve many problems connected with anthropology.

As to their other names, they were called *Anakim*, from one Anak which came of the *Nephilim* (Num. 13:23), and *Rephaim*, from *Rapha*, another notable one among them.

From Deut. 2:10, they were known by some as *Emim*, and *Horim*, and *Zamzummim* (v. 20-21) and *Avim*, &c.

As *Rephaim* they were well known, and are often mentioned: but, unfortunately, instead of this, their proper name, being preserved, it is variously translated as “dead”, “deceased”, or “giants”. These *Rephaim* are to have no resurrection. This fact is stated in Isa. 26:14 (where the proper name is rendered “deceased”, and v. 19, where it is rendered “*the dead*”). It is rendered “deceased” in Isa. 26:14.

It is retained as a proper name “*Rephaim*” ten times (two being in the margin). Gen. 14:5; 15:20; Josh. 12:15 (marg.). 2 Sam 5:18, 22; 23:13; 1 Chron. 11:15; 14:9; 20:4 (marg.). Isa. 17:5.

In all other places it is rendered “giants”, Gen. 6:4, Num. 13:33;, where it is *Nephilim*; and Job 16:14, where it is *gibbor*.

By reading all these passages the Bible student may know all that can be known about these beings.

It is certain that the second irruption took place before Gen. 14, for there the *Rephaim* were mixed up with five nations or people, which included Sodom and Gomorrah, and were defeated by the four kings under Chedorlaomer. Their principal locality was evidently “*Ashtaroth Karnaim*”; while the *Emim* were in the plain of Kiriathaim (Gen. 14:5).

Anak was a noted descendent of the *Nephilim*; and Rapha was another, giving their names respectively to different clans. Anak’s father was Arba, the original builder of Hebron (Gen. 35:27, Josh. 15:13; 21:11); and this Palestine branch of the Anakim was not called Arbahim after

him, but Anakim after Anak. They were great, mighty, and tall (Deut 2:10-11, 21-23; 9:2), evidently inspiring the ten spies with great fear (Num. 13:33). Og king of Bashan is described in Deut. 3:11.

Their strength is seen in “the giant cities of Bashan” today; and we know not how far they may have been utilized by Egypt in the construction of buildings, which is still an unsolved problem.

Arba was rebuilt by the Khabiri or confederates seven years before Zoan was built by the Egyptian Pharaohs of the nineteenth dynasty. See note on Num. 13:22 (if you have a Companion Bible).

If these *Nephilim*, and their branch of *Rephaim*, were associated with Egypt, we have an explanation of the problem which has for ages perplexed all engineers, as to how those huge stones and monuments were brought together. Why not in Egypt as well as in “the giant cities of Bashan” which exist, as such, to this day?

Moreover, we have in these mighty men, the “*men of renown*”, the explanation of the origin of the Greek mythology. That mythology was no mere invention of the human brain, but it grew out of the traditions, and memories, and legends of the doings of that mighty race of beings; and was gradually evolved out of the “heroes” of Gen. 6:4. The fact that they were supernatural in their origin formed an easy step to their being regarded as the demigods of the Greeks.

Thus the Babylonian “Creation Tablets”, the Egyptian “Book of the Dead”, the Greek mythology, and heathen Cosmogonies, which by some are set on an equality with Scripture, or by others adduced in support of it, are all the corruption and perversion of primitive truths, distorted in proportion as their origin was forgotten, and their memories faded away.