

By Nils Ibstedt, Broby, Sweden

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www.nils-ibstedt.com

Appendix 1

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES

If these become silent, the stones will cry out,
is one of Jesus' winged words.

This prediction has received an unprecedented achievement by the archaeological findings that confirm the Bible's historical descriptions.

The authenticity of the Bible's statements has been strongly challenged by the influx of Biblical criticism which had a growing influence from the mid 1800's to the present day. Much of the Bible's informations was doubted and rejected. Genesis creation doctrine and how the Earth was populated are explained as myths. It was claimed that Moses never had been able to write, and they even went so far as to doubt that a city such as Nineveh and the Assyrian empire ever had existed.

Then, almost simultaneously when the Bible's testimony was presented as myths and fairy tales, "*the stones began to cry*". One archaeological discovery after another confirmed the truth of the Bible's description of history.

Bible Criticism

The Bible has always been subject to criticism. Already in the 200's AD, said the Gnostics, who wanted to reconcile the New Testament (NT) teaching with Greek philosophy, said that the Old Testament (OT) God was not the same God as the one Jesus called his Father. One of the most famous early, literary opponents of Christianity was Celsus (180 AD). Another critic who exerted a strong influence on the Bible and Christianity was Porphyry (233-300 AD). The arguments they put forward have been taken up and developed by contemporary critics.

The modern Biblical criticism originates from the 1700's when, during the so-called "Age of Enlightenment" began to question everything, including the Bible and the Christian faith. They argued that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, but originated much later. Gradually they went further in their criticism and mustered out everything supernatural. They argued that the creation story was a myth, Israelites exodus from Egypt was a legend and Joshua a novel. They claimed that monotheism was created by the prophets Hosea and Amos. Lord God, Jahwe, was merely a tribal god among the Jews. The ark, the tabernacle and the priesthood with the feasts would have been introduced after their return from captivity in Babylon. The latter half of Isaiah, chapters 40-66, the majority of the psalms and the book of Daniel, were alleged to have occurred only during the Maccabees time, etc. Likewise, the contents of the NT has been questioned. All miracles and supernatural events have been explained as myths and legends. The Bible's own data and its author's authority, as well as almost everything they have taught and preached, have been criticized, analyzed into pieces, broken and more or less rejected. Even in our time there are often new theories in order to reduce the Bible to a collection of tales and unrealistic doctrines.

The archaeological excavations have, contrary to what these Bible critics had expected, in an undeniable way confirmed the Bible's historical data on people and

places. Remnants of ancient cities show a very high culture, and the art of writing was in use thousands of years before Moses.

How archaeology began

The interest in ancient culture and structure was first raised in 1798 at Napoleon's invasion of Egypt. He then led an expedition of about one hundred scientists who would inspect the Egyptian monuments. Their reports were the beginning of a veritable movement in the West to discover ancient cultures, where it was thought that the cradle of humanity had once stood.

The first archaeological excavations began by chance a few years later, in 1811, completely independent of Napoleon's expedition. An agent for the British East India Company named Claude James Rich, stationed in Baghdad, was intrigued by the inscriptions on some clay tablets which were found by a colleague. When he visited the site of the find it turned out to be the ancient Babylon. With the help of the natives during ten days' time he uncovered a few more tablets, which he brought to Baghdad.

In 1820, Claude James Rich visited the site of Mosul on the Tigris River where there were great heaps of ruins across the river. He stayed for four months to identify the place that he assumed to originate from the lost city of Nineveh. While there, he collected tablets with inscriptions which neither he nor anyone else could read.

An Englishman named J G Wilhelmsson traveled to Thebes in southern Egypt and lived there during 1821-1833. He copied the inscriptions from the major monuments. For his great and epoch-making efforts, he received the title: *The Egyptian archaeology father*. Nor he nor anybody else could at that time interpret the mysterious signs on these monuments.

In 1842 a French consul, Paul Emil Botta, began to excavate in the hills of ancient Nineveh, and after ten years' time, he could expose Sargon's magnificent palace in Khorsabad, a suburb of Nineveh.

Between 1845-51 Sir Austen Henry Layard, an Englishman who was known as *The Assyrian archaeology father*, succeeded to uncover palace ruins after five Assyrian kings at Nineveh and Calneh, all of which are mentioned in the Bible. He also discovered a large library of Assurbanipal, which has been assumed to contain 100 000 volumes.

This was only the beginning of many expeditions around the world. Archeologists have dug up thousands of clay tablets, buildings, monuments and objects of all kinds in both the Euphrates-Tigris River valley as the Nile Valley. The inscriptions on these tablets were written in ancient, dead languages, engraved with ancient unknown characters. Since the excavators did not understand these old characters, nor the ancient languages, it became impossible to place the findings in their proper historical context.

Many scientists tried to interpret the messages on the tablets. Despite great efforts the inscriptions remained for a long time closed and inaccessible. However, several unexpected events and three major discoveries finally solved the mysteries, both in terms of languages and the meaning of the characters. It was the findings of the Rosetta Stone, Behistun rock and the Tell el-Amarna-tablets.

The Rosetta Stone

In 1799 one of Napoleon's engineers, M Boussard found the Rosetta Stone, a boulder with inscriptions in three languages. One of these languages was Greek, but the other two languages were unknown. They tried for a long time to decipher them. Finally a young French language genius named Jean Champollion, in 1822, after twenty-three years patient work, could produce a full translation of the trilingual inscription. He managed to link up the demotic and hieroglyphic text into Greek. When the pharaonic language was revealed, the archaeologists could open the hitherto unknown historical and literary treasures of the Nile Valley.

The Behistun rock

The second landmark event was the discovery and deciphering the inscriptions on the Behistun rock on an overhanging cliffside about one hundred seventy-five meters above the surface of the Zagros mountains, southwest of Harmadan in Persia. On the rock wall are reliefs of kings with their booty, and inscriptions in three languages, all of which were unknown to people at the time. It was not a famous scientist who solved the riddle, but a British officer named Sir Henry Rawlinson. He used four years to make exact copies of the inscriptions. It took him another eighteen years to fully decipher the three languages: Old Persian cuneiform, the Elamite and the Babylonian cuneiform. With knowledge of these three languages Rawlinsong and many other well-known archaeologists and scientists could reveal the secrets of the lost civilizations of Assyria, Babylonia and Persia, who all played an important role in the Biblical description of past events.

The Tell-el-Amarna Tablets

The third major discovery was the discovery of the Tell el-Amarna Tablets. A Bedouin woman, who searched for top soil for her garden, in 1887 came across the rock piles of the Tell el-Amarna. On the eastern side of the Nile one of the Pharaoh's beautiful cities, Akhenaten, was once formed. The tablets contained official documents of the pharaoh Amenhotep III (1413-1376 BC) and his son Amenhotep IV (1375-1358 BC). Some of the paintings were a diplomatic exchange of letters between the foreign ministers of Egypt and king Mitanni, king of Babylon and other Asian countries. Many of the tablets were letters, approximately four hundred, which was written by leaders of various countries in Palestine, Phoenicia and Syria.

These tablets have been shown to be of great value to Biblical science. The fact that most of the tablets were written in Babylonian cuneiform, although they came from different countries, indicates that this form of writing was common in Biblical countries during that time and perhaps for a long time before and after. Therefore, the people which the Bible speaks about could make themselves understood to different nations and peoples. Through these discoveries there was a growing interest in archaeological research, especially in England, Germany, France and the United States. Many expeditions of archaeologists and scientists began excavations of ancient cities. It was found that the civilization of these ancient cities were consistent with what was written in both the Bible and in other ancient literature.

After nearly two hundred years of topographical and archaeological research, one can certainly say that discoveries during these excavations in over thousand ancient remains corresponds almost completely with the descriptions in the Bible. *The stones have cried out* these proofs of the Bible's authenticity at a time when its credibility was strongly criticized.

Archaeological discoveries from the cradle of civilization

Here are a few excerpts from the archeological discoveries that prove the Bible's presentations.

Creation. Babylonian creation stories, quite similar to the ones in Genesis, has been found on tablets in the ruins of Babylon, Nippur, Assur and Nineveh. The Genesis doctrine of the Bible about creation appeared thus to have been deeply rooted among the people of the world's oldest civilizations.

Original Monotheism. Bible teaching that man in the beginning believed in one God and that polytheism was a later development, have been verified by inscriptions found by Langdon in clay layers that predate the Flood at Jemdet Nasr near Babylon. In Egypt, Sir Petrie found indications that Egypt's first religion was monotheistic.

The Garden of Eden. Hall and Thompson from the British Museum in London found in 1918 indications that Eridu, which according to tradition was the site of the original Eden, was the first city that has ever been built in the world.

The Fall of man. What Moses wrote about the fall of man has been found described in an image on a Babylonian clay tablet. The centerpiece is a tree and on one side there is a man and on the other side, a woman picking fruit. Behind the woman there is a snake coming up that seems to whisper something to her. The painting has been named the Temptation Seal. Another picture is called the Adam and Eveseal. It depicts a naked man and a naked woman, walking stooped, as if they were saddened, accompanied by a snake.

The early use of metal. According to the Bible copper was in use for making articles already while Adam was alive. Scientists have long held the theory of the Neolithic Bronze Age and Iron Age, and have argued that iron came into use not earlier than 1200 BC. But in 1933 Frankfort discovered at the ruins of Babylon near Asmar an iron sheet made 2700 years BC. Copper instruments have been found in the ruins that predate the Flood.

The Flood. Babylonian tales of the Flood, very similar to those that Genesis tells us, have been found in many tablets that were made shortly after the Flood. Expressions that are repeated again and again on these tablets are "*from the time before the Flood*" and "*writings from before the Flood.*"

Deposits of the Flood has been found at four different sites – beside the testimony of it contained in fossil deposits worldwide. At Ur (1929) Woolley found a 2.4 meter thick layer of silt. Beneath the deposition, he found the ruins of a former town.

At Kish Langdon (1928-29), found a similar layer of silt and beneath it a very well-preserved chariot dating from before the Flood. It had four wheels and was made of wood with copper nails.

In Fara, which according to tradition was Noah's hometown, Schmidt (1931), found a layer of pure silt and below that relics of inhabitants from before the Flood.

In the large mound after Nineveh, Mallowan (1932-33) found at the bottom of the mound a layer of viscous mud and river sand, which must have been deposited there by a flood of water. There is a big difference in the appearance of the pots in the lower and the upper layers of the clay. These findings are very obvious signs that there has been a great flood as the Bible describes it.

Ur, the City of Abraham. The ruins of Ur have been carefully excavated by Woolley (1922-34). In Abraham's time it was one of the world's largest and most powerful cities. Many of the ruins that are from the days of Abraham have been uncovered, so that one can see the streets that Abraham once walked. The whole history of the civilization and religion that Abraham lived in has been elucidated.

Patriarchal cities. Critics who have questioned Abraham's existence have also claimed that the city of Shechem, Bethel, Ai and Gerar were not as early as the days of Abraham. But Albright and Garstang have found pottery shards from around 2000 BC at the base of the ruins of these cities, which proves that they were built in Abraham's time.

Ancient writing

The modern Bible critics who launched the theory that the art of writing was unknown at the time of Moses, stress that OT's books have been written long after the events they describe. They believe that the Bible contains only legends that have been transmitted through oral tradition.

This proposed theory, which has largely been accepted in intellectual circles, has been the most insidious attack ever on the Bible's historical credibility. But thanks to the archaeological excavations in the last century, which have discovered hundreds of thousands of books written on clay and stone tablets centuries (700-800 years) before Moses. The shovel of the archaeologist has proven that even very early Biblical events have been documented by contemporary writers.

Archaeological discoveries from the childhood of writing

Here is a small selection of the world's oldest written discoveries.

The world's oldest writing. Inscriptions from before the Flood has been found in the ruins of Ur, Kish and Danger.

Large libraries from before Abraham has been found in the ruins of Ur, Nippur, Lagash and Sippar.

The oldest known "historical document" containing information about contemporary events, written just after the Flood, was found (1923) by Woolley at Ur near Obeid.

The oldest summary of world history known as the Weld-dynasty-prism, written about a hundred years before Abraham, was found at Larsa (1923) by the Weld-Blundell expedition.

A city of books. Accad, one of Nimrod's cities, was also called "avens", meaning "The city of books". This shows that Accad was known as a center of literature.

Hammurabi's code of Laws, a large boulder with many inscriptions engraved in Abraham's time and was originally set up in Babylon, was discovered in 1902 in Susa by a French expedition.

A school-room from Abraham's time with lots of practice boards tablets in math, grammar, history and medicine have been excavated in Ur. All the hitherto mentioned places where these early writings were found: Ur, Kish, Fara, Nippur, Lagash, anemone, Larsa, Accad, and Susa, are in the same region as the tradition says that the Garden of Eden was located.

In Egypt, thousands of inscriptions, written hundreds of years before Moses have been found.

Alphabetic Writing from 1800 BC, 400 years before Moses, was discovered in 1905 by Petrie at Serabit in Sinai. Alphabetical writings during the period between Abraham and Moses have been found in Palestine in the ruins of Shechem, Gezer, Bert-Shemich, Lachish, and the Hittite cities north of Palestine.

Alphabetic Writings in Israel. The name "Kiriath-sepher", a town near Hebron, meaning "Script City", which indicates that it was a literary center.

These letters and inscriptions prove that the art of writing is very old and was used long before the time of Moses. The study of these inscriptions on the clay and stone tablets have also confirmed the Bible's description of history.

Data are collected from:
Halley's Bible Handbook
The Thompson's Chain-reference Bible