

Is there any evidence for the giants mentioned in the Bible?

Giants are mentioned in the Bible in several places (e.g., Genesis 6:4; Joshua 12:4). Og, king of Bashan (Deuteronomy 3:11); the intimidating people in Canaan reported by Moses' spies (Numbers 13:30-33); Goliath (2 Samuel 21:19); and the Anakites (Deuteronomy 9:1-2) are all examples of giants in Scripture. The Bible's references to giants have led some people to seek further evidence of giants, sometimes lending credence to sensationalistic theories and unfounded claims.

Various giant myths exist the world over. Nearly every culture has ancient tales of giant (usually human-like) creatures that terrorize villages and require heroic effort to subdue. Could these stories be vague remembrances of actual history? If so, most are colossally exaggerated. The "giants" of the Bible were not the giants of myth—forty-foot colossi who sat on houses and picked their teeth with elm trees. The giants of the Bible were tall—Goliath was maybe nine or ten feet in height—but they were not gargantuan. The Bible's giants were powerful and bigger than average, but they were human.

Some consider as evidence for giants certain written accounts outside of the Bible, archaeology and eyewitness accounts of archaeological finds, graphic depictions of giants found in ancient art, and recent historical records.

First, we should deal with archaeological evidence for giants. There are many accounts of archaeologists finding very large bones and weaponry or other artifacts that supposedly only a giant could have used. The truth is there is no proof of skeletal remains or fossils of giants, and no hard evidence of giant-sized utensils, weapons, or other gear. The large majority of the purported discoveries, especially the largest and

most striking examples, do not exist except in eyewitness accounts that cannot be verified.

Another argument is that the visual depictions of very large people, such as found on Egyptian jars and tombs, are pictures of giants. Art historians usually conclude that these giant figures are simply representations of gods or kings and that their larger size was a way to show their importance or their high rank in comparison to other figures near them. Another explanation is that the smaller people are depictions of children, not lower-ranking men. True-to-life anatomical art did not exist in any culture until the Renaissance, and, up until then, children were often depicted as proportionally exact to adults, just smaller. These arguments are valid and logical. We know that Egyptian art was highly emblematic. The fact that the Egyptians depicted the god Anubis as a man with a dog's head is no reason to assume there was an actual man with a dog's head whom they worshiped. That said, there is no way to prove the actual intention of the ancient artists. Historians form theories based on what they feel is the most likely, most reasonable explanation for what they are seeing in ancient artifacts.

There are also written accounts outside of the Bible, although these should be viewed with skepticism. These include the Book of Enoch, the Book of Jasher, and the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus. Enoch and Jasher are pseudepigraphical, and Josephus sometimes cited unreliable sources. Josephus, in a passage about the Israelites moving their camp to Hebron, mentions that the Jews encountered the inhabitants of that land, including "the race of giants, who had bodies so large, and countenances so entirely different from other men, that they were surprising to the sight, and terrible to the hearing. The bones of these men are still shown to this very day" (Antiquities of the

Jews, Book 5, ch. 2, § 3).

Many people in recent history are documented to be very tall: Robert Wadlow measured in June 1940 at 8 ft, 11.1 in. tall; John Carroll in 1966 was 8 ft, 7.5 in.; and Sultan Kösen in 2011 measured 8 ft, 2.8 in. tall (www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/tallest-man-ever, accessed 1/3/22). Such individuals stand out today, just as they did in ancient times. The Bible mentions extraordinarily large people, especially those who interacted with Israel, but there is nothing in the text to suggest gigantic beings of fabulous size. Seeking to confirm the Bible's record with hearsay, specious claims, and manufactured evidence is misguided and unnecessary.