

**The Inscrutable Question: *Nephilim* Detained behind the Sea Gates of the Abyss, Rev 20:13; 9:1-2, 11; 11:7; Lk 8:30-31; Job 38:8-9; Gen 7:11; 9:11-13; Psm 33:7; Rev 20:1-3**

- 21- In Luke 8:26-33 we find the account where the Lord encountered a man possessed by a legion of demons at the city of Gerasa /GER-a-sa /. The exchange between the demon spokesman and the Lord begins at:

**Luke 8:30** - And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered the man.

**v. 31** - And they [ **the legion of demons** ] were entreating Jesus not to command them to depart into the Abyss [ ἄβυσσος / **Abussos** / ].

- 22- It is apparent that these demons had violated a rule of engagement in the appeal trial. There is obviously a limit on how many demons are permitted to possess one individual and they had gone way over it. As a result they repeatedly pled with the Lord not to detain them in the Abyss.
- 23- This verse among others is what gives us the clue that the Abyss is the place of detention for fallen angels who violate the rules of engagement for the appeal trial.
- 24- It is also obvious that the *Nephilim* also violated the rules of engagement by the fact they had to a person rejected the Gospel message made clear to them by Noah and secondly, that their behavior was characterized by lust and violence.

**Genesis 6:13** - Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them [ **the Nephilim** ]; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.

- 25- In Luke 8:31, the word used in the King James Version to translate ἄβυσσος / *Abussos* / is "deep." This is the word used by its translators for the Hebrew word, תְּהוֹם / *tehom* / in:

**Genesis 1:2** - But the earth became desolate and empty; and absolute darkness was on the face of the raging waters [ **KJV: "the deep"** ].

- 26- From this we can see that there is a connection between the Abyss and water. Better clarity comes from an analysis of the Hebrew word תְּהוֹם / *tehom* /:

**Harris, R. Laird. *Theological Wordbook of the New Testament*. Vol. 2. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 965-66:**

Deep, depths, deep places; a large body of water; seas or the ocean; The root word referred merely to deep waters and this meaning was kept in Hebrew as a noun for water in the deep ocean and deep in the ground.

**Wilson, William. *Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies*. (McLean: Mac Donald Publishing Co.), 113:**

A mass of raging waters, specifically, the ocean or the sea, or the deep; more rarely of any other mass of waters, as those covering the earth at the creation, Genesis 1:2; the abyss.

**Jenni, Ernst and Claus Westermann. *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Vol. 3. (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 1410ff:**

*Tehom* is the Hebrew form of the common Semitic word for "sea." *Tehom* means "deep" or "waters of the deep." *Tehom* can acquire the specific connotation of the deep waters, the depths.

The best-known passages that usually serve as the basis for the explanation of the word *tehom* are those in the Pentateuch narratives concerning creation in Genesis 1:2 and the flood in Genesis 7:11; 8:2. The Pentateuch portrays the beginning and the end of the flood such that "the sources of the great flood" opened and closed again. *Tehom* describes the water under the earth that breaks through the surface of the earth and thus brings about the catastrophe.

The Septuagint translates *tehom* almost regularly with "Ἀβύσσος / *Abussos* / . Early Judaism and the New Testament shift the meaning of *tehom* and *abussos* to the depths of the earth as the prison of spirits and as the world of the dead.

- 27- The indication is that the subterranean waters, those enclosed under the surface of the earth, be they under land or under the sea, were allowed to burst free and, along with the waters of the seas and oceans, supply enough water to flood the entire earth. We can see this idea presented by the Lord in his message to Job in:

**Job 38:8** - "Who enclosed the sea with doors, when, bursting forth, it went out from the womb;

**v. 9** - when I made a cloud its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band."

- 28- Although this passage describes the universal flood of Genesis 1:2, the same mechanics were involved in Noah's flood as well. The word "doors" in verse 8 is *delet* and means "doors" or "gates."
- 29- Apparently, the suboceanic waters, i.e., those below the ocean floor, are prevented from spewing forth by means of "doors" or "gates." On two occasions, it has been God's desire to unleash these powerful waters from the deep, once in Genesis 1:2 and again in Genesis 7:11.

**Genesis 7:11** - In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened.

**v. 12** - And the rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.

- 30- The phrase, "fountains of the great deep" is made up of two Hebrew words:

מַעַן / *mayan* / - "fountains, or springs" plus the noun:

תְּהוֹם / *tehom* / - "deep": or better, "the Abyss."

*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 2, s.v. "מַעַן / *mayan* /":

In Genesis 7:11, presumably the reference is to suboceanic sources.

- 31- Following Noah's flood it was God's sovereign decision to issue a covenant to Noah regarding these subterranean and suboceanic sources of water:

**Genesis 9:11** - "I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth."

**v. 12** - And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations;

**v. 13** - I set My bow in the cloud and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth."

- 32- What allowed the flood to subside was the return of the subterranean waters to their respective places. The waters from the Abyss that had emerged on land flowed back into their suboceanic "shafts" as noted in Revelation 9:1-2.
- 33- The suboceanic waters from the Abyss that had emerged up into the waters of the sea flowed back into their chambers below the ocean's floor. We get a clue about this from:

**Psalm 33:7** - He gathers the waters of the sea together in a container; He lays up the deeps [ תְּהוֹם / *tehom* /: **suboceanic waters** ] in storehouses.

- 34- Once these waters had returned to their “containers,” or “storehouses,” the Lord slammed the doors shut and sealed them. Our final piece of evidence is from the detention of Lucifer that is executed at the beginning of the millennial reign of Christ:

**Revelation 20:1** - Then I saw an angel come down from heaven carrying a key to the Abyss and giant chains in his hand.

**v. 2** - And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, even Satan, and imprisoned him for 1,000 years,

**v. 3** - and violently threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him so that he should no longer deceive the nations; after these things he must be released for a short time.

- 35- The word for “locked” is the aorist active indicative of the verb:

κλείω / *kleio* / - “to shut up; close; lock”

aorist: Constative; contemplates the action in its entirety and gathers it into a single whole. However long it took the angel to lock the Abyss it is viewed as a completed action.

active: The angel produced the action of the verb.

indic.: A statement of biblical fact regarding a future event.

- 36- The word for “sealed” is the aorist active indicative of the verb:

σφραγίζω / *sphragizo* / - “to seal with a sense of security and permanency; to make something fixed and certain.”

aorist: Culminative; the action is viewed in its entirety but emphasizes its existing results. The angel has completed the action of securely binding Satan in the Abyss by locking and placing upon it a seal which carries with it both plenipotentiary power and authority. This sealing is legally valid and cannot be broken except by God Himself at the closing period of the Millennium.

active: The angel produces the action of sealing Satan into the Abyss for 1,000 years.

indic. A statement of biblical fact regarding a future event.

- 37- We have noted the word for “seal” or σφραγίζω / *sphragizo* / in recent studies. It is used for the sealing of the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 1:13 and indicates the eternal security of the believer. It is used in the sealing of the Lord’s tomb in Matthew 27:66 where it guarded against unlawful opening by the high-priests and Pharisees.

- 38- Just as the angel locked and sealed the shaft to the Abyss in which he had chained Satan for 1,000 years, so the Lord locked and sealed the Sea Gates of the Abyss so that the *Nephilim* could not escape until their arraignment before the Great White Throne.

**Revelation 20:13a** - Then the sea gates of the Abyss gave up the dead, those *Nephilim* in it; death and Hades gave up the dead, those in them. And they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.

- 39- I have been asked this question, “How did the *Nephilim* sin since they were the offspring of human women and angels?”

Good question. Here's the answer. The sinful nature is passed down through the male in procreation. This is why our Lord was born without a sinful nature. Since there was no human father involved in the pregnancy of Mary then His cell structure did not contain any DNA encoding for a sinful nature.

The only way the Lord could have sinned would have been from His own volition. But although under the principle of *posse non peccare* it was possible for Him to sin, we know that He did not from:

**Hebrews 4:15** - For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

We have also learned from our study of the angels that they have perfect bodies and eternal life from the moment of their creation. Consequently they not only do not have sinful natures but the perfect structure of their bodies means they did not have one to pass down in their procreation with the human women.

Consequently, these *Nephilim* were born half angel and half man but without a sinful nature. So how was it possible for them to sin? The same way it was possible for their fathers to sin. The fallen angels sinned by means of their own volition. Adam and Ishah sinned from their own volition. So did the *Nephilim*.

They sinned in two demonstrable ways. First of all, they did not respond to the ongoing ministry of Noah who evangelized them throughout the 120-year period of grace. Secondly, they were all involved in a global campaign of terror and violence. This is confirmed in:

**Genesis 6:11** - Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence.

**v. 12** - And God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.

**v. 13** - Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of the Nephilim; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth."

- 40- The fallen angels were tried and judged in eternity past. The *Nephilim* are creatures who were born, not created as were their angelic fathers. Therefore angelic half of the *Nephilim* has not been judged.
- 41- The *Nephilim* are also half human, but due to the fact there was no human father involved in the pregnancy of their mothers, they were born without a sinful nature or the imputation of Adam's original sin.
- 42- Instead, they all sinned by means of the same attribute possessed by their angelic and human parents, the function of their own free will or volition.