



# Covenant Answering Service



Produced by The Federation of the Covenant People,  
P.O. Box 830, Honeydew, 2040, SOUTH AFRICA.

ISSUE NO. 8

**QUESTION:** I have been intrigued by the archaeological documentation arising from the discovery of the bones of "giants" somewhere in China. As we all know, the Bible speaks of "giants" in the days of Noah and I was wondering if there is any connection between those giants and the bones reportedly found in China?

**ANSWER:** Before one can begin to speculate over any possible connection between the Biblical giants and the bones found in China, we need to be absolutely clear as to the meaning of the words used.

In the first instance and according to the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, the English word "giant" indicates *anything* of extraordinary size, extent or force — *anything* that is gigantic, huge or monstrous. As far as its application is to humans, it indicates a human being of an abnormally high stature.

The first reference to "giants" in the English translation of the Bible, occurs in Genesis 6:4 and reads as follows: "There were giants in the earth in those days; and also 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 English word "giant" in this instance is very mis-

leading in that it is translated from a Hebrew word which under no circumstances could be made to imply those of exceptional stature. According to the *Jewish Encyclopaedia* which is corroborated by Dr. James Strong in his *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, the Hebrew word translated as “giants” in Genesis 6, is *nephilim* – a word which while being something of an enigma, indicates an extinct (mythological, only semi-human race) which was the *progeny* of the bene Elohim and the daughters of the *âdâm*. It is derived, so it is suggested, from *nâphal* which is a primitive root with many meanings, the most persistent of which, appears to indicate something or someone who had fallen. So then, the *nephilim* of Genesis 6:4 – far from being “giants” in the sense of enormous stature, are described as being “fallen ones” i.e. those who were neither true *bene Elohim* nor of the Adamic race. The word *nephilim* COULD perhaps have some affinity with the word *mamzer* which indicates a person who is a cross-breed. The by-product of this union created *gibborim* who are described as violent and insolent people rather than “mighty men” as described in the Authorised Version.

Although, according to the *Jewish Encyclopaedia* there is absolutely no connection between the Hebrew *nephilim* and the English word “giants”, the later scribes saw fit to use this word when recording the Book of Numbers. In Numbers 13:32,33, the report of the Israelites who were sent to spy out the land of Canaan, stated that the inhabitants of the land were “men of great stature” – in addition to which they reported: “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.”

Before commenting on this claim by the majority of those sent to spy out the land, it would serve to note that several people in Canaan are spoken of as “giant’s” in the true sense of the English word. These are (1), the *rephaim* which included the Anakim and were said to be the aborigines of Philistia and the southern districts of Judah (Deut. 2:11). Then there were (2) the *Emmims*, the aborigines of the Moabite country

(Deut. 2:10); (3) the *Zamzummim*, the aborigines of the Ammonite country (Deut. 2:20) who are perhaps identified with the Zuzim of Genesis 14:5 and the inhabitants of Bashan (Deut. 3:11). From the scriptural accounts, the power of those “giant” nations was broken in Canaan at the time of Abraham (Gen. 14:5) and when Israel entered Canaan, there were very few left such as Og, the king of Bashan whose “bedstead” or sarcophagus as it is claimed in several text books measured between 11 and 13 feet in length and, at a later time, such as Goliath of the Philistines whom David slew.

At our present state of knowledge, it is impossible to either assert or deny any possible connection between the giants of Canaan or those supposedly inhabiting China at a very early age – the subject must be left for further research awaiting further archaeological discoveries.

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**QUESTION:** Jesus said: “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” Does not the statement – “... one fold and one shepherd” suggest a type of universalism and if so, does this not argue against your contention that the Lord claimed that He had ONLY been sent to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel”?

**ANSWER:** If John 10:16 is read in isolation – which so many do today – it would indeed appear that the Lord supported the concept of universalism but, on the other hand, if it is read in conjunction with the Old Testament and the other Gospel accounts, it will be seen to be in perfect harmony with our Lord’s statement in Matthew 15:24: “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

It is an undeniable scriptural fact that the majority of the Lord’s ministry was conducted in Galilee which may be seen as the fulfilment of the prophecy in Isaiah 9:1,2 which involved the remnant of two tribes

of the northern kingdom. "Nevertheless, the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." As one realises that "Galilee" was indeed the territory allocated to the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali and that a remnant of both these tribes had remained in the land after the majority of their brethren had been taken captive to Assyria, one is able to appreciate why the Lord spent so much time with them rather than with the counterfeit Jews of Judaea.

In His Discourse immediately before relating His role as the "Good Shepherd" the Lord had categorically stated: "I am the light of the world (Gr. *kosmos*, system): he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." This, as must be obvious, is tied up with Isaiah 9 in which the metaphorical "darkness" was dispelled when the Lord taught the remnant of Zebulun and Naphtali the Law of the LORD — the Law being the "lamp unto their feet" (Psalm 119:105) showing them the way in which they should walk and the things which they should do.

Our Lord was indeed the "light" to the remnant of true Israel in Galilee, but, and this is important, they were ONLY a remnant as the majority of their brethren were outside the boundaries of both Galilee and Judaea (James 1:1 and 1st Peter 1:1) and *these* were the "other sheep" to which our Lord referred. There are of course those who are of the opinion that our Lord was indicating that "others" — the so-called "gentiles" — were now included, the grafting in of "whosoever believed". However, apart from the fact that our Lord commanded His disciples NOT to go into the "way of the gentiles", this contention that He now rescinded His earlier command implies that our Lord lacked stability and that He was "all things to all people" — vacillating according to the need of the time. However,

the account in John 5:19 establishes once and for all time that the Son upheld the Father and His Honour at all times — a principle against which His statement in John 10:16 should be measured.

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**QUESTION:** I know that you have dealt with the subject of the Jew both in *The Covenant Message* and in your Kingdom Cassette series, but how does one explain the appearance of the word "Jew" as in 2nd Kings 16:6 when there was no such territory as "Judaea" and no Pharisees to give political weight to the "Jew's religion"? Can you throw some light on this?

**ANSWER:** One should of course remember that the First and the Second Book of the Kings — in their present form — were written no earlier than the Babylonian exile — a fact which is derived from the text itself. If we turn to 2nd Kings 25:30 we note an event which gives us some guide in ascertaining the time of the writing of the Book in that from verse 27, we read of the release of King Jehoiachin from confinement which took place roughly in 561 B.C. As the author wrote of the allowance made to the king "all the days of his life", we may conclude that the account in Second Kings was written after his, the king's death. So then, at the time when the account was written, there was a land called "Judaea" and there was a people called "Judaeans" or to use the modern English name, "Jews". As has been demonstrated in several recordings in our Kingdom Cassette Service series, the re-writing of the scriptures *after* the Babylonian captivity carried unmistakable traces of scribal adjustments and the account in 2nd Kings 16:6 is one of these.

By way of interest and to encourage further research into this subject, the following is the account of 2nd Kings 16:6 as translated in the Jerusalem Bible which, when compared with the Authorised Version, certainly makes one wonder what is the Truth. "At that time, the king of Edom recovered Elath for Edom; he drove out the

men of Judah from Elath, and the Edomites occupied it and live there to this present day." It will be noted that the word "Jew" does not appear in this translation and that the statement concerning "Rezin, king of Syria" as it appears in the A.V. has been replaced by the "king of Edom" who not only drove out the Judahites but recovered the Edomite town of Elath for the Edomites. One of course, is left with the choice of which account to accept but against the historical background of that time, it would appear that The Jerusalem Bible is the more correct.

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**QUESTION:** The Apostle Peter has always been very special to me and I was very pleased to read your small publication "Robbing Peter to Pay Paul". I wonder if you could perhaps help me with an answer to the question about the language which Peter spoke. According to Mark 14:70, Peter's speech betrayed him as a Galilean — what was the difference between the language used by the Jews and that spoken in Galilee?

**ANSWER:** Hebrew as such, was not spoken in Palestine after the removal of all twelve tribes into captivity. In the northern regions i.e. in Galilee where Peter hailed from, we have the population speaking a form of Aramaic which was partly Hebrew but with a very strong influence from Syriac. In the south and among the Judaeans, Hebrew in a debased form with a very strong Babylonian influence was spoken — this language being considered as a sign of learning and used by the leaders of the Pharisees and the scribes. It is quite possible that Peter and John's speech — identifying them as Galileans — had much to do with the Sanhedrin's contention that they were "unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts 4:13).

Koine Greek was of course the universal language of that time although it is very doubtful if Peter was familiar with this in his early life. Within a few years of his call, we have Peter talking with Cornelius and although we are not told what language was

used, it could have been the Koine Greek with which most Roman citizens were familiar. When we come to the matter of the Epistles of Peter, we are on less certain ground than ever because as is stated by Dr. William Smith in his *Dictionary of the Bible*, "... the style of both of St. Peter's Epistles indicates a considerable knowledge of Greek — it is pure and accurate, and in grammatical structure equal to that of St. Paul." However, as we continue we find that Peter did not appear to have written the Epistles under his name but having instructed one Sylvanus to do this for him (1st Peter 5:12). This Sylvanus is generally regarded as being the same as Silas who was a companion to Paul and as Dr. Smith indicates in his Dictionary, the Pauline connection has a definite "bearing on the Pauline character of St. Peter's Epistles." With regard to the Second Epistle of Peter which too was written in impeccable Greek, the preface to this Epistle in the Oxford Study Edition of the New English Bible has this to say. "The purpose, style, and point of view sharply distinguishes this testament from 1 Peter, and most scholars have concluded that it was written in Peter's name by a later churchman interested in representing its teaching as well-established apostolic tradition."

Thus in summary, Peter's native language was Aramaic with its Syriac flavour as indeed was that of the other Apostles. Whether he learned the Greek language or not is open to speculation and even the most conservative of theologians are doubtful whether or not Peter wrote anything at all notwithstanding the two Epistles which carry his name. In general, the language of the Galileans would appear to have been Aramaic although it is quite possible that the language of other nations and particularly the Koine Greek was spoken in the northern regions as well.

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