

Archaeology and the Bible

Germaine Charles Lockwood

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE

The world-famous archaeologist William Fox Albright wrote:

Biblical Historical data are accurate to an extent far surpassing the ideas of any modern critical students, who have consistently tended to err on the side of hyper criticism.¹

The Hittites

The Hittites are mentioned about 40 times in the Bible. In the 1800's critical scholars said that the Hittites had never existed. However, when archaeologists investigated the ruins of cities in Turkey, they found the records of the Hittites.² Archaeologists and linguists worked hard and long to be able to translate the writings of the Hittites. The critics were wrong, while the Bible is right. The British Orientalist Archibald Henry Sayce wrote:

The mention of “the kings of the Hittites” in the account of the siege of Samaria by the Syrians (2 Kings 7:6) was declared to be an error or an invention; but it was only the ignorance of the critic himself that was at fault.³

The Writings of Moses

Critical scholars believed that Moses could not have written the first five books of the Bible. They believed that Hebrew was not written until after about 800 B.C. At Ras Shamra, Syria, a French expedition found a temple library containing writing in several languages. There was material in an alphabetic Semitic language from the time of Moses.⁴ Sir Flinders Petrie found alphabetic inscriptions at Serabit el-Khadem in Sinai, which date to the time of Moses.⁵ You can understand that Spinoza and other critics of the Bible were very wrong. The Bible is right.

Sargon

In the Bible, Sargon was mentioned as king of Assyria (Isaiah 20:1). Sargon's name was not found in ancient literature. This caused critical scholars to say that Sargon never existed.⁶ They believed that the Bible was wrong. P. E. Botta excavated near the ancient capital of Assyria, Nineveh, from 1842 to 1845. What he uncovered was Khorsabad. In this city, Botta found the palace of Sargon.⁷ The critical scholars were proven wrong. There was a king of Assyria named Sargon. The Bible is right. Isaiah had recorded that Sargon the king of Assyria had sent his army to capture the city of Ashdod (Isaiah 20:1). On the walls of Sargon's palace was found recorded the same event.⁸ The Bible is right.

Belshazzar

In the Bible, the book of Daniel recorded that Belshazzar was king when the Medes and Persians took Babylon. Hitzig, a modern liberal, wrote in his commentary on Daniel that Belshazzar never existed.⁹ This was because ancient historians wrote that Nabonitus was the last king of Babylon. However, archaeologists have dug up clay tablets in the ruins of Babylon that stated that Nabonitus entrusted the kingship to his son

Belshazzar, while he went to Tema in Arabia.¹⁰ Belshazzar was king when Babylon fell, just as recorded in Daniel 5. This also explains why Belshazzar proclaimed Daniel to be the third ruler in the kingdom (Daniel 5:29), instead of second. Daniel was third after Nabonitus and Belshazzar. There is evidence that Belshazzar was the son of Nitocris, who was the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar.¹¹ Belshazzar was at least the “son of” Nebuchadnezzar in the sense of being his successor.¹² The critics were wrong in saying that Belshazzar never existed. You can see that this was based on ignorance and not believing the Bible. What is even worse is that some still have been teaching such falsehoods. The Bible is right.

The House of David

Scholars of the “deconstructionist” approach believed that the history of Israel before the Babylonian captivity is fictional. Philip R. Davies presented this view in his book: *In Search of ‘Ancient Israel’* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1992). However, in 1993, an inscription was found in a stone stele by archaeologists at Tel Dan. “House of David” and “King of Israel” are in the inscription written in paleo-Hebrew script of the ninth century B.C. It shows that the Kingdom of Israel, the Kingdom of Judah and King David are historical. You can read about this in “‘David’ Found at Dan,” in *Biblical Archaeology Review*, March/April 1994, pp. 26-39, and in *Biblical Dan* by Professor Avraham Biran (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994, pp. 274-278). The “deconstructionist” scholars’ faith is fictional, but the Bible is historically accurate.¹³ Yes, the stones cry out! Those who claimed that King David never existed, are wrong.

Politarchs

In the book of Acts in the New Testament, Luke called the rulers of the city of Thessalonica, “politarchs,” in the Greek language (Acts 17:8). Critical scholars called this a mistake, as no officials were known to have been called by this title. However, at least 17 inscriptions have been found in Thessalonica using the title “politarchs.”¹⁴ Again archaeology has proven the critical scholars wrong in their ignorance. The Bible is right.

The Book of Acts is Accurate

Sir William Ramsey (1851-1939) had accepted the views of F. C. Baur, Tübingen school of criticism, against the book of Acts. But his work as an archaeologist in Asia Minor showed him that the critics were wrong, and the book of Acts is accurate.¹⁵

... but more recently I found myself often brought in contact with the book of Acts as an authority for the topography, antiquities, and society of Asia Minor.¹⁶

The Gospel of John

Critics F. C. Baur and Van Manen speculated that the Gospel of John was not written until after A.D. 150. However, copies of the Gospel of John have been found that date before A.D. 150.¹⁷ The Dead Sea Scrolls have shown that the Gospel of John fits the language, the geography, the culture and historical context before A.D. 70. The destruction of Jerusalem destroyed all that, making it impossible for people living after A.D. 150 to have correctly gotten all those details.¹⁸

Archaeologist W. F. Albright wrote:

In the same way, the form-critical school founded by M. Dibelius and R. Bultmann a generation before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has continued to flourish without the slightest regard for the Dead Sea Scrolls. In other words, all radical schools in New Testament criticism which have existed in

the past or which exist today are pre-archaeological, and are, therefore, since they were built in der luft (“in the air”), quite antiquated today.¹⁹

Conclusion

Modern scholars were not present when the events happened that are recorded in the Bible. Too often critical scholars have based their conclusions on presuppositions, assumptions, conjectures, philosophy and egotistical unbelief. On the other hand, the science of archaeology has shown the Bible to be historically accurate. Dr. Nelson Glueck, a leading archaeologist, wrote:

As a matter of fact, however, it may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible.²⁰

Voltaire, the French skeptic said, “In less than a hundred years the Bible will be discarded and Christianity swept from the earth.” Voltaire died in 1778. The hundred years has long ago passed, but the Bible stands. Voltaire’s house in Paris has been used for many years by the Bible Society.

Thomas Paine wrote a book which he said would destroy the Bible. Payne died in 1809. The Bible stands stronger than ever.

Isaiah wrote:

**A voice says, “Call out.”
Then He answered, “What shall I call out?”
All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
When the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
Surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the word of our God stands forever.**

Isaiah 40:6-8.

Germaine Lockwood

¹ William F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine* (Baltimore: Penquin Books, 1960), p. 229.

² O.R. Gurney, *The Hittites* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1952), pp. 1-14.

³ A. H. Sayce, *The “Higher Criticism” and the Verdict of the Monuments* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1894), p. 16.

⁴ Charles F. Pfeiffer, *Ras Shamra and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962), pp. 10, 15, 25. Itzhaq Beit-Arieh, "Fifteen Years in Sinai," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, x, 4 (July/August, 1984), p. 46.
Harry Rimmer, *Dead Men Tell Tales* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1939), pp. 134-138.

⁵ Flinders Petrie, *Researches in Sinai*, 1906, pp. 129-132.
James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East, an Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), illustration 64.

⁶ George L. Robinson, *The Bearing of Archaeology on the Old Testament* (New York: American Tract Society, 1941) (Ch. 4, n.27), p. 96, cited by Joseph P. Free, *Archaeology and Bible History* (Wheaton: Scripture Press, 1956), p. 200.
Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past*, p. 209.

⁷ P. E. Botta and E. Flandin, *Monument de' Ninive de'couvert et de'crit par M. P. E. Botta, mesure' et dessine par M. E. Flandin*, 5 vols. in folio, 1849-50. Gordon Loud, "Khorsabad I, Excavations in the Palace and at a City Gate," *Oriental Institute Publication*, XXXVIII (1936).
Jack P. Lewis, *Archaeological Backgrounds to Bible People* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971), pp. 40-43.

⁸ Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, Vol. II, sec. 55 (Chicago: Chicago Press, 1927). Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, p. 197.

⁹ Joseph Free, *Archaeology and Bible History*, p. 233.
Joseph Free, "Notes on Open Letters: Daniel in the Critics' Den," *Sunday School Times*, Feb. 16, 1946, p. 126.

¹⁰ R. P. Daugherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929).
Jack P. Lewis, *Archaeological Backgrounds to Bible People*, pp.87-91.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.
M. F. Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1954), p. 299.

¹² M. F. Unger, *Introductory Guide to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1951), p. 398.

¹³ Anson Rainey, "The 'House of David' and the House of the Decon-structionist," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Nov./Dec. 1994, p. 47.
David Noel Freedman and Jeffrey C. Geoghegan, "'House of David' Is There!" *Biblical Archaeology Review*, March/April 1995, pp. 78,79.
Abraham Rabinovich, "In Pursuit of History," *The Jerusalem Post International Edition*, November 25, 1995, pp. 18,19.

¹⁴ E. M. Blaiklock, *The Archaeology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), pp. 97,98.

¹⁵ William M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897), p. 8.

¹⁶ W. M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962, reprint of 1897 edition), p. 8.
W. M. Ramsay, *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953, reprint of 1911 edition).

¹⁷ W. F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1960), pp. 239-240.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 243-249.

¹⁹ W. F. Albright, *The Teacher's Yoke*, ed. E. J. Vardaman (Waco: Baylor Press, 1964), p. 29.
Donald J. Wiseman and Edwin Yamauchi, *Archaeology and the Bible, An Introductory Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), p. 64.

²⁰ Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Cudahy, 1959), p. 31.

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