

Response to Giem:

To the editor: Giem suggests¹ that our statement “the Bible reports the destruction of the Canaanite cities and the annihilation of its people”² is inaccurate and not supported by references. The Bible reports “And Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and he called the name of the place Hormah”.³ Within a longer account, it further reports “And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon [i.e. Sidon], and unto Misrephoth-maim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward; and they smote them, until they left them none remaining. And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe”.⁴

Our work aimed to shed light on the relationships of Canaanites to ancient and present-day populations from a genetic point of view, rather than disputing the Bible or starting a Biblical discussion in the pages of a genetics journal.

References

1. Giem, P.A.L. (2017). *Am J Hum Genet.* this issue.
2. Haber, M., Doumet-Serhal, C., Scheib, C., Xue, Y., Danecek, P., Mezzavilla, M., Youhanna, S., Martiniano, R., Prado-Martinez, J., Szpak, M., et al. (2017). Continuity and admixture in the last five millennia of Levantine history from ancient Canaanite and present-day Lebanese genome sequences. *Am J Hum Genet* *101*, 274-282.
3. The Holy Bible (Authorised Version). (1611). Numbers. *21*, v2-3.
4. The Holy Bible (Authorised Version). (1611). Joshua. *11*, v8-14.

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