

GIANTS IN THE EARTH

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Genesis chapter six is well-known as the chapter in which God decides to destroy all flesh on the earth by the Flood, except for Noah and his family, and two of every kind of creature. The beginning of the chapter explains how the world became so wicked that God repented of having made man on the earth. An interesting tidbit is found in Genesis 6:4, where we learn that *“there were giants in the earth in those days.”* That is the first mention in the Bible about giants, but certainly not the last. As with this first mention of the giants in the days of righteous Noah, the entire Biblical history of the giants, and their association with wickedness, intersects the lives of many of God’s most faithful servants, and His work in them.

The Anakims

Giants, the meaning of the word “Rephaims,” were present in Canaan in the days of Abraham (Gen 14:5). God promised to Abram that he would give the land of the Rephaims to his seed (Gen 15:20). When it was time for God to fulfill this promise, we read about a giant named Anak, who was the son of Arba (Josh 14:15; 21:11). Anak had three sons, who were named Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi (Num 13:22,28,33; Josh 15:13-14; Judg 1:20). The descendants of Anak and his sons were known as the Anakims which dwelt in the land of Canaan (Deut 1:28; 9:2; Josh 14:12,15). The Israelites first saw the Anakims when Joshua, Caleb, and the other ten spies were sent into the land of Canaan to search it and bring back a report and also of the fruit of the land. The twelve spies returned after searching the land for forty days (Num 13:25). In Numbers 13:28, the spies said that *“the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.”* Numbers 13:30-33 says, “And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. *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.”*

Caleb’s different spirit

The report of the ten faithless spies about the Anakims greatly influenced the Israelites to rebel and decide to appoint a captain to lead them back to Egypt (Num 14:1-4). Joshua and Caleb were not afraid of those giants, as their faith was fully in the Lord, that He would deliver them into their hands. They told the people not to rebel against the Lord, not fear the people of Canaan *“for they are bread for us: their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not”*

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(continued)

(Num 14:9). The people would not listen and prepared to stone them (Num 14:10). At that time, the Lord determined that none of that generation of Israelites would enter in the land of Canaan, but would wander in the wilderness for forty years, one year for each day the spies spent in Canaan, until they were all dead (Num 14:21-35). Joshua would lead their children into Canaan, and Caleb would go in also. In Numbers 14:24, the Lord said, *“But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.”* After those forty years, Moses destroyed Og king of Bashan (Num 21:33-35; Deut 3:1-10). Og was last of the giants’ kings, whose “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” (Deut 3:11). Most of the remainder of the Anakims were then destroyed by Joshua and Caleb. Caleb drove out the Anakims from Hebron (Josh 14:6-15; 15:13-14; 21:11-12; Judg 1:20). The remainder of the Anakims were completely driven out of Israel by Joshua. *“And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities. There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained”* (Josh 11:21-22).

Goliath and his family

It is interesting to read in Joshua 11:22 that the remnant of the giants was confined to Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod, in the land of the Philistines. Why is that interesting? First Samuel 17:4 says, “And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath.” Goliath was undoubtedly a descendant of the Anakims of Gath, of the race called the Rephaims. As we know, David smote Goliath in the forehead with a stone from his sling, and then took Goliath’s sword and beheaded him (1 Sam 17:40-51). This led to a great victory by Israel over the Philistines that day (1 Sam 17:51-53). Later, during David’s reign as king of Israel, he and his men fought with other giants of Goliath’s family, including his four sons and a brother (2 Sam 21:15-22; 1 Chr 20:4-8). All of them were killed, and we read nothing more of giants in the Bible after them. Their history is one of spiritual wickedness, and defeat at the hands of the *spiritual giants* who were blessed by God to defeat them. Along these same lines, we must put on the whole armor of God and stand against the wiles of the devil with steadfast resistance in the faith (Eph 6:10-18; 1 Pet 5:8-9). He too is a “giant” in power, but not when God is on our side: *“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world”* (1 John 4:4).