

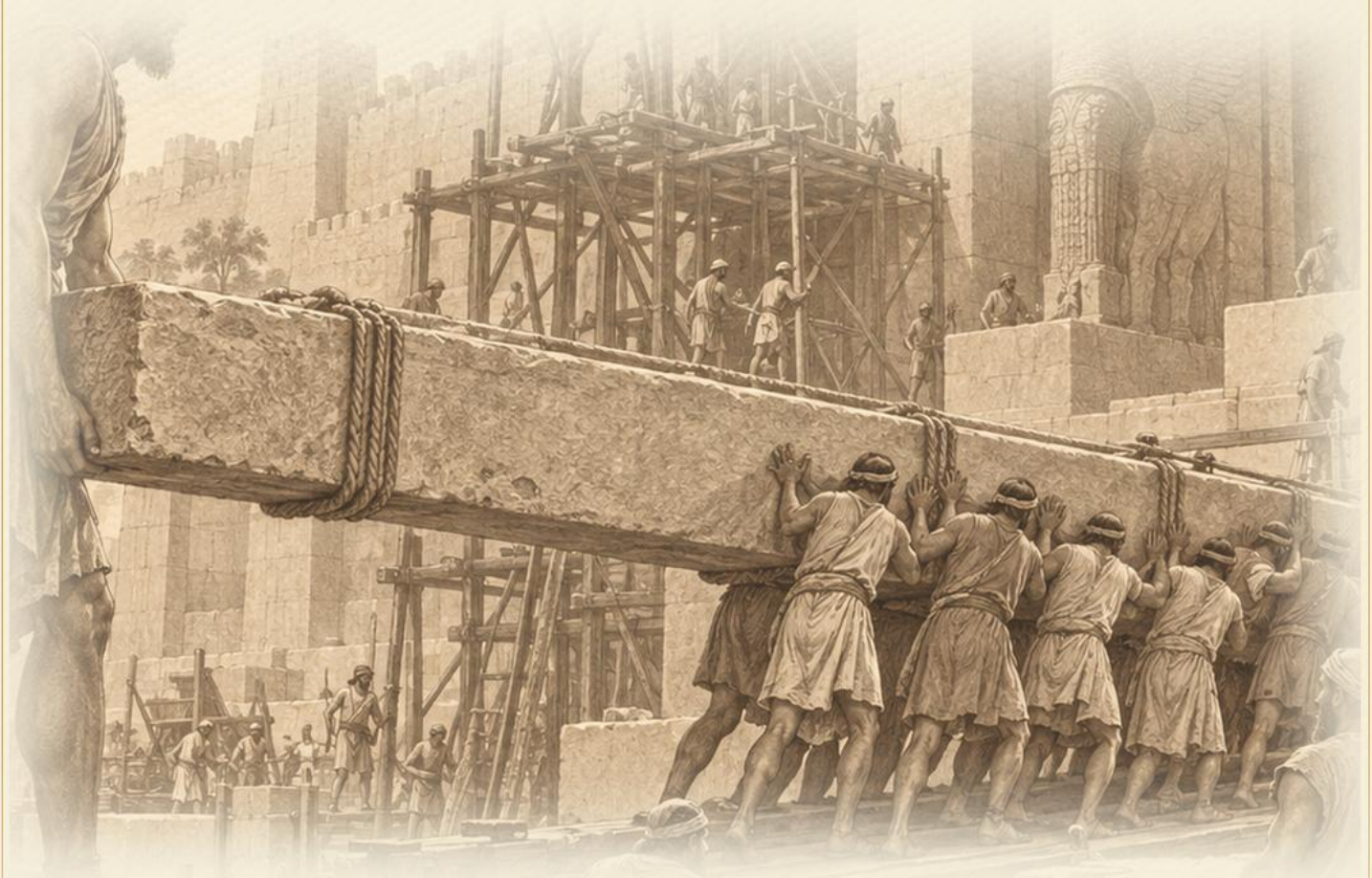
REASON TOGETHER STUDIES

RTS-120

GIANTS IN THE BIBLE | PART SIX OF EIGHT

DOES THE BIBLE TEACH THAT GIANTS BUILT ANCIENT MONUMENTS?

DEUTERONOMY 3:1–13 | JOSHUA 12:4–6 | AMOS 2:9



DR. THOMAS W. HAWKSLEY
REASON TOGETHER CHURCH

*Bring your questions. Open your Bible.
Let us Reason Together the Word of God.*

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RTS-120

Does the Bible Teach That Giants Built Ancient Monuments

Giants in the Bible | Part Six of Eight

SERMON

Primary passages Deuteronomy 3:1-13 Joshua 12:4-6 Amos 2:9

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Aloha.

Imagine standing beside a stone longer than a city bus.

Imagine that stone weighing hundreds of tons.

Imagine looking at it and knowing it was quarried, moved and placed long before electric motors, diesel engines and hydraulic cranes.

The natural question is, How did they do that?

That question has been asked beside the dolmens of the Golan Heights, beside the great stones of Baalbek and beside the pyramids of Egypt.

Some people offer an answer that sounds both dramatic and Biblical.

They say giants built them.

The Bible speaks about giants. Og ruled Bashan. Bashan contained sixty fortified cities. Massive stone structures still stand in that broader region. It can seem as though the pieces fit perfectly.

But do they fit because the Bible joins them, or because we have joined them ourselves?

That is the question before us today.

We are not going to deny anything the Bible says. If Scripture tells us that Og remained of the Rephaim, we believe it. If Scripture tells us that the children of Anak intimidated Israel, we believe it. If Scripture describes great walls, gates and bars, we believe it.

But we must also refuse to place another sentence into the Bible and then call that sentence the Word of God.

Deuteronomy chapter 3 begins with Israel approaching Bashan.

“Then we turned, and went up the way to Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei.”

Og was not a character in a bedtime story. He was a king with land, cities, subjects and an army.

God said unto Moses, “Fear him not.”

That command tells us fear was a real temptation.

Og was formidable. His army was formidable. His kingdom was formidable.

But God said, “I will deliver him, and all his people, and his land, into thy hand.”

Verse 4 says Israel took sixty cities in the region of Argob.

Verse 5 says, “All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; beside unwalled towns a great many.”

Those walls were not imaginary. The gates were not decorative. The bars were designed to secure those gates against an enemy.

Moses is describing a serious military obstacle.

Yet the purpose of the description is not to make us marvel at the unknown masons.

It is to make us marvel at the God who gave Israel the victory.

The walls were high, but they were not higher than God’s authority.

The gates were strong, but they could not close God out.

The bars were heavy, but they could not restrain the promise of God.

Og had a reputation, but God had spoken.

Og had an army, but God had spoken.

Og had sixty fortified cities, but God had spoken.

The central truth of Deuteronomy 3 is not that giants could build great cities.

The central truth is that no city, king or enemy can stand when God determines to fulfill His Word.

Now look closely at what the passage tells us.

It tells us Og ruled these cities.

It does not tell us Og founded these cities.

It tells us the cities were in his kingdom.

It does not tell us the Rephaim cut every stone.

It tells us about their walls, gates and bars.

It does not say giants designed or raised them.

Possession is not construction.

A man may buy a house he did not build. A governor may govern a state he did not establish. A king may conquer a city that had already stood for centuries.

Og's rule over a city does not prove Og built it.

Deuteronomy 3:11 tells us, "For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants." The Hebrew designation is Rephaim.

The verse then describes his unusual bedstead, which was displayed at Rabbath of the children of Ammon.

We examined that evidence in the previous study. We learned that the bedstead tells us Og was remembered as extraordinary, but the dimensions of furniture do not give us an exact measurement of the man.

Today we must apply the same discipline.

Og's association with the Rephaim does not identify the builders of every ancient structure in Bashan.

Joshua chapter 12 confirms Og's identity, territory and defeat. It still does not add the missing statement.

It never says giants built the monuments.

Numbers chapter 13 describes another frightening scene.

The spies returned from Canaan and said, "the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great."

They also said, "we saw the children of Anak there."

There were strong people.

There were great cities.

There were intimidating walls.

There were descendants of Anak.

But seeing all of those things in the same place does not establish who originally built the cities.

Finding soldiers inside a fortress does not prove those soldiers laid its foundation.

Finding a king inside a palace does not prove he cut its stones.

The spies joined everything together in their fear. They measured the inhabitants. They measured the walls. They measured themselves.

They failed to measure the faithfulness of God.

They said, “we were in our own sight as grasshoppers.”

Fear made the enemy larger and the promise smaller.

The real failure was not architectural confusion. It was unbelief.

Amos chapter 2 returns to the same memory.

God said, “Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks.”

The cedar pictured intimidating height. The oak pictured formidable strength.

Then God said, “yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath.”

God removed both visible power and hidden support.

Amos was not teaching Israel about ancient engineering. God was reminding Israel of grace.

Israel remembered how tall the Amorite appeared.

God reminded Israel who brought the Amorite down.

So let us ask the question plainly.

Where does the Bible say giants built ancient monuments?

It does not say the Rephaim built the dolmens of the Golan.

It does not say Og built the stone circles of Rujm el-Hiri.

It never connects Og with the stones of Baalbek.

It never says the Nephilim built the pyramids of Egypt.

It never says a massive stone requires a massive builder.

This does not prove that no unusually tall person ever helped construct anything. That would also go beyond the evidence.

It means we cannot call giant builders a Biblical teaching.

Three different claims are often compressed into one sentence.

First, a person or clan of unusual stature lived in a region.

Second, a great structure stands in that region.

Third, that person or clan built that structure.

The first claim may be Biblical.

The second claim may be archaeological.

But the third claim still needs evidence of its own.

We would not identify the builder of a house merely by naming the tallest person who later lived in the neighborhood.

We would look for plans, tools, records, dated materials and a secure connection between the worker and the work.

Ancient history deserves the same care.

“It could have happened” is a statement of possibility.

“The evidence supports it” is a historical judgment.

“The Bible teaches it” requires the Bible to say it.

We must never turn “the Bible does not forbid it” into “the Bible teaches it.”

The Bible does give us an account of monumental stone construction.

Turn to 1 Kings chapter 5.

Solomon prepared to build the Temple of the LORD.

Verse 13 says he raised a levy of thirty thousand men. They worked in scheduled shifts. Ten thousand went to Lebanon for one month, then they spent two months at home.

Verse 15 says Solomon had seventy thousand who bore burdens and eighty thousand who cut stone in the mountains.

Verse 16 identifies three thousand three hundred officers who supervised the work.

Verse 17 says, “And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house.”

These were great stones.

Who moved them?

Burden bearers moved them.

Who prepared them?

Stonecutters prepared them.

Who directed them?

Supervisors directed them.

Who supplied specialized skill?

Solomon’s builders, Hiram’s builders and the stonesquarers worked together.

No single worker performed the whole task.

Someone selected the timber.

Someone cut the stone.

Someone shaped it to measure.

Someone maintained tools.

Someone supplied food.

Someone recorded assignments.

Someone directed the teams.

Someone solved the problem when a load shifted or a road failed.

The finished wall made all of those workers nearly invisible, but their combined labor remained in every fitted stone.

The Bible’s explanation for great stones is not giant strength.

It is quarrying, transportation, craftsmanship, management, cooperation and time.

First Kings 6:7 says the stones were made ready before they were brought to the building site.

That required measurement.

It required planning.

It required workers who understood their material.

Ancient people did not possess modern engines, but they possessed human intelligence.

They watched what worked. They remembered what failed. They taught their children. Craftsmen accumulated knowledge through generations.

Their tools were simpler than ours, but simple tools do not mean simple minds.

The stones were massive, but the builders did not need massive bodies.

They needed knowledge, tools, organization and one another.

The Tower of Babel gives us another Biblical picture.

The people said, “Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly.”

They chose materials. They manufactured brick. They used slime for mortar. They united around a plan.

God said, “the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.”

That does not mean humanity is all-powerful.

It means people joined by language, knowledge and purpose can accomplish astonishing things.

The problem at Babel was not that ordinary people attempted something only giants could do.

The problem was their rebellion.

They said, “let us make us a name.”

The monument became an expression of pride and self-preservation apart from God.

Across history, people have built for many reasons. They built walls for defense. They built tombs to honor the dead. They built temples for worship. They built palaces to display power. They built monuments so their names would be remembered.

Great structures may reveal great organization, great fear or great pride.

They do not automatically reveal giant builders.

Consider the structures of Bashan.

The region contains durable basalt. Travelers found deserted towns with heavy stone doors, roofs and walls.

In the nineteenth century, J. L. Porter published a book called *The Giant Cities of Bashan*. He believed some buildings looked like the kind of dwellings giants would make.

His writing influenced the Christian imagination.

But Porter also saw Greek inscriptions, Roman buildings and later churches. The visible ruins came from more than one period.

A building’s appearance is not its date.

A heavy door is not an inscription naming its builder.

A ruin in Bashan is not automatically a ruin from Og.

The Golan Heights and Transjordan contain thousands of dolmens.

A dolmen is generally a stone burial chamber. Upright stones support a large capstone.

Excavated examples have contained human remains, pottery and burial goods. Many have been associated with Early or Intermediate Bronze Age communities.

Some were disturbed. Some were reused. Their dates are not all identical.

One great dolmen in the Shamir field used a capstone estimated at more than fifty tons.

That is extraordinary.

But the evidence identifies a burial monument constructed by an organized community. It does not identify a giant skeleton or name Og as the builder.

Some dolmens may predate the time normally associated with Og by centuries.

A monument may stand in a king's later territory without having been built during that king's reign.

Rujm el-Hiri is a remarkable arrangement of concentric basalt walls surrounding a central cairn.

Its date, phases and original purpose remain debated.

It is sometimes called Gilgal Rephaim, the wheel of the Rephaim.

But that Hebrew name is modern.

A modern name is not an ancient builder's inscription.

Baalbek presents an even greater problem for the giant-builder claim.

It stands in Lebanon's Beqaa Valley, not in Og's kingdom of Bashan.

Its Temple of Jupiter includes three stones often estimated at roughly eight hundred tons each.

Larger unfinished stones remain in the nearby quarry.

The site has a long history, but the monumental sanctuary is chiefly connected with Roman imperial development.

We do not know every detail of how every block was moved and placed.

But not knowing every step of a procedure does not mean we know giants performed it.

An unanswered question about method is not an answered question about builders.

The same discipline applies to the Egyptian pyramids.

The Bible does not say giants built them.

The Bible does not say enslaved Israelites built the Great Pyramid. The Great Pyramid was already ancient long before the Exodus.

The diary of an Egyptian official named Merer describes crews transporting limestone for Khufu's pyramid project.

Excavations at Giza have uncovered housing, workshops, bakeries, storage areas and administrative facilities connected with the pyramid workforce.

The evidence reveals quarrymen, boat crews, craftsmen, managers and laborers.

They were human beings working within an organized society.

Ancient builders could use sledges, ropes, levers, ramps, prepared roads, packed earth and water transport.

They could move a stone a little at a time.

They could build up the ground around a structure, position the stone and later remove the supporting earth.

They could reduce friction by preparing or moistening sand.

Different monuments required different methods. We should not pretend one answer solves every construction problem.

We must also distinguish moving a stone from lifting it straight into the air.

Modern videos sometimes picture ancient workers attempting to raise an enormous block as though they were loading it onto a modern truck.

Ancient builders could quarry near the site, shape a route, drag on a sledge, move by water, raise a working platform and place a block through many controlled steps.

An inch gained and secured does not need to be lifted again.

A ramp changes the problem.

A lever changes the problem.

A prepared surface changes the problem.

A thousand coordinated workers change the problem.

This does not tell us the precise sequence used at every site.

It tells us why “I cannot imagine how” is not historical evidence.

The limits of my imagination are not the limits of ancient skill.

But remember this simple fact.

If a stone weighs eight hundred tons, a ten-foot man cannot pick it up either.

Greater height would not remove the need for engineering.

The largest stones were mechanical and organizational problems, not merely muscular problems.

In fact, unusual height brings its own physical limits.

As a body becomes larger, its weight rises faster than the strength supplied by a simple increase in size.

Whatever Og’s stature was, he would still need footing, balance, tools and other workers.

A giant is not a crane.

The giant-builder explanation sounds simple only because it leaves the actual engineering unexplained.

Why, then, do giant-builder stories appear in so many places?

Because monuments often outlive memory.

Cities fall. Languages change. Inscriptions become unreadable. The builders’ names disappear. The stones remain.

Later people look at those stones and imagine builders proportionate to their wonder.

In Europe, some megaliths became known as giants’ graves or giants’ beds.

Massive walls were called cyclopean because legend credited the Cyclopes.

Baalbek was attributed at different times to Cain, Nimrod, Solomon, spirits and giants.

Those stories tell us how later people understood the ruins. They do not all identify the original builders.

A legend may preserve wonder after history is forgotten, but wonder is not the same as memory.

We should listen to local traditions with respect.

They are part of the human history of a place.

They may tell us which ruins frightened people, which places they considered sacred and which ancient names still carried authority.

But a story told centuries after a wall was built is not the same kind of evidence as an inscription placed there by the builder.

Folklore answers the question, “What did later people believe about this place?”

Archaeology asks, “What material evidence remains from the people who used this place?”

The Bible asks us to hear what God has revealed in the text.

Those questions can meet, but they must not be confused.

If five later stories name five different builders, repeating the most Biblical-sounding name does not make that story the oldest.

We must trace the claim, examine its date and compare it with the physical evidence.

That kind of care is not hostile to faith.

God is not honored when we promote a late legend as though it were a verse of Scripture.

God is honored when we tell the truth about what we know, what we reasonably infer and what we do not know.

Today these stories travel through videos and photographs.

Sometimes we are told that a giant skeleton was discovered and then removed.

Sometimes an old newspaper story is presented without any surviving remains.

Sometimes a photograph has no documented excavation site.

Sometimes every missing piece of evidence is explained as proof of a cover-up.

Institutions can make mistakes. Scholars can follow faulty assumptions. Museums are not infallible.

But suspicion is not documentation.

We should ask: Where was the object found? Who excavated it? Was its position recorded? Was it measured? Was it dated? Can another qualified person examine it?

We should also ask what evidence would change our mind.

If no possible discovery could count against a claim, then we are no longer investigating history.

We are protecting a belief from examination.

Truth can survive a fair test.

If the claim is true, careful documentation will help it.

If the claim is false, careful documentation will protect the church from repeating it.

If every missing artifact becomes proof that someone hid it, the claim has been protected from examination rather than proven by examination.

Proverbs 18:13 says, “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”

Verse 17 says, “He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.”

The first presentation may sound convincing.

Then someone checks the date.

Someone checks the location.

Someone finds the original photograph.

Someone examines the stonework.

Truth does not fear another question.

The Bereans received the word with readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily to determine whether those things were so.

They were neither cynical nor gullible.

They listened, then they examined.

First Thessalonians 5:21 says, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

That is our responsibility.

What does the Bible actually say?

What has been directly observed?

What has been inferred?

What evidence would be necessary to prove the conclusion?

Christians sometimes accept sensational claims for sincere reasons. We want to defend the Bible.

We hope a dramatic discovery will silence unbelief.

But weak evidence does not strengthen a strong Bible.

When a false photograph is exposed, some people think Scripture was exposed with it.

Scripture never made the claim.

There is a pastoral lesson here about how we speak.

Before we forward a startling claim, we should ask whether we have confused enthusiasm with verification.

Before we use a story in a sermon, we should ask whether the original source can be found.

Before we tell a young believer that a monument proves the Bible, we should ask what happens when the attribution is corrected.

Our motive may be sincere, but sincerity cannot turn weak evidence into strong evidence.

The ninth commandment still matters when the story seems helpful to our side.

We must not bear false witness, even accidentally, in an effort to defend the God of truth.

The Bible does not become true when an enormous stone is discovered.

The Bible does not become false when a viral story collapses.

God’s Word rests upon God’s truthfulness.

We honor Scripture when we believe everything it says, refuse to be ashamed of anything it says and refuse to make it say what it never said.

Human beings have always tried to build something that will last.

A city.

A tower.

A temple.

A tomb.

A name.

Yet stones crack. Walls collapse. Cities are abandoned. Names are forgotten.

There is only one foundation that will never fail.

First Corinthians 3:11 says, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

You cannot construct your own salvation.

You cannot quarry enough good works to remove your sin.

You cannot raise a tower high enough to reach a holy God.

Jesus came down to us.

He lived without sin.

He died for our sins upon the cross.

He was buried.

He rose again.

At Babel people said, “Let us make us a name.”

Acts 4:12 declares of Jesus, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

Stop trying to build your hope upon yourself.

Rest upon the foundation God has already laid.

Admit that you are a sinner. Believe that Jesus died and rose again. Call upon Him and trust Him to save you.

Repentance means you stop defending your rebellion and turn to God.

Faith means you stop resting the weight of your soul upon your own record and rest it upon Christ.

Perhaps you have admired the works of ancient people but never faced the ruin within your own heart.

Perhaps you have accumulated knowledge but have not received life.

Perhaps you have tried to make a name, build a reputation and secure yourself against judgment.

No monument can shelter you from God.

But Christ is a refuge for every sinner who comes to Him.

Romans 10:13 says, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Come to Him as you are.

Do not promise to save yourself.

Trust the Savior who finished the work.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Forgive us when we are more attracted to sensational stories than careful truth. Give us minds willing to examine, hearts willing to learn and courage to hold fast to what is good. Thank You for the intelligence, skill and creativity You have placed within humanity. Keep us from worshiping what our hands have built. Help us to build our lives upon Jesus Christ alone. For anyone who has not trusted Him, draw that person to repentance and faith today. Thank You that Jesus died for our sins and rose again. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Before we leave, remember that extraordinary claims will continue to find us.

Some will arrive with an impressive photograph. Some will quote a verse. Some will tell us that anyone who asks questions is hiding the truth.

Pause and ask what Scripture actually says.

Ask what has been observed and what has merely been inferred.

Ask whether the chronology has been checked and whether the evidence can be examined.

Believe the Bible when it tells you Og was formidable.

Believe the Bible when it tells you God defeated him.

Believe the Bible when it describes high walls, gates and bars.

But do not add another sentence and call it Scripture.

The Bible tells us that giants lived.

It does not tell us that giants built the monuments.

Aloha Nui Loa.

REASON TOGETHER STUDIES

RTS-120

Does the Bible Teach That Giants Built Ancient Monuments

Giants in the Bible | Part Six of Eight

COMMENTARY

Exegetical commentary on the principal and supporting passages

Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley

Reason Together Church

Bring your questions. Open your Bible. Let us Reason Together the Word of God.

Introduction

The principal exegetical question is narrower than the title may first suggest. Scripture certainly presents Og and other ancient peoples as formidable. The question is whether the inspired text attributes identifiable monuments to them. The commentary must therefore attend to verbs, subjects and narrative purpose. Who rules, who fights, who builds and who destroys cannot be treated as interchangeable.

Deuteronomy 3:1-3 The Battle with Og

The narrative follows Israel's victory over Sihon. Israel turns north toward Bashan, and Og comes out to battle at Edrei. The Lord tells Moses not to fear because Og, his people and his land have already been given into Israel's hand. The theological initiative belongs to God.

The command not to fear does not require exaggerating Og. It recognizes that his forces and reputation presented a genuine threat. The account is written to strengthen Israel for the conquest west of the Jordan. If God defeated Sihon and Og, the fortifications and peoples of Canaan should not cause unbelief.

Deuteronomy 3:4 The Sixty Cities and Argob

Israel takes all the cities, described as sixty in the whole region of Argob within Og's kingdom. The Hebrew *chebel* can denote a measured tract, district or allotted region. Attempts to identify Argob exactly with a modern geographical unit remain debated. The basaltic Leja or Trachonitis has often been proposed, while broader locations within Bashan also receive consideration.

The statement identifies political geography at the time of conquest. It does not say Og founded each city. Ancient cities commonly passed between rulers and were rebuilt across generations.

Deuteronomy 3:5 Walls Gates and Bars

The cities are described as fortified with high walls, gates and a bar, alongside many unwalled settlements. The singular “bar” may refer distributively to the securing apparatus of each gate. The language is ordinary military description. It does not contain a technical term for megalithic or cyclopean masonry.

The adjective *gavoah* means high or elevated. *Sha'ar* can identify a gate or gateway complex, while *beriach* denotes a bar or bolt that secures an entry. None of these words identifies the wall material, block size or builder's stature. Reading “high walls” as “walls built by giants” imports a conclusion into the adjective.

The contrast with unwalled towns shows a developed settlement system. Fortified centers offered defense and administration while smaller villages supported agriculture and livestock. The narrative emphasizes how complete Israel's victory was despite the defenses.

Deuteronomy 3:6-10 Defeat and Territory

The destruction language belongs to the theology of devoted warfare in Deuteronomy. This difficult subject deserves treatment within the covenant and judgment framework, though it is not the focus of RTS-120. The present study should not use the passage as an occasion to minimize its severity or divert into an unrelated defense.

Verses 8-10 summarize the territory taken from Sihon and Og. Place names define the reach of the victory. They do not identify surviving modern ruins as particular conquest-period cities without additional evidence.

Deuteronomy 3:11 Og and the Rephaim

Og alone remained of the remnant of the Rephaim in the narrative setting. “Remnant” need not mean the final Rephaite anywhere on earth. It marks him as a surviving representative in the region under discussion.

His bed of iron was at Rabbath of the Ammonites. The Hebrew noun may denote a bed or couch. Some interpreters have proposed a funerary couch or sarcophagus, but the ordinary sense should remain primary unless context requires otherwise. Barzel normally means iron. Suggestions that it means basalt arise partly from the dark stone of the region, yet that proposal is not demanded by the word.

Its dimensions are nine by four cubits “after the cubit of a man.” That qualifying phrase probably distinguishes an ordinary human cubit from a specialized or royal standard. Using an approximate 18-inch cubit yields an object about 13.5 by 6 feet, or 4.1 by 1.8 meters. The calculation measures the object, not Og. Beds and couches exceed the dimensions of their occupants, and ceremonial display may exaggerate status. The object establishes that Og was remembered as remarkable. It cannot produce an exact height without several unstated assumptions.

Most importantly for RTS-120, the bedstead is evidence about Og's remembered status. It is not evidence about the authorship of dolmens, city walls or distant temples.

Deuteronomy 3:12-13 The Land of Rephaim

The conquered territory is allocated to the tribes east of the Jordan. The phrase “land of giants” or land of Rephaim identifies the region through its remembered inhabitants. A territorial designation can outlive the people for whom it was named. It does not convert every structure within the region into their construction.

Joshua 12:4-6 The Historical Summary

Joshua 12 lists defeated kings. Og is again connected with the remnant of the Rephaim, Ashtaroth, Edrei and territory extending through Bashan. The passage is administrative and commemorative. Its subject is the Lord's victories and the lands Moses distributed. No building verb is attached to Og or the Rephaim.

Numbers 13:28-33 The Spies Report

The spies report strong inhabitants, great fortified cities and descendants of Anak. The report begins with genuine observations but develops into an “evil report.” The people become stronger than Israel, the land consumes its inhabitants and the spies perceive themselves as grasshoppers.

Verse 33 uses Nephilim and links the sons of Anak to them in the spies' report. The textual and interpretive questions surrounding that statement belong chiefly to the earlier studies in this series. For RTS-120, the important grammatical observation is that the passage does not attach a building verb to either term.

The text distinguishes what was seen from the fearful conclusion drawn from it. This provides an important hermeneutical analogy. A massive structure can be a genuine observation while the claim that only giants could build it remains an inference. The presence of Anakim and cities in one report does not grammatically attribute the cities' construction to the Anakim.

Deuteronomy 1:28 and Joshua 14:12

Deuteronomy 1 recalls Israel's discouragement: the people were greater and taller, the cities great and walled up to heaven and the sons of the Anakim were present. “Walled up to heaven” is conventional hyperbole for apparently unassailable fortifications. It should not be converted into an architectural measurement.

Joshua 14:12 records Caleb's confidence that the Lord will enable him to drive out the Anakim from great fortified cities. Caleb reverses the earlier response. The same formidable facts that produced unbelief in one generation become an occasion for faith in another.

Amos 2:9-12 The Cedar and the Oak

Amos addresses Israel's covenant ingratitude. God destroyed the Amorite, brought Israel from Egypt, led the people through the wilderness and raised prophets and Nazirites. Israel responded by corrupting Nazirites and silencing prophets.

The singular “the Amorite” functions corporately for the people Israel faced. The Amorite's cedar-like height and oak-like strength are similes. Cedars evoke elevation and majesty, while oaks evoke durability and strength. The language may preserve a memory of physically imposing enemies, but the verse is poetic and theological rather than statistical.

God destroys “his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath.” The paired extremes express totality. What appeared tall above ground and firmly established below ground could not withstand divine judgment. The repeated first-person acts of God in verses 9-11 make grace the point of the recollection. Nothing in the context concerns monumental construction.

Genesis 11:1-9 Building Babel

Genesis 11 gives a rare Biblical description of technological choice. The people manufacture brick and use bitumen as mortar. Their common language permits coordinated action. Their stated goals are a city, a tower, a name and resistance to dispersion.

The Lord's observation about what united humanity can accomplish recognizes cooperative capacity. Divine intervention addresses rebellion and pride, not a physical impossibility. Babel therefore supplies a Biblical counterpoint to the assumption that extraordinary construction requires extraordinary anatomy.

Exodus 1:11-14 Brick Labor Not Pyramid Labor

Pharaoh appoints taskmasters and afflicts Israel with burdens. The Israelites build the store cities Pithom and Raamses, and their bitter service includes mortar and brick. The vocabulary and named projects are specific enough to correct a common popular claim.

The passage does not say Israelites built the Great Pyramid or any pyramid. Khufu's Great Pyramid belongs to a much earlier Egyptian period than either major chronology proposed for the Exodus. Connecting Israel to the Great Pyramid because both belong to Egyptian history is an anachronism.

The correction should be stated pastorally. Many people learned the claim through films, children's lessons or uncritical repetition. Its removal does not remove the Biblical oppression. It allows the text to describe the labor it actually names.

Terminology and Translation Cautions

The King James Version sometimes uses “giant” for more than one Hebrew expression. Rephaim can denote a remembered people group in historical contexts, while related uses elsewhere concern the dead. Anakim identifies descendants of Anak. Nephilim occurs in Genesis 6 and Numbers 13. These terms overlap in some narrative associations but should not be collapsed into a single technical label without argument.

English readers may hear “giant” and imagine a precisely defined biological category. The Biblical texts more often emphasize formidable stature, ancestry, reputation or military threat. Translation supplies a useful traditional term, but interpretation must still attend to the Hebrew word and its context.

The same caution applies to archaeological language. “Megalith” means a large stone used in construction. It names a material feature, not an ethnic group. “Cyclopean” describes masonry made with very large irregular blocks and derives from a Greek legendary attribution. It does not mean archaeologists have identified Cyclopes or Biblical giants.

First Kings 5:13-18 The Temple Workforce

The chapter describes royal procurement and labor. Solomon organizes thirty thousand Israelites in shifts connected with Lebanon. Seventy thousand bear burdens, eighty thousand hew stone and

thousands oversee the work. The Chronicler supplies related totals and identifies resident aliens in portions of the labor system.

The “levy” in verse 13 represents royal labor service. The burden bearers and stonecutters describe distinct functions, and the officers demonstrate a hierarchy of supervision. Verse 18 joins Solomon's builders, Hiram's builders and the Gebalites, traditionally rendered “stonesquarers,” in preparing timber and stone. The project therefore combines local labor, international cooperation and specialist craft.

The ethical questions of corvée and forced labor should not be ignored in a broader study of Solomon. For this sermon, the relevant point is descriptive: monumental projects required enormous economic and human organization. Great stones reached the foundation through the work of cutters, transporters, builders and supervisors. The text explains capacity without appealing to unusual anatomy.

First Kings 6:7 and 7:9-12 Prepared Stone

First Kings 6:7 says the stone was prepared at the quarry so that hammer, axe and iron tool were not heard at the Temple during assembly. The verse implies advance measurement and quality control.

First Kings 7 describes costly stones cut according to measure and sawn on inner and outer faces. The Biblical record thus presents stone technology as specialized knowledge. It does not portray ancient builders as incapable people waiting for giants to solve their engineering problems.

Proverbs 18:13 and 18:17

Verse 13 condemns answering before hearing. Verse 17 observes that the first case sounds right until it is examined. Together they provide a Biblical method for evaluating viral claims. A persuasive presentation must be checked through chronology, provenance and competing explanations.

These proverbs do not command endless indecision. They command a fair hearing before judgment.

Acts 17:11 and First Thessalonians 5:21

The Bereans receive Paul's message eagerly while examining the Scriptures daily. Readiness and testing are allies. First Thessalonians commands believers to test all things and hold fast what is good. The verb carries the idea of examination leading to approval.

In 1 Thessalonians 5, the immediate sequence concerns prophecies: believers must not despise them, yet they must test everything and retain what is good. Paul rejects both gullibility and cynical refusal. The test is purposeful because it leads to holding the good and avoiding every form of evil.

Applied responsibly, these passages encourage Christians to examine teachings and evidence. They should not be made to imply that every historical question can be settled from Scripture alone. Scripture governs doctrine and truth, while archaeological claims also require appropriate material investigation. Nor should “test” become an excuse for suspicion without standards. A test needs relevant evidence and a conclusion capable of being corrected.

Theological Synthesis

The Biblical passages produce a coherent conclusion. God rules over formidable peoples and fortified cities. Human beings possess substantial creative and cooperative capacity. Monumental works can serve worship, defense, burial, royal power or pride. Scripture sometimes identifies builders in detail and sometimes does not identify them at all.

Faithfulness requires respect for those limits. The existence of giants does not prove their authorship of monuments. The existence of human engineering does not disprove Biblical descriptions of giants. The claims answer different questions.

Pastoral Use and Gospel Connection

The sermon should lead hearers from archaeological discernment to spiritual discernment. People often want visible confirmation strong enough to remove the need for trust. John 20:30-31 reminds readers that the signs recorded in Scripture were selected so that people might believe Jesus is the Christ and have life through His name.

First Corinthians 3:11 identifies Jesus Christ as the only foundation. Acts 4:12 identifies His name as the only saving name. Babel's desire to make a name provides an appropriate contrast. Human monuments decay, but the salvation secured by Christ remains. The invitation must not treat archaeology as the basis of the gospel. Christ's death, burial and resurrection are the message to be believed.

Answers to Likely Exegetical Questions

Could “land of the Rephaim” mean that every old structure there was Rephaite? No. The phrase identifies a territory through a people associated with it. Territorial names do not assign construction of every feature in the territory. The text would need to connect a specific work and a specific builder.

Do the sixty cities prove an advanced giant civilization? They demonstrate an organized kingdom with numerous settlements and serious defenses. Scripture gives no reason to deny that sophistication. It does not identify the inhabitants' stature as the source of that sophistication or say one ethnic group founded every city.

Does Og's bed prove he could move megaliths? No. Whatever conclusion one reaches about Og's approximate stature, the bedstead provides no information about quarrying, transport or construction. The heaviest ancient blocks are far beyond unaided bodily lifting at any plausible human height.

Could Amos 2:9 be literal rather than poetic? Simile can communicate a literal impression through figurative comparison. The enemies may indeed have been unusually tall and strong. “Like the height of the cedars” still does not function as a measured stature, and the verse says nothing about building.

Does the absence of a Biblical statement prove giants never built anything? No. Silence cannot establish impossibility. An unusually tall individual could have participated in ordinary

construction. The warranted conclusion is that Scripture does not teach the popular attribution and that each historical claim needs independent evidence.

Why use 1 Kings 5 if it concerns a later project? It is not offered as the technique used at every earlier site. It demonstrates how Scripture itself explains large dressed stones when it chooses to describe a monumental project: materials, skilled workers, transport, shifts and supervision. That makes it an important Biblical control against the assumption that great stones imply giants.

Does acknowledging uncertainty open the door to any theory? No. Historical uncertainty is graded. We may lack the exact angle of a ramp while possessing strong evidence for the date, patron and human workforce. A small gap in method does not erase the larger evidential context.

Interpretive Boundaries

Do not say archaeology has explained every monument. Do not say an institution could never suppress or mishandle evidence. Do not equate all Amorites with Rephaim. Do not assume every use of “giant” translates the same Hebrew term. Do not date all dolmens alike. Do not treat a modern place-name as a contemporary inscription. Do not calculate Og's height from his bedstead without acknowledging the assumptions. Do not present Scripture's silence as proof that an event was impossible.

The warranted conclusion is deliberately narrower: the Bible does not teach that giants built the named ancient monuments, and presently available evidence does not establish that attribution.