

Genesis 6:1-4 - Who Were The Giants On The Earth? And, There Is A Limit To God's Patience

Memory Verse

Genesis 3:15 NKJV (God speaking to satan)

And I will put enmity between you [satan] and the woman, and between your seed [the antichrist] and her Seed [the Messiah]; He [the Messiah] shall bruise your [satan's] head, and you [satan] shall bruise His [the Messiah's] heel."

Outline: (Genesis 6:1-4)

1. The origin of the nephilim, the demonic giants (vs 1-4)
2. The Holy Spirit has always been convicting man of his sin (v 3)
3. Faithfulness is God's measure of success (v 3)
4. There is a limit to God's patience (v 3)

Genesis 6:1-22 NKJV

The Great Flood

Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, ² that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

³ And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." ⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

Noah Pleases God

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.

The Ark Prepared

¹³ And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

¹⁴ Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. ¹⁵ And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.

¹⁶ You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷ And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸ But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—

you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹ And of every living thing

of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. ²⁰ Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive. ²¹ And you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather it to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them.” ²² Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.

1. The origin of the nephilim (demonic giants)

Genesis 6:1-4 NKJV

Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, ² that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

³ And the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” ⁴ 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.

Intermarriage between the sons of God and the daughters of men

v 1 **Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them:** This speaks of the rapid population growth that was possible because of the long life spans in the pre-flood world.

v 2, 4 **That the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose... ⁴ There were giants [Hebrew: *nephilim*, literally “fallen or mighty ones”] 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:** Here is a text that has divided many for centuries: Who are the “sons of God”? Clearly this was one of the main reasons that God destroyed the earth. The product of these ungodly marriages were **giants** or *nephilim*, meaning *fallen, apostate, or mighty ones*. Truly these evil offspring were fallen, apostate, and mighty—“**and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown**”.

There are two common theories as to who **the sons of God** were and who **the daughters of men** were:

1. The “sons of God” were the descendants of Seth, the “godly” line, and the daughters of men were from the line of Cain, the unbelieving line

Proponents or advocates of this theory see this ungodly union as simply intermarriage between believers and unbelievers. While God does prohibit this (see Deuteronomy 7:1–4 and 2 Corinthians 6:14), this theory doesn’t explain two main questions:

- a) Why would this make God so angry that He would wipe out almost all of the earth’s population?
- b) Why would these marriages produce unnatural offspring (*nephilim*, giants, mighty ones, fallen ones, apostates)?

Another argument for the “descendants of Seth” theory is Matthew 22:30, where Jesus said that angels “neither marry nor are given in marriage”. They reason that this proves that angels couldn’t procreate with human women. However, this argument also has two flaws:

- a) Jesus was comparing what it would be like for believers once they received their resurrection bodies. He said that once we have our resurrection bodies, we would no longer be getting married to another person (why? Because marriage was only a *temporary* physical picture of the *eternal* spiritual reality of the Church’s marriage to Christ). However, this does not mean that we will no longer be recognised as being male and female, only that we won’t be getting married. Thus, this is not proof that angels are “sexless”, and therefore could not procreate.
- b) Jesus was referring to faithful angels who obeyed God, who would therefore never procreate with a human woman. Rebellious angels are a different story, as we will find out. Remember also that angels usually appeared in the form of men (e.g. when they ate with Abraham, and rescued Lot from Sodom).

2. The “sons of God” were demons (fallen angels who were in rebellion against God)

What evidence is there to support this viewpoint?

- a) The phrase, “sons of God”, is only used three other times in the Old Testament. In each case it clearly refers to angelic creatures. It seems strange that the same phrase would have a different meaning in Genesis.

Job 1:6 NKJV

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 NKJV

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 NKJV

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

- b) The translators of the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) translated “sons of God” as “angels.” This shows that the Jews thought that the **sons of God** were angels, and not people descended from Seth.
- c) Jude 6 reveals to us that there were certain angels “who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode [habitation]”. Jude 7 then explains what this means by using the people of Sodom and Gomorrah as a comparison—“in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh”.

Jude 6-7 NKJV

And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; ⁷ as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

So just like the evil inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah participated in unnatural sexual acts (homosexuality), so these particular evil angels also participated in unnatural sexual acts (with human women). We also see that these particular angels are already locked up—“**He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day**”. It would seem that the reason is so that they cannot continue their evil and abnormal sexual interactions with human women.

d) 1 Peter 3:19–20 is another confirmation that there were some fallen angels (spirits) who were locked up before the others.

1 Peter 3:19-20 NKJV

By whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

It seems that Jesus was preaching to these spirits or demons who were **in prison** (or “*reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day*”—see Jude 6) about His victory over them on the cross.

A word of warning—don't go beyond what is written

All that we know is that *something* happened that involved demons and women. Exactly how or what happened is not described. If God didn't tell us exactly how, then we don't need to know.

“It is useless to speculate on the nature of this union. Whether it was brought about by something like demon possession, or whether angels have power permanently to assume the form of men is not revealed. But we should understand the occult is filled with sexual associations with the demonic, and there are those today who actively pursue such associations.” (David Guzik)

Why did satan send his angels to somehow intermarry with human women?

v 2 **And they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose:** God promised in Genesis 3:15 that the Messiah, the promised Saviour, would be the Seed of the woman. So if satan could somehow corrupt every woman, making them unfit or disqualified to be the mother of our Lord, then the Messiah could never be born.

“The Saviour could not be born of a demon-possessed mother. So if Satan could succeed in infecting the entire race, the deliverer could not come.” (Boice)

“And Satan almost succeeded. The race was so polluted that God found it necessary to start again with Noah and his sons, and to imprison the demons that did this so they could never do this again.” (David Guzik)

Who were these “mighty men who were of old, men of renown”?

v 4 **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:** Notice that this demonic sexual perversion not only happened before the flood, but also after the flood—**There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward.**

Thus it may be why every culture contains stories of giants, the most famous being those found in Greek mythology and Roman folklore. Hermes, Zeus, Apollo, Atlas, Heracles etc. These were supposed to have superhuman strength, and also be immortal. However, even in mythology, these “demigods” are attributed with personal flaws and negative emotions—they are not “good” or “holy”.

“The gods, ... of history, have very exaggerated personalities and they are plagued with personal flaws and negative emotions despite their immortality and superhero-like powers.” (www.greekgodsandgoddesses.net)

There are also Old Testament references to these “demigods”, giants, or nephilim after the flood. The spies who searched out the promised land reported, “*There we saw the giants [nephilim] (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight*” (Numbers 13:33 NKJV). There are many references to giants during the time when Israel was defeating their enemies in the land of Canaan, see Deuteronomy 2:11 and 2:20, 3:11 and 13, Joshua 12:4, 13:12, 17:15, 2 Samuel 21:16, 18, and 20, 21:22, and 1 Chronicles 20:4, 6, and 8. These references go all the way to the time of king David, with Goliath being one of the giants. No wonder the Israelites were so scared of him. Here is one of the above references:

Deuteronomy 3:11 NKJV

For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the giants (Hebrew: *rephaim*). Indeed his bedstead was an iron bedstead. (Is it not in Rabbah of the people of Ammon?) Nine cubits is its length and four cubits its width, according to the standard cubit.

This is a huge bed, for an unnaturally huge man or “giant”. Consider that a cubit is one and a half feet, or half a metre. This makes Og’s bed 14 feet by six feet, or about 5 metres by 2 metres. While we don’t know exactly how tall king Og was, we do know the height of another famous giant, Goliath.

1 Samuel 17:3-7 NLT

The Philistines were standing on one hill, and the Israelites were standing on another hill with a ravine between them. ⁴ Then a champion named Goliath, from Gath, came out from the Philistine camp. He was nine feet, nine inches [over 3 metres] tall ⁵ and wore a bronze helmet and bronze scale armour that weighed 125 pounds (about 57 kg). ⁶ There was bronze armour on his shins, and a bronze sword was slung between his shoulders. ⁷ His spear shaft was like a weaver’s beam, and the iron point of his spear weighed 15 pounds (about 7 kg).

Just try to imagine how physically intimidating Goliath was, standing almost 10 feet tall. But he wasn’t just tall, he was also very broad and incredibly strong. If the tip of his spear alone weighed 7 kg, and the shaft was the thickness of a weaver’s loom, the whole spear would have been at least 20-30 kg for the spear to be balanced. And Goliath would have been able to throw this monstrosity of a spear a long distance. This would have required super human strength. No wonder people thought of them as “gods”.

2. The Holy Spirit has always been convicting man of his sin

Genesis 6:3 NKJV

And the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”

v 3 **My Spirit shall not strive with man forever:** God has always been working in the hearts of men by His Spirit convicting them of their sin. God used Noah as a preacher of righteousness (see 2 Peter 2:5). Noah’s words could touch the ears, but only the Spirit of God could influence the heart.

Psalms 106:33 NKJV

Because they rebelled against His Spirit, so that he [Moses] spoke rashly with his lips.

Isaiah 30:1 NKJV

“Woe to the rebellious children,” says the LORD, “Who take counsel, but not of Me, and who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, that they may add sin to sin”.

Isaiah 63:10 NKJV

But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; so He turned Himself against them as an enemy, and He fought against them.

Ephesians 4:30a NKJV

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

As we have just read, the Holy Spirit has always been in the world convicting men of sin, but now in the church age He also convicts men of two other things: righteousness and judgement. This was only possible after Jesus had defeated satan and risen from the dead.

John 16:7-11 NKJV

Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. ⁸ **And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:** ⁹ of sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; ¹¹ of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

3. Faithfulness is God’s measure of success

v3 **His days shall be one hundred and twenty years:** Here we see God giving mankind 120 years advance notice of the coming flood. This is a lot of time for Noah to preach about God’s righteousness and warn the world of the coming flood. It would also give Noah enough time to build the ark and make preparations for food and supplies etc.

Hebrews 11:7 NKJV

By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

2 Peter 2:5 NKJV

and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly

For those who think that success is based on results or numbers, think again. Noah preached for 120 years, and was considered one of the three most righteous and influential prayer intercessors in the Old Testament Scriptures. Yet, after 120 years of preaching, only his own family were saved on the ark.

Ezekiel 14:12-14 NKJV

The word of the LORD came again to me, saying: ¹³ “Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. ¹⁴ Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness,” says the Lord GOD.

Faithfulness is the only measure of success that God uses, and for New Testament believers, our level of faithfulness to God will only be revealed to all at the Bema seat judgement when Christ will judge them for reward (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).

4. There is a limit to God's patience

v3 **And the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever”**: Yes, God is gracious, kind, generous, merciful, and loving. But He is also absolutely perfect, completely just and infinitely holy. For those who continue to ignore God's warnings, choosing instead to continue in their evil ways, they will find out that God's grace has limits. There will come a day when grace will end, and then they will experience God's justice. Remember, the longer a person puts off salvation, the harder their heart becomes, and the less likely they are to be saved. We must not take God's patience, His delaying of the punishment, as a sign that He approves of our sin. It's only that He is giving us more time to repent so that He doesn't have to judge us for our sin. But if we presume upon God's grace, taking it for granted, God's justice will inevitably catch up with us. Consider the following scriptures.

1 Peter 3:20b NKJV

...when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

Romans 2:4-8 NLT

Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin? [not so you can continue in it]

⁵ But because you are stubborn and refuse to turn from your sin, you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself. For a day of anger is coming, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶ He will judge everyone according to what they have done. ⁷ He will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good, seeking after the glory and honour and immortality that God offers. ⁸ But he will pour out his anger and wrath on those who live for themselves, who refuse to obey the truth and instead live lives of wickedness.

2 Peter 3:5-9 NLT

They deliberately forget that God made the heavens long ago by the word of his command, and he brought the earth out from the water and surrounded it with water. ⁶ Then he used the water to destroy the ancient world with a mighty flood. ⁷ And by the same word, the present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire. They are being kept for the day of judgment, when ungodly people will be destroyed.

⁸ But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. ⁹ The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise [of coming judgement], as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.

1 Peter 4:3-5 NKJV

For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. ⁴ In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. ⁵ They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

For me, one of the the saddest passages in the New Testament is in John 12, where the leaders of Israel made the choice to not believe in the Messiah. Yes, Isaiah foresaw this happening, but that doesn't mean that God forced them to not believe. God's foreknowledge is just that, foreknowledge of what will happen in the future, including the free choices that every man will make. We must learn from their example—those who would choose to not believe, despite seeing all the miraculous signs that Jesus did, only hardened their hearts to God, and God eventually gave them what they wanted—a life without Him—God honoured their free choice.

John 12:37-40 HCSB

Even though He had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in Him [this was their free choice to make]. ³⁸ But this was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet, who said: Lord, who has believed our message? And who has the arm of the Lord been revealed to?

³⁹ This is why they were unable to believe [this is the consequence of their continual refusal to listen to the conviction of the Holy Spirit], because Isaiah also said: ⁴⁰ He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so that they would not see with their eyes or understand with their hearts, and be converted, and I would heal them.

v 3 **My Spirit shall not strive with man forever:** “God did not allow the human race to stay in this rebellious place forever. This means there is a “point of no return” in our rejection of God. God will not woo us forever; there is a point where He will say “no more.”” (David Guzik)

Listen to what the Holy Spirit says to us regarding the hardening effect sin has on our hearts.

Hebrews 3:7-13 NLT

That is why the Holy Spirit says, “Today when you hear His voice, ⁸ don't harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled, when they tested Me in the wilderness. ⁹ There your ancestors tested and tried My patience, even though they saw My miracles for forty years. ¹⁰ So I was angry with them, and I said, ‘Their hearts always turn away from Me. They refuse to do what I tell them.’ ¹¹ So in my anger I took an oath: ‘They will never enter My place of rest.’”

¹² Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. ¹³ You must warn each other every day, while it is still “today,” so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God.

A prayer: God please make my heart soft so that I will not sin against You. Please help me to not be deceived and think that I can continue to sin without suffering the consequences of that sin eventually. Please help me to understand that the reason that You postpone the consequences is to give me more time to repent, and not because You approve of my sin. I am sorry for grieving Your Holy Spirit and making You sad. Please forgive me for hurting You. Please help me to see just how horribly my sin affects You and others around me. Thankyou for Your promises that I have everything I need to live a godly life. Please help me to trust you more. In Jesus name, Amen.