

# THE SEVEN TRIBES OF CANAAN

By Avram Yehoshua

The [SeedofAbraham.net](http://SeedofAbraham.net)

The seven pagan Tribes in Canaan that Israel was told by God to destroy, so Israel could possess the land of Canaan, had carnal character traits that can be found within Christians. Christians too have ‘land’ to possess, their soul, and it’s the Blood of Messiah Yeshua and the Spirit of the Lord that fight for them and with them in this battle to overcome their carnal nature and to walk in the Fruit of His Spirit (Galatians 5:16, 22-23, 25). In terms of the seven Tribes, some Christians are carnally more aggressive than others, while other Christians are carnally passive, etc. Some are war-like while others are intellectual and sophisticated. These are all manifestations of pride, which God wants to expose and deliver Christians from so they can fight the good fight of faith (1st Tim. 6:12; 2nd Tim. 4:7) and overcome their carnality (Rom. 6:1-7). The definition of the names of the Tribes and/or their lifestyle will offer insights into who they were and how Christians are like them. The following Seven Tribes are in alphabetical order.

## 1. Amorites

The name Amorites אַמֹרִי (*Eh'mo'ri*)<sup>1</sup> means “hill dwellers; westerners,”<sup>2</sup> which is “only a geographic ... term, not ethnic.”<sup>3</sup> In other words it doesn’t speak of their character, but of where they lived in Canaan; both in the “land in the west”<sup>4</sup> (that is to say Israel proper), and on “the other side of the Jordan” River “(Joshua 24:8),”<sup>5</sup> the east side, which is in modern day Jordan.

Although no characteristic can be gleaned from their name (Amorite), we do know they *opposed* the God of Israel and His people Israel (cf. Joshua 10:1-43). Sihon of Heshbon (Num. 21:27; Dt. 1:4) and Og of Bashan<sup>6</sup> (who was about 11 feet tall) came against Israel with their armies, before Israel entered the land of Canaan, and God immediately gave their territory, east of the Jordan River, to Israel (Deut. 3:8-10).<sup>7</sup> The Amorites were a very “war-like”<sup>8</sup> people, but Israel defeated them in battle.

The Amorites sacrificed their infants in the fires of Molech, out of both the desire to obey the demands of their gods and goddesses and their fear of them. They had their lineage from the man Canaan,<sup>9</sup> who was

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, Based on the Lexicon of Wilhelm Gesenius; Edward Robinson, translator and E. Rodiger, Editor, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon, Abridged* (Accordance Bible Software), paragraph 1,362.

<sup>2</sup> John Kohlenberger and William Mounce, *Concise Hebrew-Aramaic Dictionary of the Old Testament*, paragraph 1,346.

<sup>3</sup> Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, Authors; M. Richardson, translator, *The Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Boston, MA USA: Brill Academic Publishers; 2002; Accordance Bible Software), p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Numbers 21:23.

<sup>7</sup> Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), p. 54.

<sup>8</sup> [Amorites](#).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

the fourth son of Ham; Ham being the second son of Noah (Gen. 9:18, 22; 10:16).

## 2. Canaanites

The Canaanites כְּנַעֲנִי (Kih'nah'ah'ni) valued and “developed the arts and sciences” and they “excelled in ceramic arts, music, musical instruments and architecture.” They had “walled cities” which were “superior to that of later” Israeli “buildings,”<sup>10</sup> which speaks of their architectural acumen. Their name means, to be passive (not warlike), depressed, modest, humble and to submit.<sup>11</sup> The Canaanites were merchants with a passive and modest demeanor who were humble. Their chief characteristic was pride in their intelligence, which expressed itself in their music, musical instruments, ceramic arts and architecture. They were merchants.<sup>12</sup>

They were a fertility cult, meaning that they had sex with their priests and priestess' at their shrines in order for their gods to send rain to fertilize their crops, not an unusual religious motif for most pagan religions, but *they were more debased* than anyone else “in the ancient world.”<sup>13</sup> Their form of worship entailed both heterosexual and homosexual orgies. El was their chief god, who was noted for his gross and perverse behavior. He murdered his father, his son and his daughter. Of course, his followers were like him, and so *murder, hatred, envy and adultery* were traits of the Canaanites. Remember that Christians who have this trait don't have to literally murder or commit adultery to be guilty of these sins (cf. Mt. 5:21f., 28).

Baal, son of El, was the god of thunder. Anat, Astarte and Asherah were all feminine goddesses of sex and war who were utterly depraved. The Ras Shamra clay tablets describe the pantheon of the gods and goddesses of the Canaanites, some more of which were *Mot*, the god of death; *Reshep* the god of pestilence; *Shulman* the god of health and *Koshar* the god of arts and crafts.<sup>14</sup>

The Canaanites lived all over Canaan and they were also descendants of the man Canaan, the fourth son of Ham, who was the second son of Noah (Gen. 9:18, 22). There were a number of descendants of Canaan in the land of Canaan.

## 3. Girgashites

The name Girgashite גִּרְגָּשִׁי (*Ger'gashi*) means “to draw away,<sup>15</sup> to entice.” They were utterly immoral and corrupt, and were a branch of the Hivites,<sup>16</sup> descendants of the fifth son of Canaan (Gen. 9:16; 10:15-16 1st Chron. 1:14). They lived west of the Jordan River,<sup>17</sup> in Israel proper.

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<sup>10</sup> Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, p. 202.

<sup>11</sup> Koehler, *The Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 2, p. 484-485.

<sup>12</sup> Brown, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon*, paragraph 10,671.

Koehler, *The Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 2, p. 486.

<sup>13</sup> Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, pp. 202-203.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203. The Canaanites “were utterly immoral, decadent and corrupt, dangerously contaminating and thoroughly justifying the divine command to destroy their devotees (Deut. 20:17).”

<sup>15</sup> [Gergashite](#).

<sup>16</sup> *Easton's Bible Dictionary* (Accordance Bible Software), paragraph 3,024.

<sup>17</sup> Unger, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, p. 477.

## 4. Hittites

“Hittite” in Hebrew is חִתִּי (*Hih’tea*). The name comes from the Hebrew noun meaning “terror” (cf. Gen. 9:2), and they were “utterly fearless.”<sup>18</sup> They were powerful, warlike and covetous. Understandably, their neighbors were afraid of them. Their chief characteristic was aggression.<sup>19</sup> Their religion consisted of a mixture of “Egyptian and Babylonian deities” and their chief goddess was “*Ishtar of Nineveh*” (cf. Acts 19:34: aka Diana of the Ephesians; also known in English as “*Easter*”). The Hittites lived all over Canaan, but had their regional abode in Syria. Before Abraham they had an empire in modern day Turkey that rivaled Egypt and Babylon.<sup>20</sup>

## 5. Hivites

The Hivites חִוִּי (*Hih’vi*) were “warmhearted, impulsive, overconfident...overly trustful...*unwarlike*,”<sup>21</sup> “*peaceable* (Gen 34:21)”<sup>22</sup> and *deceitful*. The Gibeonites were Hivites who didn’t want to war against Israel and so deceived Joshua into thinking they were from a far away country (Joshua 9:3f.). The Hivites were also descended from Canaan, the fourth son of Ham (Gen. 10:6f.), and like the Canaanites, were merchants or traders scattered all over Canaan from the foothills of Mt. Hermon in the northeast to Gibeon in the south.<sup>23</sup> Shechem, the man who raped Jacob’s daughter Dinah, was a Hivite<sup>24</sup> (Gen. 34:2-31).

## 6. Jebusites

The name Jebusite יְבוּסִי (*Yivu’si*) means, “trodden hard, or fastness,”<sup>25</sup> and “to tread down”<sup>26</sup> i.e. a “threshing place,”<sup>27</sup> or “to trample,” derived from a verb usually used in reference to the judgment or destruction of a city. The Jebusites were “warlike,”<sup>28</sup> and many of them lived in Jebus (which would become Jerusalem after King David captured it). Because of its location on the Judean Hills, Jebus was a place of natural fortification and strength, and so it was easily defended against enemies attacking it. LaMoine says of the Jebusites that,

“At the time of the arrival of the Israelites in Canaan (1400 BC) they were ruled by Adonizedek (Josh. 10:1, 23). They were defeated by Joshua and their king was slain, but they were not entirely driven out of Jebus” until “the time of David, who made it the cap-

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<sup>18</sup> Koehler, *The Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, p. 363.

<sup>19</sup> Unger, *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, p. 580.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> “Hivites,” NIV *Compact Bible Dictionary*, n/p.

<sup>23</sup> *Easton’s Bible Dictionary*, paragraph 3,559.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> “Jebus,” *Easton’s Bible Dictionary*, para. 3,915.

<sup>26</sup> LaMoine F. DeVries, author; Edwin Hostetter, editor, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 676.

<sup>27</sup> *Strong’s Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary of the Old Testament*, paragraph 2,998.

<sup>28</sup> Koehler, *The Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, p. 655.

ital of his kingdom instead of Hebron. The site on which the Temple of Solomon was “built belonged to Araunah, a Jebusite, from whom it was purchased by David, who refused to accept it as a free gift (2nd Sam. 24:16-25; 1st Chr. 21:24, 25).”<sup>29</sup>

The Jebusites lived in the “hill country (Num. 13:29; Joshua 11:3),” but were primarily “on the border between Benjamin and Judah (Judges 1:21 and Joshua 15:63,<sup>30</sup> respectively), which is where Jerusalem is found. The Jebusites are also identified as descendants of Canaan (Gen. 10:16), the fourth son of Ham.”<sup>31</sup>

## 7. *Perrizites*

The name Perizzite פְּרִזִּי (*Pra'zi*) means, “to drag away violently; hate.” Their chief characteristics were violence and hatred. This pagan idolatrous people kept themselves “isolated” or “separated” from the six other groups in the land, and lived in “open, unwalled towns”<sup>32</sup> (cf. Dt. 3:5) or “country villages” (1st. Sam. 6:18).<sup>33</sup> They were considered “rural people” (country bumpkins?) living in the open country.<sup>34</sup> The Perizzites,

“were the graziers,<sup>35</sup> farmers, and peasants...They are afterwards named among the conquered tribes (Josh. 24:11). Still lingering in the land however, they were reduced to servitude by Solomon (1st Kings 9:20).”<sup>36</sup> They primarily dwelt in “the forested hill country of Samaria, where Ephraim and Manasseh later settled.”<sup>37</sup>

## Summary

The main characteristic of the seven pagan peoples in the land of Canaan was pride, manifesting in different ways. As followers of Messiah Yeshua, in whom there was no pride, but a divine humility, Christians need to be aware that their carnality can reflect that of the Seven Tribes of Canaan, and can only be overcome by the Blood of Messiah and the Holy Spirit within.

1. Amorite—They were warlike and opposed God and His people Israel. This Christian’s pride seeks to oppose the Spirit of God within who would lead the Christian into the Path of humility. This person is a very aggressive Christian in his social relationships. His carnality wants to destroy him and seeks to stop his forward progress “in Yeshua” to conquer his soul. As he stands up to his carnality, as Israel did to the Amorites, in the Name of Yeshua the Lord helps him to claim his soul and turn his proud, aggressive war-like nature into the humility of Yeshua and His love for others (Mt. 11:28-30).

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<sup>29</sup> “Jebus,” *Easton’s Bible Dictionary*, paragraph 3,915.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> LaMoine, *Eerdman’s Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 676.

<sup>32</sup> Koehler, *The Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 3, p. 965.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 986.

<sup>34</sup> *Strong’s Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary of the Old Testament*, para. 6,544.

<sup>35</sup> Grazier is one who raises cattle or sheep for market.

<sup>36</sup> “Perizzites,” *Easton’s Bible Dictionary*, para. 5,781.

<sup>37</sup> Hostetter, *Eerdman’s Dictionary of the Bible*, p. 1,030.

2. Canaanite—Their name means to be passive (not warlike). They were a depressed, modest, humble *and* perverse people. Their chief characteristic was pride in their intelligence, which expressed itself in their music, musical instruments, ceramic arts and construction. This is an intelligent, but perverse Christian who appears humble, but is proud of what he can do. He thinks he is impressing the Lord and others. In other words, he thinks very highly of himself.
3. Girgashite—Their names means “to draw away, to entice.” They too were utterly immoral and corrupt. This is a Christian who is easily enticed, tempted and taken off the Road, following his own desires instead of submitting to Yeshua.
4. Hittite—The Hittite was very aggressive and a terror to all around him. This Christian is aggressive and can be violent and “terrifying.” With the aide of the Holy Spirit he needs to learn to subdue and overcome his carnal self so that Messiah Yeshua can be seen in his life.
5. Hivite—The Hivites were warmhearted, impulsive, overconfident, overly trustful, *unwarlike, peaceable and deceitful*. Christians who have Hivite characteristics are naive, foolish, overly trustful, avoid confrontations and can be deceitful.
6. Jebusite—The Jebusite was warlike and a mocker (cf. 2nd Sam. 24:16-25). This is a Christian who is aggressive, mocks other Christians and loves confrontation for confrontation’s sake.
7. Perrizite—Their chief characteristics were violence and hatred. This Christian allows his carnal nature to vent in violence and hatred. You may not see him in church this way, but ask his wife.

These carnal characteristics prevail over a Christian’s nature when he or she, with the help of the Holy Spirit, doesn’t subdue and defeat these characteristics that are against the godly Fruit of the Spirit.

## ***A List of Ham’s Descendants***

### A. Ham (Gen. 10:1, 6-19)

1. Cush
2. Mizriam (Hebrew for Egypt)
  - a. Ludim
  - b. Anamim
  - c. Lehabim
  - d. Naphtuhim
  - e. Pathrusim
  - f. Casluhim (from whom came the Philistines and Caphtorim)
3. Put
4. Canaan was the “father” of the Amorite, Canaanite, Girgashite, Hivite and Jebusite. The land of Canaan was filled with his accursed descendants:
  - a. “Then he said: “Cursed be Canaan! A servant of servants he shall be to his brethren, and he said, “Blessed is Yahveh, the God of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth and may he dwell in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant.”” (Genesis 9:25-27) And so they were servants to Israel, descendants of Shem, the firstborn son of Noah (Gen. 5:32; 6:10; 7:13, 9:18).

- b.** Sidon, Canaan's firstborn son
- c.** Heth
- d.** Seba
- e.** Havilah
- f.** Sabtah
- g.** Ra'amah
  - a.** Sheba
  - b.** Dedan
- h.** Sabtacha
- i.** Nimrod<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Revised on Friday, June 7, 2024.