

Such ideas begin with Genesis 6, in which the sons of God are said to acquire human wives who bear them children. Here the phrase “sons of God” is understood to refer to angelic beings. The children then are described as great men and identified by the term nephilim, or giant.

Of course, some circles of Christianity reject such an interpretation and prefer to relegate Genesis 6 to some other explanation in which the sons of God typically refers to either the lineage of Seth in contrast to the lineage of Cain or perhaps to kings and, therefore, royal lineages in contrast with common people. Arguments substantiating the conclusion that the “sons of God” were angelic beings and their children, the nephilim, were “giants” will be discussed only in summary here. (A fuller exploration of these points can be found in our Bible Cosmology Study as well as Part 3 of our Spiritual Warfare Study: A Biblical and Historical View of Angels and Demons.) The arguments substantiating this conclusion include the following.

First, spelling and morphological factors demonstrate that the term nephilim is the Hebrew equivalent to the similar Aramaic term, which simply means “giant.” Second, there is the relationship of the Hebrew term “nephilim” to the Hebrew term “Rephaim” which also means “giant.” Third, later usage of the term “nephilim” at the time of the conquest of Canaan Land specifically equates it with great stature. Fourth, the contrasting phrase “daughters of man” in Genesis 6 is literally “daughters of Adam” in Hebrew, resulting in an inexplicable logical absurdity regarding why only Cain’s daughters or common (not royal) persons would be considered offspring of Adam. Fifth, human lineage on both sides would not explain giant offspring. Sixth, comparison to the use of the term “sons of God” in the Old Testament, particularly in Job and heavenly settings described in Psalms, require its application to heavenly beings created before mankind on day 6 of Genesis 1. Seventh, a comparison of the term “sons of God” to its usage among near eastern and Semitic cultures adjacent to the ancient Israelites including Canaanite, Ugaritic, Phoenician, and also Akkadian in which this term always refers to heavenly beings, not humans. Eighth, Hebrew texts found at Qumran and among the Dead Sea scrolls specifically affirm that Genesis 6 speaks of angelic beings interbreeding with humans. Ninth, New Testament passages from 2 Peter 2 and Jude affirm that certain angels from the time of Noah left heaven to engage in sexual practice with women. And tenth, prior to the late third and early fourth century, all Jewish and Christian writers understood Genesis 6 in terms of angelic beings engaging in sexual reproduction with women, with only Sextus Julius Africanus (late second to third century AD) and Augustine (late third to fourth century AD) expressing a dissenting opinion. And tenth, the New Testament indicates that in the resurrection men will be equal to angels, our bodies being transformed into immortal, heavenly bodies (1 Corinthians 15:38-50, Luke 20:36). Jesus directly states that this transformation is equivalent to being “born of God” and becoming the “sons of God” (John 1:12-13). This New Testament teaching and language upholds that in the minds of first-century Jews (such as Jesus and the apostles) the terms “sons of God” and “angels” were understood to contain a basic equivalence with one another and that neither

referred to mere flesh and blood humans, but rather referred to immortal beings with heavenly bodies.

(Regarding Luke 20:34-36 and its parallels in Matthew 22:30 and Mark 12:25, Jesus does state that resurrected humans are not only immortal but no longer marry. However, such language does not demand that immortal beings are utterly incapable of marriage on a physical level. It works sufficiently well as a prohibition of marriage among immortal beings, which would conform directly to the characterization that angels who took human wives were violating divine order.)

Such arguments can be found in more detail in our cosmology studies and the works of Dr. Michael Heiser, who holds an M.A. and a Ph. D. in Hebrew Bible and Semitic languages at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as well as an M.A. in Ancient History from the University of Pennsylvania (major fields: Ancient Israel and Egyptology).

SONS OF ADAM VS SONS OF THE SERPENT

In addition, the connection between Genesis 3 and Genesis 6 must also be mentioned. More specifically, in Genesis 3 after Adam and Eve sin, God declares that Eve's offspring and the offspring of the Serpent will be at odds with one another. This prophecy might be taken literally or figuratively. A literal interpretation would infer that the particular individual referred to as the "Serpent" in Genesis 3 would himself have physical offspring. A figurative interpretation would entail those "kindred spirits" who share the Serpent's efforts to corrupt mankind. It is not necessary to choose between these two options given that the bible seems to use the term in both ways. Sinful angels did intermingle themselves to produce offspring with mankind in Genesis 6 and the term "children of the devil" is used by extension as an epithet toward anyone deemed to be following in the devil's footsteps to mislead mankind, even as seen in John 8:44 and 49.

THE CHARAM

A critical element to this investigation involves the Hebrew word "charam" (Strong's Number 02763). "Charam" means "to ban, devote, destroy utterly, or dedicate for destruction, exterminate." Of these meanings, the phrase "dedicate for destruction" seems to reflect the widest range of the application of "charam." Generally speaking, "charam" is applied to people and things. Regarding people, it can be used with regard to particular individuals as a punishment for sin, to defined groups such as an army, or to national or ethnic groups or clans as a whole including men, women, children, etc.

Of the 52 times that “charam” occurs in the Old Testament, three occurrences refer to dedicating sacrifices to God (Leviticus 21:18, 28, 29), three refer to any individual (or group of individuals) who acquire a sentence of death because of some specific sin (Exodus 22:20, Joshua 6:18, Judges 21:11 – see Note 2 below), one refers similarly to a man’s property being dedicated for destruction as a punishment for a particular sin (Ezra 10:8), nine refer to conquests performed by other nations such as the Assyrians (2 Kings 19:11, 2 Chronicles 20:23, 32:14, Jeremiah 37:11, 25:9, 50:21, 26, 51:3, Daniel 11:44), one refers to an eschatological timeframe in which God will destroy the armies of the nations (Isaiah 34:2), one miscellaneous occurrence refers to God “destroying” the tongue of the Egyptian sea with his mighty wind (Isaiah 11:15), and one occurrence refers either to the wealth of nations being dedicated to the Lord or to the destruction of those nations in an eschatological timeframe (Micah 4:13). The remaining 33 occurrences all refer to the Israelite conquest of Canaan Land, primarily under Joshua but also lingering into later periods such as the time of Saul, David, and Solomon (Numbers 21:2, 3, Deuteronomy 2:34, 3:6 (see Note 1 below), 7:2 (see Note 1 below), 13:15, 20:17 (see Note 1 below), Joshua 2:10, 6:31, 8:26, 10:1, 28, 35, 37, 39, 40, 11:11, 12, 20, 21, Judges 1:17, 1 Samuel 15:3, 8, 9 (see Note 1 below), 15, 18, 20, 1 Kings 9:21, and 1 Chronicles 4:41).

(Note 1: In Deuteronomy 3:6, 7:2, 20:17, and 1 Samuel 15:9, the word “charam” occurs twice. Note 2: Although “charam” is not applied to the people of Benjamin in Judges 19-21 or the adjacent chapters, a comparison to Deuteronomy 13:15 which does use “charam” suggest that the episode may indeed have been related. Further discussion of this episode in Judges 21 will be important as it may be categorically of the same type as the 33 occurrences of “charam” which took place during the conquest of Canaan Land.)

THE GENTILIC ENDING

Another important piece of information concerns a particular linguistic nuance of the Hebrew language. As Dr. Heiser notes in his lecture, the Hebrew language has what is known as the “Gentilic ending,” which includes the Hebrew letter yod appearing at the end of nouns that designate nations. In English, this is often translated using the suffix “ite” such as “Hittite” or “Canaanite.” However, nouns designating groups of giants do not end in this way. They are simply plural nouns. Examples include such the terms “nephilim” and “rephaim.” As Dr. Heiser concludes, this suggests that the giants were not entire nations, but rather were members and in some cases rulers of certain nations.

PHILISTINE EXAMPLE

The use of “rephaim” (or “nephilim”) to refer to giants rather than to a distinct ethnicity or national group is most easily substantiated with the later example of

Goliath the Philistine. Incidentally, the Hebrew word for “Philistine” ends with a yod and, therefore, has the Gentilic ending. Although Goliath and a few others (Saph, Ishbibenob, Goliath’s brother Lahmi, and an unnamed, six-fingered man) are all denoted as having great stature or as being the “sons of the giants,” they are also clearly regarded as noteworthy and distinct among the Philistines (1 Samuel 17:4-8, 2 Samuel 21:16-22, 1 Chronicles 20:4-8). In other words, not all Philistines were giants but giant lineages were intermingled with the Philistine nation. The fact that not all Philistines were giants is corroborated by the fact that Joshua 11:22 states that the only Anakim (a particular line of giants) left by that time were in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod. (It is noteworthy that Joshua even felt it was worth letting the readers know about the population status of the giants.) Joshua 15:46 subsequently speaks of the Philistine city of Ekron, which apparently had no Anakim or giants at that point despite being a Philistine city. It would seem that of the five principle cities of the Philistines, only Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod had giants by the time of Joshua 11 while Ekron and Ashkelon did not.

With this information in mind, the next step is to investigate the nations and people groups that were the object of the “charam” commands and determine whether or not they were intermingled with giant lineages.

TERMS FOR GIANT LINEAGES

First we need to compile the means to identify giant lineages. As can be seen below from Numbers 13 and Deuteronomy 2, the Hebrew terms “nephilim” and “Raphaim” are synonyms and both denote giants. Notice that both passages are discussing the Anakim or sons of Anak. Deuteronomy 2:11 states that the Anakim are “Rephaim,” (Strong’s No. 06061), which is a standard Hebrew word that simply means “giant.” Numbers 13:33 refers to them as “nephilim” (Strong’s No. 05303) and metaphorically says that the Israelites were “like grasshoppers” in comparison.

Deuteronomy 2:9 And the LORD said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land *for* a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot *for* a possession. 10 **The Emims dwelt therein in times past, a people great (01419) , and many (07227), and tall (07311), as the Anakims;** 11 Which also were accounted **giants (07497), as the Anakims (06062); but the Moabites call them Emims.**

Numbers 13:33 And there we saw the **giants (05303), the sons of Anak (06061), which come of the giants (05303):** and we were in our own sight as **grasshoppers,** and so we were in their sight.

07497 rapha’ or raphah

from 07495 in the sense of invigorating; TWOT-2198d; n pr gent AV-giant 17, Rephaim 8; 25

- 1) **giants**, Rephaim
 1a) old tribe of giants

From these passages, we also learn that the term “Emim” is simply the Moabite word for the giants. Consequently, we know that the words “Nephilim,” “Rephaim,” “Anakim,” and “Emin” all referred directly to giants. We can also add a few more synonyms to our list by continuing our examination of Deuteronomy 2.

Deuteronomy 2:19 And *when* thou comest nigh over against **the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them: for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession; because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession.** 20 (**That also was accounted a land of giants (07497): giants (07497) dwelt therein in old time; and the Ammonites call them Zamzummims;** 21 **A people great (01419), and many (07227), and tall (07311), as the Anakims;** but the LORD destroyed them before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead: 22 As he did to the children of Esau, which **dwelt in Seir**, when he destroyed **the Horims** from before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead even unto this day: 23 **And the Avims which dwelt in Hazerim, even unto Azzah, the Caphtorims, which came forth out of Caphtor,** destroyed them, and dwelt in their stead.)

Of the groups named in this passage, Caphtorim, Avvim, and Horim have the yod “Gentilic ending” and denote proper national groups. Seir, Hazarim, Caphtor, and Azzah are place names. (Incidentally Azzah is the same name as Gaza, the Philistine city.) However, the words “Anakim” and “Zamzummim” do not have the yod “Gentilic ending.” The passage clearly refers to the Zamzummim as giants or “Rephaim” and states that they are as tall as the Anakim. Consequently, we can add the term “Zamzummim” as another ancient term for at least one particular group of giants. Of course, this passage also provides information related to which Gentile nations giants lived among and intermingled with. We will cover that issue momentarily.

NATIONS WITH GIANTS - GENESIS 14-15

Second, now that we know which terms refer to giants, we need to see which nations these giants lived among and were potentially biologically intermingled with. For this investigation, we can start earlier than the Exodus and go back to the time of Abraham over four centuries earlier.

Genesis 14:5 And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that *were* with him, and smote **the Rephaims (07497) in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims (02104) in Ham, and the Emims** in Shaveh Kiriathaim, 6 **And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto Elparan, which is by the wilderness.** 7 **And**

they returned, and came to Enmishpat, which *is* Kadesh, **and smote all the country of the Amalekites**, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezontamar.

This chapter describes the battle of kings in which Abraham's nephew Lot (the father of the Ammonites and Moabites) is taken captive. (This is, of course, before Lot's offspring had become the nations of Ammon and Moab and drove out the giants whom they called Zamzummims, which we have already seen in Deuteronomy 2:20.) The invading kings defeat a group of Rephaims, Zuzims, and Emims. Of these three groups, we already know that Rephaim was simply the Jewish word for giant and likewise that "Emim" was the Moabite word for giants according to Deuteronomy 2:9-11.

This leaves only the term "Zuzim." First, this word is placed between two other known words for giants. Second, like the other words for giants that we've already seen, it lacks the yod "Gentilic ending." Third, the name means "roving creatures," which suggests their intermingling among many nations. And fourth, the name sounds similar to "Zamzummim," the Ammonite word for giant according to Deuteronomy 2:20. All of these factors make it very likely that the Zuzim, like the adjacently mentioned Rephaim and Emim, were giants.

And at this point, we can get an idea of which nations these giants lived among. The Rephaim are in Ashteroth Karnaim, a city in Bashan. The Zuzims are in Ham (which the Online Bible Dictionary describes as "probably in the territory of the Ammonites, east of the Jordan"). And the Emim were in Shaveh Kiriathaim, which is also likely in Ammonite territory given the fact that Emim is an Ammonite word. It is also noteworthy here that Ham is the father of Canaan, a point we will return to later.

HORITES

Verses six and seven divide the first invasive attack from a second and list different groups as the recipients of each. One other group is mentioned alongside these three giants who suffered the initial invading attack, the Horites of Mount Seir, which the text states, "is by the wilderness." This designation "by the wilderness" combined with the coinciding timeframe with which these groups were all attacked, indicates they were all situated near the territory of the Ammonites and the Jordan River. The Horites are the only group in this initial list that has the yod "Gentilic ending," which suggests that these giant lineages were intermingled with the Horites.

Incidentally, there are no direct references to giants among the second group attacked by the invading force in Genesis 14. This does not mean that no giants lived among these groups only that this particular text does not comment on the presence of giants.

The next passage referring to giants is Genesis 15. Although Genesis 15 is not the first time that God promises to give the land of Canaan to Abraham and his offspring (Genesis 12:7), this is the first time that God explicitly identifies nations whose land Abraham will displace.

Genesis 15:18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 The **Kenites**, and the **Kenizzites**, and the **Kadmonites**, 20 And the **Hittites**, and the **Perizzites**, and the **Rephaims (07497)**, 21 And the **Amorites**, and the **Canaanites**, and the **Girgashites**, and the **Jebusites**.

It is worth noting that these are the nations occupying the land in Abraham's own day and there could have been some shifting by the time of the Exodus more than four centuries later. For reference, nine nations are mentioned here in addition to the Rephaim. By the time of Deuteronomy, however, God lists only seven nations by name and the lists are not identical. Specifically, Genesis 15 includes the Kenites, Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, all of which are not mentioned in Deuteronomy. Likewise, Deuteronomy mentions the Hivites, who are not listed in Genesis 15. It is also possible that perhaps by the time of the Exodus, the Hivites had largely conquered and intermingled with at least some of these nations.

NATIONS WITH REPHAIM - DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy 7:1 When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the **Hittites**, and the **Girgashites**, and the **Amorites**, and the **Canaanites**, and the **Perizzites**, and the **Hivites**, and the **Jebusites**, seven nations greater and mightier than thou.

Of greater importance, however, is the fact that Genesis 15 lists 10 groups, 9 which all have the yod "Gentilic ending" plus the Rephaim, which do not. This passage suggests that the Rephaim lived among all nine of these nations and had potentially intermingled with many or all of them.

Here a few points must be stressed. First, it must be remembered that in Old Testament records, the giants were only partially derived from angelic stock. This means that some of their parents would by definition come from human nations, such as those mentioned here in Genesis 15. Thus, giant lineages would by necessity be part of established Gentile groups. Second, this does not imply that all or even most of the members of any given nation were comingled with giant lineage. Thus, there would be some entirely human Hittites, for example, and some Hittites that were Rephaim. In fact, we have already seen this case with the Philistines, not all of whom were giants. Likewise, of the five primary Philistine cities, only three had giants in them.

Of the nations mentioned so far, we have good reason to suspect that the Horites of Mount Seir were comingled with giants given the fact that they are exclusively

mentioned alongside three giant lineages in Genesis 14:5-7. Likewise, we know that the Philistines were mingled with giants. We can also directly confirm the lineages of the giants among the Perizzites and Jebusites.

PERIZZITES

In Joshua 17, when the tribe of Joseph asks for more territory, Joshua tells them to carve out a greater territory for themselves from “the land of the Perizzites and of the giants.” The close association in the text between the land of the giants and the land of the Perizzites indicates overlapping or at least adjacent territory, which is also required by the fact that the land of both groups was by necessity nearby to the tribe of Joseph. But perhaps most noteworthy is the fact that the Hebrew word for “land” appears once in the verse. It does not read “land of the Perizzites” and “land of the giants,” but rather “land of the Perizzites and of the giants” with both the Perizzites and giants being attributed joint ownership of the same land.

Joshua 17:14 And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me *but* one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I *am* a great people, forasmuch as the LORD hath blessed me hitherto? **15** And Joshua answered them, If thou *be* a great people, *then* get thee up to the wood *country*, and cut down for thyself there **in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants (07497)**, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.

JEBUSITES , JERUSALEM, HINNOM

Similar observations can be made concerning the Jebusites. Joshua 15:1-12 describes the territory given to Judah. Likewise, Joshua 18:11-20 describes the territory given to Benjamin. Below are a few excerpts.

Joshua 15:8 And the border went up by **the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the south side of the Jebusite; the same is Jerusalem:** and the border went up to the top of the mountain that *lieth* before **the valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the valley of the giants** northward.

Joshua 18:16 And the border came down to the end of the mountain that *lieth* before the **valley of the son of Hinnom, and which is in the valley of the giants (07497) on the north**, and descended to the valley of Hinnom, **to the side of Jebusi on the south**, and descended to Enrogel.

As we can see from the passages, the valley of Hinnom, which runs along the south side of Jerusalem to this day, was known as “the valley of giants.” Jerusalem is alternately known as Jebus (Judges 19:10, 1 Chronicles 11:4), a city of the Jebusites. So, the Jebusites and the giants were living literally right next

door to one another. One lived in the valley. The other had a city on the adjacent mountain.

BASHAN IN MANASSEH

According to Deuteronomy 3:13, the entire region of Bashan (given to the half tribe of Manasseh) was a “land of giants.”

Deuteronomy 3:13 And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, *being* the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of **Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants.**

ANAKIM IN ALL ISRAEL AND JUDAH

According to Joshua 11, the giants known as the Anakim were originally somewhat widespread in the territory given to Judah, including Hebron. However, verse 21 states that Joshua not only had to eradicate the Anakims from “all the mountains of Judah” but also “all the mountains of Israel.”

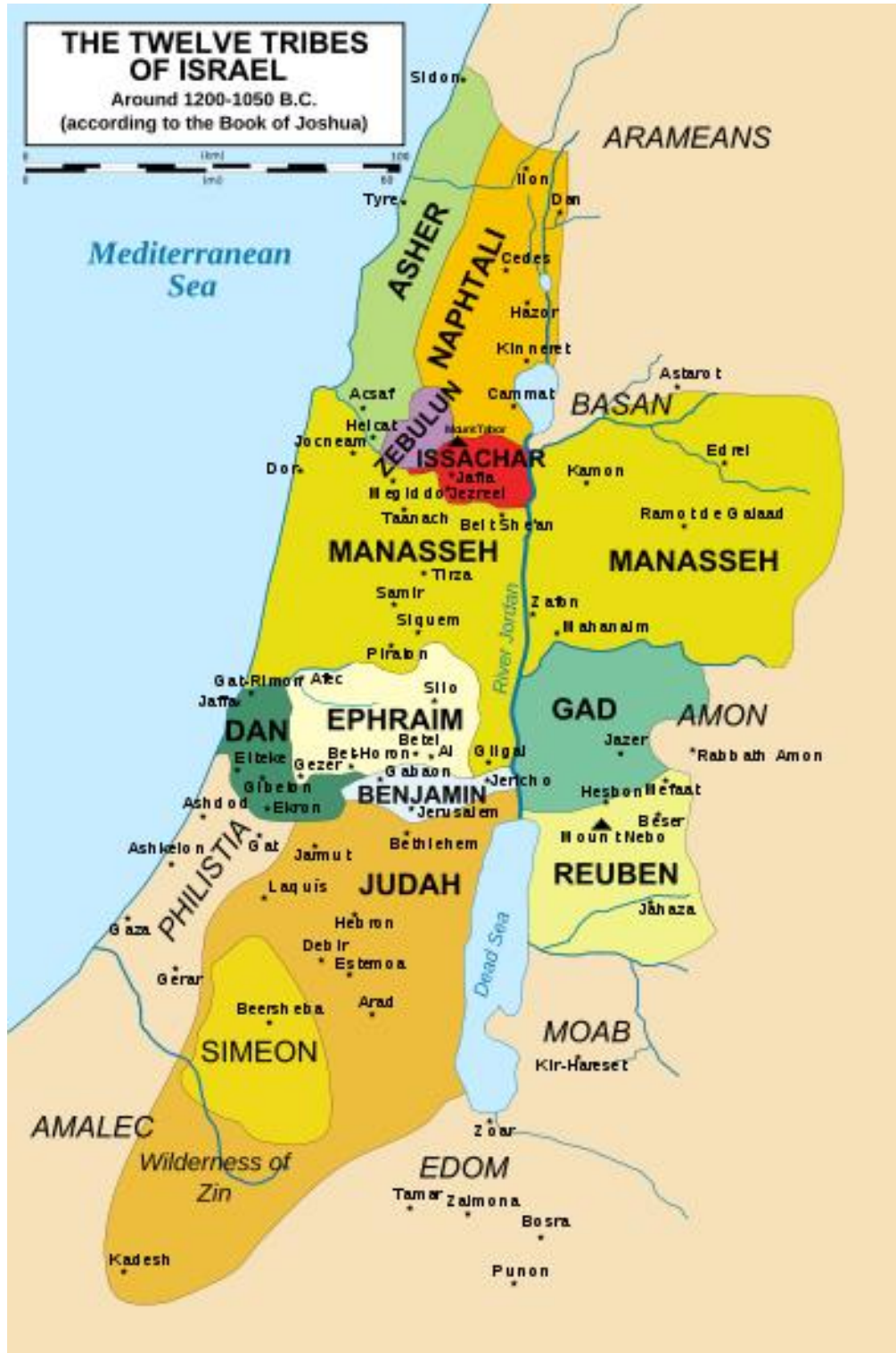
Joshua 11:21 And at that time came **Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities. 22 There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained.**

In summary, several groups of giants are depicted as living in Canaan land at the time of Abraham particularly among the Horites of Mount Seir in Genesis 14. (The general outspreading of giants among all of Canaan land is also possibly indicated by Genesis 14:5, which states that the Zuzim, meaning “roving creatures” were in the region of “Ham,” the father of all the Canaanites.) Likewise in Genesis 15, giants appear generally among the nine nations that God promises to give to Abraham. And we can confirm the presence of the giants among two of those nations the Perizzites and Jebustes.

GEOGRAPHY

When these territories are located on a map, it becomes visible that the giant lineages were running north and south on either side of the Jordan River, going all the way up to Manasseh in the farthest northeastern part of Israel originally down to the lands of Moab and Ammon on the far eastern and southeastern edges of Israel even down unto Seir which is in Edom south of the Dead Sea. But the

giants were also scattered on the west side of the Jordan. They were near Jerusalem in the valley of Hinnom. They were in Hebron in the territory of Judah. And they were even as far west as the Philistines including the city of Gath and also the coastal cities of Gaza and Ashdod along the Mediterranean Sea. And Joshua 11:21 states plainly that Anakims were originally living throughout all of Israel in various place.



NOTE: The map above is available in the Wikimedia Commons and can be found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribe_of_Gad, in the article “Tribe of Gad” and under the section titled, “Tribal Territory.”

At this point, the cumulative evidence derived from the geographic information and the nations associated directly with giants suggests that all of these Canaanite nations were literally infested with giant lineages comingled with the Gentiles nations living there.

It would seem that the reason God demanded the eradication of the Canaanites was due not to some arbitrary ethnic prejudice, but specifically to remove giant lineages from the land where his people Israel would dwell and, ultimately, to prevent giant lineages from being comingled with Israel. (As we will see a little later on, particularly from Deuteronomy 7, Israelites were also forbidden to intermarry with these nations.)

Third, now that we have identified the terms for giant and which nations the giants were mingled with, we need to compare that list to those nations God commanded be utterly destroyed during the Israelite conquest.

As noted earlier, of the 52 occurrences of the Hebrew word “charam,” 33 are used with regard to the Israel’s actions toward the nations it displaced from the Promised Land. From these occurrences we can derive a list of the following groups and kings targeted for extermination from the land of Israel.

- 1) Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites – Deuteronomy 7:1-2
- 2) The lands of Arad and Hormah, Canaanite cities in Judah – Numbers 21:1, Joshua 12:7-8, 14
- 3) Sihon and Og, both Amorite kings (Og was a giant himself and was ruler of Bashan, land of the giants. The Amorites are described as having exceeding height in Amos 2:9.) – Deuteronomy 3:8-13 (Noted: His bed was in Ammon.)
- 4) Ai, a Canaanite city “east of Bethel near Jericho” on the west side of the Jordan that was the “second city taken” in the conquest – Joshua 8:26.
- 5) Adonizedek, king of Jerusalem, as one of the 5 (remaining) Amorite kings – Joshua 10:1.
- 6) The Anakims, a prominent line of giants – Joshua 11:21.
- 7) Amalekites, descendants of Esau, punished for fighting Israel right after Exodus – 1 Samuel 15:3.

ALL CANAANITE , TWO EXCEPTIONS – PHILISTINES

Of the seven listed items, every one of them were either Canaanite nations, Canaanite kings, or Canaanite cities that were intermingled with giant lineages,

with only two exceptions, the Philistines and the Amalekites. The Philistines were descended from Canaan's father Ham through Canaan's brother Mizraim. But we know explicitly from scripture that there were giants intermingled with the Philistines. This leaves only the Amalekites.

WHO WAS AMALEK?

What we know about the Amalekites is that they are descended from Esau's son, Eliphaz, whose concubine gave birth to Amalek (Genesis 36:12). The descendants of Amalek multiplied and they eventually came to dwell in southern Canaan. When the Israelites were just beginning their Exodus journey, the Amalekites attacked them (Exodus 17:8-16) for which God commanded war against them for all generations until "the remembrance of Amalek" was "utterly put out from under heaven." Although the word "charam" is not used in Exodus 17, such a declaration from God in Exodus 17 does explain the latter use of "charam" concerning Amalek in 1 Samuel 15:3-20. Consequently, it is entirely possible that the extermination of the Amalekites was a punishment for their early aggressive attempts to destroy Israel just as it was escaping from slavery and suffering under the Egyptians.

However, similar causes are also cited for the destruction of Sihon of the Ammorites even though we know that the Ammorites were intermingled with the giant lines of Canaan. Deuteronomy 2:26-31 states that God gave the Israelites victory over Sihon because of Sihon's refusal to let them pass peacefully through his territory on the way to Canaan Land. However, the text also states that God had hardened Sihon's heart because God wanted him to respond negatively so that God could destroy him.

Therefore, it is also plausible that the actions of the Amalekites in Exodus 17 were likewise a sort of pretext for God to accomplish his purpose of destroying them. As we consider this question, several facts about the Amalekites are worth consideration.

GIANTS IN AMALEK

First, in Numbers 24, in the midst of a proclamation concerning how God would bless Israel, the Gentile prophet Balaam makes an interesting remark pertaining to the Amalekites.

Numbers 24:1 And when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness. **2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes,** and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; and the spirit of God came upon him. **3 And he took up his parable, and said,** Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man

whose eyes are open hath said: 4 He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: 5 How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! 6 As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the LORD hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. 7 He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed *shall be* in many waters, and **his king shall be higher (07311) than Agag (090)**, and his kingdom shall be exalted.

There are two words that are noteworthy from verse 7, “higher” and “Agag.” “Agag” (Strong’s No. 090) is simply the name of the Amalekite king defeated by King Saul of Israel.

090 Agag

of uncertain derivation, compare with 089; ; n pr m

AV-Agag 8; 8

Agag = "I will overtop"

1) king of Amalek, spared by Saul but slain by Samuel

The very next occurrence of “Agag” after Numbers 24 is 1 Samuel 15:8. In fact, outside Numbers 24:7, all of the other occurrences of the Hebrew word “Agag” are in 1 Samuel 15.

1 Samuel 15:8 And he took **Agag (090)** the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword...9 But Saul and the people spared **Agag (090)**, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly...20 And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought **Agag (090)** the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites...32 Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me **Agag (090)** the king of the Amalekites. And **Agag (090)** came unto him delicately. And **Agag (090)** said, Surely the bitterness of death is past...33 And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed **Agag (090)** in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

One question that arises here concerns the timeframe. Balaam makes this statement at the time of the Exodus, which is approximately 1500-1300 BC (according to either an early or late dating for Moses’ lifetime). Saul lives in the eleventh century BC and reigns from 1021-1000 BC.

“**Saul** – Hebrew Sha’ul (flourished **11th century BC**, Israel), first king of Israel (c. **1021–1000 BC**).” – Britannica.com

In his speech in Acts 7, Steven confirms this duration saying that there was 450 years from the time when the Israelites conquered Canaan until the time of King Saul’s older contemporary, Samuel the prophet.

Acts 13:17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it. 18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. 19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. 20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

How does Balaam know the name of an Amalekite king over four centuries later? The most readily apparent answer is simply that Balaam was speaking prophetically. This explanation is perfectly sufficient, especially since figures like Cyrus and Josiah were identified prophetically by name long before either man was born. However, another intriguing although entirely unnecessary possibility also presents itself. Was Agag possibly a nephilim, a descendant of an angelic and human procreation? Would that potentially have given him incredible longevity allowing him to live for the time of Balaam to the time of King Saul? And such longevity could possibly be corroborated indirectly by the Flood. Perhaps it was necessary for God to intervene and directly remove the human population because the nephilim lived exceedingly long and would not soon die out if left to natural causes. Perhaps sinful humans sought after this kind of interbreeding as an alternative means to extend human lifespans hundreds of years as an alternative to the tree of life.

(Incidentally, we know that long life spans did occur both before and after the Flood although those cases pertain specifically to men who were not nephilim. For example, Adam lived over 900 years and he was certainly not a descendant of human and angelic procreation. Consequently, the best explanation for the longevity of men such as Adam, Methuselah, Noah, and others in Genesis 5 is access to the tree of life before the Flood, which also explained the diminishing degree of longevity as generations increased in distance from the Flood. Apparently, there was a residual impact on the vitality of the offspring of any man who ate of the tree of life. But in any case, these other examples show that such longevity is not at all incompatible with scripture. For more information on access to the tree of life among Adam and Eve's descendents see our "Priesthood and the Kinsman Redeemer" study.)

But even if we assume the perfectly acceptable, standard explanation that Balaam is speaking prophetically and Agag doesn't live until centuries later, Numbers 24 still contains another indication that Agag may have been a giant. This brings us back to the word "higher" in verse 7, which states that the Jewish king will be "higher" than Agag.

Numbers 24:7 He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed *shall be* in many waters, and **his king shall be higher (07311) than Agag (090)**, and his kingdom shall be exalted.

The Hebrew word for higher is “ruwm” (Strong’s No. 07311) and the most interesting thing about this word is how it is used in other contexts involving giants.

Deuteronomy 1:28 Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, **The people is greater and taller (07311) than we;** the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen **the sons of the Anakims (06062) there.**

Deuteronomy 2:10 **The Emims** dwelt therein in times past, **a people great, and many, and tall (07311), as the Anakims (06062);**

Deuteronomy 2:21 A people great, and many, **and tall (07311), as the Anakims (06062);** but the LORD destroyed them before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead:

Deuteronomy 9:2 **A people great and tall (07311), the children of the Anakims (06062),** whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak!

In all four of these passages, the meaning of “ruwm” is “tall” and in chapter 2:10 and 21 as well as 9:2, the word is specifically used to express the height of the Anakim giants. Of course, this word does not strictly refer to giants, but applies generally to anyone who might be considered taller than others. But the larger point here is that Agag is being discussed in Numbers 24:7 as having noteworthy tallness. And that idea certainly suggests that he might have been of giant lineage, especially since we see the same Hebrew word applied in the exact same way to giants in Deuteronomy, the very next book of the bible.

SAUL FULFILLS BALAAM’S PROPHECY

Since “ruwn” can simply convey “loftiness” or “exalted,” we need to go a little further to demonstrate the likelihood for interpreting it in regard to physical stature. And that we can do. Numbers 24 not only notes that Agag has great height, but it also states plainly that the king of Israel will be taller than Agag. In this context, consider the following descriptions of King Saul.

1 Samuel 9:2 And he had a son, whose name was **Saul, a choice young man,** and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: **from his shoulders and upward he was higher (01364) than any of the people.**

1 Samuel 10:17 **And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh...**21 When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and **Saul the son of Kish** was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found. 22 Therefore they enquired of the

LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff. 23 And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, **he was higher (01364) than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.**

01364 gaboahh

from 01361; ;{ See TWOT on 305 @@ "305a"}

AV-high 24, higher 5, lofty 2, exceeding 1, haughty 1, height 1, highest 1, proud 1, proudly 1; 37

adj

1) high, exalted

1a) high, tall

1b) high (in position)

1c) proud, haughty

n m

2) loftiness

As we can see, the book of Samuel makes sure to let us know twice that Saul was taller than anyone else among all the people, even when all the people were gathered together as they are in chapter 10. In fact, Saul isn't just a few inches taller, but both passages state that his entire shoulders and head were above anyone else in Israel at that time. With such deliberate declarations about Saul's exceeding height, there can be no doubt that Balaam's reference to an Israelite king who would be as "high" as Agag are meant prophetically to refer to Saul's physical stature. And consequently, we must also conclude Numbers 24:7 is, in fact, stating that Agag (although not quite as tall as Saul) was exceedingly tall.

Concerning Agag, we can now add up the following. First, we have established that all of the other nations that God commanded the Israelites to "charam" or destroy were interspersed and intermingled with giant lineages. Second, although God elsewhere cited the Amalekites' aggression against the Israelites at the onset of the Exodus as the basis for their eradication, God also cited similar reasons for the destruction of Sihon of the Ammorites even though we know that the Ammorites were intermingled with the giant lines of Canaan. In that case, the Ammorites' malevolence toward the Israelites was also depicted as a kind of pretext for God's desire to destroy them. Third, the Amalekite King Agag was known for his exceeding height using a Hebrew term that was repeatedly applied in the historical context to giants. These facts make it increasingly plausible that Agag was descended from giant lineages, in which case, the destruction of the Amalekites would not constitute an exception to the rule that God's commands to eradicate certain national groups coincided with those nations that were intermingled with giant lineages.

At this point, it seems that there is good reason to conclude that God's desire to destroy these nations utterly, to place them under "charam," was at least in part to remove angelic comingling with the human race.

However, although our initial conclusions have been established, it is also possible to investigate a few related matters a little further.

A THIRD EXCEPTION, ISRAELITES UNDER CHARAM?

Earlier, we listed Judges 21:11 as an occurrence of the word “charam.” Specifically, in that instance recorded in Judges 19-21, a matter had arisen in Gibeah, a city in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin.

In Judges 19, a certain Levite along with his concubine are spending the night in Gibeah on their way back to their home. Similar to the incident involving the two angels in the city of Sodom and Gomorrah (a fact that itself raises further questions and invites further potential parallels), the men of Gibeah come to the house where the Levite is staying and demand that he be brought out so that they can “know” the Levite. And like the incident with Lot in Sodom, the man of the house offers his daughter and the concubine to the men of the city instead. The men of the city refuse although eventually the concubine is sent out to them anyway. She is raped throughout the night until she is dead. The next day, the Levite returns with her body, cuts it in pieces, and sends it to the twelve tribes of Israel, which prompts them to summon together to decide and aid in the matter.

Only two groups did not answer the summons. The tribe of Benjamin and the people of the city of Jabeshgilead, a town in the territory of Gilead east of the Jordan River and itself bordering on the territory of Bashan, a known stronghold of giants according to Deuteronomy 3:13. As the events unfold, the Israelites and tribe of Benjamin find themselves effectively at war with one another. After a series of battles, the Israelites finally obtain victory and end up killing the people of Benjamin, including the women and children, until only 600 men from Benjamin remained. At this point, the Israelites relented and regretted that Israel had lost almost an entire one of its twelve tribes. Having previously sworn not to give any of their wives to the men of Benjamin, the Israelites sought to find women for the remaining 600 men. As a remedy, the Israelites decided to punish the people of Jabeshgilead. The city of Jabeshgilead was put under “charam” and everyone in the city was killed except for the virgin women who were given as wives to the remaining men from the tribe of Benjamin.

But the relevant component of the tale is why the Israelites were at war with the tribe of Benjamin and why they would not give their wives to them. And the answer lies with another reference to “charam” found in Deuteronomy 13.

DEUTERONOMY 13’S PRESCRIPTION

Deuteronomy 13:12 If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities, which the LORD thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, 13 Certain men, the

children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known; 14 **Then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently;** and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you; 15 **Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly (charam, 02763), and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword.** 16 And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, **and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit,** for the LORD thy God: and it shall be an heap for ever; it shall not be built again. 17 And there shall cleave nought of the cursed thing to thine hand: that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and shew thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee, and multiply thee, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers.

A few other terms are worth noting for comparison to the incident in Judges 19-21 concerning the city of Gibeah and the rest of the tribe of Benjamin. First, Deuteronomy 13 describes what the Israelites are to do when they hear a report that “children of Belial” have drawn away the inhabitants of their city to serve other gods. The Israelites are supposed to investigate the report. And if they find evidence that the report is true, they are to burn the city to the ground and “charam” everything in it, all the inhabitants and even all the livestock by the edge of a sword. Step by step, this is precisely what happens with Gibeah and Benjamin in Judges 19-21.

DEUTERONOMY 13’S CHARAM APPLIED TO BENJAMIN

But most importantly, Judges 19:22 refers to the men of Gibeah who surrounded the house as “sons of Belial,” the same term used in Deuteronomy 13. Although in Hebrew, Belial can simply translate to “wicked” or “destruction,” the Greek equivalent is “a name of Satan.” While this certainly was used metaphorically in the Old Testament, is it also possible that it could be used literally to offspring of ungodly angels? Moreover, when the Israelites gain the upper hand, they smite everyone in Gibeah with the edge of the sword, burn the city to the ground, and pursue (with the sword) the remaining men outside the city (Judges 20:37-47).

The question here is not whether the Israelites were performing “charam” concerning the entire tribe of Benjamin. The facts show that they clearly were. Nor is the question whether the charge of withdrawing to other gods was sufficiently suspected to have spread beyond Gibeah to the rest of the tribe of Benjamin. The application of Deuteronomy 13 to the tribe of Benjamin demonstrates that they were indeed suspected of this. The intriguing implication here is that the application of the “charam,” a command which was otherwise applied to nations intermingled with giant lineages, combined with the use of the term “sons of Belial” hints that the people of Israel were suspicious that the people of the tribe of Benjamin might themselves have begun to intermingle with these lineages.

(It should also be noted that this language invokes historical, parallel imagery from Genesis 3, 6, 14 and 15. Genesis 3 promises war between the seed of the serpent and the descendants of Adam and Eve from whom a kinsmen redeemer would come. Genesis 6 depicts angelic beings who actually come down and have giant offspring through human women, which leads to great violence in the earth. Genesis 14 describes war against giants and other descendants of Ham and Genesis 15 describes God giving the land of giants and the nations intermingled with them to Abraham.)

GENTILES IN BENJAMIN'S MIDST

At this point, another question does emerge? Who were these “sons of Belial” in Gibeah? And could they at least theoretically be either Gentiles or Israelites interbred with pagans? To establish this possibility, we must only establish that there were Gentiles still remaining in the territory of Benjamin, which is simple enough. Not only did the territory of Benjamin border Jerusalem, which at that time was still a Jebusite city, but it also bordered the valley of Hinnom, just south of Jerusalem, which was known as the valley of giants. On any map of biblical cities, Gibeah is less than five miles from Jerusalem and the valley of Hinnom. In fact, the nearness of Gibeah to these two places is substantiated by the account in Judges 19-21.

Judges 19:10 But the man would not tarry that night, but he rose up and departed, and came over against Jebus, which is Jerusalem; and there were with him two asses saddled, his concubine also was with him. 11 And when they were by Jebus, the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in into this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it. 12 And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger, that is not of the children of Israel; we will pass over to Gibeah.

GIBEAH VERY CLOSE TO THE GENTILES

Here the Levite, his servant, and his concubine make their journey back home and as sunset is approaching, his servant suggests that they stay in Jerusalem. However, the Levite insists that they continue a bit farther to Gibeah, which confirms the short walking distance between the two places. With less than five miles between the Jebusites and the valley of the giants, it is very likely that some of the Gentile populations could have remained interspersed and potentially even interbred with the people of Gibeah and Benjamin. The fact that the Israelites immediately suspected this very thing is demonstrated when the Israelites assemble at Mizpeh to decide the matter, they apparently swore an oath to each

other not to give their daughters to Benjamin even before they began to fight in battle.

Judges 20:1 Then all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beersheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the LORD in Mizpeh. 2 And the chief of all the people, *even* of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand footmen that drew sword. 3 **(Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh.)** Then said the children of Israel, Tell *us*, how was this wickedness?

Judges 21:1 Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh, saying, There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife...⁷ How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing **we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them of our daughters to wives?** 8 And they said, **What one is there of the tribes of Israel that came not up to Mizpeh to the LORD?** And, behold, there came none to the camp from Jabeshgilead to the assembly.

WHY NO DAUGHTERS GIVEN TO BENJAMIN?

In this historical setting, the only context in which we can understand forbidding to give daughters in marriage to a particular people group is Deuteronomy 7. In Deuteronomy 7, God specifically commanded the Israelites that when they possessed the land of the Canaanite nations, they were forbidden from giving their sons or daughters in marriage to the Canaanite peoples. Moreover, the reason God cites for this prohibition is that the offspring of such intermarriages will lead the people away to serve other gods. This is very important because it provides the essential backdrop for Deuteronomy 13 and the phrase “sons of Belial.” Notice also that the Jebusites, mentioned specifically in Judges 19-21 for their proximity to Gibeah, are identified by name as one of the groups that the Israelites were not to intermarry with.

Deuteronomy 7:1 When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; 2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; **thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them:** 3 **Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.** 4 **For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods:** so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.

The parallels between chapter 7 and 13 are abundantly clear when the texts are viewed side by side.

Deuteronomy 13:12 If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities, which the LORD thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, 13 Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known;

Both these segments begin with a focus on the cities and land of the Gentiles God was giving to the Israelites. Then both passages discuss unlawful children and the people being turned away from God to follow false gods. Clearly the “sons of Belial” in chapter 13 are either the unlawful offspring produced by the intermarriage or they are the male children of the Gentiles allowed to interbreed with Israelite women and lead the people away from God. In either case, Israelite offspring interbred with Gentile lineages are an essential part of the focus.

Consequently, for the Israelites to decided at Mizpeh (before taking the field against Benjamin) not to give their daughters to the men of Benjamin demonstrates that the Israelites were suspicious that the tribe of Benjamin had intermingled with the Gentiles and, therefore, the Israelites could no longer interbreed with the tribe of Benjamin.

PHINEHAS, NUMBERS 25, AND INTERBREEDING

Another conspicuous confirmation that the Israelites suspected Benjamin and Gibeah of interbreeding with the Gentiles stems from the involvement of Phinehas. Phinehas is a priest and the grandson of Moses’ brother Aaron through Aaron’s son Eleazar (Ex. 6:25). In Numbers 25:1-15, the Moabites and Midianites had learned from the words of Balaam how to overcome the Israelites. And when the Israelites begin to interbreed with the Midianites and Moabites, God’s anger is kindled against Israel and thousands of Israelites begin to die from a plague. When Phinehas sees an Israelite going into his tent with a Midianite woman, he rises up and kills both the man and the woman. Phinehas’ action pleases God and he stops the plague.

Two items are particularly noteworthy from this encounter. First, Phinehas is famous for his zealous intolerance of Israelites interbreeding and his willingness to kill fellow Israelites for engaging in such practices. Second, God promises Phinehas and his seed after him an everlasting covenant of priesthood specifically because of his zeal in this matter. This shows the relationship between the priesthood and the prohibition to interbreed. God was primarily concerned that his priests, his intercessors would not engage in interbreeding and Phinehas had shown himself fully committed to that ideal. And so, not only Phinehas, but also his offspring are blessed and accepted.

With these facts in place, it should not be surprising to find Phinehas involved in the events of Judges 19-21. Judges 20:27-28, we find that it is Phinehas, the son

of Eleazar, the priest who is serving before the ark in those days. In fact, when the Israelites inquire about whether they should persist in attacking Benjamin, this inquiry is conducted by Phinehas who asks, “Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease?” God responds, “Go up; for to morrow I will deliver them into thine hand.” Phinehas’ use of the first person pronoun “I” in combination with his role as the chief priest, suggests that Phinehas has a lead role in conducting this war against Benjamin. And the fact that Judges takes the time to mention for us that this war is being conducted by a man known for his zeal to kill fellow Israelites for interbreeding provides further confirmation that Benjamin and Gibeah were indeed suspected on the charge of interbreeding.

A SLIM CHANCE FOR GIANT LINEAGE TO CONTINUE

When there were only 600 men left, the Israelites could have felt reasonably certain that they had wiped out such intermingled lineages, particularly because it was the women with whom angels would have interbred and all the children had been killed. Still, one small, unlikely possibility remained, if any of those remaining 600 men were themselves descended directly or indirectly from giants or angels, the lineage could have remained among the people of Benjamin.

FOUR CONFIRMING DETAILS FROM SAUL

This is where we return to Saul and his family. Not only was Saul “from his head and shoulders” taller than anyone else in Israel, but he was from the tribe of Benjamin and his father was called a “gibbawr” (Strong’s 01368) in the very same context that Saul’s height is noted.

1 Samuel 9:1 Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, **a Benjamite, a mighty (01368) man of power (02428).** **2 And he had a son, whose name was Saul,** a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: **from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.**

01368 gibbawr

intensive from 01396; ; { See TWOT on 310 @@ "310b" }

AV-mighty 63, mighty man 68, strong 4, valiant 3, ones 4, mighties 2, man 2, valiant men 2, strong man 1, upright man 1, champion 1, chief 1, excel 1, giant 1, men’s 1, mightiest 1, strongest 1; 158

adj

1) strong, mighty

n m

2) strong man, brave man, mighty man

02428 chayil

from 02342; n m; {See TWOT on 624 @@ "624a"}

AV-army 56, man of valour 37, host 29, forces 14, valiant 13, strength 12, riches 11, wealth 10, power 9, substance 8, might 6, strong 5, misc 33; 243

1) strength, might, efficiency, wealth, army

1a) strength

1b) ability, efficiency

1c) wealth

1d) force, army

The confluence of these facts is made all the more relevant in comparison to Genesis 6:4, which is the very first occurrence of the term “gibbowl” and which uses that term to refer to the first nephilim, the giant offspring of the angels and human women.

Genesis 6:4 There were giants (05303) in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men (01368) which were of old, men of renown.

And as if the evidence wasn't already conclusive, Saul's hometown and his father's house was in Gibeah, the very city previously destroyed on the suspicion of interbreeding with the Gentiles.

1 Samuel 10:26 And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.

1 Samuel 15:34 Then Samuel went to Ramah; and **Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul.**

It would seem that in its historical context this strange incident concerning the tribe of Benjamin in Judges 19-21, which otherwise doesn't seem to require inclusion in the biblical record, serves the perhaps divinely anticipated purpose of explaining why King Saul from the tribe of Benjamin, was so extraordinarily tall.

A FAIR CHANCE FOR SAUL (AND DAVID)

The entire episode would also serve to demonstrate that despite God's desire to eradicate the giant lineages to prevent them from interbreeding with the Israelites (from whom the Messiah would come), God gave Saul a fair chance to show himself faithful despite such lineage, ultimately knowing that Saul would not. Saul faced his ultimate test of faithfulness when given the choice to act as an Israelite and follow God's command to eradicate the Amalekites or to perhaps sympathize with Agag, a fellow giant (or at least of giant lineage). Saul failed, sparing Agag, in what is perhaps Saul's mutual respect for another “gibbowl.”

And through this incident, God demonstrated another reason why He insisted the Israelite king (and the future Messiah) must be fully human so he would have no ties to the angelic bloodline and no cause to betray his allegiance to God or Israel.

Then imagine Saul not taking the field against Goliath, another giant or “gibbor.” So in Saul’s stead, God raised up David, an average-sized man from the tribe of Judah, who was willing, without fear or hesitation, to destroy the giant Goliath even while the exceedingly tall Saul refused to destroy a fellow descendant of the nephilim (1 Samuel 17). And for such willingness and zeal, David won for himself God’s favor and the position of one of the most prominent ancestors of the Jewish Messiah.

(David’s average height is established in contrast to the noteworthy height of Saul and by God’s comments to Samuel in 1 Sam. 16:7-13 that David was not selected based on his stature.)

BALAM CONFIRMS SAUL’S LINEAGE

Lastly, Revelation 2:14 tells us something very interesting about Balaam that relates to the issue at hand.

Revelation 2:14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of **Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.**

Revelation states that Balaam taught Balak to get the children of Israel to commit fornication. The fornication mentioned here is specifically the illegal practice of engaging in sexual intercourse with Gentile nations, which is clear from the primary record of these events in Numbers 22-25. While there are fleeting references to Balaam in Deuteronomy 23:4-5, Joshua 13:22, 24:9-10, Nehemiah 13:2, Micah 6:5, 2 Peter 2:15-16, and Jude 1:11, these passages only contain a brief recap of the events described in Numbers 22-25. A few of them, such as 2 Peter and Jude refer to Balaam’s willingness to prophecy for financial gain as a sin. But none of these verses mention Balaam teaching or suggesting that Israel could be undone through fornication.

In fact, a verse by verse search through Numbers 22-25 reveals that there is no overt place where Balaam says anything to anyone about the children of Israel and fornication. To the contrary, throughout these chapters Balaam repeatedly only relays the words given to him by God. He blesses Israel and does not curse them. His entire language is characterized prominently by his refusal to say any bad thing concerning the Israelites.

A few details are worth noting.

First, the fornication in question occurs in Numbers 25, where it is defined as sexual intercourse between the Israelites and the daughters of Moab and, to a lesser extent, daughters from Midian. Balak, who hired Balaam, was king of Moab and the elders of Midian were also called in to advise concerning how to dispose of Israel (Numbers 22:4, 7, Numbers 25:1-3, 6, 15-18, Numbers 31:1-3, 7-9, 15-18). This is the exact kind of intermarriage that we will see God outlawing in Deuteronomy 7 below.

Second, in the three chapters spanning from Numbers 22-24, there is only one verse in which the idea of interbreeding is even suggested in the words of Balaam. That verse is Numbers 24:7. We have already discussed how the comparison of Agag's height to the height of a king of Israel inferred giant lineage intermingled with the Israelites, particularly the future King Saul. However, we have not discussed the phrase immediately preceding the reference to Agag.

Numbers 24:7 He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed *shall be* in many waters, and his king shall be higher (07311) than Agag (090), and his kingdom shall be exalted.

Right before the declaring that Israel will have a king as tall as the Gentile (Amalekite) King Agag, Balaam foresaw that Israel's "seed would be in many waters." This language is highly suggestive in prophetic themes of the idea that Israel's offspring would be intermingled among many nations. The occurrence of such language right before the reference to Agag, with all its implications, only strengthens our conclusions as does the fact that this is the only potential candidate in all of Balaam's words which could even vaguely substantiate Revelation's claims that Balaam's teachings were the basis for drawing the Israelites into the sin of unlawful interbreeding with the Gentile nations.

Our point here is not that Balaam necessarily intended these words to function as a hint or as instructions for how the Moabites and Midianites could subvert Israel, although it is possible that Balaam could have. Still, Numbers 24:2 specifies that Balaam gave these words under the inspiration of "the spirit of God." The most likely outcome is that the leaders of Moab and Midian, knowing Balaam's profound wisdom and desperately seeking to destroy Israel, seemed to vigilantly attend to his words for any possible advantage and to find in his foreknowledge concerning King Saul the concept of Israel interbreeding with its Gentile neighbors. This they decided they could use to their benefit. After all, if Israel could be made like her neighbors by intermarriage, then perhaps Israel would no longer seek to destroy its neighbors or perhaps God would no longer favor Israel over its neighbors.

(The question naturally arises whether God could condemn Balaam for teaching something to Israel's enemies when God himself inspired Balaam's words. On this point, we can turn for comparison to 1 Samuel 19:10, 21-24 and John 11:51. In 1 Samuel 19, after God rejects Saul, Saul prophesied by the Holy Spirit even while pursuing David to kill him. Likewise in John 11, the high priest prophesied "not of himself" that Jesus should die for the nation. These examples show that

although consistent prophetic interaction with God conveys God's approval, when divine inspiration occurs on a singular occasion, it does not imply God's approval of the deeds or intentions surrounding that particular occasion or particular individual. Furthermore, the text of Numbers is clear that God does not find fault with Balaam's words but with Balaam's desire to go and give an audience to the Moabites and Midianites. Consequently, it can be reasonably concluded that it is not the words which made God angry at Balaam but rather that Balaam went and spoke these words in front of God's enemies, knowing what they would do to pervert and misuse God's revelations. Jesus' warning in Matthew 7:6 seems related to this principle. In this passage, Jesus warns, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." The thrust of this teaching especially conveys the idea that the godless will use good gifts, perhaps even godly wisdom and teaching, to do harm to the righteous. In this light, Balaam's error was not the words which he taught, words which God himself inspired, but who he taught those inspired words to and the fact that his motivation for teaching the wrong people came from the desire for material gain.)

Regardless of how such particulars play out, the inevitable conclusion is that we find the prophetic reference to the tallness of King Saul in comparison to King Agag following immediately on the tail of prophetic language that suggests Israel's seed or offspring being intermixed with the nations. The combination of these factors further corroborates the conclusion that the thread of these related chapters from Numbers, Deuteronomy, Judges, and 1 Samuel are intended to convey to us that Saul was, in fact, a descendent of the giant lineages preserved among the Gentile nations.

SUMMARY

These facts do not imply that people with giant lineage cannot be saved or accepted. These giant lines were judged and eradicated after many years of sinful behavior. It was conditional and behavioral condemnation, not unconditional or genetic. Saul's appointment proves this.

These facts show God's desire to ensure that the Messiah was Adam's offspring but not angelic offspring. (God did not command the Israelites to kill all giants everywhere.) Sufficiently reasonable explanations are not difficult to speculate. Think of the inversion of justice that occurs if mankind is ruled by a Messiah who is the descendant of a fallen angel or the perversion that occurs if the Second Person of the Trinity becomes a man who is himself a descendant of fallen angels. On the contrary, beginning even as early as Genesis 3, God clearly indicates that his intention is to redeem sinful men from bondage to the serpent and his offspring through a human, a kinsman descended from Adam and Eve, who would restore mankind's dominion. (For more on this see our "Priesthood and the Kinsman Redeemer" study.)