



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on July 29, 2017

Despite Media Spin, Canaanite-Lebanese Study Doesn't Disprove Bible

Predictably, some secular media sources have taken a DNA study, and attempted to argue it somehow disproves or contradicts the biblical account. It doesn't.

Dr. Marc Haber, a lead author of a recent study that compares some ancient genomes with modern-day people in Lebanon, concluded, "We found that the Canaanites were a mixture of local people who settled in farming villages during the Neolithic period and eastern migrants who arrived in the region about 5,000 years ago. The present-day Lebanese are likely to be direct descendants of the Canaanites, but they have in addition a small proportion of Eurasian ancestry that may have arrived via conquests by distant populations such as the Assyrians, Persians, or Macedonians."



The researchers compared the genomes of five Canaanite people who lived about 4,000 years ago in the Lebanese city of Sidon with 99 modern Lebanese. The conclusion was, according to Haber, "Present-day Lebanese derive over 90 percent of their ancestry from the Canaanites or a genetically similar population."

Canaanite is a generic name for several peoples who lived in the Middle East, in the area now occupied by Israel and Lebanon. The Phoenicians, who developed the first alphabet, were Canaanites — the term "phonics" is derived from this connection. The Carthaginians, who later fought the Punic Wars against the Roman Republic, were also of this ethnic extraction.

The study adds some interesting information about the region today.

Unfortunately, some media sources have opted to use the study in an effort to attack the Bible. The *Daily Mail* report was typical, with a screaming headline, "Bronze Age DNA disproves the Bible's claim that the Canaanites were wiped out." *ScienceMag*, an online site, was more reserved, saying only that the "Old Testament ... suggests a grisly end for many Canaanites: After the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, God ordered them to destroy Canaan and its people (though other passages suggest that some Canaanites may have survived).... Now, ancient DNA recovered from five Canaanite skeletons suggests that these people survived to contribute their genes to millions of people living today."

Yet, the *Daily Mail* and many other media sources chose to report the findings in a way to cast doubt upon the veracity of the biblical accounts, asserting that the research is contrary to the biblical account.

But is it?



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Paul Copan, a philosophy professor at Palm Beach Atlantic University in Florida, has challenged that conclusion in his book *Is God a Moral Monster?* “A closer look at the biblical text reveals a lot more nuance — and a lot less bloodshed,” he stated.

The early chapters of the book of Judges clearly state that the taking over of the land was “far from complete.” While the rhetoric was rather bombastic in the book of Joshua about wiping out all of the Canaanites, Copan argues that this is much like a sports team saying they “blew their opponents away.”

The end of the book of Joshua assumes that the Canaanites were still around, despite several battles for the land. In Joshua 23:12-13, Joshua warns the Israelites, “For if you ever go back and cling to the rest of these [Canaanite] nations, *these which remain among you*, and intermarry with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, know with certainty that the LORD your God will not continue to drive these nations out from before you.” (Emphasis added.)

Why would there be any concern about intermarrying with a people who had been utterly wiped out? Deuteronomy 7:2-5 explains the concern was not ethnic prejudice, but remaining faithful to the God of Israel: “Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods.” The text goes on to direct the destruction of Canaanite religion, which consisted of human sacrifice and sexual immorality.

As Copan asks, “If the Canaanites were to be completely obliterated, why this discussion about intermarriage?”

Despite these warnings, some Israelites no doubt *did* intermarry with them. In many cases, the indigenous Canaanites probably converted to the God of Israel. We can see this with Rahab [a Canaanite woman] who converted to Israel’s faith; the problem was not intermarriage so much as intermarriage with non-believers. We see the same thing in the Book of Ruth, when a Moabite woman intermarried into the Jewish nation, trusting in the God of Israel herself. Both of these women are ancestors of King David, and ultimately Jesus Himself (on His mother’s side).

Other Canaanites survived and became part of the nation of Israel, while still others survived as continued nuisances to the people of Israel. As cited in the book of Joshua above, God did not continue to drive out some of the Canaanite people, because of the disobedience of the Israelites.

This should serve to illustrate, however, that far too many secular journalists *look* for opportunities to attack the Bible. Since the Bible did not say all the Canaanites were destroyed, it is logical to presume that some of their descendants are still living today, many in close proximity to their ancient neighbors. One only has to look at a map of the region today to figure that out.

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