

# Og's Bed

by: Rabbi Jeremy Rosen

The Torah mentions Og the King of the Emorites several times. He is called Og King of the Bashan which is on the East bank of the Jordan where Reuben and Gad ended up living. Although he was defeated and killed he had a fearsome reputation as a giant. Later, some think he would become a symbol of Israel's enemies and is hinted at in the late Prophetic period as the evil Gog Magog who is defeated by the forces of good.

Here the Torah said he had a huge bed (that is the usual English translation) made out of iron that was nine by four cubits and made out of iron and "can still be seen to this day in Rabat Benei Ammon which sounds like present capital of Jordan." Og is also described as a descendant of the refaim who elsewhere are bracketed with giants.

Some take this to mean that he was so huge and overweight no other bed could support him. Others suggest it was a cradle because he needed to be rocked asleep. But the Hebrew word eres can mean various things including a throne. And given that various contemporary Middle Eastern records refer to the bigger the king the bigger the throne or the platform on which he sat to dispense his orders and receive supplicants, this might have been a platform too. We will never know.

Only that the Midrash is very creative in its interpretations and that size does not matter. Spirit does.