

The Bible Vindicated! - 7

Sir Leonard Woolley's excavation of Ur (in what is now Iraq) enabled scholars to trace the history of the city back to its prehistoric beginnings nearly 6,000 years ago. "Woolley's findings revealed much about everyday life, art, architecture, literature, government, and religion in what has come to be called 'the cradle of civilization'." - Enc. Brit.

It was this sort of work - by archaeologists and other trained specialists, which has overturned the fuzzy concepts of the Higher Critics who claimed that the first five books of the Bible were a collection of man-made legends.

Even back in 1936 Woolley could report, "archaeological discoveries made during the last half century have proved that there was no period in Hebrew history for which contemporary written authority of one kind or another could not possibly have existed" - Abraham, p.22.

- Woolley cites the famous letters found at Tell el Amarna in Egypt. Early in the fourteenth century BC the governors of Syrian and Palestinian towns were corresponding with the Egyptian Foreign Office in the cuneiform writing which the long domination of Babylonia had made the diplomatic script of the Near East.
- At Ras Shamra, on the north Syrian coast, there were unearthed documents - clay tablets bearing inscriptions in cuneiform, but the signs represent not syllables, as in Babylonian, but letters of the alphabet, and the language is a form of Aramaic closely related to Hebrew: they date from the fourteenth century before Christ. "Consequently we see that by the time of the Exodus people living in Syria and speaking a tongue akin to that of the Israelites were so accustomed to the idea of writing that they had modified the old-established script of Sumer and Babylon to suit the peculiarities of their own language."

James Starkey, the chief excavator of the first archaeological expedition to Lachish, discovered inscriptions in archaic Canaanite characters which he dated to the early thirteenth century BC, and Professor Stephen Langdon to the fifteenth century B.C., "these last appear to be akin to the so-called Serabit inscriptions found in the Sinaitic desert."

The classic work, *Semitic Writing from Pictograph to Alphabetic*, by G R Driver summarizes the discovery and study of Semitic inscriptions from Old Testament times and places. This work contains sections on Cuneiform Scripts, Alphabetic Writing, and the Origin of the Alphabet. In the Chronological Table of Inscriptions on p. 127 is a list of West Semitic (including Hebrew) alphabetic inscriptions from 585 to 1000 BC and of Proto-Sinaitic from the latest Lachish inscription in 1250 BC, mentioned above, with others dating back to 2,500-1,800 BC.

W. F. Albright, a respected American biblical archaeologist and Middle Eastern scholar, was noted for his excavations of biblical sites. Albright unfortunately embraced Higher Critics' speculation that the books of Moses were an assembly of material from various sources.

Even though this was his view, he stated in his book, *The Archaeology of Palestine*, p. 225, concerning the contents of the books of Moses, that "new discoveries continue to confirm the historical accuracy or the literary antiquity of detail after detail..It is, accordingly, sheer hypercriticism to deny the substantially Mosaic character of the Pentateuchal tradition."

Thus we have from some of the most prominent of biblical archaeologists, a growing body of recent discovery and study which shows the true status of the literary art in Moses' times. Even though many of these people have not expressed conservative Christian views, they honestly reported what they saw - that there was no valid reason for denying the claims of the Pentateuch to have been written by the historic Moses of the fifteenth century BC.