

THE NEPHILIM "A Comparison of Judgments"

*Thus far, we have asked the question, why did God command genocide? Our question led us to an examination of the term "sons of God" or **ben elohym** in Hebrew. We saw that the term (and its counterpart ideal in the New Testament) referred to direct creative or birthing acts of Father God. Angels, born again believers, The Lord Jesus Christ, and Adam are all referred to as sons of God. As used in the Old Testament, we saw that the term "sons of God" used in Genesis 6 meant angels. We saw how these spirit beings were part of the council of the Lord and how Satan had access into God's council chambers. Though cast to the earth, he is not yet bound to it. In the book of Ephesians he is called "the prince and the power of the air."*

We then looked at three specific words in God's direction to man: subdue, have dominion, and keep. We saw how all these terms in the Hebrew have a militant nuance and their combination in God's commands to Adam reveal the existent presence of an enemy when the injunction was given.

Gen 2:8-9; 15-17

- 8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.
- 9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the **midst** of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
- 15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to **keep it**.
- 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:
- 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (KJV)

The tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil were in the center of the garden. Adam was placed in the garden not only to dress it (cultivate or work it), but also to keep it (guard it, protect it, watch over it). When an invasion occurs, what is the first thing breached? The borders. Defenses are usually built up at the borders. In the days of hand-to-hand combat, nations would have border garrisons, then cities would have walls. Inside the city walls would be a deeper fortification, the castle or fortress, with further defenses of moats, ramparts, and walls. The point is this, if you were going to invade, you had to make your way past all these defenses to get to the center.

Gen 3:1-6

- 1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?
- 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:
- 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.
- 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. (KJV)

*The original sin occurred in the middle of this garden, where the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life stood. The serpent was in the center of the garden. Adam had failed to guard the way to the tree of life and after his sin was replaced in this post by cherubim (Gen. 3:24). I don't know if that can be emphasized too much. Adam had the responsibility of guarding the garden. He was created male (Heb. **zakar**, remembered, from a root which means to remember) and according to the strict narrative, it was he who received the original prohibition.*

1 Tim 2:14a "And Adam was not deceived. . ." (KJV)

Whether Adam witnessed the conversation between the woman and serpent or simply heard it from her second hand, the record is still clear, he was not deceived. How could he have been? He had named all the animals, thus demonstrating at once his superiority over them and their speechlessness (they could not name themselves). Also, he had seen all living creatures and among them was not found one such as himself (a help meet, a helping counterpart). He had seen the serpent and named it. If he had heard or heard of the serpent talking, he must have known right off that something else was at work. He was not deceived. He sinned willfully, knowing full well whose voice he had followed. In consequence, mankind was thrust from the garden and Adam was replaced in his role as guardian of the garden by the cherubim with the flaming sword.

There is another guardian of the garden mentioned in Scripture. As Adam was not replaced until he sinned, so this guardian was not fired (and later replaced) until after his sin.

Ezek 28:12-16

12 "Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "'You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared.

14 You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones.

15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.

16 Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. (NIV)

Some propose that the devil became jealous of man when God created Adam and gave him the

position of guarding the garden. In this frame of thought, the devil became prideful (thinking himself slighted by God and better than man) and his sin was tempting man to disobey God. Though tempting man was a sin (for which he was cursed and his destruction foreordained - Gen. 3:14-15), I don't think the record makes a case for it being his original sin.

First of all, the garden of God (a recurrent theme in the Word of God) described here in Ezekiel is primarily mineral. Precious stones, fiery stones, and the mount of God is mentioned, but trees are not. Some may argue that vegetation is inherent in the term "garden." This may very well be true (though the concept of a "rock garden" is not unfamiliar), but the character of the things surrounding the guardian cherub as described in Ezekiel is mineral. Though Gen. 2:12 mentions gold and onyx, the rest of the garden description surrounding Adam is botanical. There is a marked difference in character.

Second, why would God replace a guardian if the guardian was doing his job? Adam was not thrown out of the garden and replaced in his role as a guard until after he sinned. The "anointed cherub that covereth" was not thrown out until after he sinned.

Thus it seems from the words used in the Genesis 1 account that an enemy was present on earth when God placed man in the garden. Therefore subjugation, domination, and guarding were all necessary. How could this state of affairs been "very good"? The same way the Millennial Kingdom will be "very good." Not because there is no devil there, but because he is bound. Man's job was to bind God's enemies. At this, our father Adam failed. At this, our Lord Jesus succeeded.

I Jn 3:8b

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. (NIV)

John 16:33

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (NIV)

Heb 2:14-15

14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death-- that is, the devil--

15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. (NIV)

I Jn 4:4

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. (NIV)

What judgments did Lucifer receive for his revolt?

Ezek 28:16-19

16 Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you

in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones.

17 Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.

18 By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching.

19 All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more." (NIV)

Isa 14:9-15

9 Hell [*sheol*] from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead [*Rephaites*] for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

10 All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?

11 Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. (KJV)

Rev 12:3-4

3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads.

4 His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. (NIV)

He and his minions were cast down, thrown out, and defrocked. His ultimate and future demise was foretold. But he wasn't bound. As we saw in Job, he could still access the throne room of God.

Matt 12:28-29

28 But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

29 "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house. (NIV)

Jesus bound the strong man in his earthly ministry. That which is incarcerated needs no binding. You bind that which is loose. There is a time coming when satan will be incarcerated.

Rev 20:1-3

1 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his

hand a great chain.

2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.

3 He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. (NIV)

But at present, he is at work and still called "the prince of the power of the air."

Eph 2:2

Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: (KJV)

To summarize, Helel (Lucifer), the light-bearer, the worship leader in heaven willed to be like the Most High and desecrated the heavenly sanctuary with his trafficking (the co-opting of other angels in his rebellion). For this sin, he lost his position in heaven and was cast to earth, where he was to be under the dominion of Adam, male and female. By deception, he caused the woman to sin and she in turn the man. The Serpent would be crushed by the seed of the woman. But in the meantime, he had gained dominion over man and man's former charge, the earth (Luke 4:6). You may wonder why he is still fighting God. One reason is, he is still free to do so.

In contrast, let us look at some other spirits mentioned in Scripture.

2 Pet 2:4-9

4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to **hell**¹, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment;

5 if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others;

6 if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;

7 and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men

8 (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)--

9 if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. (NIV)

Strong's definition-

5020 **tartaroo**¹ (tar-tar-o'-o); from Tartaros (the deepest abyss of Hades); to incarcerate in eternal torment: KJV-- cast down to hell. [Literally: to cast into Tartarus.]

Here in 2 Peter we have a reference to sinning angels who were bound in the dungeons of Tartarus (vs. 4), punishing them while they await final judgment (vs. 9). This is the only use of tartaroo in Scripture and as such, the only direct reference to Tartarus. Tartarus is a term borrowed from Greek mythology. It is the place where the Titans, who were the children of Uranus (heaven) and Ge (earth), were incarcerated after their rebellion against their father was put down by Zeus. In Greek mythology, Tartarus is a dismal place, as far beneath Hades as

earth is below heaven.

Who were these angels and how did they sin? The Apostle Peter mentions these incarcerated angels in connection with Noah, the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah and their destruction. This is not coincidental. The devil and his angels are represented as free until bound at the start of the Millennial reign (Matt. 12:24-28; 25:41; Rev. 12:7-9; 20:1-3). If it was simply the original rebellion against God that caused the angels to be cast into Tartarus and bound in chains of darkness, why are the devil and his angels still roaming? That a place of incarceration and torment exists that is worse than the current fate of demons (Eph. 6:11-12, Matt. 12:43-45) is evidenced by their reactions and supplications to Jesus.

Luke 8:30-31

30 Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him.

31 And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss¹. (NIV)

Matt 8:29

And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? (KJV)

The legion of demons in this man were afraid and accusative. They did not want to be cast into the Abyss ("to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment") or be tortured "before the time" ("while continuing their punishment"). Apparently, there was a place that was worse for the demons than the "dry places" of Matt. 12:43. Peter mentions spirits in prison in his first epistle as well.

1 Pet 3:18-20

18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,

19 through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison

20 who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, (NIV)

1 Peter clearly states that these spirits were in prison for disobedience done "in the days of Noah." Tartarus was not the punishment and prison for the angels who rebelled with satan. It is a prison house where spirits who "disobeyed . . . in the days of Noah" were cast. For what sin?

Jude 1:6-7

6 And the angels which kept [5083] not their first estate [746], but left [620] their own habitation [3613], he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. (KJV)

¹See Rev. 20:1-3 with regard to the Abyss.

Jude 6 states that angels were put into chains and reserved for the day of judgment for not keeping their first estate and leaving their own habitation. Examining Thayer's definitions of the Greek words in this verse adds further light on the subject.

Thayer's definitions-

5083 tereo- to attend to carefully, to take care of

- a) to guard
- b) metaphorically, to keep, one in the state in which he is
- c) to observe
- d) to reserve: to undergo something

746 arche-

- 1) beginning, origin
- 2) the person or thing that commences, the first person or thing in a series, the leader
- 3) that by which anything begins to be, the origin, the active cause
- 4) the extremity of a thing; used of the corners of a sail
- 5) the first place, principality, rule, magistracy; used of angels and demons [See Rom. 8:38; Eph. 6:12; 1:21]

620 apoleipo-

- 1) to leave, to leave behind
- 2) to desert, to forsake

3613 oiketerion-

a dwelling place, a habitation;

used of the body as a dwelling place for the spirit [See 2 Cor. 5:1-2. Translated "house" in verse 2 (KJV), its only other usage in Scripture.]

Putting these definitions together with a mind to the context of Genesis 6 and the information in Peter's epistles, we get:

The angels which did not keep themselves in the state (the form of existence) in which they were in, their principality, rule or magistracy, but deserted and forsook the body and dwelling place of their spirit "he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

On the heels of this information comes verse 7, "even as Sodom. . . in like manner. . . going after strange flesh." The sin of the angels, which was accomplished through the abandonment of their principle position, state of being, and body and place of habitation is compared to the sins of Sodom, Gomorrha, and the cities round about that were involved in fornication (illicit sexual intercourse) and going after "strange flesh." What is "strange flesh"? The Greek word for "strange" is heteros. Following is Vine's definition and comparison of the Greek words allos and heteros, both translated "another" in various places in the King James Version.

ANOTHER

allos ^243^ and heteros ^2087^ have a difference in meaning, which despite a tendency

to be lost, is to be observed in numerous passages. *Allos* expresses a numerical difference and denotes "another of the same sort"; *heteros* expresses a qualitative difference and denotes "another of a different sort." (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words) (Copyright (C) 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

The sin committed by Sodom and Gomorrha was not restricted to homosexuality, according to Jude. By definition, homosexuality would be going after flesh too much like our own. Homosexuality was bad enough, but they had committed sin more heinous than that. They had gone after flesh "unlike their own." The sin of Sodom and Gomorrha included bestiality, strictly forbidden by God.

Lev 18:22-25 (NIV)

22 "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.

23 "Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion.

24 "Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled.

25 Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.

Lev 20:15-16

15 "If a man has sexual relations with an animal, he must be put to death, and you must kill the animal.

16 "If a woman approaches an animal to have sexual relations with it, kill both the woman and the animal. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads. (NIV)

Deut 27:21

"Cursed is the man who has sexual relations with any animal." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!" (NIV)

In God's direction to Moses, he let the prophet know that the Canaanites had involved themselves in child sacrifice, homosexuality, and bestiality and for these reasons, they were going to be driven out of the land by the nation of Israel under the Lord's direction. We will shortly see where the impetus for such sins came.

Gen 19:1-5

1 The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.

2 "My lords," he said, "please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning." "No," they answered, "we will spend the night in the square."

3 But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate.

4 Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom-- both young and old-- surrounded the house.

5 They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them." (NIV)

Here in the Genesis account, we see the men of Sodom so consumed with lust that they sought to have sex with God's emissaries. Here we see going after strange flesh in the other direction, men desiring to fornicate with angels. As in the case of the Canaanite peoples, the region of Sodom and Gomorrha was infested with the presence of the Rephaites.

Jude compares the sin of the angels to the sin of Sodom and Gomorrha, that of "men" going after bodies unlike their own for the purpose of sexual gratification. In other words, a man having sex with an animal is compatible to an angelic being having sex with a human.

This sin God punished more severely and more swiftly than satan's rebellion. The angels that caused it in Noah's day were incarcerated, as were any angels who tried it subsequently. The severe judgment and condemnation of God on the angelic beings who sinned as described by Peter and Jude tell us of the seriousness of the crime. They transgressed what I call the "law of the seed."

Merrill F. Unger, he of the Unger Bible Dictionary fame, called "one of the most influential evangelical Bible scholars of this century" has this to say regarding the "sons of God" and the Nephilim of Genesis 6:

Again, if the "sons of God" are simply pious Sethites who mixed with the Cainites, the prominent question is left unexplained as to why their progeny would have been "giants," . . . The Septuagint [a Greek translation of the Old Testament done by Alexandrian Jews] translators' rendering of the expression by "giants" (*gigantes*) seems clearly an indication that they thought of the *nephilim* in this passage . . . as the offspring of the sons of God (angels) and the daughters of men (mortal women); for the basic idea of the Greek term is not monstrous size, which is a secondary and developed meaning, but *gegenes*, "earth-born," and employed of the Titans who were partly of celestial and partly of terrestrial origin. These monstrous beings of mixed birth [according to Greek mythology] rebelled against their father Uranus (Heaven), and after a prolonged contest were defeated by Zeus and thrown into Tartarus.

The real and original idea in the mind of the ancient translators . . . may well have been "fallen ones," or monsters of mixed human and angelic birth, who, like the rebellious Titans, were exceedingly wicked and violent, so that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5).

Since they [the angels] chose to leave their own realm and to break the bounds and God-ordained laws of two worlds, to work havoc and vicious confusion, God wiped out the results of their disorder with a flood, and dashed them down to the lowest dungeons (Tartarus) to deprive them forever of the opportunity of causing further derangement. The region of their imprisonment appears to be a more doleful and terrible place of confinement than Hades, and is clearly distinguished from Gehenna (Rev. 19:20; 20:10). In Greek mythology Tartarus was a dismal abode, as far beneath Hades as earth is below heaven, and significantly considered the prison-house of the Titans.²

When the Lord God set this earth in order, he put a law in place we would do well to heed. All the creatures were to be "after his kind." Plants, animals, and man were to reproduce after their own species. This order of the creation was reaffirmed by the Levitical law.

Lev 19:19

"Keep my decrees. "Do not mate different kinds of animals. "Do not plant your field with

²Merrill F. Unger, *Biblical Demonology*, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Mich. 1994, p. 48-50

two kinds of seed. "Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material. (NIV)

God would not have diverse species mating, two kinds of seed sown in the same field, or even clothing woven out of two fabrics (poly-cotton anyone?). The sons of God transgressed this law and were cast into Tartarus. Their progeny the Scriptures refers to as Nephilim, among other things. We must proceed to see how this could have happened and in what ways were the Nephilim a threat to God's plan of redemption.