

in the service of his Lord, he refers to the three occasions when he had suffered shipwreck. Where and when precisely all this befell him we cannot tell, but we know from the date of 2 Corinthians that it was before the shipwreck on Malta recorded in Acts 27.

Constantly we need to remind ourselves that the large section of Acts devoted to the apostle's activities does not aim to give us a detailed biography. Such an exercise would occupy many volumes, but at the same time we need to note how Acts witnesses incidentally to Paul's sea journeys. Even from our brief survey we can safely conclude that Paul knew what he was talking about when he intervened in the conference on Crete (Acts 27:9,10).

Because of the intrinsic interest of Acts 27–28, the record, as we have already briefly indicated, has attracted much attention from a variety of authors writing about life in the Roman Empire. As for those who have commented on the journey itself, following it stage by stage, a special place must be given to James Smith, a scholarly Scots-

man with the means to visit the Mediterranean and carry out meticulous researches in the area. His book is entitled *The Voyage and Shipwreck of St Paul*. It first appeared in 1848, and the fourth edition, the best known, appeared in 1884. The work remains authoritative, and has commanded considerable respect. Thus Sir William Ramsay speaks of the book as excellent, and more recently Colin Hemer has drawn repeatedly upon it.<sup>5</sup> What gave Smith a special advantage was the fact that when he visited the Mediterranean the days of the sailing ship were by no means over, and he was thus able to consult experienced contemporaries.

[\(To be continued\)](#)

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5. Ramsay speaks of the excellence of Smith's book in *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen* (ninth edition), London, 1907, p. 314. For Hemer see his *The Book of Acts in the setting of Hellenistic History*, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake, 1990. On page 4 he states that Smith in his monograph "has never been bettered".

**New series**

# The city of Hebron

## 1. Giants in the land

David Green

*This study is concerned mainly with the naming and the history of the city of Hebron and its environs. Since both these aspects are connected with the Anakite<sup>1</sup> giants occupying parts of the land of Canaan, the first part of the study will be a more general consideration of the aboriginal giant inhabitants on both sides of the Jordan.*

**T**HE USUAL WORD translated 'giants' in the Bible is *rephaim*. There is a considerable difference of opinion as to the derivation of this term, but two interesting possibilities are 'ones that weaken' or 'those who strike terror'. The corresponding word usually used in the Septuagint is *gigantos*, but twice 'Titans' is used (2 Sam. 5:18,22).

*Nephilim* is a less common word that is translated 'giants' in most versions. It is used only three

times, once in Genesis 6:4 and twice in Numbers 13:33. A number of similar meanings are suggested for this term: 'heroes', 'fierce warriors', 'fellers', 'bullies' or 'tyrants'. These suggestions are based on the assumption that the underlying meaning of the word is 'to fall upon' or 'to cast down', that is, 'to fell'. The contexts of the passages where the terms *rephaim* and *nephilim* are used show that both apply to people of exceptional stature.

### Giants in Transjordan

The racial origin of these giants is shrouded in mystery, but they appear to have been the original inhabitants of parts of the land on both sides of the Jordan. We are first introduced to them in Genesis 14, when those in the Transjordan area came un-

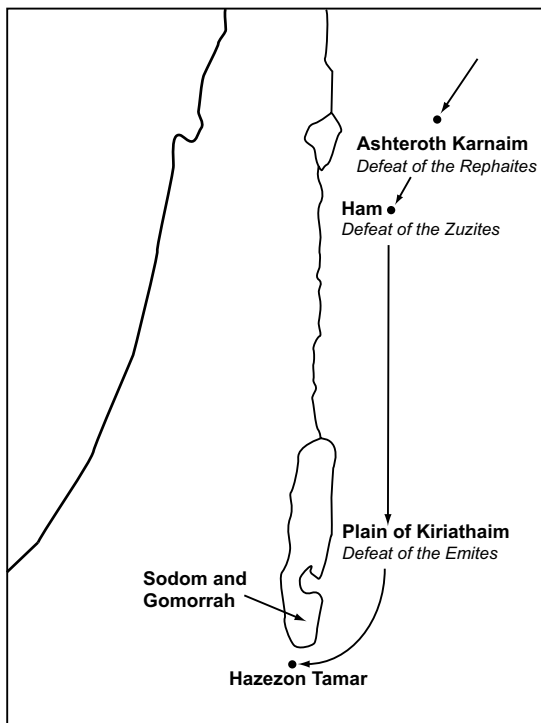
der attack from the army of Chedorlaomer and his allies (vv. 5,6). They are listed in [Table 1](#), together with their locations (see also [Map 1](#)).

They are mentioned again in Deuteronomy 2 and 3, which details their eventual displacement by the Moabites and Ammonites ([Map 2](#) overleaf). This information is set out in [Table 2](#), together with the meanings of their names.

According to one Bible atlas,<sup>2</sup> Ham, the site of the defeat of the Zuzites according to Genesis 14, has been located northeast of the mountains of Gilboa in northern Gilead at a place having the modern name of Ham ([Map 1](#)). This puts the Zuzites quite a way north of the territory of the Ammonites that they originally occupied. Perhaps their army moved north to intercept the invaders. However, another relatively modern reference says that the site of Ham is unknown.<sup>3</sup>

Originally, "The whole region of Argob in Bashan used to be known as the land of the Rephaites" (Deut. 3:13, NIV; see [Map 2](#)), but the only Rephaite to have survived in Bashan by the time of the Israelite invasion was King Og (v. 11). It would appear that the Amorites had displaced the Rephaites from that area, since Og is described as a king of the Amorites (v. 8). From comments in Deuteronomy 2 it is clear that the term 'Rephaites' is a general one that would encompass both the Emites and Zamzummites, for "they too were considered Rephaites" (v. 11, NIV, cf. v. 20).

Og's iron bedstead or sarcophagus (NIV mg.) was later moved to Rabbath of the Ammonites (3:11). Does this imply that Og escaped destruc-



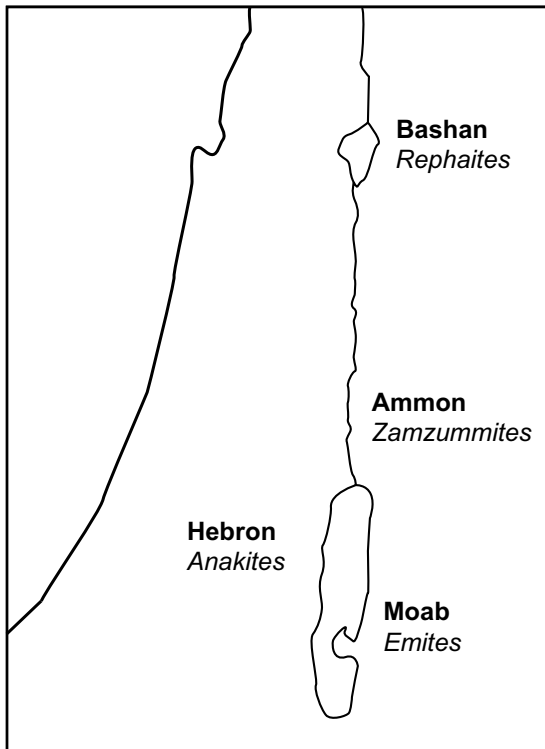
**Map 1. Chedorlaomer's invasion**

tion at the hands of the Israelites? Verses 1-3 suggest that Og did not escape. If it was his sarcophagus, rather than his bedstead, it must have remained empty.

Table 1	
Giants	Place of defeat
Rephaim (Rephaites)	Ashteroth Karnaim in Bashan
Zuzim (Zuzites)	Ham (in northern Gilead?)
Emim (Emites)	Shaveh (the plain of) Kiriathaim in the land of Moab

Table 2			
Tribe (NIV)	Possible meaning of name	Dispossessed by	Reference
Rephaites	Terror strikers, Weakeners	Amorites	Deut. 3:8-13
Zamzummites	Commotions, Noisemakers, that is, Terrors, Plotters	Ammonites	Deut. 2:20,21
Emites	The terrible	Moabites	Deut 2:10-11

1. Modern versions of the Bible tend to replace the Hebrew plural *im* with 'ites', so the names read Rephaites, etc. Since *im* represents the Hebrew plural, the AV is incorrect in using the suffix 'ims'.
2. *Atlas of the Bible*, Nelson, 1963.
3. *New Bible Dictionary*, third edition, 1996.



**Map 2. The tribes of giants.**

### The Rephaites in the land of Canaan

The earliest mention of the Rephaites in Canaan occurs in the list of the ten tribes whose land was promised to Abraham when God made a covenant with him (Gen. 15:19-21). These Rephaites must be identical with the Anakites who inhabited the cities of Hebron, Debir and Anab, as well as the mountain areas of both Judah and Israel (Joshua 11:21), since the Anakites are not mentioned by name to Abraham.

The almost complete destruction of the Anakites from the land of Canaan by Joshua is summarised in the following passage from Joshua 11: "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. So Joshua took the whole land" (vv. 21-23).

The Valley of Rephaim, which lay near Jerusalem (15:8; 18:16), was on a number of occasions the scene of battles between the Philistines and King David (2 Sam. 5:18,22) because it provided a suit-

able route for Philistine armies attacking towards Jerusalem. The name of this valley presumably derives from it being the site of a settlement of the Anakites from which they were driven out in the days of Joshua.

Goliath was one of four sons of "the giant" (Rapha, NIV) who lived in Gath in the days of David (21:18-22). Were these four, who were killed by David and his men, the last remaining Rephaites in the Promised Land?

### People of great stature

How tall were these giants? A number of passages of Scripture stress their great height. The Emites and Zamzummites were peoples "as tall as the Anakites" (Deut. 2:10,21, NIV). The Anakites were the descendants of Anak, whose name is said to mean 'long-necked'. They were men whose gigantic stature and great strength dismayed most of those sent to spy out the land. On their return they discouraged the Israelites by saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the giants [Nephilim, NIV], (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight" (Num 13:32,33, NKJV). In order to bolster their discouraging report, the spies exaggerated both the size and the numbers of these giants.

Thirty-eight years later Moses described them as, "a people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak!". However, he encouraged the Israelites by telling them that God would destroy these Anakites despite their reputed invulnerability (Deut. 9:2,3).

The only indication as to their size comes from Goliath's height of "six cubits and a span" (1 Sam. 17:4). On the basis of an eighteen inch cubit, Goliath would be over nine feet tall. *The New Bible Dictionary*<sup>4</sup> suggests a slightly longer cubit, and gives an estimate of 3.2 metres, equal to 10.5 feet. It also mentions that human skeletons of this kind of height have been unearthed in Palestine. Og's bedstead or sarcophagus was nine cubits long (13.5 feet on the basis of an 18-inch cubit), so perhaps he was taller than Goliath.

[\(To be continued\)](#)

4. *Ibid.*