

DAVID ASCENDANT

Chronicles of the Nephilim
Book Seven



BRIAN GODAWA

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By Brian Godawa

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First Edition

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Dedicated to
culture giant slayer John H. Walton,
Whose scholarship has helped me to read Israel's storytelling
through ancient Near Eastern eyes.

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NOTE TO THE READER

David Ascendant is seventh in the series of novels, *Chronicles of the Nephilim* about the Biblical Cosmic War of the Seed. Though it can be read as a standalone novel, the reader should advisedly consider reading it within the series. There are so many characters, motifs, storyline histories, artifacts, and themes that have been carried over from previous novels in the series, that the true depth and riches of the story can best be appreciated and understood within that context.

However, if you really want to just read this story about King David, you won't regret it. You will be shocked at the material you've missed from the lines of the Bible — and in between — but you won't regret it.

Based on the true story
that is stranger than fiction.



PROLOGUE

It was a magnificent civilization of excellence, virtue, and strength. They had managed to rule over the Greek islands and parts of the continent, from the pillars of Heracles to the pyramids of Egypt in the south and Tyrrhenia in the west. It had risen from humble beginnings to become an empire. It had a military and navy of unparalleled might; a ruling elite of philosopher kings with unapproachable wisdom; and such advanced culture that could only have come from the beneficence of the gods.

It was Atlantis, the city of wonder and mystery on the isle of Thera within the Aegean archipelago. It was rumored that the gods had chosen this location to reveal oracles of occultic knowledge as they had done on Mount Hermon of Syria in the primeval past. This explained the advanced architecture, engineering, and technology that it produced.

The capital city was laid out in the gulf of the island as a series of concentric circles of land separated by channeled waterways. At the center of the ring was an acropolis on a hill that housed the majestic temple of Poseidon, god of the sea.

The city was engineered like no other before it. Buildings contained running water, a complex sewer system, as well as unprecedented technology for heating resident interiors in the winter and cooling them in the summer. Word had spread around Greece that they had also discovered how to harness energy in a form that would enable them to power mechanical devices without the aid of human slaves.

But such engineering and technological advancement were only symptoms of a much more significant pursuit of the ruling

class of Atlantis: godhood. Though some humans had been known to live as long as one hundred or so years, the average life span of most Aegeans was about forty to fifty years. Aristocrats would often reach seventy and eighty. The hygiene created by Atlantean technology and medicine had increased that expectancy. But in their collective memory, they knew their primeval ancestors had lived many centuries. Before the Great Deluge, they had heard of the oldest antediluvian reaching nine hundred and sixty nine years!

The patrician class had concluded that if the nobles could mate with deity, the resultant demigods would not only become gibborim warrior rulers, but their hybrid flesh would return to the longevity of lives once enjoyed by the antediluvian fathers.

They could not understand the reticence of Poseidon to partake in their plan of uniting heaven and earth with a Sacred Marriage rite between deity and humanity. He had mumbled about the Gigantomachy and the Titanomachy, and about some unknown pentapolis called Sodom and Gomorrah. But he did not explain himself beyond the simple declaration that the Deluge of water and the fire of heaven was the response to such unholy hubris.

As the Greeks remembered the Flood story, Zeus had sent the Deluge as judgment but saved Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha by having him build a chest that brought them safely through the waters.

But this story did not sway the Atlanteans in their quest for eternal life. They would stop at nothing to achieve godhood, and eventually, their constant pleas prompted Poseidon to give in and reinstitute the Sacred Marriage.

The gods would once again mate with humans.



It was a warm and sunny summer day on the chain of Aegean islands when all Hades was unleashed.

There had been an increase in frequency of earthquakes on Thera that had caused the more superstitious citizens to leave in

ships for the western sea. But everyone else went about their business, having become familiar with such rumblings throughout their entire lives. All across the island, people were trading in the marketplace, farming their land, performing matrimony, and coupling together in marriage beds of love and adulterous beds of lust. There were aristocrats ruling, buyers trading, thieves stealing, liars lying, thousands living their normal lives.

In the temple of Poseidon, the priests were engaging in their liturgy of worship when the first sinkhole opened up beneath them and swallowed them all alive. A huge crevice split the concentric isle circles, reducing the buildings instantly to rubble, and crushing a multitude of Atlanteans.

What followed next was unthinkable.

The capital city completely disintegrated in a massive explosion of a magnitude that had never before been seen on earth. The expanding rush of debris and smoke choked all life, instantly engulfing people on the far side of the island. A pile of ash buried everything. A blast of rock and magma spewed out from the center of the caldera as the force of pressure built up over millennia finally released itself from the earth.

The ancient volcano of Thera had awakened.

An enormous pillar cloud of sixty cubic miles of rock, ash and pumice rose into the sky and spread out for hundreds of miles around, choking the life out of everything in its way. The uplift of the earth, created an offset of the sea that released a tsunami wave pushing its way at hundreds of miles per hour away from the explosion.

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The Minoan island of Crete lay a mere hundred miles away. Its inhabitants could see the plume of smoke darkening the sky, and many sought the higher mountainous regions as safety from the oncoming wave. But most did not escape the crushing wall of water that washed over the island and wiped out every city in mere

seconds. Hundreds of generations of civilization built upon the wisdom of its ancestors were completely decimated by billions of tons of seawater.

This incapacitation of the great Minoan culture of Crete would completely cripple its defenses, making it vulnerable to conquest by the maritime forces of the Mycenaens who would follow in the wake of the tsunami.

What happened this day would become the stuff of legends about the glorious achievements of a magical civilization mysteriously swallowed up in a day by the largest volcanic eruption in history.

But rock, ash, and lava were not the only things vomited out from the belly of Sheol that day. Within the debris that flew miles into the air and landed in the sea was a humanoid form. It was severely burned by its encasement in magma, but alive because of its divine being.

When he hit the ocean and was released from the hardened lava rock, the salt water burned his flesh with stinging pain. But this was nothing compared to the blazing heat of the river of magma he had been entrapped in miles beneath the surface of the earth.

But now he was free. And he was set on revenge against the malicious Creator and his archangels who had trapped him there to await the final judgment. That wait would be delayed as he began to swim westward with strong plunging strokes of charred black arms.

He had been incarcerated in the earth for generations. But he didn't care. He was a god of power and storm. He would work his way back up the hierarchy of gods to claim his rightful status as the Most High god. He would get his revenge on Yahweh Elohim and his pathetic offspring of worms, the sons of Israel.

He was the storm god, Ba'al. And he was back.

CHAPTER 1

The two naked young male warriors grappled in the atrium yard surrounded by rows of Phoenician columns. They wore nothing but loincloths protecting their genitals from their rough sparring. They were Philistines in their home city of Gath on the western coastline of the land of Canaan. They exercised their perpetual pursuit of physical perfection and dominance as new recruits in the reserves of the army.

They were both Rephaim giants, but not yet fully matured. The elder, at eighteen years old, stood about seven feet tall. He was physically stronger than the younger one, who was seventeen and only six and a half feet tall. But he had more agility and cunning than his companion.

Aside from their size, they also carried the additional distinguishing trait of their antediluvian Nephilim ancestors: polydactylism, an extra finger on each hand and an extra toe on each foot, for a total of twelve fingers and twelve toes. This physical peculiarity aided their skills in battle by increasing their gripping span.

That gripping span of the older wrestler was being frustrated by the cunning trick of the younger.

“You slippery serpent,” grunted the elder. The younger had greased himself before their contest, making it difficult to grab his body effectively. He was always a step ahead when it came to strategic planning.

“I told you,” growled the younger, “Smarts over skill.”

“More like knavery.” The elder fumed with anger. He deliberately elbowed his opponent’s face.

The younger's nose leaked blood. He tasted it and grinned. He responded with his own elbow to his elder's chin.

The shudder of teeth cracking together splintered through the elder's jaw.

It lit him up like a torch. He figured that the only place that wouldn't be greased down on the younger's body would be underneath his loincloth. So if his adversary was going to play dirty, then so would he. He grabbed the fabric and yanked at it, ripping it from the younger's body.

"Who is the knave, now?" grunted the younger, with anger to match his rival. What had started as a typical competition of egos between best of friends was turning hostile.

The elder tried to grab his opponent's member, but the younger caught his hand, and responded with a rain of punches to his adversary's abdomen. The elder grunted in pain.

The apparent weakness caught the younger off guard and he got flipped hard to the ground, stunned. He lost his breath.

The elder took that moment to rip off his own loincloth. Then he flipped his stunned prey around to face him.

The younger noticed that the elder was aroused. The elder slapped the younger hard in the face.

Then again.

The younger grabbed the elder's hand and yanked him down.

They met face to face. Passionate anger turned to passionate lust as the two kissed as violently as they fought.

They rolled on the ground trying to vie for dominant position. The elder punched the younger in the face. It was enough to make him dizzy and vulnerable.

The elder flipped him around to his face on the ground and gratified his lust unnaturally with his dazed younger opponent. It was the prize for victory in this contest of young warriors in training.

The sound of a Philistine war horn blended into the elder's consciousness as he reveled in his ecstasy; drool splattering on the

back of his defeated partner. His physical spasm had so perfectly united with the call to war that he felt himself lifted up to the throne of Dagon in heaven.

But the voice of his younger companion, Ishbi ben Ob, brought him back to earth.

“Goliath! We are being called to war!”

CHAPTER 2

Goliath and Ishbi ben Ob said goodbye to Ishbi's family, suited up in their Philistine armor. Though they were native Rephaim of Canaan, their tribe had been absorbed into the Philistine people of the coastal territory a generation earlier. Thus, they wore the traditional armor of the Philistines: sandals, brass shin greaves, battle skirt, and chest armor made from strips of metal angled like a "V" across the torso. On their heads they wore the signature feather-topped helmets that resulted in the insulting nickname, "brush heads," from their enemies. Each soldier carried a small round shield, two javelin spears and a straight sword.

Goliath felt restricted by the uniform. The more elite units were allowed to make individualized alterations in their armor and weaponry. But until they achieved any notoriety, Goliath would have to be content with the standard uniform of the common soldier. He did not see himself being content with that for very long. He wanted to stand out, to make a name for himself. He sensed that the gods had a special destiny of greatness for him.

Ishbi's father, Warati, a retired one-armed Rephaim officer, punched Ishbi and Goliath in the chest. This was the Philistine sign for male affection and greetings or farewells.

Two other young boys, each ten-years old, stood with them. They were Lahmi, Goliath's younger brother, a growing Rephaim about five feet tall, and his companion Ittai, who had the signature extra digits and toes of a Rephaim, but was not a giant in height.

"We finally have our opportunity to fight," said Goliath.

“It is not a good sign,” countered Warati. “We have been at war with the Israelites at Aphek. The only reason our generals would call up reserves is if they considered themselves in trouble.”

Goliath would not give up. “Then we will be heroes to our people for turning the tide of battle.”

Warati eyed the young upstart whom he had raised as his adopted own. “The surest way to a forgotten death is the relentless pursuit of memorable fame.”

“Yes, father,” said Goliath with deference. “But we must get going.” All he could think of was the fame of that despicable Israelite Samson, whose mighty deed, years earlier, of bringing down the temple of Dagon would never be forgotten. Especially since his own parents died in the tragedy. It seemed evil men were rewarded with infamy that outlived heroes.

“We want to go with you!” yelled Lahmi.

Goliath smiled and ruffled his brother’s hair.

Ishbi said, “You both are too young. And the runt is too small.” The derogatory nickname was a reference to Ittai’s small size.

Ittai blurted out, “But I’m as strong as Lahmi!” It was true. He didn’t have the height, but he somehow had the growing strength of a Rephaim.

Ishbi ignored the little fellow. “Wait a few years and keep training. You will have your day.”

Goliath added, “Stay here and obey father. We will return with the heads of Israelites on our pikes.”

Lahmi pouted. He admired his brother deeply. When their parents died in the collapse of Dagon’s temple, Warati, a close family friend, had adopted him and Goliath.

Lahmi followed his older brother in everything, including his furious hatred of the Israelites. He watched Goliath become obsessed with the desire to become for the Philistines what Samson had been for the Israelites; a legend, a deliverer enshrined in

greatness because of his mighty deeds as a gibborim, or warrior of renown.

More than anything, Goliath just wanted revenge against the vermin that killed his parents.

CHAPTER 3

Goliath and Ishbi stood at attention with a thousand other military reinforcements preparing to join their brothers in battle north of the city. They had come from the surrounding five cities of the Philistine pentapolis. Philistia had been settled generations earlier when the Mediterranean Sea Peoples had left their habitations in search of new territory and landed on the shores of Canaan. They were not a singular people, but consisted of a variety of Aegean clans; Cherethites, Pelethites, and even Caphtorim, from the island of Caphtor, also known as Crete.

These Sea Peoples had quickly established their presence on the coast and immediately launched an invasion of Egypt. They were repelled and so accepted a form of vassalage under the Pharaoh's authority. They became known collectively as Philistines and maintained a profitable control of the access to shipping routes to the rest of the world, including Egypt, for travel and trade. The land route from Canaan to Egypt eventually was called the Way of the Philistines.

Hundreds of years in the past, the wandering Israelites first entered Canaan like a plague upon the land. They were a warmongering tribe that sought to empty the country through the merciless slaughter of all of Canaan's inhabitants, including Goliath's people. As he learned it, a cruel and violent general named Joshua led the Israelite Habiru, or Hebrews, as they were now called. They first plundered the Transjordan, the eastern side of the Jordan River, where Goliath's Rephaim ancestor, Og of Bashan ruled. The few surviving Rephaim fled into Canaan and some of them ended up in Philistia on the coast.

The Israelites hunted down all the giant clans of Rephaim and Anakim, but for unknown reasons, stayed away from the five cities of the Philistines. These were Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Gaza on the shore with Ekron, and Goliath's hometown Gath, a short way inland.

Over the next few generations, the Israelites became annoying gadflies to the Philistines. The two nations found themselves in constant battles over territory. The Israelites were a loose confederation of a dozen lawless tribes spread out like lice on sheep in the central hill country from the south Negeb all the way up to Laish in the north.

The pentapolis of the Philistines was a more cohesive and civilized confederation of cities, each led by Lords called *seranim*, who met in a Council of Five. They were less like kings and more like governors of a unified military confederation. Their entire civilization was so much more advanced than the ruffian Israelites, it was a wonder they could not exterminate them.

The Philistines had brought beautiful painted art, sculpture, and pottery to the land of Canaan. The Israelites were still scratching on rocks and using stones for utensils. The Philistines had developed blacksmithing and the new art of forging iron. The Israelites were still using bronze, copper and tin for crude implements and few weapons. The Philistines had iron chariots; the Israelites cowered on foot in the hills and mountains. The Philistines had developed a cosmopolitan culture that traded with the nations of the world, and adopted many ideas and gods into its own. The Israelites still worshipped a primitive invisible demon whose insane jealousy demanded his people avoid contact with other nations. It was a wonder they were having so much trouble overcoming these ignorant, uncouth and uncultured Hebrews.

The Lord of Gath, Achish ben Maach, announced to the mustered reserve forces before him, "Aphrek is twenty-eight miles north of Gath. You will engage in an all-day speedy march to bring aid to your fellow soldiers on the battlefield. You are being called

upon because the Israelites have brought forth a magical talisman of great occultic powers that has struck fear into the hearts of your countrymen. It is a golden box that houses their demon god, and releases a great terror upon their enemies.”

Goliath and Ishbi had been taught about this magical object. In ages past, it had toppled the mighty walls of Jericho, slayed thousands of warriors, and opened the gates of Kiriath-Arba to the hordes of barbaric Hebrews who wiped out the last of the Anakim.

Achish continued, “You will provide your support for our forces and you will sacrifice your lives for the glory of Dagon!” The soldiers cheered. “These dirty leprous Hebrews have terrorized us for too long! It is time we stamp them out for good!”

More cheers rose from the ranks. Goliath could only think of one thing, his vendetta against the Israelites. He loved death as much as these Hebrews loved life, and he was not afraid of their god who hid himself in a magical box. He had already figured out what he was going to do.

It would be glorious.