

Giants in the Bible



Thousands



How many giants were there?

12 individual named giants mentioned in the Bible

RAPHA

- Early ancestor of all the giant clans in what became the region of Palestine, which included the Anakites, Emmites, and Horites (Deut 2:10-12; 2 Sam 21:16,18,20,22; 1 Chron 20:4,6,8)

ANAK

- Father of a clan of giants living southern Canaan (Num 13:28)

ARBA

- Forefather of Anak and the Anakim (Josh 15:13; 21:11)
- Honored as “the greatest man among the Anakites” (Josh 14:15)
- The Anakite name for Hebron was Kiriath-Arba meaning “City of Arba” (Josh 15:13)

SEPHER

- Because Debir was an Anakite city like Hebron (Josh 11:21), and because the former Anakite name for Debir was Kiriath-Sepher meaning “City of Sepher,” it must be that Sepher was the name of another Anakite patriarch like Arba (Josh 15:15)

OG

- The king of Bashan identified as the last of “the *Rephaites*” (Deut 3:11)
- Since other giants after Og are also *Rephaites*, the reference most likely means that Og was the last pure blooded (100%) giant sired by an angel mixing with a human woman (see explanation of the *Nephilim*)
- Bashan where Og ruled is in the region of Mount Hermon, and that according to the book of Enoch is where angels sired the *Nephilim*
- Og is the largest giant mentioned in the Bible—his bed was 13.5 feet long meaning Og was himself about 13 feet tall (Deut 3:11)
- Og with his army attacked the Israelites east of the Jordan in a battle at Edrei while they were still commanded by Moses (Deut 3:1-11)
- Og was defeated and killed and his territory was assigned to the half-tribe of Manasseh

AHIMAN

- A descendant of Arba and Anak who lived in Kiriath-Arba (later named Hebron) when Israel invaded Canaan (Num 13:22)
- One of 3 giants driven out of Hebron by Caleb (Josh 15:14; Jdg 1:10,20)

SHESHAI

- A descendant of Arba and Anak who lived in Kiriath-Arba (later named Hebron) when Israel invaded Canaan (Num 13:22)
- One of 3 giants driven out of Hebron by Caleb (Josh 15:14; Jdg 1:10,20)

TALMAI

- A descendant of Arba and Anak who lived in Kiriath-Arba (later named Hebron) when Israel invaded Canaan (Num 13:22)
- One of 3 giants driven out of Hebron by Caleb (Josh 15:14; Jdg 1:10,20)

GOLIATH

- The “champion” of the Philistine army opposing the Israelites under Saul (1 Sam 17:4)
- Was 9 feet tall, wore armor weighing 125 pounds, and spearhead weighed 15 pounds (1 Sam 17:4-7)
- Was descended from the Anakim giants whom Joshua allowed to survive in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod (Josh 11:22)

LAHMI

- One of the giants living in Gath
- The brother of Goliath
- Was killed by one of David’s men named Elhanan son of Jair
- Used a spear of similar size to one used by Goliath (1 Chron 20:5; 2 Sam 21:19)

ISHBI-BENOB

- One of the giants living in Gath with the Philistines in southern Canaan
- Was killed by David’s nephew Abishai, son of David’s sister Zeruah, who rescued David when this giant went after David during a battle between the Philistines and Israelites (2 Sam 21:15-17,22)
- Used a spearhead weighing 7.5 pounds (2 Sam 21:16) which was merely half the size of Goliath’s spearhead

SAPH also called *SIPPAI*

- One of the giants subjugated by the Philistines in southern Canaan
- Another giant who lived with the Philistines in Gath
- Was killed by one of David’s men named Sibbachai the Hushathite (1 Chron 20:4,8; 2 Sam 21:18,22)

2 unnamed individual giants mentioned in the Bible

A giant with 6 fingers on each hand and 6 toes on each foot
(2 Sam 21:20-22; 1 Chron 20:6-8)

- One of the giants subjugated by the Philistines in southern Canaan

- Another giant who lived with the Philistines in Gath
- Taunted Israel in battle and was killed Jonathan, the son David's brother Shimea

A "huge Egyptian" (2 Sam 2:21; 1 Chron 11:23)

- Was 7.5 feet tall (1 Chron 11:23)
- Was killed by Benaiah son of Jehoiada
- Benaiah was unarmed but snatched away the Egyptian's own spear and killed him with it

Families of giants mentioned in the Bible

Families of Anakites living in Hebron and Debir (Josh 10:36-39; 14:12-15)

Goliath's family of giants who lived in Gath (2 Sam 21:19; 1 Chron 20:5)

At least 3 cities of giants mentioned in the Bible

Anakites giants lived in 3 of their own cities

- These were Hebron (formerly Kiriath-Arba), Debir (formerly Kiriath-Sepher), and Anab
- These Anakite cities were located "in the hill country of Judah" (Josh 11:21)

Some Anakite giants also resided with the Philistines

- Philistine cities where Anakite giants resided included Gaza, Gath and Ashdod
- These Philistine cities with Anakite residents were located on the coastal plain below the hill country of Judah (Josh 11:22)

Anakite giants of southern Canaan lived in "large cities that have walls up to the sky" (Deut 9:2)

- This most likely referred to the Anakite cities of Hebron, Debir, and Anab
- May or may not have referred to the Philistine cities of Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod

5 clans of giants mentioned in the Bible

ANAKITES or ANAKIM or SONS OF ANAK

- Were *Rephaites* (Deut 2:11) meaning they were giants descended from Rapha, a subgroup descended from the *Nephilim*
- Were giants descended from the *Nephilim* (Num 13:33)
- Were "people of great size" (Num 13:32)
- Were "stronger and taller" than regular people (Deut 1:28; 9:2)
- Were all descendants of a giant named Arba (Josh 15:13; 21:11)
- Were descendants of a giant named Anak who lived in southern Canaan (Num 13:22,28)

EMITES or *EMIM*

- Described as “strong and numerous” and “tall as the Anakites” (Deut 2:10)
- Were *Rephaites* (Gen 14:5; Deut 2:11) meaning they were giants descended from Rapha, a subgroup descended from the *Nephilim*
- Lived east of the Jordan river in a region of Moab (Gen 14:5; Deut 2:11)
- Were defeated in Abraham’s day by King Chedorlaomer (Gen 14:5)

ZAMZUMMITES or *ZAMZUMMIM* or *ZUZITES* or *ZUZIM*

- Described as “strong and numerous” and “tall as the Anakites” (Deut 2:21)
- Were *Rephaites* (Gen 14:5; Deut 2:20) meaning they were giants descended from Rapha, a subgroup descended from the *Nephilim*
- Lived east of the Jordan river in the region of the Ammonites (Deut 2:20)
- Were defeated in Abraham’s day by King Chedorlaomer (Gen 14:5)
- Were later destroyed by the Ammonites (Deut 2:21)

HORITES

- Were *Rephaites* (Gen 14:5-6) meaning they were giants descended from Rapha, a subgroup descended from the *Nephilim*
- Lived in the “hill country of Seir” (Gen 14:6; Deut 2:12) a region of Edom
- Were defeated in Abraham’s day by King Chedorlaomer (Gen 14:5-6)
- Were later destroyed by “the descendants of Esau,” the Edomites (Deut 2:12,22)

AVVITES

- Mentioned only once at the end of a list of *Rephaites* (Deut 2:23)
- Lived in the coast land of southern Canaan in villages near Gaza (Deut 2:23)
- Were destroyed and replaced by the Caphtorites (ancestors of the Philistines who arrived from the island of Cypress/Caphtor)

An entire race of giants mentioned in the Bible*NEPHILIM*

- Race of “renown heros” resulting from the sexual mixing of angels (sons of God) with human women (Gen 6:2)
- “Heros” in Gen 6:2 were not necessarily good people
- *Nephilim* were “heros” in the same sense that Goliath was called a “hero” of the Philistines (1 Sam 17:51)
- This resulted in offspring of exceptional size and strength (Num 13:33)
- This giant race aggravated the exceptional wickedness of men living before the flood and was a factor in God’s decision to “wipe mankind from the face of the earth” by a flood (Gen 6:5-7)
- Angels continued siring *Nephilim* with human women even after the flood (Gen 6:4) which explains why descendants of the *Nephilim* resided in Canaan when Israel invaded under Joshua (Num 13:33)

- According to Jude, Enoch son of Jared, before the flood, in the 7th generation following Adam, stood firm against an explosion of wickedness among men that led to angelic intervention (Jude 14-15)
- Since the sort of wickedness to which Jude refers required angelic intervention, it may well have concerned the *Nephilim*

REPHAITES or *REPHEIM* or *DESCENDANTS OF RAPHA*

- Initially referred to descendants of an individual giant named Rapha, and then became general term for several giant clans living in the region of Canaan
- *Rephaites* were *Nephilim* because the Anakites (a clan of *Rephaites*) are identified as *Nephilim* (Num 13:33)
- *Rephaites* clans included the Anakim, the Emim, the Zamzummim, the Horites, and the Avvites
- Were in the region of Canaan during Abraham's day (Gen 15:20)
- Several *Rephaites* clans were defeated by King Chedorlaomer in Abraham's day (Gen 14:5-6)
- Og, King of Bashan, is identified as the last individual "remnant of the *Rephaites*" (Deut 3:11). But since other giants after Og are also referred to as *Rephaites*, this reference most likely means that Og was the last pure blooded (100%) giant sired by an angel mixing with a human woman

Giant killers named in the Bible:

CHEDORLAOMER, the king of Elam (region of Persia) who defeated several clans of giant people in the region of Canaan during the day of Abraham (Gen 14:5-6)

The unknown Israelite who killed Og, the giant king of Bashan (Deut 3:3)

CALEB who killed the giants Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi (Josh 15:14; Jdgs 1:10,20)

OTHNIEL, Caleb's son-in-law, who killed giants living in Debir (Josh 15:17; 10:39)

DAVID who killed the giant Goliath (1 Sam 17:51)

BENAIAH SON OF JEHOIADA who killed a "huge Egyptian" who was 7.5 feet tall (1 Chron 11:23)

ELHANAN SON OF JAIR who killed the giant Lahmi, brother of Goliath (2 Sam 21:19; 1 Chron 20:5)

ABISHAI SON OF ZERUIAH, David's nephew, who killed the giant Ishbi-Benob (2 Sam 21:16-17)

SIBBACHAI THE HUSHATHITE who killed the giant either called Saph or Sippai (2 Sam 21:18; 1 Chron 20:4)

JONATHAN SON OF SHIMEA, David's nephew, who killed an unnamed giant with 6 fingers on each hand and 6 toes on each foot (2 Sam 21:20-21; 1 Chron 20:6-7)

Regions where giants lived:

The "region of Argob" in Bashan ruled by Og the giant king (Deut 3:4)

Anakites were scattered throughout the "hill country of Judah and Israel" (Josh 11:21)

The main Anakite centers were the cities of Hebron (formerly Kiriath-Arba), Debir (formerly Kiriath-Sepher), and Anab in the hill country of Judah (Josh 11:21)

Some Anakites also lived in the coastal plain region with the Philistines in the cities of Gaza, Gath and Ashdod (Josh 11:22)

Emim lived east of the Jordan river in a region of Moab (Gen 14:5; Deut 2:11)

Zamzummim lived east of the Jordan river in the region of the Ammonites (Deut 2:20)

Horites lived below the Dead Sea in the "hill country of Seir" (Gen 14:6; Deut 2:12) a region of Edom

Avvites lived in the coast land of southern Canaan in villages near Gaza (Deut 2:23)

The place where a coalition of eastern kings led by Chedorloamer, king of Elam (in the region of Persia) defeated the combined armies of several giant clans was named *Shaveh-Kiriathaim* (Wasteland of Kiriathaim). This place is a valley located in the high plain above the Arnon River east of the Dead Sea in the region of Moab (Gen 14:5)

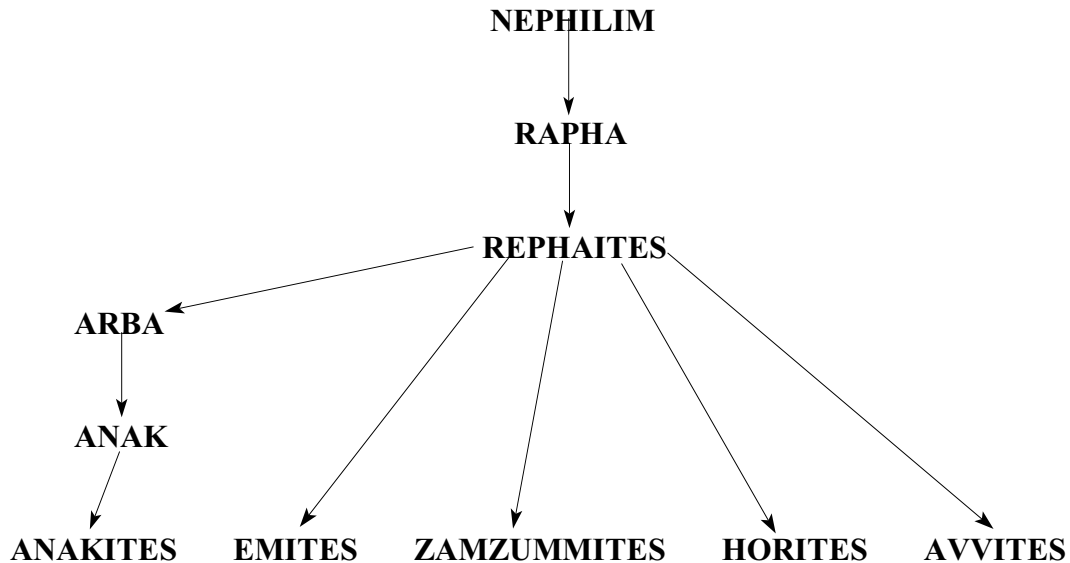
How the clans of giant were related:

Arba was the "forefather of Anak," the patriarch of the Anakim clan (Josh 15:13; 21:11)

Anakim were descended from the *Nephilim* (Num 13:33)

Rapha was the early ancestor of all the giant clans living throughout the region of what became Palestine. Giant clans descended from Rapha were referred to as *Rephaites* and included the Anakites, the Emmites, the Zamzummites, the Horites, and the Avvites (Gen 14:5-6; Deut 2:10-12,23; 2 Sam 21:16,18,20,22; 1 Chron 20:4,6,8)

Since the Anakites were giants descended both from Rapha (Deut 2:10-11) and the *Nephilim* (Num 13:33), that means all *Rephaites* (descendants of Rapha) were descended from the *Nephilim*. The *Nephilim* were the original giants (Gen 6:4)



Key stories involving giants:

A race of giants called *Nephilim* begin with angels mixing with women not only before but also after the flood (Gen 6:1-4)

Chedorlaomer, king of Elam (region of Persia), forms a coalition of kings who invade the region of Canaan and defeated several clans of giant people descended from the *Nephilim* during the day of Abraham (Gen 14:5-6)

Spies sent by Moses discover giants (descendants of the *Nephilim*) living in walled cities in southern Canaan. 10 of the spies conclude that opposing the giants was hopeless, but Caleb and Joshua had faith that God would enable them to overcome (Num 13:27-33)

Moses leads Israel in killing Og the giant king of Bashan and defeating his entire army. Israel then takes the land of Bashan at their own (Deut 3:1-11)

Caleb drives out and kills all the giants living in Hebron, formerly called Kiriath-Arba, (Josh 10:36-37; 14:12-15)

Othniel, Caleb's son-in-law, drives out and kills all the giants living in Debir, formerly called Kiriath-Sepher, (Josh 10:38-39; 15:15-17)

Joshua destroys all the Anakites except those in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod (Josh 11:22)

Philistines destroy the Avvites near Gaza (Deut 2:23) and subdue other giant clans in southern Canaan (1 Chron 20:4)

Moabites subdue the Emim living in the region of Moab (Deut 2:11)

Ammonites drive out the Zamzummim living in the region of Ammon (Deut 2:21)

Edomites drive out the Horites living in the region of Edom (Deut 2:12)

David kills the giant Goliath (1 Sam 17:51)

Benaiah son of Jehoiada kills a 7.5 foot Egyptian (1 Chron 11:23)

Elhanan kills the giant Lahmi (2 Sam 21:19; 1 Chron 20:5)

Abishai kills the giant Ishi-Benob (2 Sam 21:16-17)

Sibbachai kills the giant called Saph or Sippai (2 Sam 21:18; 1 Chron 20:4)

Jonathan son of Shimea kills the unnamed giant with 6 fingers on each hand and 6 toes on each foot (2 Sam 21:20-21; 1 Chron 20:6-7)

Where did all these giants come from?

- ✓ All giants in the Bible are descended from the *Nephilim*
- ✓ The name *Nephilim* literally means “fallen ones”
- ✓ The *Nephilim* came from angels mixing with human women (Gen 6:2), which occurred not only before but also after the flood (Gen 6:4). Not all theologians agree, but this is the only explanation that explains why their offspring (the *Nephilim*) would be unusually strong and tall
- ✓ This is a very ancient interpretation supported by the book of Enoch. Enoch is not part of the Bible, but its reliability is validated by the book of Jude in the Bible which includes a quote taken from the book of Enoch (Jude 14-15)
- ✓ The book of Enoch records how “in the days of Jared” (who lived before Noah and died just before the flood) angels disobeyed God (defiled themselves) by having sexual relations with women who gave birth to a race of giants called the *Nephilim*
- ✓ The book of Enoch also reports that all this activity involving angels and women (activity giving rise to the *Nephilim*) took place in the region geographically located near (or on) Mount Hermon just north of Bashan (where the giant Og later reigned as king)

- ✓ This interpretation not only explains the origin of giants in the Bible, but also explains the reference in the New Testament to angels who are now imprisoned waiting judgment because in the days of Noah they “disobeyed” God (1 Pet 3:19) by “not keeping their position” and “leaving their properly assigned place” (Jude 6)

Observations about giants mentioned in the Bible:

- ✓ It appears that the race of giants mentioned in the Bible as existing after Noah’s flood began in the region of Mount Hermon, east of the Jordan and north of Bashan
- ✓ Over time, this race of giants evolved into various clannal (tribal) groups some of whom migrated southward east of the Jordan River through the region of Ammon, then to Moab and lastly to Edom (south of the Dead Sea)
- ✓ Eventually some branches of this giant race migrated across the Jordan River with some settling into the hill country of southern Canaan, and some migrating as far as the coastal plain in the region of Gaza
- ✓ While these giant descendants of the *Nephilim* were much larger and stronger than other men and for that reason struck fear in those who opposed them, it also appears they were not especially bright (and were perhaps slow) because they lost to everyone who opposed them—the coalition led by Chedorlaomer, the Philistines, the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Edomites, as well as the Israelites
- ✓ Over time this race of giants intermarried with non-giants, and king Og of Bashan seems to have been the last of the original race or pure blood descendants of the *Nephilim*
- ✓ This may also explain why giants in the Bible were growing shorter over time. During the day of Moses, the giant Og was 13 feet tall, but 400 years later in David’s day the giant Goliath was just 9 feet tall. And Goliath’s younger colleague, Ishbi-Benob, seems to have been weaker than Goliath because he used a spearhead that was only half the size of Goliath’s spearhead
- ✓ The Israelites under Joshua (especially Caleb) destroyed most of the race of giants remaining in the region of Canaan. But they did not destroy all because they left a few who were living in the Philistine cities of Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod
- ✓ The giants killed by David and his men about 200 or 300 years later were not 100% pure blood giants (they were mixed blooded) and were the last remaining vestiges of those who were descended from the *Nephilim*
- ✓ No giants survived anywhere on earth after David rose to power in about 1005 BC

Why were giants born and why did God allow it?

- ✓ The angels who disobeyed God by mixing with women to generate a race of giants were not the same angels who fell in Satan's rebellion before the Garden of Eden. This second group of fallen angels were motivated by different reasons than the first group, and their reasons seem to have something to do with generating a race of beings (the *Nephilim*) that were neither entirely human nor entirely angelic
- ✓ What these angels did parroted God's idea of incarnation (embodiment of divinity). This angered God by interfering with his plan for redeeming humanity, and it is likely that the reason motivating the angels who did this had something to do with redemption. That is, they may have been trying to force God to include their fallen colleagues (angels who fell with Satan) in his plan to redeem humanity. Their logic may have been that, if God saved angels mixed with men, then he would have to save fallen angels as well as fallen men
- ✓ What those angels planned did not work. But since nothing takes God by surprise, and since nothing ever occurs outside God's control, that means God must have known what was occurring and allowed it for some time not only before but also after Noah's flood. And if God allowed it to occur for as long as he did, then he must have had a really good reason for allowing this mixed race of angelic-human giants to grow into quite a sizeable population
- ✓ The Bible does not reveal God's reasons for allowing this race of giants to arise (especially after the flood), but they most likely have something to do with:
 - Affirming the justice of God's punishment of fallen angels
 - Affirming the uniqueness of God's plan for redeeming fallen humanity
 - Affirming the fairness of excluding angels from God's redemption of men
 - Demonstrating God's absolute control over the means of salvation and the impossibility of ever manipulating God's eternal plan to redeem humanity without in any way compromising the fairness of eternal damnation for fallen angels
 - Highlighting the amazing wonder of God incarnating himself in order to save fallen men and women who repent