

Giants of the Bible

The biblical history of giants was well known to the Hebrews and their fearsome physical attributes made powerful neighboring states that would challenge Israel's efforts of conquest and independence. The biblical accounts of giants served to:

- 1) reminded the Israelites of their dismay and bleak chances of success, and
- 2) acknowledged their ultimate dependence on God.

The Bible mentions several names or races of giants:

Nephilim

Little detail is known about the Nephilim aside from biblical accounts; however, extrabiblical Egyptian sources dated about 2000 BC mention their existence. The Bible mentions them in Genesis 6:4 and Numbers 13:31-33.

Rephaim

The Rephaim were one of the original occupants of the land, east of the Jordan, before the Canaanites immigrated. Og was a descendant of this race. Other giant groups similar or related to them were the Zamzummin (Zuzim), the Emim and the Anakim.

Extrabiblical accounts confirm the biblical existence of Rephaim. The Ras Shamra Texts whose cuneiform is dated about Joshua's time, frequently mention the Rephaim. The Bible mentions them in Genesis 14:5; 15:18-21; Deuteronomy 2:10-11, 20-21; 3:10-14; and Joshua 12:4; 13:12.

Anakim

Anak, from whom the Anakim were descendants of, was the son of Arba. The city Kirjath-arba, which means 'the city of Arba' was built by Arba, and the city ultimately became Hebron. Before the Conquest, the Anakim resided in the south near Hebron. It is believed that the Philistines intermingled with the race of Anakim from which Goliath of Gath, who fought David, came from.

Extrabiblical accounts confirm the biblical existence of Anakim. Egyptian manuscripts, the Execration Texts dated between 1900 and 1700 BC, records curses on Anakim chieftains who lived in Canaan. The Bible mentions them in Deuteronomy 2:10-11, 20-21; Joshua 11:21-22; 14:12-15; Numbers 13:31-33; 1 Samuel 17:4-7 and 2 Samuel 21:15-22.

Emim

The Emim (Hebrew meaning "dreadful ones") lived east of the Jordan. Little else is known about them. The Bible mentions them in Genesis 14:5 and Deuteronomy 2:10-11.

Horim

The Horim occupied the mountain range of Seir. Little else is known about them. The Bible mentions them in Genesis 14:5 and Deuteronomy 2:10-12, 20-21.

Victories over giants would remind the nation of Israel of God's blessings and covenant, and the psalmist memorialized these victories in Psalm 135:11 and 136:20.