

Who were the Amorites?

The Amorites were an ancient nation mentioned frequently in the Old Testament. They were descended from one of the sons of Canaan (Genesis 10:15-16). In early inscriptions, the Amorites were also known as Amurra or Amurri. The “land of the Amorites” included Syria and Israel. Some of the southern mountains of Judea were also called the hill country of the Amorites (Deuteronomy 1:7, 19-20).

Two kings of the Amorites named Sihon and Og were defeated by the Israelites under Moses’ leadership (Deuteronomy 31:4). In Joshua 10:10, five Amorite kings were defeated by the people of Israel, and the victory was decisively won in Joshua 11:8. In the time of Samuel, peace existed between Israel and the Amorites (1 Samuel 7:14).

Less than a century later, King Solomon forced the remaining Amorites into slavery: “All the people who were left of the Amorites . . . who were not of the people of Israel—their descendants who were left after them in the land, whom the people of Israel were unable to devote to destruction—these Solomon drafted to be slaves” (1 Kings 9:20-21). The Amorites are last mentioned in Amos 2:10. It is assumed they either died out or were absorbed into the culture of Israel.

The Amorites were known as fierce warriors during their prime. Moses referred to Og, the king of the Amorites, as a very tall man whose bed was approximately 13.5 feet long (Deuteronomy 3:11). Despite their strong numbers and military might, the Amorites were destroyed due to their worship of false gods. Israel’s conquest of their land was part of God’s judgment on the pagan Amorite culture.

Here are a couple lessons to learn from the Amorites:

First, only the one, true God is worthy of worship. The idols of the Amorites and the false gods they represent cannot compete with the omnipotent God of Israel.

Also, God gives nations opportunity to repent before judgment (2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 2:20-21). The Amorite nation had plenty of time to turn from their idolatry, but they despised God's goodness and longsuffering and refused to repent (Romans 2:4). The Lord's judgment upon them was severe, and anyone who imitates their rebellion will eternally regret it (Romans 2:5; Matthew 10:28; Revelation 2:22-23).