



Nefilim

The present state of the Moon and of Mars and other celestial bodies does not imply that in the past they were equally desolate. Concerning Mars and Moon we have the testimony of our ancestors, supported by modern observations, that these bodies were engaged in near-collisions only a few thousand years ago. It is not excluded that under conditions prevailing on their surfaces prior to these events, life could have developed there or elsewhere in the solar system to an advanced stage.

Working in the early 1940's on *Worlds in Collision*, which in its original form covered also the cataclysmic events preceding the Exodus, I wondered at a certain description that sounded like a visit from space.⁽¹⁾

The sixth chapter of the book of Genesis starts this way:

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God [*bnei Elim*] saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.⁽²⁾

The story told in Genesis VI about the sons of God (*bnei Elim*) coming to the daughters of men is usually explained as referring to an advanced priesthood that mingled with backward tribesmen.⁽³⁾ When Columbus discovered America, the natives, according to the diary of his first voyage, regarded him and his crew as having arrived from the sky.⁽⁴⁾ A similar occurrence could have taken place in prediluvial times, when some invaders from a remote part of the world came and were regarded as "sons of God."

But if we are today on the eve of interplanetary travel, we must not declare as absolutely impossible the thought that this Earth was visited, ages ago, by some people from another planet. Or was this earth alone populated by intelligent beings? In my understanding this passage from the book of Genesis is a literary relic dealing with a visit of intelligent beings from another planet.

It appears that the extraterrestrial visitors made their landing as if in advance knowledge of the impending catastrophe of the Deluge.⁽⁵⁾ It could be that Jupiter and Saturn were approaching each other ever closer on their orbits and that a disruption of one of them was expected.⁽⁶⁾

Possibly many centuries, or even millennia, passed between the landing and the Deluge. The mission could have been undertaken to ascertain the conditions on Earth. If it was an escape it could also have been from another catastrophe in the solar system, one of those that preceded the Deluge, like the one described as the dethronement and emasculation of Uranus by Kronos. If the ancient legends of a battle between the gods and titans, so persistent in the Greek world, but also in the mythologies of other civilizations, have any historical value, we may try to find what may have been the substratum of this fantasy. It seems that following great convulsions of nature observable in the celestial sphere, giant bodies were hurled on the earth. They arrived burned and were crushed by impact.⁽⁷⁾ But at least one group of escapees succeeded in safely reaching the earth.⁽⁸⁾ They descended on Mount Hermon or Anti-Lebanon.⁽⁹⁾ Of the extra-

biblical traditions dealing with the subject some reach hoary antiquity, antecedent to the composition of the Biblical texts. The Book of Enoch narrates that the group was composed of males only, two hundred in number, under the leadership of one by the name of Shemhazai.⁽¹⁰⁾ The Aggadic literature says that the “sons of God” tried to return to heaven from where they had come, but could not.⁽¹¹⁾

The new arrivals were probably of gigantic stature—their progeny with women of the earth were giants:

The Nephilim were on 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. These were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown.⁽¹²⁾

Having fathered giants, they themselves must have been not of human size.⁽¹³⁾

The planet from which they came I would not know to determine. El would refer to Saturn.⁽¹⁴⁾ The great size of the visitors would suggest a smaller body where the gravitational influence would be less.⁽¹⁵⁾

Ten thousand years is only an instant in the life of the cosmos; ten thousand years ago man was only in a rude stone age; today he contemplates to visit other planets. If such progress is made in a time as short as this, who knows what secrets are concealed in the past or in the future?

References

1. Because the story seemed so fantastic, I made up my mind at that time not to publish anything on the subject when discussing the Deluge and still earlier events. I came to this idea in 1940-41. In the 1950's many people reported sighting UFO's, which were claimed to be vehicles of visitors from other planets (a view which does not find any credence with me). In 1957 the space age began, and by the late 1960's, when the proposal that there were ancient visitors to Earth from other star systems found its way into print, the idea provoked little ridicule.
2. Genesis 6:1-2
3. Cf. S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis*, 6th ed. (New York, 1907), pp. 82f. [J. Morgenstern, however, considered them to be heavenly beings ("The Mythological Background of Psalm 82," *Hebrew Union College Annual* XIV, 1939, p. 95.)]
4. *The Journal of Christopher Columbus*, tr. by C. R. Markham (London, 1893)—October 14th, 1892: "They asked us if we had come from heaven. One old man came into the boat . . . to come and see the men who had come from heaven.
5. Their story in fact precedes that of the Deluge in the Scriptures.
6. [Later in this book Velikovsky traces the cause of the Deluge to a disruption of Saturn by Jupiter. See below, Part II: Saturn and the Flood.]
7. [Velikovsky seems to be referring to the passage in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* describing the crushed bodies of the defeated giants: "The terrible bodies of the giants lay crushed beneath their own massive structures." Transl. by M. Innes (London, 1955)]

8. [Analogous accounts are reported from the New World. Cf. the Inca account recorded by Pedro Cieza de Leon in the fifty-second chapter of his *La Cronica del Peru*.]
9. In 1960 a Russian physicist and mathematician, M. Agrest, came to the conclusion that the Baalbek stone was a platform for ascent by ancient space travelers, and that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by atomic weapons. (*Literarnaya Gazeta*, February 9th, 1960). At the time I saw some alluring points in this thesis—but I would strongly question the implication that extraterrestrial visitors came to Earth as late as the Old Kingdom in Egypt, because this is the time to which the Patriarch Abraham, a contemporary of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, belongs.
10. *The Book of Enoch* VI. 6-7, transl. by R. H. Charles (Oxford, 1912).
11. Ginzberg, *Legends* V. 172; *Aggadat Bereshit*.
12. Genesis 6:4
13. Previously several correspondents engaged me on the subject; one correctly observed that in order to procreate the visitors must have been of the same species as man.
14. [Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* IV. xvi; *beni Elim* would more correctly be rendered as “Sons of the Gods” and may possibly be taken in the sense of “Sons of the Planets,” or “Those who Came from the Planets.”]
15. [Several sources, including *The Book of Enoch* and Clement of Alexandria (*Eclog. Proph.* iii. 474, Dindorf ed.) maintain that the Nefilim brought with them much astronomical and technical knowledge which they imparted to mankind.]

