Giants in the Old Testament
by Tim Chaffey on February 22, 2012

Introduction
The Bible describes many individuals as giants, and it also mentions several giant people groups. Interpreters have speculated about the size of these people with guesses ranging anywhere from 6 feet to more than 30 feet in height. Also, a great deal of misinformation about biblical giants has been proliferated on the Internet along with some fake pictures of supposed giants. So did these giants really exist? If so, how big were they?

This article surveys all of the individuals and people groups described as giants in Scripture. Next, some ancient records and archaeological data that corroborate some of the biblical data will be examined. The article concludes with a study of how big these people could have been based on what we currently understand about genetics and biology.

Old Testament Giants
One of the earliest mentions of giants in Scripture is found in Genesis 14.
“In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in their mountain of Seir . . . . Then they turned back and came to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and attacked all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazezon Tamar” (Genesis 14:5–7, emphasis added).

Genesis 14 does not reveal that the Rephaim, Zuzim, Emim, or Amorites were giants, but this information can be found in other places.

The Amorites
The Amorites are mentioned more than 80 times in Scripture, and early on, some were allied with Abraham (Genesis 14:13). They were descendants of Noah’s grandson Canaan (Genesis 10:15–16). Although the Bible does not provide this information, the Jewish general-turned-historian Josephus gives the name of their ancestor as Amorreus. 1 While the Amorites are mentioned in the same contexts as other giants a few times, they are specifically described as giants in the Minor Prophets.

“Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was as strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit above and his roots beneath. Also it was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the
wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite” (Amos 2:9–10).

Through Amos, God clearly stated that the Amorites were generally very tall and strong. Some may downplay the description of the Amorites in this passage, since these verses employ figurative language, but there are some good reasons to take this passage in a straightforward manner.2

The idea that the Amorites were giants is supported by the report of the spies whom Moses sent through the land of Canaan. The Amorites were one of the people groups they saw (Numbers 13:29), and they claimed that “all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature” (Numbers 13:32). It is telling that in their response, Joshua and Caleb did not challenge the size of the land’s inhabitants (Numbers 14:6–9).3

The Emim

Deuteronomy 2 reveals that the Emim, which likely means “terrors,” were giants: “The Emim had dwelt there in times past, a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. They were also regarded as giants [Hebrew rephaim], like the Anakim, but the Moabites call them Emim” (Deuteronomy 2:10–11).

Moses told the people that the Emim used to live in the territory that God had given to the descendants of Lot’s son Moab (Genesis 19:37).

The Zuzim (Zamzummim)

The Zamzummim (almost certainly the same as Zuzim in Genesis 14:5) were also called giants and listed in the same chapter as the Emim: “[The land of Ammon] was also regarded as a land of giants [Hebrew rephaim]; giants [rephaim] formerly dwelt there. But the Ammonites call them Zamzummim, a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. But the Lord destroyed them before them, and they dispossessed them and dwelt in their place” (Deuteronomy 2:20–21).

These verses explain that a group of giants known as Zamzummim had lived in the land of Ammon, “a land of giants.” God destroyed the Zamzummim so that the descendants of Lot’s son Ben-Ammi (the Ammonites) could live in the land (Genesis 19:38).4

According to Genesis 14:5, the Zuzim were in the land of Ham. This may be in reference to Noah’s son, Ham, since they descended from him. But it is more likely a reference to the Hamathites, who were descendants of Canaan, Ham’s son. While the Zuzim and Zamzummim may have been different people groups, there are enough similarities in name, description, and geographical location to infer that they were variant names for the same group.
Rephaim
The most common term used to describe giants in the Bible is *rephaim* (e.g., Deuteronomy 3:11, 13). It may refer to a certain people group, or it may be a term that simply means *giants*. The singular form, *raphah*, also appears several times (e.g., 2 Samuel 21:16, 18, 20).

The third chapter of Deuteronomy contains an interesting account of the victory of the Israelites over Sihon, the king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Bashan. It is here that we learn an intriguing detail about Og:

“For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the giants [rephaim]. Indeed his bedstead was an iron bedstead. (Is it not in Rabbah of the people of Ammon?) Nine cubits is its length and four cubits its width, according to the standard cubit” (Deuteronomy 3:11).

Some translations use the word *sarcophagus* (NEB) or *coffin* (TEV, CEV) in place of *bedstead*, for the Hebrew word עֶרֶשׂ (*eres*). The majority of English Bibles render this term as *bed* or *bedstead*, which makes sense since *eres* means *couch*, *divan*, *bed*, or *bedstead*. Also, it would be indeed strange to translate it as *sarcophagus* since these were made of stone or marble, and Og’s “bedstead” was made of iron. Whether Moses referred to Og’s bed or coffin is not particularly relevant to the discussion at hand. However, the size of this object is noteworthy. We are told that it was nine cubits long and four cubits in width “according to the standard cubit.” Since the standard cubit is approximately 18 inches long, then Og’s bed or coffin was about 13.5 feet long and 6 feet wide. To put this in perspective, if stood up on end, the height of this bed would have been exactly twice as tall as a person who is 6 foot 9 inches tall. Of course, he may not have been as large as his bed. Some authors have attempted to downplay the significance of these dimensions, but the Bible clearly identifies Og as a giant.

The Nephilim
The earliest mention in Scripture of giants is just prior to the Flood account. “There were giants [nephilim] on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown” (Genesis 6:4).

The word translated as “giants” in this verse is the Hebrew word *nephilim*, and many Bible versions simply transliterate it as such. There has been much debate over the meaning of this word. Some believe it comes from the Hebrew verb *naphal*, while others claim that it is from the Aramaic noun *naphil*. These individuals are described in Hebrew as *gibborim* (“mighty men”). The *nephilim* were mentioned again when the spies returned from their exploratory mission of the land of Canaan. These men reported that Ahiman, Sheshai, and
Talmai (descendants of Anak, progenitor of the Anakim) dwelt in Hebron. They also stated, “the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there” (Numbers 13:28). The chapter concludes with ten of the spies giving “a bad report” trying to convince the Israelites that they could not conquer the land:

“The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size. There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight” (Numbers 13:32—33, NASB).

The Anakim

The Anakim were mentioned in several of these passages. They were perhaps the best known of the giants dwelling in the land of Canaan at the time of the Exodus. As stated in the verse above, they were part of the nephilim. If nephilim simply refers to giants in general, then the Anakim are just said to be giants in Numbers 13:33, which is consistent with their description in this passage. So the Amorites and other giant people would also be nephilim. If nephilim refers to a particular giant tribe, then the Anakim were part of this line. Numbers 13:22 states that Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai were descendants of Anak, who was obviously the namesake of the Anakim. Both the Emim and Zamzummim were compared to the Anakim, as they were both “a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim” (Deuteronomy 2:10, 21; 9:2).

Anak was the son of Arba (Joshua 15:13). Little is known about Arba, and his ancestry is not provided. However, he was apparently somewhat legendary as indicated by the parenthetical statements in the text when his name appears. The city of Hebron, where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob settled and were buried was also called Kiriath Arba. We are told that “Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim” (Joshua 14:15), and “the father of Anak” (Joshua 15:13; 21:11). Kirjath Arba was also called “Mamre” in Genesis 35:27. Mamre was an Amorite, who was an ally of Abram (Genesis 14:13). This man owned some trees by which Abram settled, and at some point, part of Hebron became synonymous with his name. Joshua fought several battles with the Anakim and the Amorites. Eventually, he “cut off the Anakim from the mountains: from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. None of the Anakim were left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod” (Joshua 11:21–22). These actions set the stage for the famous account of Goliath in 1 Samuel.
Goliath

Of course, the most renowned giant was the mighty Philistine slain by David. Here is how he is described in Scripture.

“And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. And he had bronze armor on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders. Now the staff of his spear was like a weaver’s beam, and his iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels; and a shield-bearer went before him” (1 Samuel 17:4–7).

Notice that Goliath was from Gath, which happened to be one of the three places where Anakim remained, according to Joshua 11:21–22. So although he is not called one in 1 Samuel 17, it is possible that Goliath was a descendant of the Anakim who mixed with the Philistine population in that area.15 There is some debate about Goliath’s height due to the textual variants in ancient manuscripts. Most English translations follow the Masoretic text in listing his height at “six cubits and a span” (approximately 9’9”). However, the NET Bible puts Goliath at “close to seven feet tall.” The reason for the discrepancy is that the Masoretic Text differs from some ancient texts, including the Septuagint and an ancient manuscript found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, labeled 4QSamᵃ, which list Goliath’s height as four cubits and a span (approximately 6’9”).

Many modern scholars believe there is stronger textual support for the shorter Goliath.16 But while he is not specifically called a giant in this passage, 2 Samuel 21:15–22 seems to identify Goliath as the “giant” (raphah) from Gath. There are other details provided that make the “six cubits and a span” the more likely figure. For example, the sheer weight of his armaments required that he must have been of enormous size and strength. His coat of mail weighed about 125 pounds and just the tip of his spear was 15 pounds. This does not even take into account his helmet, armor on his legs, javelin, or sword.17 Also, I personally find it hard to believe that every member of Israel’s army would have been terrified of someone who was my height (6’9”).18

There are many other details about the account of David and Goliath that are often overlooked. Most people assume David was a short young man when he fought against the giant, but the Bible is very clear that David was considered “a mighty man of valor, [and] a man of war” (1 Samuel 16:18) prior to fighting Goliath.

Other Giants

The Bible mentions four more Philistine giants, who were relatives of Goliath from the region of Gath. 2 Samuel 21:15–22 provides a more detailed account of these
giants than the record of 1 Chronicles 20:4–8, but the latter passage does provide some extra information that helps us make sense of the passage. The additional details from 1 Chronicles are provided in brackets.

“When the Philistines were at war again with Israel, David and his servants with him went down and fought against the Philistines; and David grew faint. Then Ishbi-Benob, who was one of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose bronze spear was three hundred shekels, who was bearing a new sword, thought he could kill David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah came to his aid, and struck the Philistine and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him, saying, ‘You shall go out no more with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel.’ ”

“Now it happened afterward that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob [or “Gezer”]. Then Sibbechai the Hushathite killed Saph [or “Sippai”], who was one of the sons of the giant. Again there was war at Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaare-Oregim [or “Jair”] the Bethlehemite killed [“Lahmi”] the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver’s beam.”

“Yet again there was war at Gath, where there was a man of great stature, who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number; and he also was born to the giant. So when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea, David’s brother, killed him.”

“These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants” (2 Samuel 21:15–22).

David’s mighty men killed giants named Ishbi-Benob, Saph (Sippai), and Lahmi, as well as an unnamed giant with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. Each of these men could have descended from the remnant of Anakim that survived in the region of Gath, Gaza, and Ashdod (Joshua 11:22).

An Egyptian Giant?

One of David’s mighty men, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, defeated a large Egyptian man:

“And he killed an Egyptian, a man of great height, five cubits tall. In the Egyptian’s hand there was a spear like a weaver’s beam; and he went down to him with a staff, wrested the spear out of the Egyptian’s hand, and killed him with his own spear” (1 Chronicles 11:23, italics in original).

Although he is often considered a giant, the Bible does not specifically identify this man as one, nor does it place this account with the exploits of David’s other men who slayed giants, but it does provide his height as being “five cubits” (approximately 7’ 6”). The KJV, NKJV, NASB, ESV, and others insert the word “great” before “height” or “stature,” but “great” does not appear in the Hebrew. This may have been done for stylistic and readability purposes or because his height is provided later in the verse. Young’s Literal Translation renders this verse in an almost perfect word-for-word match of the Hebrew: “‘And he hath smitten the man, the Egyptian—a man of measure, five by the cubit—and in the hand of the Egyptian is a spear like a beam of weavers’” (1 Chronicles 11:23, italics in original).
In the parallel account given in 2 Samuel 23:21 the Egyptian is called “a spectacular man” in the NKJV and “an impressive man” in the NASB. While modern man may think of a 7’6” man as a giant, it is intriguing that the Bible does not identify him as such. Perhaps this is a clue that those who are identified as giants were larger than the Egyptian slain by Benaiah. Another explanation for this omission is that many of the giants were called by their particular tribes (Anakim, Emim, etc.), but the tall Egyptian is not said to belong to any of these giant groups. If that is the case, it is curious why the biblical writers would not simply use a generic term for “giant,” such as *rapha*.

Following these accounts in 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles, the giants fade from the pages of Scripture (other than the retrospective mention of the Amorites as giants in Amos 2:9).

**Extra-biblical References to Giants**

Scores of giant skeletons have been allegedly unearthed in the past couple of centuries. These claims were especially popular in the nineteenth century. So far, no concrete evidence of these claims has been brought forth. Although some claim the evidence was ignored, destroyed, or hidden by places like the Smithsonian, it seems more likely that the vast majority of these reports were hoaxes created for various reasons.

**SO FAR, NO CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF THESE CLAIMS HAS BEEN BROUGHT FORTH.**

Several websites display pictures of people standing next to or holding a giant human femur, but these bones are sculptures, allegedly replicas of a real bone found in Turkey or Greece. Once again, there are fantastic claims, but little or no hard evidence to support them.

As far as I know, no one has discovered fossil evidence of giant humans. But then again, human fossils are quite rare altogether, since humans are more capable of avoiding rapid burial in sediment and other conditions that could lead to fossilization of their remains. What is indeed significant is that many giant versions of other creatures existed in the past or still exist today. To name just a few, these include the following:

1. spiders (e.g., the bird-eating spider, up to 12-inch leg span)
2. moths (e.g., the Atlas moth, with a wing span of 11 inches)
3. centipedes (up to 13 inches long)
4 snails (e.g., the African giant snail, up to 15½ inches long)
5 frogs (e.g. *Beelzebufo*, 16 inches high)
6 dragonflies (e.g., *Meganeura*, with a wing span of more than 2½ feet)
7 rats (e.g., *Josephoartigasia*, with a conservatively estimated body mass of 750 pounds)
8 beavers (e.g., *Trogontherium*, about 7½ feet long)
9 scorpions (e.g., the sea scorpion *Jaekelopterus*, estimated at more than 8 feet long)
10 crabs (e.g., the giant spider crab, with a claw span more than 12 feet)
11 armadillos (e.g., *Glyptodon*, up to 13 feet long)
12 turtles (e.g., *Archelon*, up to 16 feet long)
13 fish (e.g., *Xiphactinus*, 19 feet long)
14 sloths (e.g., *Megatherium*, which stood about 20 feet)
15 worms (e.g., the giant earthworm, up to 22 feet long)
16 sea cows (e.g., *Hydrodamalis*, 25 feet or more in length)
17 crocodiles (e.g., *Sarcosuchus*, up to 40 feet long)
18 snakes (e.g., *Titanoboa*, over 42 feet long)
19 crustaceans (e.g., supergiant amphipods 10 times larger than those previously discovered)
20 squid (e.g., *Mesonychoteuthis*, 50 feet or more in length)
21 sharks (e.g., *Rhincodon*, up to 65 feet long)
22 octopuses with 100 foot long tentacles.

The fact that scientists have discovered animals with body sizes far greater than those observed today suggests, at least in theory, the possibility of there having also been giant humans in the past, as recorded in the Bible. Many modern scholars scoff at the idea that there could have been giant warriors in excess of seven and a half feet tall. Consequently, the biblical dimensions of these people have often been downplayed or ignored. However, the biblical data about these people can be trusted because it is in the Word of God. Furthermore, other ancient sources describe giants, and the Anakim are even mentioned as dwelling in the land of Canaan.

**Egypt**

During the twelfth dynasty of ancient Egypt, traditionally dated from the twentieth to nineteenth centuries B.C., the Egyptians practiced something akin to the modern use of voodoo dolls. A potter would make a clay figurine of an enemy they feared. The figurine had its arms behind its back and the name of the group or its leaders would be written upon it. Sometimes a bowl or block of clay was used for...
listing the enemies. The figurine or bowl was then smashed in a symbolic way of cursing the enemies so that they could be defeated.
Archaeologists have reconstructed many of these Execration texts (also called Proscription Lists), and some very interesting details have been found concerning the Anakim. This is an example of a text which mentions them:
The Ruler of Iy’anaq, Erum, and all the retainers who are with him; the Ruler of Iy’anaq, Abiyamimu and all the retainers who are with him; the Ruler of Iy’anaq ‘Akirum and the retainers who are with him (emphasis added).23
It should be noted that anaq (i.e., with a q in place of the k) is a common transliteration of the Hebrew word for Anak, יְנָק (Numbers 13:33).
Another Execration text places the Anakim in the land of Canaan and even mentions the city of Jerusalem.24 The ancient Egyptians also called the inhabitants of the land of Canaan “Shasu.” A later text entitled The Craft of the Scribe (c. 1250 BC), which was used to train Egyptian scribes, discusses a Canaanite mountain pass during a past battle.
The face of the pass is dangerous with Shasu, hidden under the bushes. Some of them are 4 or 5 cubits, nose to foot, with wild faces.25
Egyptian cubits were longer than the Hebrew common cubit. At 20.65 inches per Egyptian cubit, the Shasu mentioned in this letter would have measured between 6’10” and 8’7.” This description shows that the traditional measurement of Goliath is not as outlandish as many critics believe.

Other Ancient Reports
Nearly every place around the world has legends of giants dwelling in the land. Certainly, one must exercise caution when reading these stories on the Internet since so much of the information online is contrary to the Word of God. For example, a few years ago, pictures of giant skeletons started to appear on websites, but they were clearly doctored (apparently part of a graphic design contest). Greek and Roman mythology mentions the Titans, Kyklopes (Cyclops), and several other giants.26 Norse mythology contains stories of the Frost giants of Jötunheim. But these records are not limited to European mythologies or only to the ancient past. African and Asian peoples also have legends of giants, as do Native Americans.
For example, in his autobiography, “Buffalo” Bill Cody wrote the following words about a legend recounted to him by members of the Sioux tribe.
It was taught by the wise men of this tribe that the earth was originally peopled by giants, who were fully three times the size of modern men. They were so swift and powerful that they could run alongside a buffalo, take the animal under one arm, and tear off a leg, and eat it as they ran. So vainglorious were they because of their own size and strength that they denied the existence
of a Creator. When it lighted, they proclaimed their superiority to the lightning; when it thundered, they laughed. This displeased the Great Spirit, and to rebuke their arrogance he sent a great rain upon the earth. The valleys filled with water, and the giants retreated to the hills. The water crept up the hills, and the giants sought safety on the highest mountains. Still the rain continued, the waters rose, and the giants, having no other refuge, were drowned.27 Undoubtedly, many of these stories contain exaggerations of the giants’ prodigious height and strength. But is it reasonable to automatically reject every one of these traditions, or, like tales of dragons, is there possibly some truth behind the legends, as is often the case? It is interesting that much of giant lore includes descriptions of a flood sent by God (or the gods) to destroy these wicked people. Could it be that while the Bible contains the true history of our past, these groups are simply repeating their own distorted versions of world history prior to and perhaps after the dispersion at Babel?28

Modern Giants
So were all of these giants just people who developed gigantism? Although gigantism may account for some of the ancient giants, this proposed solution falls short of explaining many of the biblical accounts.
Modern gigantism is often caused by abnormalities that lead to excessive production of growth hormone.29 It is highly unlikely that Goliath, the nephilim, Anakim, or most of the other Old Testament giants suffered from such a condition since they were often described as warriors or “mighty men,” while modern “giants” are usually awkward, uncoordinated, and endure several physical ailments. There have been some rare cases where the person could accurately be described as a “mighty man.”30 Furthermore, modern gigantism is not hereditary, whereas the Bible often describes giants as being the offspring of other giants (e.g., Deuteronomy 9:2; 1 Chronicles 20:6). So the groups known as giants were not simply made up of individuals with the modern form of gigantism.

How Tall Were They?
So just how tall were the various groups of giants in Scripture? Given the discrepancy in the ancient texts about Goliath’s height, it is difficult to base our estimate on his dimensions. The Egyptian killed by Benaiah was at least 7’6” (perhaps taller if the common cubit was not being used), but he is not called a giant. The Egyptian document, The Craft of the Scribe, placed the Shasu (Anakim?) between 6’10” and 8’7”. They had to be large enough for the Israelites to claim that
they looked like grasshoppers in the sight of the giants and for God to compare the height of the Amorites to cedars. There are two main lines of thought on this subject. One idea looks at the modern understanding of human growth. Our stature is primarily affected by our DNA with some influence from environmental factors, but we seem to be limited by the “square-cube” law.\textsuperscript{31} For example, let’s use my dimensions to see what would happen if I was scaled up to twice my height. This will give us a good example since I am 6’9”, and some have argued that King Og of Bashan was as tall as his bed was long (13’6”), which is exactly twice my height. So if we were to double my height, then we would also need to increase my width and depth proportionally to compensate. This means that, along with my height, both my width and depth would double, so we would need to multiply my weight (about 250 pounds) by a factor of eight. So a person of my proportions at 13’6” would weigh 2000 pounds! Not only is it difficult for us to imagine a person so large, but also when considering the compressive strength of bone,\textsuperscript{32} we would conclude that Og’s skeletal system would be under tremendous stress, and he would be much more likely to suffer broken bones than a normal-sized person, not to mention the dangerous stress placed on his body’s other systems.\textsuperscript{33}

The second view is based on three points mentioned above. First, would a 5’6” individual really feel like a “grasshopper” compared to someone who is 7–8 feet tall? Admittedly, this is somewhat subjective, but the contrast seems to require a taller giant. Next, as pointed out in the second footnote, there is a strong comparison of the height and strength of the Amorites to the cedar and oak trees in \textit{Amos 2:9}. 
Third, the evidence of other creatures in the fossil record that are far greater than twice the size of their modern counterparts provides support to the idea that the limits imposed by the square-cube law may not be as strict as we imagine them to be. For example, the *meganeura* is an extinct dragonfly, whose wingspan was greater than 30 inches. The Wikipedia entry (Wikimedia Commons image, right) on this creature states the following:

Controversy has prevailed as to how insects of the Carboniferous period were able to grow so large. The way oxygen is diffused through the insect's body via its tracheal breathing system puts an upper limit on body size, which prehistoric insects seem to have well exceeded.34 While I don’t believe in “prehistoric” creatures (since man has been on earth since Day Six, and God has revealed what happened during the first five days in a historical account), the *meganeura* shows that the size limits of living organisms may be greater than expected. Those holding the second view do not have a problem with the biblical giants exceeding nine feet in height.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the square-cube law is accurate when applied to building materials, but it doesn’t seem to perfectly relate to biological organisms, although it probably provides some “ballpark” limits. For example, the average house cat is about 30 inches long (head to tail), 9–10 inches tall, and weighs about 11 pounds, while tigers reach 12 feet in length (head to tail), 3 feet in height, and weighs about 500 pounds.35 If we were going to estimate the weight of a 10-foot long, 3-foot tall cat using the square-cube law, based on the dimensions of the average house cat, then the numbers would not match what we see in reality. According to this rule, when we quadruple the length (2.5 feet to 10 feet), then we would need to multiply the weight by 64 (4 x 4 x 4), which means we would expect the weight to be approximately 700 pounds. This is significantly higher than the weight of a tiger of this size.36

This example shows that tigers and house cats do not share the exact same proportions, but this is exactly the point. Both animals belong to the created cat “kind,” and the much larger varieties (lions, tigers, etc.) are not perfectly “scaled up” compared to the smaller varieties. If this were the case with giant humans, then perhaps a 13’6” Og isn’t out of the realm of possibility, but the notion that some biblical giants were 20–30 feet tall or greater is probably a “stretch.”

**Conclusion**

So which view is accurate? I honestly do not know, but the square-cube law seems to provide some upper limits, so it is unlikely that they reached 20–30 feet or more. However, I do know the Bible clearly teaches that giants existed in the past. Many of them lived in and around the land of Canaan, and Joshua was involved in several
battles with them. David and his mighty men killed some Philistine giants. The Egyptians knew about the Anakim and feared them. Finally, cultures from around the world have legends that are often remarkably similar to biblical accounts, including the existence of giants.

The biblical accounts of giants are more than just “tall” tales. These enormous people truly existed, and no amount of scoffing or rationalizing by skeptics will change that fact.