

Who were the Nephilim?

Question: Who were the Nephilim in the Bible?

Answer: The Nephilim were giants who lived on the earth at one time. They are mentioned in a couple of passages:

Genesis 6:4 "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. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown."

Numbers 13:33 "There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

The descendants of Anak were part of the Nephilim. The ten men who spied out the Promised Land became fearful of them, because they were so much taller and larger.

Some people believe the Nephilim were offspring of fallen angels ("sons of God"), who married the "daughters of men." Genesis 6:4 says, "The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose." According to this theory, the intermarriage of fallen angels and women produced giants.

However, the problem with this interpretation is angels don't have sexual functions. Jesus said, "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven" (Matthew 22:30). Angels are a different order of creation than humans, so reproduction would be impossible. The idea that the Nephilim sprang from cohabitation of angels and mortals does not line up with Scripture. This interpretation is possible only if one puts the Scripture on the same level as Greek mythology with the union of gods and men.

A more likely interpretation is the "sons of God" refer to the godly line of Seth, those who had retained a belief in the living God. The "daughters of men" refer to those from families who had abandoned belief in God. We do know the Nephilim were giants and anything beyond that is just speculation.