

Joshua Valiant

Chronicles of the Nephilim

Book Five

By Brian Godawa

Copyright ©2013 Brian Godawa
All rights reserved.

Embedded Pictures Publishing
Los Angeles, California
310.948.0224
www.embeddedpictures.com

Scripture quotations taken from *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001.

PROLOGUE

It was four hundred years after Abraham was promised the land of Canaan that his descendants, the children of Abraham, the Seed of Eve, left their bondage in exodus from Egypt to claim their promised allotment from Yahweh.

After four hundred years in the land of Canaan, the giant descendants of the Nephilim, the Seed of the Serpent, had spread out upon that land. The Jordan River ran north and south, splitting the country in half. The Anakim dominated the Cisjordan, which included the desert hills and valleys east of the Jordan River. The Rephaim controlled the Transjordan, which included the fertile hills and valleys west of that same river. They were both called by the generic term *Amorite*, and they worshipped the pantheon of Canaanite gods led by Ba'al the most high, Ashtart, goddess of sex and war, Molech of the underworld, and other patron deities of the region.

The land of Canaan was filled with abomination. The iniquity of the Amorites was complete.

CHAPTER 1

A trickle of blood dribbled out of Joshua ben Nun's nose. It did not flow down onto his chin, but rather up into his eyes and onto his forehead—because he was hanging upside down, along with his companion Caleb ben Jephunneh. Both of them had been beaten senseless and strung up in order to be skinned alive and eaten by a unit of ten giant Anakim warriors. The two had been ambushed when they were visiting the graves of their patriarchs, Abraham and Isaac, near the caves of Machpelah, just outside the oaks of Mamre in Canaan. Their horses had been taken from them.

And now they were arguing upside down.

“I told you we should not stop,” hissed Joshua. “But you had to visit our forefather's resting place for your own sense of importance.”

Caleb coughed back, “You are my truest friend, Joshua, but sometimes your arrogance is unbecoming.”

“But I am right.”

“Shut up, you two worms!” shouted the gruff nine-foot tall Anakim with a filet knife. “I cannot think straight.”

“You never think straight,” complained another nine-footer with a bandaged arm. He had been wounded in the fight with the

two small humans. “I say we eat them, and move on. We are already late. And you know how angry Abi gets when we are late.”

Abi was the shortened nickname for Abi-yamimu, their military general in the city of Kiriath-arba, just a few miles away. They were on first patrol for the evening, and they should have been back already.

Another one added, “He might sic Ahiman on us.”

Ahiman was the right hand of Abi and he was the tallest and most fearsome Anakite in the land, the largest and mightiest of the Sons of Anak. The Anakim were the dominant force in Southern Canaan. They were a mighty clan of red and blonde haired fair-skinned giants whose ancestors were the primeval Nephilim from before the Great Flood. The name *Anak* was thought to mean “necklace,” which was more a reference to their doubly long necks than the strings of gold and bones that they wore as attention-drawing jewelry. Because of their Nephilim ancestry they also had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot and grew to heights of eight to eleven feet tall. Ahiman was unusually large at fifteen feet.

“I will make it quick,” said the one with the filet knife.

It would not take too long to skin and eat the captives. There were actually three of them. The third one was a mercenary from some unknown territory. He was unconscious. They would be a mere snack for a few of these towering warriors whose weight of four hundred to six hundred pounds required much daily meat to satisfy their hunger.

Most of the patrol sat at the fire warming up in the cold desert night.

The one with the filet knife raised it to start on Joshua.

But just as suddenly, a dagger flew through the air and lodged itself into the giant's bicep. He dropped his blade with a curse and clutched his wounded arm.

All ten of the warriors jerked their heads to see where the knife had come from.

Two Anakim warriors stepped into the firelight. The one that threw the knife was about ten feet tall and about seven hundred pounds. The other was a foot higher, heavier, and with a manicured beard. They both had the fair skin and blondish red hair that typified the Anakim ethnic traits, and the doubly long necks of bulging muscle, another Anakim distinctive. But these two were a higher caste. Their necklaces were more gold than bones. They were rulers.

“Lord Sheshai, lord Talmai!” blurted the captain of the unit.

They all stood up and gave their militia salute of submission to their overlords. It was a fist straight right arm thrust forward with a fist left arm at a perpendicular angle jutting into the elbow of the straight arm. It was their salute to power, the only thing they held sacred as worshippers of Ba'al, the most high god of storm and power in the pantheon.

The filet Anakim whimpered and groaned as he pulled the knife from his arm and sought to wrap the wound with a bandage.

Sheshai and Talmai were commanders of the armed forces for the hill country region. And they were brothers of Ahiman, the fierce one.

It was said of this mighty clan of Canaan, “Who can stand against the sons of Anak?” And of all these mighty giants, Ahiman was the most feared. He was twelve hundred pounds of brutal monstrosity. Because of this glorious reputation, the three brothers, Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai were often called by the honored name, “Sons of Arba,” their original forefather.

The middle, Sheshai, was more of a politician, a cunning master of strategy and leadership. The youngest, Talmai, the one who threw the knife, was more aggressive and hot-tempered. He could explode with rage and everyone tried to avoid being the one to trigger it.

Sheshai walked up to the hanging captives. He leaned in close to look at Joshua, then Caleb. He sniffed them, and muttered in Akkadian, the lingua franca of the realm, “Egyptian clothing. But you are not Egyptians. Habiru?”

Habiru was the Canaanite term used of wandering tribes of mercenaries and troublemaking nomads. He had heard that an entire nation of Habiru had been released from slavery in Egypt and had been wandering in the desert. These Habiru may have been the very ones that his own people were looking for. It was a blood feud that went back generations.

Sheshai noticed that Joshua was almost passed out because the blood had been rushing to his head. So he reached up and cut the rope hanging Joshua. He fell to the ground with a thud.

Joshua began to come to his senses. He noticed he was not too far away from their pile of confiscated belongings, including their weapons.

“Who are you, little rodent?” asked Sheshai in Akkadian again. “Where do you come from? What tribe or people?”

But Joshua did not respond, so Sheshai repeated himself in Egyptian. It was one of the two dominant languages that everyone had to have some comprehension of or suffer economic disadvantage.

Joshua was feigning semi-consciousness, strategizing how he could get to his knife in his pack to cut himself free. But his lashed feet and tied hands behind his back would not offer much in the way of opportunity.

Then Sheshai looked at the unconscious mercenary. He said to the Captain, “Strange armor. I have not seen this before. What is this one?”

The Captain replied, “We caught him by the Oaks of Mamre shortly after the Habiru. A loner. He was not a very skilled fighter.”

But Sheshai stared at the creature with curiosity and said, “He could be a Hurrian or Hittite scout from Syria. I wish these Egyptians and Syrians would stop using our land as a playground for their control.”

Sheshai lifted the mercenary’s head. He was a rather handsome dark haired muscular fellow. It seemed odd to Sheshai. But it did not matter because the mercenary was not breathing.

“You idiots,” grumbled Sheshai. “This one is dead.”

He cut the rope and the dead mercenary dropped to the ground.

“You have let them hang too long.”

He reached over and cut down Caleb’s rope as well. Caleb twisted and landed on his back on the ground with a grunt.

Talmi said, “Hurry up, Sheshai. I want to get back.”

Sheshai said, “Do not eat them. Bring them to King Hoham. I have a feeling these two Habiru may be what we have been looking for.”

Joshua gulped. He knew that these Sons of Anak were looking for the Sons of Abraham because he had heard their captors tell their story about Abraham and their primogeniture, King Arba, the father of Anak. It was not a positive tale. He knew that if they were taken to King Hoham in Kiriath-arba, they would experience a fate worse than being eaten. Then these brutish monsters would attack the entire nation of Israel hiding out in the Negeb desert, just south of their city.

They could not let that happen.

But it was about to.

Sheshai walked back to his brother and they prepared to leave. He barked to the captain, “Get your lazy asses up and back to the city. And keep the captives alive!”

“Yes, sir!” saluted the captain.

All the soldiers watched Sheshai and Talmi disappear into the darkness and gave one another looks of a close call with trouble.

“You heard the Commander! Get moving!”

But when the captain looked back at where the prisoners were, he noticed that the dead one was no longer on the ground. And the other two Habiru were now standing, no longer tied up, but holding shield and sickle sword in hand.

Someone had cut them loose when everyone’s attention had been turned.

That someone was the mercenary who had only been feigning death, looking for the right moment to pull his hidden knife and cut himself and the others free. He was not a chance encounter at Mamre. The only reason he “was not a very skilled fighter” when they captured him, as the soldier had said, was because he was planning subterfuge in order to rescue the two Habiru.

But the mercenary was nowhere to be seen. He had disappeared.

And that was only the beginning of the surprises about to overwhelm this unit of Anakim.

The second surprise was two successive arrows piercing the skulls of the captain and his closest commander.

Joshua dropped his composite bow and drew his sword.

But before the dead bodies hit the ground, the mercenary came out of the side bushes, outside the visual focus of the giants, and

cut a swath through the middle of the soldiers before they knew what was happening.

He slashed long throats, opened abdomens and cut off sword hands. He had dropped four of them before the others had their weapons up and started to fight.

Joshua and Caleb gave each other a surprised glance. This fellow was impressive.

Six giants down, four to go, against the three humans. But with their skills, it was not good odds for the giants.

The mercenary picked up a fallen shield just in time to protect himself for the downswing of an Anakite's battle axe. The hit sent a jarring shudder through his entire body and pushed him to his knees. This monster was big, maybe ten feet tall.

Still, the Anakite was no match for the mercenary with preternatural skills.

The mercenary dropped the shield and dove through the giant's long legs. The soldier's long neck strained to see where he landed. But it was too late, as his entire groin had been eviscerated and his femur artery gushed the last of his life out onto the ground.

Joshua and Caleb engaged the enemy. Joshua's bronze sickle sword was no match for the heavy giant swords made of a much stronger metal than he had ever seen before. He would have to get himself one of them.

Caleb's sword however, was entirely adequate to the task. It was in fact a special heavenly weapon passed down through his tribe from ancient descendants. It was a whip-like sword, ten feet long. Its blade was made of an unknown heavenly metal that was both flexible like a whip, and razor sharp strong and unbreakable. It had been forged in angelic realms and used by his ancestor, Lamech ben Methuselah, the father of Noah.

Lamech had named it “Rahab” because its serpentine nature reminded him of the sea dragon of chaos who went by the same name. And in the hands of Caleb, it was a very destructive sea dragon with extremely accurate aim.

Gabriel the archangel had visited Caleb when he was young and taught him how to use the sword in the special angelic fighting style called “Way of the Karabu.” Now at the age of 40, he did not so much fight as he did dance, moving in and out of his opponents, snapping Rahab like a dancer waving a long twirling ribbon—of death.

He cut off the head of a giant and the sword arm of another before they could even get within striking distance.

Joshua, on the other hand was Caleb’s opposite in style. He was brute force and fury wrapped up inside rage. Once his instincts kicked into survival mode, Joshua was a non-stop flurry of rapid strikes, slashes, and stabs that few warriors could keep up with, let alone the slow giant he pummeled with ferocity, who succumbed to exhaustion.

At age 20, Joshua had the strength and stamina of a giant wound tight into his six foot frame. Although tall for his own people, his deceptively small appearance to these giants was an added advantage of surprise.

Unfortunately, Joshua was to receive the last surprise of the evening, as the one-armed Anakim, not yet bled out, knelt up to land a deathblow on Joshua behind his back with his iron blade.

Actually, it was the next to last surprise, because before he could land it, a blur flew through the air and knocked the giant sideways to the ground before his last gasp.

It was the mercenary, who promptly cut off the monster’s head from his long muscular neck.

“Whew,” said the mercenary. “That was close. I almost had a lot of explaining to do to Yahweh.”

The two Israelites stood catching their breaths, looking at their benefactor with astonishment.

“Are you—mal’akim?” asked Caleb. It meant, “angel,” one of Yahweh’s heavenly host, and he knew their presence ever since his visits from Gabriel years ago.

“I am Mikael the archangel, prince of Israel, sent to watch over and protect Yahweh’s people.”

Joshua thought to himself that this must mean he was destined for a higher purpose in Yahweh’s plan if this guardian angel of Israel was watching over him. Joshua had hoped and prayed for such an honor. Being the assistant of Moses had fed that hope in his heart, handpicked by the ruler of Israel himself. And now that hope was growing stronger.

He had no idea just how wrong he was.

Mikael said, “You had better hurry and catch up with the other spies. They are almost back to the camp in the Negeb.”

Joshua bent down and picked up a sword and scabbard from one of the smaller warriors. He smiled and wrapped it onto his horse.

“What about these soldiers?” asked Caleb. “If those commanders, Seshai and Talmai, find them, they will know for sure that we are the ones whom they seek. They might chase us all the way back to our camp.”

“Do not worry,” said Mikael. “Be strong and courageous. I will bury them. You just get moving.”

Joshua said, “What about you?”

“Oh, do not worry about me,” said Mikael. “You will be seeing plenty of me in the future. Now, go.”

They went.