

## Response to Giem:

*To the editor:* Giem suggests<sup>1</sup> that our statement “the Bible reports the destruction of the Canaanite cities and the annihilation of its people”<sup>2</sup> 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”.<sup>3</sup> 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”.<sup>4</sup>

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.

Marc Haber,<sup>1,\*</sup> Claude Doumet-Serhal,<sup>2</sup> Christiana Scheib,<sup>3</sup> Yali Xue,<sup>1</sup> Petr Danecek,<sup>1</sup> Massimo Mezzavilla,<sup>1</sup> Sonia Youhanna,<sup>4</sup> Rui Martiniano,<sup>1</sup> Javier Prado-Martinez,<sup>1</sup> Michał Szpak,<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Matisoo-Smith,<sup>5</sup> Holger Schutkowski,<sup>6</sup> Richard Mikulski,<sup>6</sup> Pierre Zalloua,<sup>7</sup> Toomas Kivisild<sup>3</sup> and Chris Tyler-Smith<sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, Wellcome Genome Campus, Hinxton, Cambs. CB10 1SA, United Kingdom;

<sup>2</sup>The Sidon excavation, Saida, Lebanon;

<sup>3</sup>Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, CB2 1QH, UK;

<sup>4</sup>Institute of Physiology, University of Zurich, Winterthurerstrasse 190, CH-8057, Zürich, Switzerland;

<sup>5</sup>Department of Anatomy, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, 9054;

<sup>6</sup>Department of Archaeology, Anthropology, and Forensic Science, Bournemouth University, Talbot Campus, Poole BH12 5BB, UK;

<sup>7</sup>The Lebanese American University, Chouran, Beirut 1102 2801, Lebanon; Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Boston, MA 02115, USA.

\*Correspondence: mh25@sanger.ac.uk (M.H.), cts@sanger.ac.uk (C.T.-S.)