

Abraham Allegiant

Chronicles of the Nephilim

Book Four

By Brian Godawa

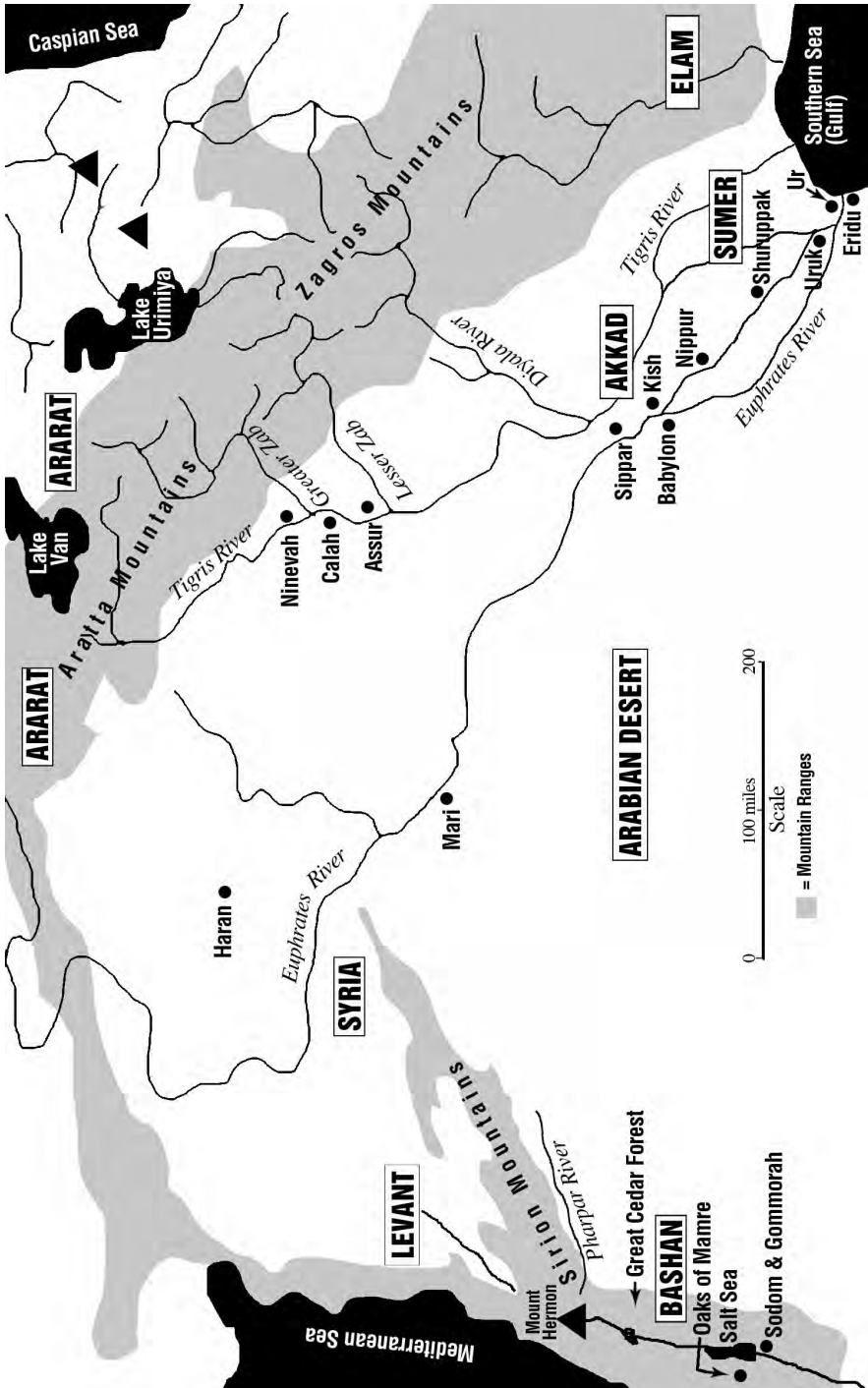
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Dedicated to
the fans of *Chronicles of the Nephilim*.
You helped me name most of the books,
including this one,
and you inspired me to work diligently
to satisfy your story hunger.

Could it have happened like this?



CHAPTER 1

The mighty hunter, Nimrod, stepped off his four-wheeled chariot and looked into the thicket of reeds that was before him. He was the giant king of Sumer and Akkad, the land of Mesopotamia. At nine feet tall, with a closely cropped beard, piercing eyes, and hunter's armor, he was terrifying. He was a Naphil, one of the Nephilim, demigods born of the sexual union of god and human, which explained his towering height and massive strength.

He was supported by a contingent of forty other huntsmen and trappers on their chariots equipped with nets, throwing sticks, clubs, and bolas. They did not carry their bows, swords, and javelins because they were not hunting to kill, but to trap. And they carried neck and hand bindings rather than cages because they were not hunting animals; they were hunting humans.

"We spread out from here on foot," said Nimrod to his two captains. "Rendezvous at the target point at nightfall."

The captains nodded and took their squads of six men each into the thick forest of reeds before them.

The chariots were useless in the marshy wetlands. They were in the southernmost part of Mesopotamia, the marshes and waterways outside the huge city-state of Ur on the coast of the Southern Sea.

This was the tail end of the great Tigris and Euphrates rivers that traversed the vast alluvial plains of Akkad and Sumer where they emptied into the Gulf.

This delta area was quite different from the rest of Mesopotamia. Because of its southernmost location near the sea, it contained a myriad of shallow lakes and narrow waterways winding through dense thickets of reeds that often grew taller than men, creating a natural maze of protection for the rustic inhabitants that lived in its midst. They were pastoralists who avoided urban life and sought independence, living off the land.

And that is why Nimrod wanted them as slaves.

He had left Uruk and moved to the central area of Mesopotamia to establish a new kingdom. But he had to build a city to match his ambition. Such a massive undertaking required manpower, more than he had at the time. So he was building a slave force by subjugating outlying rural tribes and transporting them upriver to his home base, now called Babylon.

In just a short time, he had secured Mesopotamia by starting the communities of Akkad and Babylon. His mighty army consisted of hundreds of his own giant progeny and became quickly feared and respected in the region. These were the giant offspring he had produced when he was king of Uruk and had established *jus prima noctis*, the divine right of the lord to first conjugal rights with all brides of the city. He ultimately abandoned the practice because of the consequences of a populace that resented their king. But not before he had sired hundreds of giant sons and daughters that he had taken with him to build his future.

Nimrod established a beneficent vassal kingdom through a treaty coalition with the tribes of the sons of Noah. Sippar, Nippur, and Kish were all allowed their own local rule without hostility under the condition of tribute and military support to Nimrod, who also started his northern expansion into the Syrian foothills of the

Zagros with his newly established cities of Nineveh, Asshur, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and Resen.

Down in southern Sumeria, Nimrod's son Ur-Nungal ruled Uruk and helped him to consolidate his power over Eridu, Larsa, Lagash, and Ur. Ur was overtaking Uruk as the largest cosmopolitan metropolis in Mesopotamia with its trading location on the Gulf and its surrounding vast agricultural regions of rich soil. Ur was circumvented by hundreds of acres of villages, hamlets, farming land, and irrigation canals controlled by the government for the good of the people. At least, that's what they said to maintain the illusion of civilian participation in the collective. Beyond the city-state boundaries were the marshlands where Nimrod now quietly stalked his human prey.

It was near dark and the villagers of the marshland were settling down for their community meal by the fires that consisted of cooked boar and water buffalo, along with vegetables and some grains. They were a peaceful people who preferred to be left alone to care for themselves. They did some trading with the rural dwellers of Ur, but usually did so under the table to avoid the oppressive taxes of the city. Their village was located along a channel deep in the marshland. Their economy was built on the staple product of the perennial reeds all around them. They would cut the strong flexible stalks down with sickles and use them for just about everything, including fodder for livestock feeding and fuel for cooking. They even built their homes and boats out of reeds, covered with a layer of pitch for waterproofing.

It was that pitch covering the reed houses that went up in flames all around the village, set alight by Nimrod's hidden trappers, now surrounding the village in the reeds.

Some women screamed. But it was too late to save the homes. They were burning to the ground.

Nimrod's men burst out of the shallows, throwing nets over whole families of villagers, pummeling the fighters, and chasing down stragglers. Their favorite tools for capture were the bola and the throwing stick. The bola was a rope with a weighted iron ball on each end that was thrown at its victim. It would wrap itself around the prey's legs or torso, bringing them to the ground, or knocking them out. The throwing stick was a flat curved piece of hardened gopher wood that was shaped like a crescent moon. One threw the stick to incapacitate victims at a distance.

Bolas and throwing sticks flew through the smoky chaos that enveloped the village. Others were clubbed into submission. Women were dragged by their hair and chained up for transportation. The attractive ones were often raped first before shackling them, and then chosen for further satisfaction of lusts along their journey northward. The men who fought back with weapons were usually killed if they could not be disarmed.

It took a mere fifteen minutes or so before the entire village was captured, wrangled, and bound for transport. Nimrod strode along the line of about seventy-five captive men, women and children as he announced their destiny.

“People of the marshland, you are now slaves of my kingdom. I am the mighty Nimrod of Babylon. You will be brought to my region up north to help build my city and temple for my name and glory. If you submit and obey, you will be treated fairly. If you do not, you will suffer and die. I will not tolerate insubordination.”

At that moment, one of Nimrod's warriors brought the chieftain of the village to him, bound, gagged, and struggling defiantly.

Without pause, Nimrod withdrew his sword and cut off the head of the chieftain. The corpse fell to the ground spurting blood from its aorta. Its head rolled near the throng of captives, and they knew without further argument that their future would not be a hopeful one.

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Nimrod said with deadpan frankness, “I am now your king. I am your god.”

CHAPTER 2

Ur was a port city on the gulf of the Southern Sea. Because of its prime location, it became rich in transport taxes. All trade shipped in from abroad went through its harbor on the Euphrates to the other cities upriver. It would later be known as “Ur of the Chaldees” because of the growing influx of Chaldean people in the region.

Ur was already getting a reputation for its elaborate funerals and royal tombs of the deceased. The king, Urnanna, was obsessed with bureaucracy and administration and had constructed a most voluminous library of laws and decrees in his perpetual quest for godlike control of the province. The urban landscape within its walls could only be described as cramped and suffocating for its city dwellers. Homes were small and tightly packed by design of the city planners in order to maximize a dependent citizenry and minimize freedom of movement.

Nimrod rode his chariot at the head of the processional of newly captured slaves through the main street up to the temple district that was at the height and heart of the city. Urnanna was Nimrod’s vassal king; Ur, a tributary of his rule. He always performed triumphal entries with her usual fanfare and grandiosity in order to impress his subjects and reinforce his godlike authority. It helped that he was

nine feet tall, a Naphil, born of Watcher god and human mother. He had discovered that the more theatrical and godlike his rhetoric and display, the more fear he garnered. His ultimate goal was deification.

The real deity rode beside Nimrod in his chariot as his personal bodyguard and emissary from the pantheon of gods. This was Marduk, a huge eight-foot muscle-bound hulk, who wore a hooded cloak and stood quietly in the shadow of Nimrod so as not to draw attention to himself. In fact, he was a fierce warrior of many weapons and was only waiting for his moment to step out of the shadows and execute his own secret plan, a plan of which even the assembly of gods was unaware.

But his time had not yet come.

They ended their parade at the foot of the Great Ziggurat of Ur, a brick temple tower so large, it could be seen miles away above the plains. Its name was *Etemennigur*, which meant, “House whose foundation creates terror.” It was about two hundred feet square and about one hundred feet high and was made of mud bricks that created a solid structure, the top of which was a shrine to the moon god Nanna, the patron deity of the city.

Ziggurats were step pyramids that were accessed by stairways extending up to the shrine on long ramps. They were man-made holy mountains that functioned as ceremonial stairways of descent from heaven to earth for the gods. They were considered to be the very cosmic connection of heaven and earth, with its foundation being in Sheol and its top reaching to the heavens of the gods. The ziggurat at Larsa was called *Eduranki*, which meant, “Temple that links heaven and earth”; at Sippar, *Ekunankuga*, “Temple of the stairway to pure heaven.”

But that was not all. The temple was also a likeness on earth of the temple that was in heaven. It was a representation that was spiritually linked to its heavenly reality, thus inspiring the liturgical formula, “as in heaven, so on earth.” Sacred space was enmeshed

with sacred performance as a tangible nexus between these two realms.

The priests' and priestesses' housing as well as the king's palace were built in close proximity to the Great Ziggurat to ensure a religious and political focal point for the city. Royalty and religion were closely linked.

Nimrod gazed upon the edifice with awe. He thought to himself, *The temple I build will dwarf this pile of bricks as a mountain dwarfs an anthill.*

He had been planning his temple structure for some time along with the city he was building to house it in grandeur: Babylon. But this was to be more than the most glorious and mightiest temple. It had been commissioned by the assembly of gods to be a cosmic mountain to take the place of their current residence far in the west at Mount Hermon. The goal was for Nimrod to become the first world potentate residing in Babylon and for the gods to consolidate their heavenly power with his earthly rule for an ultimate unity between heaven and earth. The Babylonian temple would be dedicated in an occultic ceremony of sorcery that would establish it as the new cosmic mountain of the gods. A portal would open to the heavens that would allow easy access for the gods to this, "land between the rivers," the origins of civilization after the flood.

Nimrod had finally acquired the wealth and manpower to begin his building project of both city and temple. He had but a few things left to take care of before returning to his home base upriver. One of those things was the primary reason he was visiting the Ur provinces. He wanted to have a private meeting with a sorcerer of Ur, an idol maker by the name of Terah.

CHAPTER 3

Terah ben Nahor had established quite a reputation from Sumer to Akkad for his innovative discoveries in astrology, and the art of divining the future and the will of the gods from signs in the heavens. He had started as a humble idol maker, whose house idols, called *teraphim*, had become well known for their exquisite carvings. They were mostly small terra cotta statues of deities, both human and animal shaped, from the size of a large finger up to a foot tall. They were often lime-washed or painted in red and black. They were set in the doorways of homes or buried under the threshold to protect the inhabitants from malignant spirits. But they were also worshipped in private family chapels and buried with family member's bodies in graves as afterlife guardians.

Soon he was commissioned by the king to craft larger than life idols out of imported stone for the royal palace and temple. His interest in deity expanded into divination and he studied texts on extispicy, hepatoscopy, and lecanomancy, the arts of divining from animal entrails, livers, and liquid movements respectively.

His interpretation of omens became legendary and he was appointed an official diviner, called a *baru*. But that was short lived as he began charting the heavens for horoscopic portents. It was believed that the heavens and earth were united in cosmic oneness

and that celestial events were signs that foreshadowed earthly events of kings and kingdoms. Mesopotamians also believed that the stars and planets in the heavens were interchangeable with the gods in a mystical union of being. Thus the term “heavenly host” carried a double meaning reference to both the stars in the heavens and the assembly of gods. The study of the heavenly host, and their movement through the heavens was ultimately religious devotion.

Urnanna had appointed Terah head sorcerer because of his vast knowledge of heavenly secrets. But Terah was also a strong asset because he had been very amenable to the king’s wishes. Terah sought to please Urnanna at all costs. This was why Urnanna was concerned as he led Nimrod and Marduk to meet Terah up the long ramp of steps that approached the Great Ziggurat’s temple of Nanna at the top. He suspected Nimrod was interested in building his own institution of magicians and sorcerers and Urnanna was about to lose his treasured Terah.

Either that or lose his head.

They entered the temple at the top. It was a white marble structure lined with pillars and hosting an exquisite black obsidian idol of the moon god Nanna before an altar in the center of the temple. Over in the corner Terah was engrossed in reading an astrolabe, a mathematical text of astronomical observations and calculations. Rather, he was *apparently* reading the astrolabe, because he had fallen asleep in his reading position and was currently snoring away, oblivious to his new visitors.

Urnanna cleared his throat loudly and Terah snapped awake. He noticed the king and stood with a bow. “My lord,” Terah blurted.

“Terah, you need to go home and get some rest,” said Urnanna. “You can’t live, eat, and sleep in the temple. You have a family and a life.”

“Yes, your eminence,” said Terah. And then he noticed the very large hooded muscleman, and the king looking closely at the statue of Nanna.

Urnanna announced, “Terah, meet King Nimrod, your suzerain.”

“Your high majesty,” said Terah and bowed again.

Nimrod did not look at Terah, but continued to examine the idol as he spoke.

“You have quite the reputation for a diversity of talents,” said Nimrod.

“At your service, my king,” said Terah.

Urnanna winced. That was most likely indeed going to happen.

Nimrod said, “You may leave us, Urnanna.”

Urnanna bowed and left the temple for the stairway descent. It was humiliating to be ordered around like a servant. But he knew that any show of pride or independence would result in punishment, if not instant death by the blade of Nimrod himself.

Once Urnanna was gone, Nimrod returned to his examination of the idol and said, “You have crafted an amazing likeness out of this black obsidian.”

“Thank you, my lord,” said Terah.

Nimrod said, “Your terra cotta house idols are known all over Mesopotamia. One could say you’ve cornered the marketplace with your expertise.”

“I pray my excellence honors the gods,” Terah replied.

“How are your skills with coarse stone?” asked Nimrod. “Sedimentary or igneous rock.”

“Competent, your majesty.”

Nimrod said, “How would you like to have your own institute of astrologers, sorcerers, and magi?”

Terah said, “Well, I, uh – that would be – an undeserved honor, my lord.”

Nimrod continued, “I want you to be my head sorcerer, Prince of the Heavenly Host. You would be fully supplied with everything you need and would answer only to me.”

Terah couldn’t think of what to say, so he repeated himself, “I am at your service, my king.”

He paused and added, “Shall I gather my wife and belongings to return with you to the north?”

“Not yet,” said Nimrod. “Your first duty will be to accomplish a secret task for me down here and then travel up to Babylon at an arranged time in the near future.”

“As you wish, my lord,” said Terah.

Nimrod asked him, “What would be the stone that has the largest deposit nearest Ur, and the best balance between hardness and speed for sculpting?”

Terah thought for a moment. “I would have to say your best bet is limestone. It’s the perfect medium between gypsum and granite. There is a significant region of it just west of here not too far into the desert.”

Nimrod said, “Good. I want you to establish a guarded quarry there. Keep it out of sight of the cities. I’ve hired dozens of stonecutters from the Zagros and the Levant to provide you their services. They will arrive this week.”

“I don’t understand, my king,” said Terah. “What would you like me to make out of the stone?”

Nimrod was looking again at the idol. “An army of limestone *golemim*. Stone Ones in the form of soldiers. Ten thousand strong.”

Terah gulped. “Forgive me, my lord, but I still do not understand. Of what use will this ‘army’ of statues be to you? And how will I transport them all upriver?”

“You won’t have to transport them,” said Nimrod. “They will march up to Babylon for my command.”

Terah was too shocked to ask the obvious question.

Nimrod walked up to him and pulled out a battered piece of parchment paper and handed it to Terah. He read it.

“This is highly sophisticated sorcery,” said Terah.

“That is why I wanted the best sorcerer I could find,” said Nimrod.

“Its purpose is to animate the non-living. Where did you get it?”

“I stumbled across it on a journey I had long ago.” Then Nimrod added as an after thought, “In another life.”

It was indeed another life. For Nimrod had been the infamous Gilgamesh, king of Uruk before he changed his identity and his life. He had stumbled upon the animated Stone Ones while seeking his great great grandfather, Noah the Faraway, now remembered as Utnahpishitim. The written spell, placed into the mouth of a golem, brought it to life as a slave to do the bidding of its master. These Stone Ones had no life, no breath, just animation. So they could not be killed and were almost impossible to stop. Nimrod had fought with several Stone Ones and had defeated them by crashing them into each other, which turned them into rubble. He commandeered the current spell from one of the mouths of the defeated golemim.

Nimrod explained, “You will keep the sculpted Stone Ones in the desert, out of sight from the cities until you have completed their numbers. Then you will duplicate this spell on as many parchments, and place them in the mouths of the golemim. As you said, the spell will animate them to do your bidding. You will arm them with weapons and march them up to Babylon at a coordinated time. Then you may take residence in my city and begin your institute as you desire.”

It was obvious what Nimrod was planning, an invincible army to rule over all of Mesopotamia. And it was also obvious why he wanted it done in secret in the desert. He needed the element of surprise to accomplish his purpose.

Better to be on the side of the conqueror, thought Terah, than on the side of his conquered.

“It will be my honor,” said Terah.

It was more like a lack of honor. For Terah was driven by self-preservation, not virtue. The pursuit of secret knowledge, of *any* knowledge, had created in him a fear of death. The more he learned, the more he realized how much more he had to learn, which resulted in a dreadful awareness of how little time he would have left in his life to satisfy his craving. He would not live forever, so he sought to cram as much into his short life as he possibly could. Therefore, whatever maintained his survival would take precedent, so that he could maintain his pursuit of more knowledge. The result was that he tried to serve too many masters that all demanded his allegiance.

Fortunately, he did not have any children yet, so it would be relatively easy to pick up his minimal possessions along with his wife Amthelo, and make the trek up to Babylon when necessary. Until then, she would be able to stay in Ur, while he accomplished his labor of mining and sculpting the sedimentary rock. He could make visits back home whenever he needed to.

“I will need the army two new moons from now,” said Nimrod.

Terah gulped. He knew not to complain to this king for he could see there was no compassion in his eyes, only power. He could tell that hesitancy of any kind would provoke wrath. Okay, he wouldn't see his wife for two full months after all. He would be working morning, noon, and night carving an army of ten thousand soldiers and bringing them alive with the duplicated spell he held in his hand.

Terah said with bold confidence, “You will have your army of golemim in two new moons.”

Nimrod grinned and slapped Terah's back.

“Now that is what I like to see, a willing attitude. You and I will work well together, Terah. As you can imagine, I have very big plans. And I want you to be a part of them.”

“I am at your service,” repeated Terah. It was a bit too pandering.

“Of course,” said Nimrod, “if you reveal any of the details to anyone, I will torture and execute your entire family in front of your eyes, and then do the same to you.”

“Of course, my lord,” gulped Terah. “Of course.”