

Origin of Demons

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For Discussion: Your Questions Answered

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When I was preparing this Deep Dive Bible study, I discovered some interesting new details about the Marfa Lights. Apparently, the source of the lights has been narrowed down to originating on a ranch south of Marfa. This ranch is reportedly haunted by chickens.

- They have long had a problem on this ranch with poultrygeists, which are fowl spirits.
- I understand that people are starting to refer to that ranch as the “Feather-Walker Ranch.”

Where do demons come from?

PW Answers: A typical answer to the origin of demons is to refer to the non-canonical book of Enoch...

1 Enoch 15:8-9 – *“And now, the giants, who are produced from the spirits and flesh, shall be called evil spirits upon the earth, and on the earth shall be their dwelling. Evil spirits have proceeded from their bodies; because they are born from men and from the holy Watchers is their beginning and primal origin; they shall be evil spirits on earth, and evil spirits shall they be called.”*

The oldest copy of this book is from the Dead Sea Scrolls (around 200 BC). This teaches that fallen watcher angels came down and mated with human women and produced giant offspring (Genesis 6:1-4).

Why isn’t the book of Enoch in the Bible?

It was not accepted into the Jewish-Christian canon because it contains late, extra-biblical material and claims that the church’s canon judges found to be non-apostolic or non-prophetic. In plain terms:

- It was written by someone using Enoch’s name to gain authority; that counted against its canonicity.
- It contains extensive angelology detail tied to noncanonical traditions which made the early church doubt its inspiration.

- The Book of Enoch failed to gain widespread, consistent acceptance among the fathers of the church as a divinely inspired, authoritative book in the way the recognized Scriptures did.
- Even when the book was known or even cited by some writers (for example Jude cites an Enoch tradition), that did not establish it as canonical.

What is the value of the book of Enoch?

As historical and cultural background... The Book of Enoch can be a helpful resource that enriches our understanding of Jewish apocalyptic thought and certain New Testament references, and it can provoke useful devotional reflection — but it is subordinate to and judged by the inspired, canonical Scriptures.

According to the book of Enoch, what happened when the Nephilim died in the flood?

After these physical giants died, their spirits continued on, roaming the earth as evil wicked spirits (also called demonic spirits).

What did the early church believe about the origin of demons?

Many early church fathers agreed with the framework of 1 Enoch 15 as to the origin of demonic spirits...

- Justin Martyr (165AD), Athenagoras of Athens (180AD), Lactantius (c. 250-325AD).

Other early church fathers taught that the Genesis 6 affair involved fallen angels mating with human women and agreed with the overall framework of 1 Enoch's perspective.

- This included Irenaeus (200AD) and Clement of Alexandria (210AD).

Others such as Origen (250AD) and Augustine (400AD) rejected the supernatural view of Genesis 6 and equated demons with fallen angels.

Does the Bible support the idea that demons came from dead Nephilim?

Mondo Gonzales believes there is some biblical evidence for the origins of demons without the need to quote the non-canonical book of 1 Enoch.

- In theology and linguistics, scholars often will use the terms (synchronic and diachronic).
- A synchronic study examines a language at a specific point in time, usually a defined historical stage, without focusing on how it developed.
- A diachronic study examines how a language changes over time. Let's look at this from a diachronic perspective...

What does Scripture tell us about the Nephilim?

In the Bible, the word Nephilim only appears twice (Genesis 6:4, Numbers 13:33):

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 (NASB)*

Moses connects the Anakim to the Nephilim giants (cf. Deut 9:2). He also links other very tall hybrid giant tribes...

Deut 2:10-11 – *The Emim lived there formerly, a people as great, numerous, and tall as the Anakim. Like the Anakim, they are also regarded as Rephaim, but the Moabites call them Emim.*

So, the word Rephaim (ref-ah-eme) along with Nephilim seem to be the broadest generic descriptors of the angel/human hybrid giant class of beings.

- Since Nephilim only appears twice in the Bible, it doesn't help us except to link the other giant tribes back to the origin story of Genesis 6:1-4.

Who were the Rephaim?

The Rephaim (or Rephaites) were giants. The name of these people literally means "terrible ones." The Hebrew word Rephaim has two distinct meanings:

- In poetic literature it refers to departed spirits whose dwelling place was Sheol. It is a figurative description of the dead, similar to our concept of a ghost.
- The second meaning of Rephaim is "a mighty people with tall stature who lived in Canaan." The word doesn't seem to be ethno-centric like "Jew" or "Egyptian" but is more of a descriptive term.

What are ghosts?

They are demons masquerading as the spirits of dead humans.

What does Scripture tell us about the Rephaim?

The Rephaim giants appear first in Genesis 14:5 and 15:20. Not long after the flood, some fallen angels must have once again mated with human women.

Genesis 6:4 – *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.*

The post-flood fallen angels causing giants to be born is not mentioned specifically in the Bible except in this passage.

- In the early biblical books of Moses and Joshua Rephaim is always and only used of physical giants (Gen 14:5; 15:20; Deut 2:11,20,31,13, Josh 12:4,13:12; once later in 1 Chron 20:4).
- However, some later poetic uses of the Hebrew word Rephaim in the Bible refer to departed evil spirits who cause mischief and are associated with Sheol (the underworld).

What were the giants in Canaan?

The "giants" in Canaan were local peoples described in the Old Testament by names like the Nephilim (Numbers 13:32-33), the Anakim (sons of Anak), the Rephaim/Raphaim, Horim, Zuzim, and others

Why were there post-flood giants in Canaan?

As a test for Israel... The first generation of the Exodus from Egypt failed the test except for Joshua and Caleb. But under Joshua's leadership, Israel dealt with them.

- There were lingering pockets of giants that Israel, and specifically King David had to eliminate.

How did the Rephaim come to refer to departed spirits whose dwelling place was Sheol?

- **Physical Giants:** Originally, the Rephaim were known in the Bible as a powerful, tall, ancient people or "giants" living in Canaan.
- **The "Weak" Dead:** The Hebrew word *Rephaim* (רָפָאִים) is often associated with the root *raphah*, meaning "to weaken," "sink," or "relax". Therefore, it came to describe the dead as "the weak ones" or "shades" whose strength has departed.
- **Poetic and Spiritual Association:** In biblical poetry and prophetic texts (e.g., Isaiah 14:9, Psalm 88:10), the term shifted to describe departed spirits or ghosts in Sheol, representing the state of the dead.

What is Sheol?

Sheol is the Old Testament term for the realm of the dead, literally “the grave” or “death.” It is synonymous with the New Testament term “Hades.”

- Jesus shed light on Hades in Luke 16 in the story of the rich man & Lazarus. Before the cross of Christ, Hades had two partitions: **Torments** where those who rejected God’s provision for eternal life go, and **Abraham’s Bosom** where those faithful to God go after death.
- Since the cross, Abraham’s Bosom was moved to Heaven so that all who die trusting in Jesus for their salvation go to be with Him (2 Cor 5:8).

How were the giants connected to departed spirits in Isaiah 17:5?

Isaiah 17:5 – *It shall be as when the harvester gathers the grain, and reaps the heads with his arm; It shall be as he who gathers heads of grain in the Valley of Rephaim.*

It is interesting that the Rephaim are mentioned here in the context of the harvest which is symbolic of God’s judgment.

Where do we see the reference to Rephaim in Isaiah 14:9 which addresses the ultimate demise of Satan?

Isaiah 14:9 – *Hell from beneath is excited about you, to meet you at your coming; It stirs up the dead for you, all the chief ones of the earth; It has raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.*

You have to go to a Hebrew Lexicon to discover it... the Hebrew word translated “the dead” is the same word for “Rephaim” in other passages.

- Indeed, the Strong’s Hebrew Lexicon has different reference numbers for the same Hebrew word:
- H7496 translated “the dead” also refers to “ghosts of the dead, shades, spirits.”
- H7497 is only translated “Rephaim.”
- The context determines which understanding is meant by the Hebrew word.

What is the connection between the departed spirits of the Rephaim with demons?

The departed spirits of the dead were once human, but the Nephilim/Rephaim were hybrid humans. So, the word Rephaim connects the physical giants with later departed spirits associated with Sheol.

How does the behavior of demons reinforce the idea that they are the spirits of Nephilim and Rephaim?

- They have the agenda of their fallen angel fathers in that they oppose God everywhere they can.

- They seek to possess bodies whenever they can... they once had a body and thus are most at home in the possession of a body.

Why should the departed spirits of Nephilim/Rephaim not be confused with the departed spirits of humans?

Humans are in the image of God and thus have a triune nature of body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess 5:23).

Hebrews 4:12 – *the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

The human soul is our inner self; our personality, intellect, and the seat of our emotions. The human spirit is that part of our inner self that has the capacity to know God; we’re born dead to the things of God until we’re born again.

- Spirits of the Nephilim/Rephaim refer to their inner selves similar to the human soul but lacking a human spirit that has the capacity to know God.

What is the prophetic significance of Nephilim and Rephaim mixing it up with humans?

Matthew 24:37 – *as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be*

While the context indicates that the primary meaning of this is that people will be oblivious to the coming judgment of God, it also implies that conditions that led to the Flood will be similar: violence, no thoughts of God, and altering human DNA (Nephilim).

- Transhumanists seek to accelerate the evolution of humans by altering DNA to have immortality.
- One of the promises of AI data centers is to develop custom vaccines for cancer and other human genetic afflictions.
- It is likely the Mark of the Beast includes some change of human DNA since it cannot be repented of (Revelation 14:9-10). Jesus died for humans only.

What applications do we see from our discussion today?

- It is likely that the demons are the departed spirits of Nephilim and Rephaim.
- The effort to “fix” human DNA reveals how close we are to the end of the Age.