

# The Nephilim and The Sons of God

Unfortunately this subject is a source of much confusion and has become in some circles a bone of contention that fuels many fruitless arguments. Initially for my own satisfaction, I decided to do a thorough exegesis on this subject so that in my own mind I could put the matter to rest. What I discovered I believe will settle the matter for you too, so without further ado, grab your Bible and a pen for notes and let us get straight into the study.

These two terms, Nephilim and Sons of God, are only ever found together in one place in the Bible and that is in this passage from Genesis Chapter Six:

Genesis 6:1-4 RSV

When men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, **2 the sons of God** saw that the daughters of men were fair; and they took to wife such of them as they chose. **3** Then the Lord said, "My spirit shall not abide in man for ever, for he is flesh, but his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." **4 The Nephilim were 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. These were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown.

However, although not joined with the phrase 'sons of God', the term Nephilim is also found in Numbers Chapter Thirteen giving us both a pre-flood and a post-flood reference:

Numbers 13:30-33 RSV

But Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once, and occupy it; for we are well able to overcome it." **31** Then the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we." **32** So they brought to the people of Israel an evil report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people that we saw in it are **men of great stature**. **33 And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim)**; and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them."

Whilst the majority of popular Bibles (over 60%) use the word Nephilim, about 28% render the word as giants and a few use various other words such as: fallen ones, great warriors, supernatural beings and the like. Here we have the King James Version and the NKJV:

Genesis 6:4 KJV

There were **giants** in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the **sons of God** came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

Genesis 6:4 NKJV

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.

Numbers 13:33 KJV

And there we saw the **giants**, the sons of Anak, which come of the **giants**: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

Numbers 13:33 NKJV

There we saw the **giants** (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”

The centre column reference of the NKJV reads: Heb. *nephilim*, *fallen or mighty ones*. So whilst the editors of the NKJV chose the word ‘giants’ in the text, they at least acknowledged the variations of other translators that they were aware of.

The debate in the Christian Community regarding the identity of the Nephilim and the Sons of God has resulted in four basic viewpoints that look to the Bible for support for their opinion:

Viewpoint 1. The sons of God are fallen angels that bred with women and their offspring resulted in giants that have been called Nephilim.

Viewpoint 2. The sons of God are children of Adam and Eve who were born before the fall who later sinned when they took the daughters of men as wives. Their children became mighty men of renown who may have been giants that were called Nephilim.

Viewpoint 3. The sons of God are descendants of Adam's son Seth who were the godly line. They married the unbelieving daughters of men and their offspring who may have been giants that were called Nephilim.

Viewpoint 4. The sons of God are descendants of Adam and Eve who began to call upon the Name of the Lord after the birth of Adam's grandson, Enosh. They married the daughters of men and produced mighty men of renown who may have been giants that were known as Nephilim.

The first of these viewpoints is known as the Fallen Angel Hypothesis and the other three are known collectively as variations of the Fallen Man Hypothesis. The foundations of both the Fallen Angel and the Fallen Man theories are dependent upon one's understanding of the meaning of the two terms featured in the title of this article: The Nephilim and the Sons of God.

We will first ‘go deep’ into the etymology and meaning of the Hebrew word that is rendered Nephilim. To begin with, Nephilim is not a translation, but is a transliteration. They just spelt the sound of the Hebrew word with English letters, perhaps an acknowledgement of the fact that they did not know the meaning of the word; or an attempt to protect an erroneous theory; or a fear of proclaiming a truth that at the time did not have majority support. Speculations on motivations aside, we shall see what we shall see.

As mentioned above, the editors of the NKJV acknowledge at least three possible meanings: giants, fallen ones and mighty ones. The Hebrew word *Nephilim* is the plural of the Hebrew word *nephil*: Strong's 5303 (nef-eel'); from *naphal*; properly, a feller, i.e. A bully or tyrant -- giant. We shall look at the English word ‘feller’ first. BTW, a feller is not to be equated with a fellow.

I have an old English dictionary in my possession that includes the following under the words ‘fell’ and ‘feller’. The Concise English Dictionary 1907:

Fell: To cause to fall; to bring to the ground, either by cutting or by striking; to hew down; to knock down.—Feller, *n* One who fells or knocks or hews down.

An example of the most common usage in English would be a tree feller, one who cuts down trees. He is not a fallen one. Rather he causes trees to fall. Also in English, a not so common usage would be to describe one who came under attack as in the sentence: He fell among thieves.

The following are examples where the word *naphal* and the related word *nephil* are used in the Bible.

Jeremiah 46:16

He made many fall; Yes, one **fell** upon another. And they said, ‘Arise! Let us go back to our own people and to the land of our nativity from the oppressing sword.

In this example from Jeremiah, ‘fall’ is from Hebrew *kashal* which can mean stumble or totter, but the causative ‘fell’ comes from the word *naphal*. One ‘attacked’ the other.

Job 1:15 NKJV

... when the Sabeans **raided** them and took them away—indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!”

Job 1:15 Raided: literally “fell upon”; Hebrew *naphal*; ‘raided’ can also be rendered ‘attacked’.

Some consider this way of using the word *naphal* as rare, however, it is no rarer than the word *Nephilim*. The following list from the NAS Exhaustive Concordance gives as some idea of the many uses of this word *naphal*:

abandon (1), allot (1), allotted (2), anyone falls (1), apportioned (2), attacked (2), born (1), bring down (1), burst (1), came down (1), cast (16), cast down (5), casts (1), collapse (1), come (3), dash down (1), defect (1), defected (3), deserted (3), deserters (3), did (1), dismounted (1), divide by lot (2), divide it by lot (1), downfall (1), dropped (1), fail (1), failed (4), fall (130), fall down (4), fallen (55), fallen away (1), fallen down (4), falling (3), falling down (2), falls (22), falls away (1), fell (98), fell down (8), felled (1), felling (1), give birth (1), go over (1), going over (2), gone over (3), inferior (2), killed (1), knocks (1), lay (1), lay down (1), lay flat (1), lie down (1), look (1), lost (2), lying (5), making (1), perish (1), present (1), presenting (3), prostrating (1), remains (1), settled (1), surely fall (1), throw (2), topple (1), turns (1), void (1), waste away (3)

It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word *naphal*, is never associated with any connotation of committing sin or transgression from the Law, even though some of the actions may involve sin, as in killed or attacked. The most common usage is shared between ‘fell’, and ‘fallen’ or derivatives thereof, and twice it used for attacked. However, a continued investigation reveals that ‘fall’ or ‘fell’ is used metaphorically nearly a hundred times to describe violent death: they fell by the sword, by spears, by calamity etc. Here is but a few scripture references of how the root word *naphal*, often in compound words is translated into English as ‘fall’ and it appears that despite what some may say, the idea of attacked being meant is far from rare.

Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon

*Naphal* 2. a. Especially of violent death (c. 96 t.), Judges 5:27 (3 t. in verse) 1 Samuel 4:10; 1 Samuel 14:13; 2 Samuel 11:17; 2 Samuel 21:9; 1 Kings 22:20 2 Chronicles 18:9; 2 Samuel 1:4; 2 Samuel 2:23 (twice in verse); fall pierced (fatally) Judges 9:40; 1 Samuel 17:52; 1 Samuel 31:1 1 Chronicles 10:1 Ezekiel 35:8; compare Ezekiel 32:20; Isaiah 10:4; corpses fall Jeremiah 9:21; Numbers 14:29, Numbers 14:32; by the sword, Amos 7:17; Hosea 7:16; Hosea 14:1; Isaiah 3:25; 2 Samuel 1:12; Ezekiel 5:12; Ezekiel 6:11; Numbers 14:3,43; Joshua 8:24; Judges 4:16; by the hand of 2 Samuel 21:22; 2 Samuel 24:14 (twice in verse) 1 Chronicles 21:13 (twice in verse); 1 Chronicles 5:10; 1 Chronicles 20:8; fall under my feet 2 Samuel 22:39.

Many of these references translate *naphal* to the English word ‘fall’ when the context means ‘fell dead’, died, or were killed.

To use ‘fall’ as we commonly do in the phrase: ‘the fall of man’ to describe the transgression of Adam is simply not found anywhere in the Bible. Men sin, men transgress, men disobey and fail to believe but to say man fell into sin is definitely not a biblical term, even though we use it in modern language to describe what happened. So how does this give rise to the idea of fallen angels for it is evident that the Hebrew word is never used in that manner?

And then there’s the confusion over who has fallen. If the Nephilim are the children of the fallen angels, how are the Nephilim the fallen ones? Are not the sons of God supposed to be the fallen angels? Let’s press on toward some answers.

As we have already noted, although there are rare occasions where *naphal* is rendered ‘attacked’, to

fell or to fall is often used metaphorically of violent attack and almost always to do with fall or falling when used literally. So then, why do many English Bibles render the Hebrew word as 'giants' when the majority prefer to avoid translating and use the transliteration *Nephilim*? Could it be that the primary meaning of *Nephilim* is not 'giants'? And maybe *Nephilim* is not 'fallen ones' either? Let's go giant hunting and find some more details.

Various translators have rendered four other Hebrew words by the English word giant or giants: *Anakim*, *Rephaim*, *Emim*, and *Zamzumim*. The word *nephilim* is mentioned once in Genesis (pre-flood) and twice in one verse in Numbers (post-flood). All the rest of these words are used in post-flood references.

*Rephaim*, *Emim*, and *Zamzumim* are found mentioned together in Genesis 14:5. The *Rephaim* are mentioned again in Genesis 15:20 as one of the tribes dwelling in the Promised Land that were to be later dispossessed. *Rephaim* is also found in Joshua 17:15 where it is translated giants in about 15% of English Bibles, probably because Deuteronomy 3:11 mentions Og, king of Bashan, who was the last of the *Rephaim* and whose bed was 9 cubits. That's about 14 feet, which is well over four metres. I guess that qualifies him to be a giant, unless he just liked an oversized bed. The *Anakim*, the descendants of Anak were also identified as giants being of great stature (Numbers 13:33). *Emim* were identified as giants (*Rephaim*) like the *Anakim* (Deuteronomy 2:10-11).

As we continue to explore whether it makes sense to translate *Nephilim* into the English word giant, we note that in Strong's, one of the terms for *Nephilim* is giants. But where did Strong's get that meaning from? Strong's is only a concordance that records what the translators have done originally with the King James Bible. If we go back to the Latin Vulgate, we find that Jerome translated the word *Nephilim* as *gigantes* from which we get our English word giants. For this there is plausible contextual support from the context of Numbers 13, but nothing at all to give any indication that *Nephilim* actually means giants in Genesis 6. It is highly likely that Jerome in his Latin Vulgate was influenced by the Greek Septuagint translation (300-200BC) rendering of *Nephilim* as *gigantes*.

In Numbers 13 we find the descendants of Anak, who were noted to be 'of great stature' and that they came from the *Nephilim*. Yet Goliath and his brothers were giants and were not identified as *Nephilim*. In fact, the most common term for giant or giants is *Rephaim*.

As mentioned above, the root word *naphal* and Strong's meaning of *nephil* lead us to consider that the word *Nephilim* is better translated tyrant, or fearsome warrior, or one who attacks, and although they may have been extra tall, the meaning from the context of Numbers 13 and the context of Genesis 6 reveals they were simply men to be afraid of, mighty men (which means men of might), men of renown. So whilst they **may** have been giants, their real identity was their tendency to terrorise. After all, evil men who are extra tall will no doubt be extra mean and nasty tyrants.

Supporters of the idea that *Nephilim* refers exclusively to giants find it difficult to prove their case from the Word of God. Therefore, many of them look to the Book of Enoch and the Book of Giants which both speak directly on this matter. The only complete manuscript of the Book of Enoch was originally written in Ge'ez, the language of the Ethiopians with later copies in Aramaic, whilst the Book of Giants was written originally in what is thought to be Eastern Aramaic (Persia) and all that remains are a number of fragments found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Although there are claims that these books were written originally in Hebrew, to this day no evidence has ever been found to support the idea.

That aside, let's look at a couple of translations of the portion of the Book of Enoch where giants are mentioned. Here we have the Richard Laurence translation Chapter 7:11-14 which reads as follows:

*11 And the women conceiving brought forth giants, 12 Whose stature was each **three hundred cubits**. These devoured all which the labor of men produced; until it became impossible to feed them; 13 When they turned themselves against men, in order to devour them; 14 And began to injure birds, beasts, reptiles, and fishes, to eat their flesh one after another, and to drink their blood.*

The ancient Hebrew cubit is approximately 45 centimetres or 18 inches long, originally the distance from the tip of the fingers to the elbow. A big man's cubit maybe half a metre. This would make these giants about the height of a 40 storey building. Somewhere between 130 to 150 metres and weighing who knows how many hundred tonnes. This is waaaay bigger than the largest known dinosaurs maybe ten, twenty times greater, or more. Scientists have concluded from feasibility studies that no animal could ever be that size, let alone a man. Blood pressure considerations and cell structures and the laws of physics make the whole idea not just implausible, but completely impossible.

Another translation of the Book of Enoch by R. H. Charles Chapter 7 verse 2 gives the height of the giants as 3000 ells. An ell (where we get elbow from) is an old English and European measurement of various lengths, beginning with something equivalent to a cubit, with others over a metre. So these giants according to R H Charles translation would be anything from about 1300 metres up to about three kilometres or around two miles high. Four hundred stories! Or more! Whilst some Apocrypha books may have some historical facts that may be worth knowing, when it comes down to the wire, most of them are found to be completely unreliable sources and should be avoided like the plague.

There is no complete manuscript of The Book of Giants. The fragments together make up less than a page and when put together claim to tell the story of some interactions between Enoch and the giants and some of the exploits of the giants, even giving the names of some. These tales were most probably derived from ancient Near Eastern mythology as the name of one of the giants is Gilgamesh, a Babylonian mythological hero of the third century BC.

One thing is clear, neither of these books were written by Enoch, the seventh from Adam, despite the fact that the book bears his name. One would have to believe that writing was invented before the flood when archaeologists have never discovered anything to suggest such a thing. The generally accepted research declares that the earliest portions of the Book of Enoch are dated about 300BC and the later portions about 100BC.

Although popular among both Jews and Christians, these books have never been regarded as canon. And because their contents are both fanciful and uninspired (by God) they have rightly been classified as apocrypha and denounced as pseudepigraphal, a designation given to those books that are written fraudulently under the name of a historical figure in order to gain acceptance. Otherwise they are known as Jewish Fables.

Despite the absolutely ridiculous size of these giants and many other fanciful statements that do not line up with scripture or reality, there are still many people who claim legitimacy for the Book of Enoch because of these verses in the New Testament from the Letter of Jude:

Jude 14-15 NKJV

Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, 15 to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

The reasoning goes that because a prophecy attributed to Enoch is quoted by Jude, the Book of Enoch must therefore be accepted into the canon. It has not occurred to these folk that there may be another source from which this prophecy comes. There are other quotes and statements in the New Testament that are from unwritten sources or sources that cannot be substantiated with any surviving documentation. For the sake of brevity, I shall give but one clear example:

2 Timothy 3:8

Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith

Jannes and Jambres are not mentioned anywhere else in scripture. Where Paul got this information from is pure speculation. Paul's mention of them in this letter to Timothy is the first known historical

document that has any reference to both of these characters. There is not one document that mentions both Jannes and Jambres that has ever been considered to be scripture. The earliest known comments are from the Dead Sea Scrolls of the Qumran Community which identified Jannes, but the other name was absent. It is only in Jewish and Christian writings of later antiquity that we find both mentioned. From this it is supposed that the story of Jannes and Jambres and the mention of Enoch's prophecy were oral traditions which ended up in being mentioned by various writers long after Paul's writings. BTW, the names are attributed to two of the Egyptian magicians that did some miracles in opposition to Moses and the biblical story is found in Genesis Chapters 7-9.

It seems probable that in the case of Enoch's proclamation, the Ethiopian writer mentions the quote to give legitimacy to his writing. The quote itself, mentioned by Paul at the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is of course true, but the rest of the Book of Enoch is nothing but wild imagination and is proven to have statements that are clearly false.

I think we can dismiss the idea that the word *Nephilim* actually means giants. Rather, we have discovered that it is their personalities that were inclined toward tyranny. The context declares they were mighty men, men of renown (Genesis 6:4), fellers who terrorized the people both before and after the flood, whose appearance intimidated the spies from believing God could give them the Land (Numbers 13:31-33). Although being tall would certainly have given them an advantage over their victims, the term nephilim had nothing to do with their height. A gentle giant would never have been called a nephil.

But to identify their genealogy we must now define the term 'sons of God' as used in Genesis Chapter Six. Simultaneously, we will be examining the Fallen Angel Hypothesis as it is this theory that proposes the idea that the sons of God in Genesis 6 is referring to fallen angels. This viewpoint makes its claim to orthodoxy based on these three verses from the Book of Job.

Job 1:6

Now there was a day when the **sons of God** came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.

Job 2:1

Again there was a day when the **sons of God** came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord.

Job 38:7

When the morning stars sang together, and all the **sons of God** shouted for joy?

Apparently, the Hebrew phrase *bene elohim* that is translated 'sons of God' is only ever used in Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7 and in Genesis 6:2, 4. Based on that fact, the presumption is made that this term is used to represent angels in the Book of Job, it is therefore speaking of angels in the Book of Genesis. Advocates of this theory also presume that the sons of God in these three verses from Job are angels even though they are not identified as angels. They could very well be angels. I'm inclined to think they are angels. However, they could also be seraphim, or cherubim. Satan is described as a cherub (Ezekiel 28:14) and he came among them (Job 1:6; 2:1). So within this theory we have a presumption based on a presumption when the Book of Job just doesn't say who or what they are. And besides, Job actually uses a different word for 'angels' elsewhere in his writing:

Job 4:18 NKJV

If He puts no trust in His servants, *if* He charges His **angels** with error . . .

Job 15:15 NIRV

God doesn't trust his holy **angels**. Even the heavens aren't pure in his sight.

Job used a derivative of the Hebrew word *mal'ak* (Job 4:18) which is the word that is commonly used for 'angels' throughout the Hebrew scriptures. And in Job 15:15, we find yet another term used for

angels *qadosh* which is literally ‘holy ones’, but also used to represent angels (Daniel 8:13 and Deuteronomy 33:2; rendered as saints in many bibles despite the context revealing them to be angels).

If *bene elohim* refers only to ‘angels’, why did Job use another word *mal’ak* for ‘angels’? Why did he not maintain consistency and use the term ‘sons of God’? Is it because they are different? While ‘sons of God’ **may** be angels in the Book of Job, the idea that *bene elohim* is always angels is clearly inconclusive.

The presumption that the term ‘sons of God’ is reserved for angels only is simply that: a presumption. All through the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures there are many other terms, which all have the same meaning that are used to describe sons of God and they are: children of God, My children, children of the living God, etc. etc. None of these examples refer to angels and all them refer to people. Again, to presume that the words *bene elohim* are always reserved for angels cannot be supported by scripture for there is nothing in scripture to indicate any such a premise.

To take the phrase ‘sons of God’ used by Job out of its context and transfer it into the passage in Genesis written by Moses which has its own context is simply cut and paste theology. When Moses refers to angels he uses the word angels (Hebrew *mal’ak* Genesis 19:1, 15; 21:17; 24:7; 24:20; 28:12; 32:1). If Moses so freely and consistently uses the word *mal’ak* for angels, why should we think that when he uses the words *bene elohim* for sons of God in Genesis Chapter Six that he is now referring to angels? What kind of teaching is it to suggest that Job’s use of this phrase determines the meaning of sons of God for Moses or for that matter, the rest of scripture? In the New Testament the same Holy Spirit refers to the people of God as sons of God and Jesus Himself as The Son of God. This kind of wrangling with words is what is required to support the Fallen Angel Hypothesis.

Nevertheless, advocates of this theory also draw on two passages from the New Testament. This line of reasoning is the beginning of another long rabbit hole . . .

2 Peter 2:1-11 KJV

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. 4 **For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;** 5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; 7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) 9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: 10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. 11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

Jude 4-8 KJV

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. 5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. 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 Gomorrah, 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. 8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

The message of these two passages is that there is a sure judgement upon those who turn away from God. The false prophets and false teachers are promised 'swift destruction'. In support of that proclamation, examples of God's judgment in times gone by are listed: The flood upon the world of the ungodly; Sodom and Gomorrah; The disobedient angels and the Children of Israel that came out of Egypt that later did not believe.

These passages do not mention giants, nor do they mention angels mating with women. Supporters of the Fallen Angel Hypothesis are left with these two phrases: 2 Peter 2:4 where it is written, "the angels who sinned" and Jude 6 where we find they "left their own habitation." From these two statements, it is construed that the angels sinned by coming down to earth and took wives for themselves from the daughters of men. To support this leap of logic they point to the mention of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah who had given themselves over to fornication, elsewhere identified as homosexuality. Once again, it takes a leap of logic to extract out of these passages that the angel's sin was like the sexual sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. Besides, the sin in Sodom was the sin of homosexual men, not the sin of the angels. Sodom and Gomorrah just happen to be among a list of people groups that were judged in like fashion as the sinning angels and the common denominator is that they were judged simply because they were all ungodly.

The advocates of the Fallen Angel Hypothesis suppose that the punishment against these angels is that they are cast down to a portion of hell called Tartarus where they are bound in chains to be held there until the final judgment. Different Bible versions have paraphrased the verse with imaginative phrases, saying that these angels are: kept in dark pits of gloom; cast them into the lowest levels of the underworld; put them in gloomy dungeons lower than Sheol; put them in caves of darkness; gloomy pits of darkness; etc. etc. Their licence to do so does not come from scripture, but comes direct from the Greek mythological use of the word *Tartarus* which is the Greek word translated 'hell' in 2 Peter 2:4. I won't flood your mind with details of the Greek belief on this subject. You can find heaps on line if you are so inclined to pursue the matter.

That 'fallen angels' are bound in darkness is undisputed, but what does 'chains of darkness' truly convey, and what did Peter really mean when he wrote 'cast them down to Tartarus'. For this we will need to get a biblical understanding of the word 'hell' and what it means to be 'chained in darkness'.

The word Tartarus, is found in Greek mythology and it describes the netherworld or the underworld, thus the translators have rendered it hell. There are four words which are translated 'hell' in the Bible: *Sheol* in the Hebrew Scriptures; *Hades*, *Gehenna* and *Tartarus* in the Greek New Testament.

*Sheol* is most often translated grave or pit and the Greek word *hades* has the same meaning. It was the place of the dead and was divided into two regions with a chasm that separated the righteous from the wicked (Luke 16:19-31) up until the resurrection of Jesus Christ. After that, only the unrighteous are consigned to *hades* to be kept until the final judgment and the saints now, upon death, go to be with Him (2 Corinthians 5:6-8).

*Gehenna* is the name of a valley close to Jerusalem, also called the Valley of Hinnom, which was used as the city dump. Fires were constantly burning to consume the city's rubbish. Jesus used the term *Gehenna* metaphorically whenever he spoke of the eternal punishment of everlasting fire. His message is clear. God considers the wicked to be rubbish that will be thrown into a fire that never goes out (Mark 9:43-48).

In contrast to the word *Tartarus*, there is not one mention in all the Bible that *sheol* or *hades* is a place of punishment or confinement for angels in this present age. *Sheol* or *hades* is only ever regarded as a place of confinement and torment for wicked people. Or, it is referred to as a source of

opposition that shall not prevail against the church of the living God (Matthew 16:18). But when we look at all Jesus said about *Gehenna* we find it is described as an everlasting fire for the unrighteous along with the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41).

If Peter had meant hell as understood from an orthodox Jewish theology he would have used the readily understood Greek word *hades* for the underworld or the metaphorical expression *Gehenna* that Jesus used for the coming fire of judgement. Clearly *Tartarus* has another meaning. That said, we cannot then presume that Peter was giving complete legitimacy to the contemporary Greek mythological use of the word which was completely at odds with biblical revelation.

A closer look at these two verses might be helpful. For clarity, here is the verse from Peter in the **Holman Christian Standard Bible**:

2 Peter 2:4 HCSB

For if God didn't spare the angels who sinned but threw them down into Tartarus and delivered them to be kept in chains of darkness until judgment;

Jude 6 NKJV

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.

The final consequences of sin has not yet come. The eternal fire still waits. But in the meantime we find that there are consequences for sin that are in this age. The Bible describes the consequences of sin upon all the descendants of Adam and Eve in various ways. People are bound in cords of iniquity (Acts 8:23 Job 36:8). And see here what we find in the words of the Psalmist:

Psalm 107:10-16 NKJV

Those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, **Bound in affliction and irons**—11 Because they rebelled against the words of God, And despised the counsel of the Most High, 12 Therefore He brought down their heart with labor; They fell down, and *there was* none to help. 13 of men! 16 For He has broken the gates of bronze, and cut the bars of iron in two. Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble *and* He saved them out of their distresses. 14 **He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and broke their chains in pieces.** 15 Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the LORD *for* His goodness, and *for* His wonderful works to the children men! 16 For He has broken the gates of bronze, and cut the bars of iron in two.

And we sing the song, "He has broken chains that bound me, and set this captive free." Hallelujah!

Jesus delivers us out of the Kingdom of Darkness and brings us into the Kingdom of His Love, out of darkness and into the light, out of bondage and into His glorious liberty. However, the fallen angels are beyond redemption, presumably because they sinned in the face of the complete revelation that they had of the Father. In contrast to mankind who have the opportunity to repent and be freed, the fallen angels are bound in chains of darkness forever and all that awaits them is judgement. The demons exclaimed to Jesus, "Have you come to torment us before the time." The time of judgment for the devil and his angels has not yet come. Do you not know that we will be judging angels? (1 Corinthians 6:3) In the meantime, they are not in some pit chained to a wall. Demons are bound to the kingdom of Darkness and are still at work serving their master to this day. Tempting mankind with evil inspirations, infecting minds with their demonic doctrines and afflicting people with infirmities, sickness and disease is all they know and it is what they are bound to with everlasting chains of darkness until the day of judgement.

What we find is that both Peter and Jude were speaking in highly symbolic metaphorical language common throughout the Bible and people are trying to take it completely literally. *Tartarus* is simply a term borrowed from the Greek language with which to label the kingdom of darkness and that is all there is to it. Thankfully, that's the end of the rabbit hole.

Some of the advocates of the Fallen Angel Hypothesis say that the angels had sex with the daughters of men, yet the scripture says that they took wives. Whilst we accept that wives have sexual relations with their husbands, being a wife is a long term arrangement, not a one off sexual encounter. To accept this idea, the whole concept of what an angel is and what they are capable of is brought into question. Even though angels are mentioned over 250 times in the Word of God, there is very little about what they actually are and what their capabilities are, but what the Bible does say is quite definitive.

The Greek word for angel is *aggelos* and it means messenger. The Hebrew word is *mal'ak* and it has the same meaning. We find them doing just what the meaning of the word means, bringing messages to mankind, and we also find them fighting a war in the spiritual realm. They are created beings, all things having been made by Him. But concerning their substance and whether or not they could actually be a husband and bring about conception with a woman, we have only these few words from the writer of Hebrews and a couple of statements by Jesus.

Hebrews 1:7 NKJV

And of the angels He says: "Who makes His **angels spirits** and His ministers a flame of fire."

Hebrews 1:13-14 NKJV

But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool"? 14 Are they not all **ministering spirits** sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

Luke 24:37-39 NKJV

But they were terrified and frightened, and **supposed they had seen a spirit**. 38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for **a spirit does not have flesh and bones** as you see I have."

Matthew 22:30 NKJV

For in the resurrection they **neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven**.

Luke 20:34-36 NKJV

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.

From the above we glean that **angels are spirit beings, they do not have flesh and bones, they neither marry nor are given in marriage and they cannot die**, though from the previous verses we looked at, those that have sinned can certainly be punished.

Angels have revealed themselves in such a way as to be mistaken for men. They can come to a person in a dream, they can come out of a man and enter a pig, they have power to move rocks, break shackles, eat food and they even empowered the magicians who counterfeited some of the plagues performed by Moses. But again, they have no flesh or bones. They can simply appear and disappear before your eyes.

Satan himself has fallen from Heaven (Isaiah 14:12; Luke 10:18) and at one time he entered into Judas (Luke 22:3). 'Fallen angels' are called the devil's angels (Matthew 25:41) and have been known to reveal themselves in deceptive ways. Most commonly they are referred to as evil spirits or demons. Jesus also called them unclean spirits. I can testify to the fact, having cast out many evil spirits, that while they have inhabited the bodies of people, these evil angels had no body of their own. Sometimes these fallen angels are made visible to the eye with a gift of discernment, but their appearances are always temporary.

That angels throughout the Bible make appearances is indisputable and we have many examples. However, that they can take on human flesh and have a wife and produce offspring is only ever suggested by the advocates of the Fallen Angel Hypothesis and this idea is in direct contradiction to the words of Jesus. It is commonly agreed upon among Bible scholars that we ought not to make a doctrine out of one scripture. In this particular case, although they have drawn scriptures from various places, each passage of scripture quoted is teaching things entirely unrelated to the premise being promoted. The verses quoted are out of the context wherein they are found and cut and pasted into another context altogether with little regard to the original meaning. Therefore, I find that the Fallen Angel Hypothesis is nothing but an unfortunate heresy that preys upon the gullible with an enticing mystery. One last point before we move on.

Another aspect of the Fallen Angel Hypothesis is that it subtly shifts the reason for the flood from the sin of the people to the sin of angels mating with women and the corruption they brought to mankind. The flood of evil that brought about the flood of water is placed upon the activity of the fallen angels. But the Word of the Lord lays the blame entirely with the wickedness of mankind.

Genesis 6:5-12 NKJV

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 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." 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

9 This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

With this shift of blame, the Fallen Angel Hypothesis reveals its hidden elements of misogyny in that the blame is shifted from Adam's sin to the women becoming wives of fallen angels. It's like a repeat of Adam and Eve's reply to God when questioned about what they had done. Eve blamed the devil and Adam blamed Eve. At that point in time, neither of them took accountability for their actions and this is exactly what the Fallen Angel Hypothesis fosters. Okay, now we can move on . . .

The Fallen Man Hypothesis has three viewpoints that seem to have some support from scripture. Is it not a divided camp? Certainly it is, but it does have a general point of agreement which will become apparent. We will list them again for easy referencing:

Viewpoint 2. The sons of God are children of Adam and Eve who were born before the fall who later sinned when they took the daughters of men as wives. Their children became mighty men of renown who may have been giants that were called Nephilim.

Viewpoint 3. The sons of God are descendants of Adam's son Seth who were the godly line. They married the unbelieving daughters of men and their offspring who may have been giants that were called Nephilim.

Viewpoint 4. The sons of God are descendants of Adam and Eve who began to call upon the Name of the Lord after the birth of Adam's grandson, Enosh. They married the daughters of men and produced mighty men of renown who may have been giants that were known as Nephilim.

According to the above three views the sons of God are: 2. The sons of Adam and Eve from before the 'fall'; 3. Exclusively the descendants of Adam and Eve's son Seth; 4. Any of the descendants of Adam and Eve who called upon the Name of the Lord.

Although View 2 is a minority view, it draws on sufficient scripture to be considered, though most people react to what at first sounds unorthodox. I have presented this view, **not because I whole**

**heartedly support it**, rather because it counterbalances the Fallen Angel Hypothesis by presenting a plausible alternative with some scriptural merit.

This view goes like this: Adam and Eve received from God the command to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:28). This view supposes that in the unspecified time between their creation and the 'fall', Adam and Eve were obediently fruitful and multiplied. It is also supposed that because Jesus came as the second, or last Adam, and died when He became sin for us at approximately the age of thirty three and a half years, Adam lived thirty three and a half years after creation before he died spiritually, having become sinful the day he ate the fruit. This thirty three and a half year period allowed time for Eve to become the mother of all living (Genesis 3:20).

Depending on how you count them, what you think the possibilities are and Adam and Eve being of perfect health, their children and grandchildren could amount to anything between 30 and 350 sons and daughters of God. Note: It was after the 'fall' that Eve was told by God that she would experience a multiplication of her sorrow and conception and that bringing forth children would now be painful (Genesis 3:16). Also, it was after the 'fall' that Adam called his wife Eve "because she **was** the mother of all living" (Genesis 3:20), not because she was going to become the mother of those not yet born. This scenario may explain a couple of things about Cain: While it is presumed by most that he was the first born son, he is never referred to as such in the Bible. This may also explain who the people were that he was afraid would kill him (Genesis 4:14-15) and also where Cain's wife came from (Genesis 4:17).

The premise continues: Because of Adam's sin, the entire creation came under the influence of Satan and so Adam's children were also influenced and sin spread to all mankind. This is paralleled with the warning in the Ten Commandments about the effects sin affecting even the third and fourth generations, both those who are already living and those who would be born. We all understand how violence in the home affects those living in the home.

Romans 5:12-17 NKJV

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned— 13 (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

Before these sons sinned, they were called sons of God and they chose the daughters of men whom they desired. Shortly afterward, the Lord declares that the thoughts of mankind were evil continually.

In this theory, the Nephilim were mighty tyrant men, possibly of great stature, both before and after the flood. There is as much if not more biblical support for this theory as there is for the Fallen Angel Hypothesis according to my reasoning.

The next theory is considerably more popular among both Jews and Christians. This idea is commonly known as the Sons of Seth Theory. In this view, the listed generational line from Adam to Noah is considered to be the 'godly line' (Genesis 5:1-32). It is supposed that the men from this line are the referenced sons of God. In marrying the ungodly women (more on that later), their descendants became the Nephilim tyrants of renown. Some of the suppositions in the above viewpoint apply to this theory too. Within this theory and the one that follows, there is room for Adam and Eve to have other sons and daughters after the fall, but before the birth of Cain.

The final theory of the Fallen Man Hypothesis looks first of all to the scriptural context of the proceeding verses to ascertain the identity of the sons of God. Earlier in the Genesis account we find that after the birth of Seth's son Enosh, men began to call upon the Name of the Lord (Genesis 4:26). As the Scripture says that all those who call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10:13), these people qualify to be called sons of God. While it appears that godly men were in the generational line of Seth, this viewpoint finds no support from the Word for excluding others of this

time period from being so identified.

The sons of God in this viewpoint were the godly descendants of Adam and Eve who called upon the Name of the Lord and the daughters of men whom they married brought forth mighty men of renown, but it seems that this union did not produce good fruit in the descendants. In this theory, because of their ungodliness, these women were not identified as daughters of God but were labelled daughters of men. Unlike the Fallen Angel Hypothesis that has no corresponding scenario elsewhere in God's Word, this example of the Godly men marrying the ungodly women is consistent with other teachings throughout the scriptures, this example being written for our admonishment (Romans 15:4) as it becomes mankind's first warning to the righteous about being unequally yoked with unbelievers, a theme that is repeated throughout scripture (Deuteronomy 7:2-3; Ezra 10:1-4; 1 Kings 11:1-4; Nehemiah 13:25; 2 Corinthians 6:14).

In summary, it appears that the Fallen Angels Hypothesis relies heavily upon apocryphal support, pagan mythology and scriptures taken out of context. It even has statements by Jesus that refute the whole idea. In contrast, the Fallen Man Hypothesis has both contextual and etymological support, and a theme that is found elsewhere in the Bible.

The theory favoured by this author is that all those who called upon the name of the Lord after the time of Enosh are the sons of God mentioned in Genesis 6:1-4. The sons of God would include the descendants of the line of Seth if they were godly. It is also remotely possible that all three of the Fallen Man Hypotheses could jointly be true and the sons of Adam before the 'fall' are also among those designated as 'sons of God' after the 'fall'. However, Adam's naming of Eve could have been at a later point in time and there is not enough evidence in the scriptures to be dogmatic on that point.

In short: the Sons of God were godly men and the Nephilim were tyrants both before and after the flood. Hope you found this edifying.

**Warning:** Beware of getting involved in arguments over doubtful things.

Love, joy and peace to you in Jesus Mighty Name.