

What are the Nephilim?

Are they biblical giants?

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Mar/26/2026

There has been much ballyhoo about the *Nephilim* being a long-lost race of biblical giants, or is it all hyperbole (exaggeration)? As with most biblical questions, reading the passages in context and cross referencing usually reveals the answer to the query.

The term *Nephilim* only appears twice in **Tanakh** (Old Testament,) both before and after the flood. Specifically, from **Numbers 13:31-33** and **Genesis 6:2-4**.

The root of the **Hebrew** word *Nephilim* means "*to fall*" as in *one who causes others to fall*, like a mighty warrior in battle. The word does not mean angels or giants, other than warriors may be large and formidable.

Numbers 13:31-33

Before the **Israelites** entered their promised land of Canaan, **Moses** first sent spies to scout the land and people living in Canaan. The reports that came back were a bit exaggerated claiming some of the people they found, calling them Anakim, were *strong and tall* making the spies seem like grasshoppers in comparison.

But this hyperbole (exaggeration) was born from fear, and does not connote *giants*, rather large formidable humans, much like what we have today. More detail was provided in **Deuteronomy 9:2** (NIV) "*The people are strong and tall—Anakites! You know about them and have heard it said: 'Who can stand up against the Anakites?'*"

With this as context, let us examine the passage in **Numbers 13:31-33**:

Numbers 13:31-33 (NIV)

³¹ *But the men [spies] who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are."* ³² *And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size.*

³³ *We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the*

Nephilim). *We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.*

Despite the Anakites being *tall and strong*, the **Israelites** conquered Canaan and the rest is history.

To understand why "*the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim*" we must go back before the flood to **Genesis 6:2-4**.

Genesis 6:2-4 (NIV)

² *the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose.* ³ *Then the Lord said, "My spirit will not remain in humans forever, for they are corrupt; their days will be a hundred and twenty years."* ⁴ *The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.*

Here the *Nephilim* are "*heroes of old, men of renown*" with no mention of size. And the *Nephilim* come from breeding the "*sons of God*" to beautiful human women. To understand what "*the sons of God*" are, we have to go back to what is chronologically the earliest book in the bible, specifically to **Job 38:4-7**. Where **God** explained to **Job** what existed before the earth was even created:

Job 38:4-7

⁴ *"Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?
Tell me, if you understand.
⁵ Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!
Who stretched a measuring line across it?
⁶ On what were its footings set,
or who laid its cornerstone—
⁷ while the morning stars sang together
and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"*

God reveals two classes of hierarchical heavenly hosts, the "*morning stars*" and then lower in rank are the "*sons of God*." With both classes seemingly singing and joyous in heaven.

I explain what the "*morning stars*" are in my sermon "*A Detailed Description of Heaven*" but the created spirits in heaven called the "*sons of God*" are what **God** sent to earth to become humans. Spirits in heaven are neither male or female because they do not have genitals. But once they became *animals* on earth, either male or female, with genitals, they had sex with each other

to create new humans. **God** first creates the new spirits in heaven, then **God** inserts the spirits into the womb of a woman on earth.

Zechariah 12:1

*¹...The Lord, ...who forms the **human spirit** within a person, declares:*



So, the term "*sons of God*" does not mean they are all men, rather they are all *unisex* spirits who eventually became either a man or woman on earth. **Jesus** told us in **Matthew 22:30** and **Mark 12:25**, there was no marriage in heaven, because human spirits are like the angels and have no genitals with which to have sex, everyone's human spirits are absolutely equal to each other.

God, Jesus, Paul, and John claimed all the humans on earth are sons and daughters of **God**, we are all children of **God**, as the light from **God** keeps our spirits alive. But back then on earth in a male dominated society, certain "*heroes of old, men of renown*" were thought to have been born from these "*sons of God*," while women were lesser beings only needed to give birth to these *Nephilim*. The *Nephilim* are ancient lore, based on biased misunderstandings from scripture and oral traditions.

While the text in **Genesis 6:2-4** never mentions *giants*, or even being tall and strong, the lore over time grew into the legend we find in **Numbers 13:31-33**, with the spies being fearful of the tall and strong warriors they encountered and exaggerated in reports to seemingly avoid encountering them in battle.

Book of Enoch (1 Enoch)

This *Nephilim* lore was taken to the extreme in the 300-200 BC writing the **Book of Enoch (1 Enoch)** where it exploded into an elaborate story of fallen angels having sex with human women who gave birth to a race of giants (bones of which have never been found.) The first 36 chapters, called "*The Book of the Watchers*" is largely fiction born from this lore, while the second section of **1 Enoch**, chapters 37–71, called the "*Book of Parables*" which was written and appended much later, around 100 BC, is highly prophetic and accurate. **New Testament** writers even mentioned this prophetic section coming from **God**, yet never mentioned the *Nephilim* lore of giants.

Conclusion

Just as there are tall, large, and strong humans today, each containing a spirit made from **God**, so did they exist way back in biblical times. Therefore, when you hear someone claim the bible speaks of, and proves, a long-lost race of giants, you can know they are full of ballyhoo and are perpetuating ancient lore.

URL to this sermon: <https://eliasmonastery.com/Nephilim.pdf>

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