

Pastor Mark Carrara

SUPERNATURAL

SERIES: Part 5



Understanding the Origins of Good, Evil, Sin,
and Salvation in the Bible

Michael the Archangel, Guido Reni 1636



The Second Rebellion

*And it come to pass that mankind began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them. **Gen. 6:1 (YLTM)***

*The sons of God [bene Elohim] saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and they took to themselves women [nashim] as they chose. **Gen. 6:2 (YLTM)***

*And God said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he is flesh: his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." **Gen. 6:3 (YLTM)***

*There were giants [nephilim] in the earth in those days, and even afterwards when sons of God came into daughters of men and bore children to them. **Gen. 6:4 (YLTM)***

*And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. **Gen. 6:5 (YLTM)***

*And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. **Gen. 6:6 (YLTM)***

*So the Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." **Gen. 6:7 (YLTM)***

*But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. **Gen. 6:8 (YLTM)***

This is the passage that leads us into the story of Noah and the flood. But while the story of Noah is well known, this passage is often overlooked. Largely because it had wildly supernatural implications. But the supernatural implications of this account are precisely what make it important to the story of Israel and God's redemptive plans for mankind.

When understood correctly this second rebellion helps explain:

- (1) Why God felt he needed to literally destroy virtually all flesh on the earth to redeem mankind.
- (2) The origin of demons from a second temple and first century Jewish/Christian perspective, and
- (3) Why Joshua was ordered to annihilate certain people groups so completely in the Promised Land, including all their men, women, and children.

Let's begin by stating what this wildly supernatural worldview of the ancient Israelites and first century Jewish Christians was and then we'll work backward to explain it.

WHAT IS GENESIS 6:1-8 REALLY SAYING?

When ancient Israelites and first century Jewish Christians read this passage, they understood it to be talking about a divine and human rebellion.

To an Israelite Genesis 6 is saying the following...

1. A group of elohim [bene Elohim], who were part of God's divine council, rebelled against God.
2. They left their heavenly spiritual abode and took on human form. [Elohim taking human form is not unusual as it may sound. We have several accounts in both the OT and NT.]
3. They then took women from among the daughters of Adam (i.e., human woman), knew them in a "biblical" way," and had actual physical children with them.
4. These children were part elohim and part human and were known by the Israelites as the nephilim, a Hebrew word often translated as "giants."
5. These rebellious elohim were also believed to be responsible for both false teaching and sharing forbidden divine knowledge with mankind [knowledge God was not ready for them to have]. This teaching possibly included things like sorcery, witchcraft, and other occult practices, to name a few. This acquiring of "divine knowledge" apart from God sounds a lot like the rebellion of Adam and Eve.
6. In the end they had the effect of leading mankind away from God, corrupting the "seed" or "offspring" any human who was a part of this or descended from these elohim, and increasing wickedness and violence in the earth to such a degree that God felt his only recourse was to destroy mankind and begin again with the one righteous man he had left – Noah.

WHY HAVEN'T WE HEARD THIS BEFORE?

The reason this isn't typically taught in Sunday School is because it's just so supernatural that many people think it's too supernatural to be true.

But is this really any more supernatural than the immaculate conception of the Messiah? The parting of the Red Sea? The creation of all things from nothing? The ground opening up to swallow a man named Korah and his family because of rebellion? Jonah being swallowed by a great fish and getting spit out three days later right where he was supposed to be? Jesus coming back again riding a white horse and rapturing believers? Lazarus rising from the dead after three days? I don't think so.

TWO ALTERNATIVE BUT FAULTY VIEWS OF GENESIS 6

The ancient Israelite view we just presented was the prevailing view in Christianity until about the 5th century when some church fathers began to question it. As a result of questioning this supernatural historical Jewish and Christian view two alternative, more intellectually acceptable views popped up.

The first, called the **Sethite View**, holds the sons of God in Genesis 6 were not elohim but descendants of Seth, one of Adam's sons. Their sin was marrying the daughters (or descendants) of Cain, the first murderer.

The second is the **Divinized Human View** which also holds that the "sons of God" are not elohim. But in this view, they are human rulers whose sin is polygamy.

Both these views have problems that are hard to resolve. They both make assumptions about things that are not in the text but must be read back into it to make the view work.

For example, the idea of marriage and wives is found in just about every modern translation of this text. But those words are not found in the Hebrew text. The text more literally says these sons of God “took women for themselves.” It never mentions marriage. It never mentions the daughters of Cain. It never suggests that only the descendants of Seth worshiped God.

Dr. Michael Heiser does a good job of summarizing the issues with these views in his book *The Unseen Realm*. Because the issues can get technical, I am not going to try and work through them here. If you want to better understand why these alternative views fall short, I encourage you to read Dr. Heiser’s book.

WHY ACCEPT THE ANCIENT ISRAELITE VIEW?

1. It explains why a good God would do something as drastic as wipe out virtually all of mankind with a flood and require Israel, under Joshua, to utterly wipe out every man, woman, and child in many of the cities they conquered in the Promised Land.
2. It provides the foundation for first century Jewish and Christian understanding of who/what demons were and where they came from.
3. This was the view of the disciples of Jesus.

Let’s briefly talk about each one of them in light of Genesis 6:1-8.

WHY WOULD A GOOD GOD SEND A FLOOD AND LATER COMMAND ISRAEL TO UTTERLY WIPE OUT ENTIRE TRIBES OF PEOPLE?

The sons of God of Genesis 6, or fallen angels if you prefer, transgress the God ordained boundaries between heaven and earth, and spirit and flesh, by producing children with human women.

These children are called Nephilim, which means “giants.” The Bible also calls them by other names such as Rephaim, Anakim, Emim, and Zamzummim (Deut. 2-3; Num. 13:32-33).

Neither these fallen angels or their giant offspring, the Nephilim, were nice guys. They were evil enemies of God and anyone who served God, especially Israel. **Did you ever wonder why in all the Old Testament stories of giants you never read of even one giant serving on the side of Israel?** They are always opposed to Israel because they are always opposed to God.

By the time of Moses and Joshua the Nephilim had multiplied and settled in the land God promised to Abraham and his descendants. We call it The Promised Land.

Was this a coincidence or could it have been part of the enemy's efforts to thwart the plan of God by settling the giant Nephilim in the Promised Land to intimidate and/or annihilate the Israelites?

Either way it set the stage for an epic conflict between Israel and the giants of the land. But like other epic conflicts in the Bible there was more to this than meets the eye.

Let's start in the NT. On more than one occasion Jesus expressed his dislike for many of the religious leaders of his day. In Matthew 23:33 he called them "serpents and vipers." This was an intentional reference to the serpent in the garden. He was saying that they were like the serpent.

In John 8:44 he said they were of their "father the devil." This is Jesus' way of helping us make the connection between the prophecy of the serpent's offspring in Genesis 3 and who the offspring really are, at least some of them.

In 1 John 3 the Apostle John contrasts the offspring of the serpent with the offspring of God when he writes...

*Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil... The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. **1 John 3:8 (ESV)***

*No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. **1 John 3:9 (ESV)***

The Apostle is writing in the New Testament period, but he is using language that alludes to the Old Testament book of Genesis. John's comparison between those who are "of the devil" and those who are "born of God" remind us of the "offspring" prophecy regarding the woman and the serpent in Genesis 3. John is teaching that this current day conflict between those who choose rebellion and evil like the serpent [born of the devil] and those who choose faith in Jesus [born of God] was an extension of the ancient conflict prophesied in the garden.

The Genesis 3 judgment on the serpent prophesied that he would have “offspring.” We can now see through the Bible and history how he has had and still has real offspring in the form of people and divine beings who perpetuate evil on the earth, who rebelled and continue to rebel against God. The Genesis 6 fallen ones and their descendants were very real offspring of the serpent in the garden.

This provides a big clue to why God sent the flood and required certain entire tribes to be destroyed. We can summarize it this way.

Firstly, the fallen elohim of Genesis 6 corrupted mankind and his offspring. When Peter writes about this incident in the New Testament he connects it with things like sexual immorality, false teaching, despising authority, blaspheming God, and more.

There are also references in other extra-biblical books, some of which we know would have been familiar to the disciples of Jesus, that talk about how these fallen ones were responsible for violence, bloodshed, injustice, even giving mankind divine knowledge they should not have had. Teaching them how to make weapons and war against one another. Even teaching them sorcery, spells, witchcraft, and other defiling things.

The point is that the influence of these fallen angels was so widespread that it had the effect of corrupting virtually all of mankind to a point of no return. Eventually God called Noah to build the ark. That process took 120 years. During that time the Apostle **Peter says that Noah preached righteousness to the people of his day** (2 Peter 2:5).

One extra-biblical source called the Sibylline Oracles has God commanding this of Noah...

"To all the people preach repentance, so that they may all be saved. But if, with shameless soul, they heed me not the whole race I will utterly destroy." (Book I, lines 155–161).

This is not the Bible, to be sure, but it helps us understand what Peter may have meant by Noah preaching. Noah was building the ark AND preaching repentance before the flood came. But wickedness had become so deeply engrained no one repented. Only then did God send the flood. Had God not sent the flood mankind, in bondage to the fallen ones, would have eventually destroyed itself. Long before that they probably would have tried to destroy Noah or his descendants. What was God to do?

Secondly, we can also see how this account in Genesis 6 informed the actions of Joshua to destroy certain tribes and cities when they came into the promised land. For example... When Moses and the Israelites approached the Promised Land for the first time, he sent spies into the land ahead of the people. When the spies returned, they were terrified to enter the land because they said there were giants there. Their report read like this...

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.

Numbers 13:33 (ESV)

Most of us have read this passage and thought to ourselves, “What wimps these people were.” But if we knew what they knew perhaps we would have agreed with them. To a Jew these giants weren’t just tall soldiers. These giants were the ancestors of fallen angels – part human and part elohim. They were far more formidable than any tall soldier. This is what caused so much fear and unbelief in them that God sent them into the wilderness for a time out.

But when they returned 40 years later to enter the Promised Land the giants were still there. In fact, before they could even get to the border of the Promised Land God had Moses take the Israelites on route that put them in conflict with the armies and allies of a man named Og the King of Bashan, who was a Rephaim – one of the giants (Deut. 3:11). We are not told how tall Og was, but we are told his bed was 14 feet long. So, I’m guessing he was pretty big. And just for kicks let me also point out that Bashan, the name of the land he ruled over means serpent. **Can you see the connection between Genesis 3 (the serpent), Genesis 6 (the giants), and Israel’s attempt to enter the Promised Land?**

Not long after this Moses dies and leadership of Israel passes to Joshua who takes the Israelites, having already tasted victory over one giant into the Promised land to face others. In the Book of Joshua, we can read about his military campaigns and how they destroyed some tribes by wiping out every man, woman, and child. Surely, that has seemed extreme even unnecessary for many people and difficult to resolve with a God who is love. **So why command such extreme measures?**

Because the wars of conquest for the land wasn’t just about land and it wasn’t just Israel against their enemies. It was about God verses the offspring of the serpent who had settled in the land and wanted Israel out.

God required the annihilation of these giants and their descendants to cut them off from ever reproducing and repeating the rebellion of Genesis 6. This is why Joshua sums up his campaigns and battles this way...

There was none of the Anakim [giants] left in the land of the people of Israel. Only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod did some remain. Josh. 11:22 (ESV)

God never wanted to take the life of women and children, or men for that matter. But God did need to “cut off” the giant clans from ever reproducing. The only way to do that was to destroy those clans. That’s why he had Joshua and Israel so completely and seemingly mercilessly wipe out certain tribes of people. Had God not done this we might very well be fighting Nephilim even today wondering why God didn’t just handle it a few thousand years ago.

By the way, did you notice how Joshua mentions all the giants were destroyed except those in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod – three Philistine cities? Do you know why?

It signals to the reader that someone will have to fight giants from those cities eventually. David was the first. Faced Goliath, a giant, and defeated him. Later in 2 Samuel 21:15-22 some of David’s best fighters also face off against Philistines giants from these cities and defeat them.

In the weeks to come we'll try to understand it the way Jesus and his disciples did.

WHERE DO DEMONS COME FROM?

We all know the Bible talks about angels and demons. We also know that angels were created by God. Nothing surprising there. But what about demons? **Did you know there is not one passage in the Bible that explains the origin of demons?**

The most common traditional view is that demons must be the fallen angels who were cast out of heaven with the Devil. Surprise! The Bible doesn't say that. That idea comes from church tradition and John Milton's Paradise Lost. The closest thing to this idea in the Bible is Revelation 12:9, but that passage is talking about something that happened at the birth of the Messiah, not in some ancient past event that describes the origin of demons. It's not what Jesus or his disciples would have believed.

But even though the bible doesn't give us a direct answer to the question of demons, thanks to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the mid-20th century, we now have ancient Jewish writings that help us understand what ancient Israelites and first century Jewish Christians believed about demons.

These documents are not inspired writings, like the Bible, but they do reveal to us what commonly held beliefs the Jews and early Christians had about demons. More importantly the writings in question have biblical links and would have been known to Jesus and his disciples. So, although the answer to this question may be a shocker to us, it would not have been to Jesus or his disciples.

So where do demons come from? The short answer is that to an ancient Israelite and a first century Jewish Christian demons were believed to be the disembodied spirits of dead Nephilim – the giants of Genesis 6 who perished in the flood. **Here's how they get there.**

The Old Testament describes these giant offspring of the fallen sons of God as both giant warlords (Deut. 2:8-11; 3:1-11; Josh.13:12) **AND** later as frightening, sinister disembodied spirits ("or shades") in the Underworld or Sheol in Hebrew (Isa. 14:9; 26:14; Job 26:5).

In other words, the Bible connects the spirits of these dead giants with death, the underworld (Sheol) and later to Gehenna, Hades, and Hell. **We don't have time to look at all the OT and NT passages that relate to this view, but let's talk about how this connection become a belief that these beings were demons.**

Shortly after the Jews began to return from Babylon, they rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem. That temple became known as Herod's Temple. It was the temple Jesus worshipped in during his lifetime. But in 70 AD that temple was destroyed by the Romans.

The period between the rebuilding of the temple and its destruction, about 600 years, is called the "Second Temple" period, and for most of that period we have no biblical writings. The OT writings ended toward the beginning of that period and didn't start again, as the NT, until close to the end of that period. And so, we had nearly 400 years with no inspired biblical writings, but there were still Jewish authors writing about their faith. One of the books from this period is known as 1 Enoch (or First Enoch) and it gives us insight into what the Jews believed about demons.

The Book of 1 Enoch calls the fallen elohim of Genesis 6 Watchers, a term that the Book of Daniel also uses in the Bible and gives us a great explanation. After 1 Enoch makes it clear that he is writing about Genesis 6 we read...

The Lord said... the giants who are born from the (union of) the spirits and the flesh shall be called evil spirits upon the earth, because their dwelling shall be upon the earth and inside the earth. Evil spirits have come out of their bodies. Because from the day that they were created from the holy ones they became the Watchers; their first origin is the spiritual foundation. They will become evil upon the earth and shall be called evil spirits. —1 Enoch 6:1-2; 7:1; 9:1, 9-10; 10:9; 15:8-9; translation from J. H. Charlesworth, Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, vol. 1

In addition to this idea in 1 Enoch, the book uses terms for these giants that is used as demons in various other Dead Sea Scrolls that support 1 Enoch.

The New Testament picks up on this idea in several places too. For example, 1 Enoch also says that the Watchers, whose transgression led to the origin of demons, were to be bound "for 70 generations underneath the rocks of the ground."

This idea is found in 2 Peter 2:4-5 where Peter, speaking about the days of Noah says, “God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment.”

You don't have to believe that the origin of demons is the Genesis 6 story or that demons are the disembodied spirits of the giant offspring of the fallen angels of that story to be saved. But all the evidence we have tells us that this is what the disciples believed about demons, and there is no other explanation provided in Scripture. Supernatural? Yes. Too supernatural to believe? I don't think so.

WHAT DID JESUS' DISCIPLES BELIEVE ABOUT GENESIS 6?

The best way to answer this is to read what they wrote about it. This is what the Apostle Peter wrote.

*For if God did not spare angels when they sinned but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment. **2 Peter 2:4 (ESV)***

*If he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly. **2 Peter 2:5 (ESV)***

This is what the Apostle Jude (not Judas) wrote.

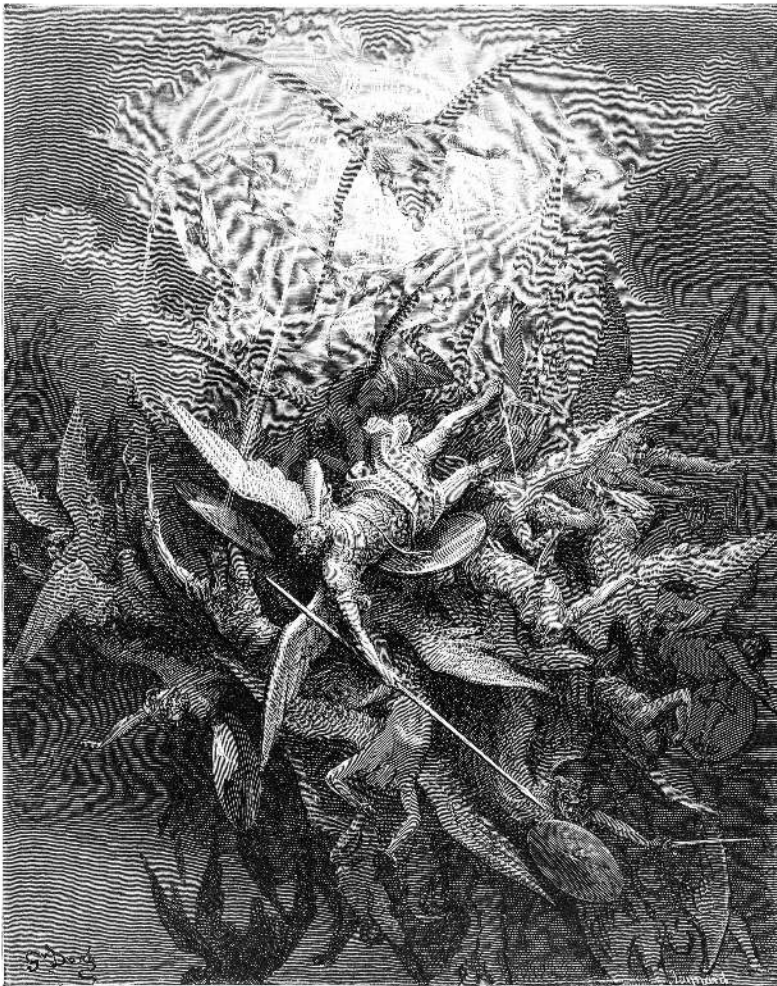
*Now I want to remind you... the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day... **Jude 1:5-6***

*Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire... **Jude 1:7***

Both passages are in the Bible. Both passages are written by Apostles who sat under Jesus' teaching. Both passages are referring to Genesis 6, because no other historical biblical event could possibly be in question. Both passages connect the sin of the Watchers with the sexual immorality of Sodom and the days of Noah.

These passages strongly support the idea that the Apostles and first century Christian believed and taught that the account in Genesis 6 is exactly what it sounds like – elohim (angels) rebelled against God, took on human form, took women to themselves, had offspring with these women who were the giants of old, and proceeded to corrupt the flesh and worship of all mankind until God judged them in the flood.

The End of Part 5



For more detailed information on the topics presented in this study I recommend four books by **Dr. Michael Heiser** *Angels, Demons, The Unseen Realm, and Supernatural*. A significant number of insights into the study presented here, especially on the three rebellions, the Divine Council, and the Tower of Babel can be found in far more detail in his books and were drawn from various material of his. I highly recommend them to anyone wanting to dig deeper into the realm of supernatural in the bible. I will recommend additional resources as the study progresses.