

REASON TOGETHER STUDIES

GIANTS IN THE BIBLE | PART SEVEN OF EIGHT

HAVE ARCHAEOLOGISTS FOUND THE BONES OF BIBLICAL GIANTS?

GENESIS 6:4 | NUMBERS 13:33 | DEUTERONOMY 3:11



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

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RTS-121

Have Archaeologists Found the Bones of Biblical Giants?

Giants in the Bible | Part Seven of Eight

SERMON

Primary passages Genesis 6:4 Numbers 13:33 Deuteronomy 3:11 Job 13:7-9

Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley

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Aloha.

Imagine receiving a photograph from a Christian friend.

The photograph shows an archaeological excavation.

Several workers are standing in a deep pit.

Between them lies an enormous human skeleton.

The skull appears larger than one of the workers.

The arms and legs stretch across the excavation.

The caption reads, "Scientists discover the skeleton of a Biblical giant."

What would you think?

Would you be excited?

Would you send it to someone else?

Would you post it and write, "At last, here is proof that Genesis is true"?

I understand why a Christian would want that photograph to be real.

We love and believe the Bible.

We welcome legitimate evidence that illuminates Biblical history.

We would not be disappointed if archaeologists discovered the remains of an extraordinarily tall person from the world described in Scripture.

But wanting something to be true is not evidence that it is true.

A claim does not become reliable merely because it agrees with what we already believe.

A photograph does not become authentic merely because somebody places a Bible verse beneath it.

Proverbs 14:15 says, "The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going."

The Bible does not condemn faith; it condemns gullibility.

Faith believes God.

Gullibility believes everything.

Faith rests upon what God has said.

Gullibility accepts whatever appears upon the screen.

Today we must answer two questions.

First, have archaeologists found the bones of Biblical giants?

Second, if something appears to support the Bible, may Christians repeat it before determining whether it is true?

The first question concerns bones.

The second question concerns our Christian witness.

Before asking archaeology what it has found, let us ask Scripture what it actually says.

Genesis 6:4 reads, "There were giants 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 which were of old, men of renown."

The King James Version uses the English word "giants."

The underlying Hebrew word is Nephilim.

That word identifies the people mentioned in the passage.

It does not provide their measurements.

Genesis describes them as mighty men and men of renown.

The text does not tell us how tall each Nephilim was.

It does not tell us that every Nephilim was the same height.

It does not describe their skeletons.

It does not identify their graves.

It does not tell a modern archaeologist how to recognize one of them by the shape of a bone.

We should affirm everything the Bible says.

We should also resist adding what the Bible does not say.

Numbers 13:33 records the words of the spies: "And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."

The sons of Anak were real people.

Other passages confirm that they were formidable and unusually tall.

The Israelites feared them.

Ten spies said that they felt like grasshoppers beside them.

That is the language of fear and comparison.

It is not a measured anthropological report.

The spies did not say, "We measured the Anakim and recorded their height."

They described how small and powerless they felt.

The passage supports unusually intimidating stature.

It does not support every modern claim of a fifteen-foot skeleton.

Deuteronomy 3:11 says, "For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man."

Og was king of Bashan.

He was associated with the remnant of the Rephaim.

His bedstead was unusually large.

That contributes to the Biblical picture of Og as a very large man.

But the verse measures the bed.

It does not measure Og.

A bed is normally longer than the person sleeping upon it.

The verse does not say that Og was nine cubits tall.

It certainly does not say that archaeologists later found his bones.

The Bible tells us that formidable and unusually tall people existed.

We believe what the Bible says.

But the Bible does not tell us that every enormous skeleton reported on the internet belongs to them.

The Bible does not tell us to abandon careful judgment whenever someone writes "Nephilim" beneath a picture.

Suppose a very large skeleton were discovered tomorrow.

What would archaeologists need to establish before calling it the remains of a Biblical giant?

First, they would need to determine whether the object was really bone.

Stone can resemble bone.

Fossilized wood can resemble bone.

A sculpture can resemble bone.

A modern model can resemble bone.

A digital image can show a bone that never existed outside the image.

The existence of a photograph does not establish the existence of a specimen.

Second, they would need to determine whether the bone was human.

Large bones may come from mammoths, mastodons, elephants, whales, dinosaurs or other extinct animals.

To someone without anatomical training, a large animal bone may look like part of an enormous human.

An osteologist is a specialist who studies bones.

That specialist examines the shape of the bone, its joint surfaces, its internal structure and its relationship to the rest of the skeleton.

A large bone is not necessarily a human bone.

Third, they would need to determine whether the bones belonged to one individual.

Ancient graves can be disturbed.

Floodwater can move remains.

Animals can move remains.

Later burials can disturb earlier ones.

Grave robbers and earlier excavators can separate bones from their original setting.

A burial place may contain parts of several people.

It may contain both human and animal bones.

If someone combines bones that do not belong together, the reconstructed person may become much larger than any person who was actually buried there.

Fourth, specialists would have to estimate the person's height.

If the skeleton is complete, they may use the anatomical relationship of the whole body.

If it is incomplete, they may estimate height from the femur, tibia, humerus or another long bone.

But the result is still an estimate.

The formula must be appropriate to the population.

Incomplete, distorted or incorrectly associated bones increase the uncertainty.

A long grave is not the same as a tall body.

A long coffin is not the same as a tall body.

A large bed is not the same as a tall body.

Fifth, investigators would need to know where and when the remains were found.

Archaeological context includes the grave, the soil layer, the pottery, the tools, the buildings and the other remains surrounding the skeleton.

Provenience means the precise recorded location where the object was found.

Provenance describes its known history after discovery.

Chain of custody records who excavated, transported, studied and stored the remains.

Radiocarbon dating, pottery and soil layers may help determine when a person lived.

But even a correct date would not automatically identify the person.

A tall skeleton from ancient Canaan would be interesting.

It would not come with "Anakim" written upon its forehead.

Sixth, other qualified investigators must be able to examine the discovery.

A credible find should produce a named excavation.

It should have a known location.

It should have field notes, photographs and measurements.

It should have a museum or repository where the remains are preserved.

It should have a specimen number.

It should have a professional report.

It should permit independent examination.

Deuteronomy 19:15 says, "At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established."

That verse concerns legal testimony, but its demand for adequate confirmation gives us a valuable principle.

One anonymous report is not enough.

One picture without an origin is not enough.

One newspaper repeating another newspaper is not independent confirmation.

A photograph is not a specimen.

A caption is not an excavation report.

A rumor is not a museum record.

A claim that cannot be examined cannot honestly be called archaeological proof.

When the alleged giant skeletons are tested by those standards, what remains?

The responsible present conclusion is this.

No presently available human skeleton has been authenticated as the remains of a Nephilim, an Anakite, a Rephaite, Og or any other named Biblical giant.

No professionally documented excavation has established an ancient Near Eastern population of human beings measuring ten, fifteen or twenty feet tall.

We must state that carefully.

We are not saying that archaeology has proved the Bible wrong.

We are not saying that no unusually tall ancient people ever existed.

We are saying that no presently available skeleton has been demonstrated to be the remains of a Biblical giant.

Archaeology has discovered genuinely tall individuals.

Ancient skeletons show the same general reality we see among living people.

Some people are shorter.

Some people are taller.

A few individuals stand far outside the average of their community.

Some skeletons also show signs of medical conditions that affected growth.

Researchers examined a young man buried in a third-century cemetery near Rome.

His estimated height was approximately six feet eight inches.

He stood far above the average of his community.

His long bones were exceptionally large.

His skeleton showed changes consistent with pituitary gigantism.

This was not a viral photograph without an origin.

The skeleton existed.

The excavation was documented.

Specialists measured the bones.

Their findings were published.

Other qualified people could evaluate the conclusion.

That is what a credible extraordinary discovery looks like.

Researchers have also reassessed remains attributed to the Egyptian king Sa-Nakht.

The man was approximately six feet two inches tall.

That may not sound enormous to a modern American audience, but it was exceptional in his ancient Egyptian setting.

Researchers proposed that he may have experienced gigantism.

Yet caution remains necessary.

The identity of the skeleton is not absolutely certain.

The diagnosis depends upon the surviving evidence.

The case concerns one unusually tall person.

It is not evidence of an entire race of enormous Egyptians.

Archaeology has found tall people.

Archaeology has found probable cases of ancient gigantism.

Archaeology has not authenticated the enormous human skeletons circulated online.

If those skeletons are not found in professional archaeological reports, where did their stories begin?

Many began in old newspapers.

People sometimes say, "It was printed in a newspaper in 1885. Why would a newspaper print it if it were not true?"

Newspapers can contain accurate reports.

They can also contain mistakes, exaggerations, jokes, advertising schemes, secondhand stories and deliberate fabrications.

Age does not transform a claim into evidence.

Many giant-skeleton reports follow the same pattern.

A farmer opens a mound.

A laborer discovers large bones.

Someone estimates an enormous height.
A local newspaper publishes the story.
Other newspapers repeat it.
No professional measurements appear.
No excavation report follows.
The bones supposedly crumble, disappear or are sent to an unnamed museum.
The specimen can no longer be examined.
If twenty newspapers reprint the same report, that does not create twenty discoveries.
It may represent one unverified story copied twenty times.
A rumor can travel farther than its correction.
In 1916 a newspaper reported that archaeologists in Pennsylvania had discovered sixty-eight skeletons.
The men supposedly averaged seven feet tall.
Some skulls supposedly possessed hornlike projections.
The story was extraordinary.
But the excavation records did not describe horned skulls.
Deer antlers had been placed over a burial.
Someone misunderstood a remark or repeated a joke.
A sensational story was printed.
A correction followed, but the correction never became as famous as the original headline.
Not every old writer was intentionally lying.
Some reports may involve honest mistakes.
Some may involve poor measurements.
Some may describe unusually tall people.
Some may describe animal bones.
Sometimes the evidence allows us to say, "This report was false."
At other times we must say, "We do not possess enough evidence to determine what happened."
Biblical discernment does not force certainty where evidence is absent.
What old newspapers did with words, modern technology has done with photographs.
Return to the photograph with which we began.
The enormous skeleton.
The workers.
The excavation pit.

The picture looked convincing.

The image was created by a digital artist using the name IronKite.

It was submitted to a 2002 digital-art competition called Archaeological Anomalies 2.

The participants were instructed to create convincing archaeological hoaxes.

The image was not originally presented as a real discovery.

It was artwork.

Later the image became separated from its original setting.

People attached new captions.

One placed the discovery in India.

Another placed it in Saudi Arabia.

Another connected it with the Nephilim.

Some claimed that National Geographic had participated in the excavation.

National Geographic denied the claim and traced the photograph back to the competition.

Another photograph supposedly showed a giant discovered in Romania.

Investigators located the original image.

It showed a normal human skeleton excavated from a sixth-century cemetery in France.

The skeleton had been digitally enlarged.

The same image was given a new country, a new history and a new meaning.

Before sharing an extraordinary photograph, ask who took it.

Ask where it first appeared.

Ask whether an earlier version exists.

Ask whether the same image has been assigned to different countries.

Ask whether the archaeological project is named.

Ask whether that project confirms the discovery.

Ask whether the physical remains are available.

Today artificial intelligence can create photographs, video, voices, documents and archaeological scenes that never existed.

Seeing may begin an investigation.

Seeing can no longer end the investigation.

When a photograph is exposed as false, another argument often appears.

Someone says that the genuine skeletons were hidden or destroyed.

A widely circulated story claims that the Smithsonian Institution collected thousands of giant skeletons, destroyed the remains, concealed the discoveries and was later forced by the United States Supreme Court to confess.

Investigation reveals that the story originated on a satirical website.

The website published fictional material.

The alleged Supreme Court case cannot be found in Supreme Court records.

The supposed archaeological organization named in the story has no established record of existence.

The Smithsonian denied the allegation.

Some photographs attached to the story came from digital-manipulation contests.

Museums are human institutions.

They can make mistakes.

Artifacts have been lost, misidentified, poorly documented, collected unethically or returned to descendant communities.

Access to human remains may be limited for legal and ethical reasons.

We should not pretend that every museum record is perfect.

But imperfect records do not prove the destruction of thousands of giant skeletons.

Notice how circular conspiracy reasoning works.

If bones are displayed, someone says, "Those are not the real bones."

If bones are missing, someone says, "That proves they were destroyed."

If the museum denies the accusation, someone says, "That proves the museum is involved."

Nothing is permitted to count against the theory.

That is not an investigation.

That is a conclusion protected from every possible test.

Exodus 20:16 says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

Christians must not accuse individuals or institutions without evidence.

The size or power of an institution does not give us permission to repeat an unsupported accusation.

Some enormous bones were not fabricated.

The bones were real.

The identification was wrong.

Most of us have never examined a human skeleton closely.

Fewer have compared human bones with the bones of mammoths, mastodons, elephants or whales.

A person may sincerely say, "I have never seen a bone this large. It must have belonged to an enormous man."

But sincerity cannot identify a species.

A trained specialist must determine what the bone is.

Large extinct animal bones have been mistaken for giants, heroes, monsters and ancient races.

Sometimes bones from several animals were arranged in the wrong positions to create an apparently human form.

Misidentification is not always deliberate fraud.

A person can be sincere and still be wrong.

Good intentions cannot transform an animal bone into a human femur.

There are, however, genuine human beings who reached extraordinary heights.

Every population includes shorter and taller people.

A person can stand far above his neighbors without having a disease.

Height alone is not a diagnosis.

Gigantism occurs when excessive growth hormone acts before the growth plates close.

The long bones continue growing.

The person may become extraordinarily tall.

Acromegaly usually develops after the growth plates close.

It does not normally produce the same increase in height.

It may enlarge the jaw, brow, hands, feet and other tissues.

Robert Wadlow was medically measured at eight feet eleven-point-one inches.

His height was supported by physicians, photographs, repeated measurements and people who knew him.

His extraordinary growth resulted from a pituitary condition.

His size brought serious physical problems.

He required leg braces and assistance in walking.

His life proves that human beings can reach extraordinary height.

It also demonstrates the physical burden such height places upon the body.

We should not announce an arbitrary height that God could never permit a human being to reach.

But when somebody claims a fifteen-foot, twenty-foot or thirty-foot human, the evidence must be correspondingly strong.

A missing bone and an anonymous story are not enough.

Suppose archaeologists someday authenticate the skeleton of a nine-foot human being.

What would that prove?

It would prove that one extraordinarily tall human being existed.

One skeleton establishes one individual.

A seven-foot skeleton proves that one seven-foot person existed.

A nine-foot skeleton would prove that one nine-foot person existed.

It would not establish that the person's family, tribe or nation shared the same height.

Evidence for a population would require numerous skeletons, repeated burials, adult men, adult women, children, secure dates, geographic relationships and independent examination.

A skeleton may reveal approximate age, biological sex, height, disease, injury, diet and biological relationships.

Bones do not normally reveal the name by which a people were known.

A tall person in ancient Canaan would not automatically be an Anakite.

A tall person east of Jordan would not automatically be a Rephaite.

Additional historical and archaeological evidence would be required.

We remain open to future discoveries.

If new remains are found, careful investigation will strengthen a valid claim rather than threaten it.

Until that evidence appears, we should not pretend that it already exists.

We have answered the archaeological question.

Now we must face the spiritual question.

Job asked his friends, "Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him? Will ye accept his person? will ye contend for God? Is it good that he should search you out?"

Job's friends believed that they were defending God.

They reasoned that God rewards righteousness and punishes wickedness.

Job was suffering terribly.

Therefore, they concluded that Job must be hiding terrible sin.

They did not know about the conversation recorded at the beginning of the book.

They did not understand the reason for Job's suffering.

But they spoke confidently.

They accused Job.

They claimed to understand what God was doing.

Their defense of God was built upon assumptions that were not true.

Job did not merely accuse them of misunderstanding him.

He asked whether they would speak deceitfully for God.

Would they bend the truth because they believed God needed their help?

Would they make a false accusation because it seemed to protect God's justice?

Would they use an unrighteous argument for a supposedly righteous purpose?

That question reaches from Job's ash heap into our churches, our conversations and our social media accounts.

Will we speak deceitfully for God?

Will we share a fabricated image because it mentions Genesis?

Will we call something archaeological proof when no archaeologist has authenticated it?

Will we repeat a newspaper account without admitting that the bones cannot be examined?

Will we accuse museums of destroying evidence without proof?

Will we say that the Bible gives a man's exact height when the Bible gives only the size of his bed?

Will we add certainty where God did not provide certainty?

Romans 3:7 asks, "For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?"

Paul rejects the suggestion that a lie becomes acceptable when somebody thinks it will bring glory to God.

He rejects the principle, "Let us do evil, that good may come."

A fabricated photograph does not become righteous because it appears in a Sunday school lesson.

An exaggerated story does not become holy because a preacher tells it from a pulpit.

A false claim does not become true because somebody hopes it will lead another person to believe the Bible.

God does not need us to lie for Him.

God does not need altered photographs to defend His Word.

God does not need missing skeletons to establish His authority.

God does not need exaggeration to strengthen His truth.

When a claim is true, receive it gratefully.

When a claim is uncertain, call it uncertain.

When a claim proves false, release it.

When Christians use false evidence, thoughtful listeners may eventually discover the error.

Then they may wonder, "If Christians were careless about this claim, what else have they told me without checking?"

The fabricated skeleton does not strengthen the Christian witness.

It gives somebody a reason to distrust it.

If we shared something that proved false, we do not need to protect our pride.

We can say, "I believed this. I shared it. I later learned that it was not true. I was wrong. I want to correct it."

That confession does not weaken our faith.

It demonstrates that our loyalty is to truth rather than to our own reputation.

If our faith does not rest upon the bones of giants, upon what does it rest?

Second Peter 1:16 says, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty."

Peter does not appeal to an anonymous report.

He does not point to a circulating rumor.

He does not claim that the evidence was hidden in a distant land.

He testifies concerning what the apostles saw.

The false giant story offers an unnamed discoverer.

It offers an unknown location.

It offers a missing skeleton.

It offers a changing caption.

It offers an altered photograph.

It offers no independent examination.

The Gospel offers Jesus Christ in identifiable places.

It offers public teaching.

It offers a public crucifixion.

It offers a known tomb.

It offers named disciples.

It offers numerous witnesses.

It offers a message proclaimed where the events occurred.

First Corinthians 15 declares, "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

He was seen by Cephas.

He was seen by the twelve.

He was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once.

He was seen by James.

He was seen by Paul.

Christianity does not stand or fall upon whether archaeologists find Og's skeleton.

Christianity stands upon Jesus Christ.

Crucified.

Buried.

Risen.

The bones of every ancient giant would testify that the giant died.

The empty tomb testifies that Jesus Christ conquered death.

You may believe that giants lived.

You may believe that archaeology illuminates Biblical history.

You may believe that the Bible is reliable.

But believing that giants existed will not save your soul.

Knowing the difference between a mammoth bone and a human bone will not forgive your sins.

Winning an argument about archaeology will not reconcile you to God.

The Gospel is not that archaeologists found the bones of giants.

The Gospel is that Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again.

Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Jesus took upon Himself the judgment our sins deserved.

He shed His blood.

He died.

He was buried.

He rose again.

Salvation cannot be earned.

It cannot be purchased.

It cannot be inherited from Christian parents.

It cannot be obtained merely by attending church.

It is received by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

If you have never trusted Him, call upon Him today.

Admit that you are a sinner.

Believe that Jesus died and rose again.

Place your trust in Him rather than in yourself.

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

Let us pray.

Father, thank You for Your Word.

Thank You that Your Word is true.

Forgive us for the times when we have believed something merely because we wanted it to be true.

Forgive us for repeating claims without examining them.

Forgive us if we have attempted to defend Your truth with something uncertain or false.

Give us wisdom.

Give us discernment.

Give us humility to say when we do not know.

Give us courage to correct something when we discover that we were wrong.

Help us to prove all things and hold fast that which is good.

Thank You that our faith does not rest upon a photograph, a rumor or a missing artifact.

Thank You that Jesus Christ died for our sins.

Thank You that He was buried.

Thank You that He rose again.

Draw the unsaved person to Christ.

Help that person to repent and believe the Gospel today.

Help all of us to become truthful witnesses for the God of truth.

We ask these things in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

Before you share the next extraordinary claim, stop.

Before you forward the photograph, investigate.

Before you call something Biblical, open the Bible.

Before you call something archaeological, look for the archaeology.

Before you accuse somebody of hiding evidence, determine whether evidence supports the accusation.

If the claim is verified, receive it gratefully.

If the claim is uncertain, call it uncertain.

If the claim proves false, let it go.

A false argument does not protect the Bible.

A fabricated photograph does not honor God.

The God of truth never needs His children to speak deceitfully for Him.

Have archaeologists found unusually tall human beings?

Yes.

Have they found probable cases of ancient gigantism?

Yes.

Have they authenticated a skeleton as the remains of a Nephilim, Anakite, Rephaite or other Biblical giant?

No.

Could future discoveries add to what we know? Certainly.

But our faith is not waiting in the ground for somebody to uncover it.

Our faith is founded upon Jesus Christ.

We do not possess authenticated bones belonging to a Biblical giant.

But we have the empty tomb of the risen Savior.

We have the written Word of God and the Gospel of salvation.

And we have no need of cunningly devised fables.

Aloha Nui Loa.

REASON TOGETHER STUDIES

RTS-121

Have Archaeologists Found the Bones of Biblical Giants?

Giants in the Bible | Part Seven of Eight

COMMENTARY

Exegetical notes 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 passages do not answer a modern archaeological question in modern technical language. They address primeval corruption, Israel's crisis of faith and the memory of conquest. Careful commentary must first hear each text in its own literary setting. Only then should it ask what the text permits Christians to say about human stature or material remains.

The KJV is used as the primary English text. Original-language observations are included only where they clarify a disputed term or guard against an unwarranted conclusion. Exegesis explains what the text communicates. Archaeological identification is a separate historical argument requiring material evidence.

Genesis 6:1-4

Literary setting

Genesis 6:1-4 stands at the end of the movement from creation toward the flood. Human multiplication accompanies escalating corruption. Verses 5-7 give the theological evaluation: human wickedness was great and every imagination of the thoughts of the heart was continually evil. The passage about the sons of God, daughters of men and Nephilim therefore belongs to a narrative of pride, disorder, violence and judgment.

Genesis 6:4 reads: “There were giants 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 which were of old, men of renown.”

“Giants” and Nephilim

The KJV's “giants” translates the Hebrew plural nephilim. The same word occurs in Numbers 13:33. Its derivation is debated. A common proposal relates it to the Hebrew root n-p-l, “to fall,” producing explanations such as fallen ones or those who cause others to fall. Etymology alone cannot settle identity or anatomy. Words take meaning from usage and context, and the two occurrences do not provide a height measurement.

The ancient Greek Septuagint used gigantes. In Greek usage the term could evoke mighty or primeval figures and did not function merely as a tape-measure category. The KJV stands within that translation history. It is appropriate to retain its wording while explaining that the English word should not be expanded into precise physical claims the verse does not make.

“Mighty men” and “men of renown”

The expression “mighty men” translates gibborim, a broad term for powerful warriors, champions or men of unusual strength. “Men of renown” means men of name or reputation. The wording emphasizes status and remembered power. It does not identify a burial custom, skeletal marker or uniform stature.

The grammar of the final clause has generated discussion about whether the children born from the unions are identical with the Nephilim. The KJV naturally connects them, but the verse's compressed form has produced alternative readings. The archaeological conclusion does not depend upon resolving that syntax because no view supplies a diagnostic skeletal profile.

Major interpretations of the sons of God

The angelic interpretation understands “sons of God” as heavenly beings, comparing Job 1:6, Job 2:1 and Job 38:7. It has early Jewish support and takes the expression in a supernatural sense. Questions arise about the nature of the union and its relation to Jesus' teaching that angels do not marry.

The Sethite interpretation understands the sons of God as the godly line of Seth and the daughters of men as women from the wider corrupt human society, often associated with Cain's line. This reading emphasizes the breakdown of covenant separation. Critics note that Genesis 6 does not explicitly name Seth or Cain in these phrases.

The royal or tyrant interpretation understands the sons of God as kings, nobles or warrior rulers who took women according to power and desire. Ancient rulers could claim divine sonship. This view fits the themes of domination and violence, though the precise title remains debated.

These are scholarly proposals, not separate gospels. The sermon need not settle the debate in order to teach the passage honestly. Every major view places the event within the corruption preceding the flood. None authorizes authentication of an anonymous giant photograph.

“And also after that”

The phrase acknowledges the presence of Nephilim after the period being described. It prepares readers for the term's reappearance in Numbers 13. It does not explain the mechanism of continuity across the flood. Proposed explanations include recurrence of similar conditions, survival through a family line, or the spies' use of an ancient feared name. Scripture does not elaborate here. A responsible teacher labels proposed solutions as inference rather than Biblical fact.

Exegetical conclusion

Genesis 6:4 teaches that the Nephilim were present, that extraordinary unions occurred and that mighty, renowned figures arose in the world moving toward judgment. It does not state their exact heights, describe their bones or predict a modern discovery. The passage should produce sobriety about human rebellion, not dependence upon sensational artifacts.

Numbers 13:1-33

The mission and the land

At the LORD's command, Moses sends representatives to search Canaan. The mission is concrete. They are to observe the land, its people, its cities and its produce. The men return after forty days with fruit and affirm that the land flows with milk and honey. The dispute is not whether the land is good. It is whether Israel will trust the LORD in the presence of strong opposition.

Numbers 13:22 reports that Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai, children of Anak, lived in Hebron. Verse 28 describes strong inhabitants and walled cities. Caleb answers in verse 30: "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." The ten reply that Israel cannot prevail because the inhabitants are stronger.

The evil report

Verse 32 says that the ten "brought up an evil report of the land." The Hebrew term can describe a damaging or slanderous report. Their report moves beyond reconnaissance into faithless persuasion. They say the land eats its inhabitants and that all the people they saw are of great stature. The phrase "all the people" has the sound of fear-driven generalization, especially after the report has already named varied peoples in the land.

The narrative does not require every observation to be fabricated. The cities were fortified. The Anakim were imposing. Deuteronomy and Joshua confirm their remembered stature and military significance. The sin lies in interpreting real obstacles as proof that the LORD's promise cannot be trusted.

Numbers 13:33

"And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants." The KJV again uses "giants" for nephilim. The clause associates the sons of Anak with the feared primeval name. Whether this is a genealogical claim, an identification by type or rhetoric within the evil report is

debated. The narrative presents the sentence as the words of the ten spies, not as an independent narrator's measurement.

“And we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.” This is a simile of comparative smallness and powerlessness. It vividly expresses the spies' self-perception. The first half explicitly concerns how they saw themselves. The second may represent their assumption about how the inhabitants regarded them. The statement is not a field measurement and should not be converted into a mathematical ratio.

Canonical controls

Deuteronomy 1:28 remembers the discouraging report: “The people is greater and taller than we.” It also preserves the frightened claim of cities walled up to heaven, an obvious expression of intimidation rather than architectural measurement. Deuteronomy 9:2 asks who can stand before the children of Anak, showing their reputation. Joshua 11:21-23 records that Joshua cut off the Anakim from the hill country, with remnants in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod. These texts support a real formidable people while leaving their exact statures unstated.

Theological emphasis

Numbers 13 is not principally a chapter about unusual skeletons. It is a chapter about whether God's people will interpret danger through fear or through His promise. Caleb does not deny the enemy's strength. He places the obstacle beneath God's faithfulness. Modern exposition should not repeat the spies' error in reverse by exaggerating the enemy to make the story more exciting.

Deuteronomy 2:10-21 and 3:1-11

Peoples remembered as Rephaim

Deuteronomy 2 names the Emim, Anakim and Zamzummim in a compressed historical review. The Emim were “a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims” and were accounted Rephaim by the Moabites. The Zamzummim were likewise “a people great, and many, and tall” and were counted Rephaim by the Ammonites. The KJV renders rephaim as “giants” in these contexts.

These notices serve a theological purpose. The LORD had enabled Edom, Moab and Ammon to possess their allotted lands against formidable previous inhabitants. Israel therefore had no reason to believe that the inhabitants of Canaan were beyond the LORD's power. The remembered giants magnify divine sovereignty rather than invite speculation about hidden remains.

The term Rephaim also appears in other Old Testament settings and may refer to a people, ancient dead or shadowy inhabitants of the underworld depending on context. A word study must not flatten every occurrence into one biological category.

Og and the victory in Bashan

Deuteronomy 3 recounts Israel's victory over Og king of Bashan. Verse 3 attributes the victory to the LORD. Verses 4-10 emphasize the extent of Og's fortified kingdom. Verse 11 then provides a memorable note about the defeated king.

“For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants.” Within the narrative, Og embodies the formidable Rephaite past. Israel's victory demonstrates that neither reputation, stature nor fortified power can frustrate God's purpose.

The bedstead of iron

The Hebrew word *eres* normally means bed, couch or bier. Some propose that the object was a sarcophagus, though “bedstead” remains a natural translation. “Iron” may describe an iron frame or an object ornamented or reinforced with iron. Another proposal understands the term as basalt, whose dark appearance might invite comparison with iron, but this is uncertain.

The object was kept at Rabbath of the Ammonites, perhaps as a known trophy or monument. Its public location supplied ancient readers with a tangible comparison.

The dimensions are nine cubits by four cubits “after the cubit of a man.” The phrase indicates an ordinary cubit rather than a special royal standard. A common approximation of eighteen inches would yield a length near 13 feet 6 inches and a width near 6 feet. Exact conversion is less important than the textual distinction: these are the dimensions of the bedstead. A bed exceeds the sleeper's height and can have ceremonial significance. Calculating Og's exact stature by equating man and furniture goes beyond the verse.

Exegetical conclusion

Deuteronomy presents Og as a real king associated with the Rephaim, ruling a real territory and defeated in Israel's transjordanian conquest. The bedstead reinforces his extraordinary reputation. The text supports unusual size but does not preserve his bones, locate his grave or report his measured height. Its theological stress falls on the LORD who gave victory.

Job 13:1-12

Context of Job's rebuke

Job's friends have offered confident explanations for his suffering. Their theology includes true general statements about God's justice, but they apply those truths falsely by assuming that Job's calamity proves concealed wickedness. They speak beyond their knowledge and become false witnesses against a suffering man.

Job calls them “forgers of lies” and “physicians of no value.” Then he asks, “Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him? Will ye accept his person? will ye contend for God?” The friends suppose that defending divine justice permits an accusation they cannot establish. Job warns that God Himself can search their reasoning.

Application to apologetics

The passage does not forbid defense of the faith. It forbids wicked or deceitful speech offered as defense of God. The truthfulness of the cause does not purify false evidence. A manipulated image, fabricated quotation or unsupported accusation remains wrong when used in a sermon.

This application should be made first to the preacher and only then to the audience. Pastors bear heightened responsibility because listeners may repeat claims on the strength of pastoral authority. The proper correction is not embarrassment or concealment but transparent retraction.

Proverbs 14:15 and First Thessalonians 5:21

“The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.” Simplicity here is not childlike trust in God. It is an unguarded openness to persuasion. Prudence examines the path before acting. The proverb supports verification before forwarding a sensational story.

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” In context, Paul tells the church not to despise prophesyings while also requiring testing. Biblical discernment avoids two errors: rejecting everything unusual and accepting everything spiritual-sounding. Testing makes it possible to hold the good more firmly.

Deuteronomy 19:15

The legal rule requires two or three witnesses for a charge to be established. Archaeological method is not identical with Israelite courtroom procedure, so the verse should not be presented as a

technical scientific rule. It does reveal God's concern for adequate testimony before a consequential conclusion. Multiple newspapers copying one source do not constitute independent witnesses.

Romans 3:4-8

Paul defends God's faithfulness against human unbelief: "Let God be true, but every man a liar." He then rejects distorted reasoning that would justify sin because human falsehood somehow displays divine truth. The slanderous conclusion, "Let us do evil, that good may come," receives condemnation.

Applied carefully, the passage blocks a common apologetic temptation. A person may imagine that exaggerating evidence is acceptable if it moves listeners toward a true doctrine. Paul refuses that moral calculation. God's truth does not need human falsehood to become glorious.

Second Peter 1:16-21

Peter denies that the apostolic proclamation rests upon "cunningly devised fables." He appeals to eyewitness experience of Christ's majesty and then to the prophetic word. The passage unites historical witness with God's written revelation.

The text should not be reduced to a slogan that every Christian internet claim is reliable. It makes the opposite distinction. Apostolic witness has identifiable content and accountable witnesses. A viral photograph with no traceable origin has none of those qualities. Christian confidence rests upon God's act in Christ and God's trustworthy Word.

First Corinthians 15:1-8 and John 20:30-31

Paul summarizes the received Gospel: Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, rose the third day according to the Scriptures and appeared to named witnesses. The burial affirms death. The appearances affirm resurrection. The repeated "according to the scriptures" places the event within God's redemptive purpose.

John states that selected signs were written so readers might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and have life through His name. The evangelists do not promise exhaustive records. They provide sufficient testimony directed toward saving faith.

These passages supply the sermon's final contrast. The Christian message is not founded upon a missing giant skeleton. It is founded upon the crucified and risen Christ proclaimed by authorized

witnesses. Archaeology can assist historical understanding, but salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

Theological Synthesis

The authority of Scripture and the verification of an artifact must not be confused. Scripture may truthfully describe people whose remains have never been recovered. An artifact may be genuine without proving the interpretation attached to it. Faithfulness requires honoring both revelation and evidence within their proper limits.

The Biblical giant traditions consistently place human power beneath divine sovereignty. The mighty men before the flood do not escape judgment. The Anakim do not cancel the promise. Og's kingdom does not withstand the LORD. The theological point is never that impressive bodies deserve fascination for their own sake. Human greatness remains creaturely, mortal and accountable to God.

Truthfulness is therefore part of Christian apologetics, not a limitation upon it. The ninth commandment, Job's rebuke and Paul's moral reasoning forbid false witness in God's name. Humility about uncertain evidence can strengthen pastoral credibility because it shows that the church's confidence does not depend upon embellishment.

Pastoral Guidance for Follow-Up Questions

If a listener asks whether giants were real, answer that Scripture presents Nephilim, Anakim, Rephaim and unusually formidable individuals as real within their respective contexts. Then explain that the texts do not provide exact heights for most of them.

If asked whether archaeology has disproved them, explain that archaeology has neither recovered nor authenticated remains belonging to those named groups. Nonrecovery is not disproof. It simply limits what may presently be claimed from material evidence.

If shown a photograph, do not ridicule the person. Ask where the image first appeared, which excavation produced it and where the specimen is held. Invite investigation together. A gentle method teaches discernment better than humiliation.

If confronted with a conspiracy claim, distinguish possibility from evidence. Institutions can act wrongly, but a specific allegation requires documents, identifiable witnesses and testable records. A theory that treats every denial or missing record as confirmation cannot correct itself.

If asked whether a very tall person could have lived, affirm that well-documented extreme stature exists and that ancient pathology has been studied. Then distinguish one unusually tall person from a whole population and a human skeleton from identification with a Biblical people.

If a believer has already shared false evidence, encourage a public correction proportionate to the original sharing. The goal is not shame. It is restoration of truthful witness.

Commentary Conclusion

Genesis 6:4, Numbers 13:33 and Deuteronomy 3:11 provide meaningful Biblical testimony about feared, mighty and unusually imposing people. They do not provide a method for labeling an unproven skeleton. Job 13:7-9 supplies the ethical guardrail: God's people must not speak deceitfully for God. Second Peter 1 and First Corinthians 15 redirect confidence to the trustworthy witness concerning Jesus Christ.

The pastor may therefore affirm the Biblical record without endorsing sensational claims, describe archaeological limits without adopting skepticism and invite the congregation to a faith that is both confident and truthful.

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