

# **Bible History and Archeology**

## **2. Wonder Cities of the Past**

Archaeology establishes the reliability and trustworthiness of the Bible.

Dead men do tell tales, for from their dusty tombs is heard such thrilling storied as vanished empires speak to this generation. Suddenly in our day has flooded upon us the ceaseless array of evidence of bygone civilisations. Very largely this has been made possible because of two major discoveries.

One, the Rosetta Stone which in 1798 was discovered by Napoleon and his men while they were on a military confrontation with Egypt. Now from a military point of view it was an absolute failure, but Napoleon took with him about 120 scholars and artists whose duty it was to search out the land. One of his soldiers discovered this stone, this bit of black basalt measuring two feet four inches by three feet nine inches in length. Notice, this was in 1798, the very year that prophecy had pointed to as the 'Time of the End' when knowledge was to be increased! [Daniel 12:4]

You see prior to this discovery no one could read the Egyptian hieroglyphics but this piece of black basalt was the key to the history of the ancient Egyptian language. It was written in three languages. The bottom was the Greek, the middle was the Egyptian Demotic which was like the cursive form of the hieroglyphics, and the top language was the Egyptian hieroglyphic. Scholars, when they found this Rosetta Stone presumed that it was the same story written in three languages. It was the French scholar Jean Francois Champollion who inscribed his name on the pillars of the Karnak Temple that really deciphered this dead language.

The second discovery of the Behistun Rock took place about 20 miles east of Kermansha on the main highway to Tehran. Here 350 feet above the plain, Darius the Great carved in three languages the records of his achievements. Travellers for centuries had seen this great rock but no one knew what it was about because they couldn't read the languages, the Persian, the Elamite, and the Babylonian, this strange wedged shape cuneiform script which is the oldest writing known to man. It survived because it was written on clay tablets and then baked in the oven. Many of those tablets have survived for centuries and today we are able to read them. It was Sir Henry Rawlinson over a period of several years, who even risked his life in trying to decipher this language.

So it has been these two discoveries which very largely have opened up the ancient world to us. So what we discuss now is from a great deal of certainty because dead men indeed are telling tales and they're telling them in the stones and in the rocks.

About 50 miles south of Cairo, underneath the Sahara Desert, is the tomb of the sacred bulls. The Egyptians worshiped crocodiles, cats, bulls, beetles, in fact anything that moved the Egyptians worshiped it. They cut a shaft underneath the rock that went down 1,120 feet. There were 27 rooms off that long shaft. Every one of them is empty today. The only remains of a sacred bull is over in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D, C. and I'll tell you why.

Cambyses the Great, the son of Cyrus the Great, in his capture of Babylon, hated the religion of the Egyptians. So he marched down there in order to overthrow their religion. There the army lined up. On one side was the Egyptian army and on the other side there was the Persian army. By the way when they fought in the Nile Valley they never worried about prisoners escaping because on one side was the Arabian Desert and on the other side was the Sahara Desert and a prisoner died just as surely as if an arrow had gone through his heart if he tried to run away. So these two armies that lined up. The Egyptian army outnumbered the Persians three to one. Just before those two armies charged, Cyrus walked out with a bag full of cats. He upturned them and the cats ran all over the ground. The Egyptian army laid down their arms, for if they had charged they may have killed one of those cats and the cats were sacred to them.

Now when Cambyses went down into the tomb, he smashed open every one of these stone sarcophagus, but there was one that he couldn't get opened. Fortunately for us today it stayed there. He hated their religion and he wanted to get the treasures that were stored inside the sarcophagus, but this one he couldn't get the lid off. It weighed 72 tons.

It's very interesting how they got those great sarcophaguses down underneath the earth. They cut a shaft right down underneath the ground. Then they filled it up with sand. Then they lowered the sarcophagus down step by step. We haven't got a chance of ever getting them out today, they're there for good.

But another question that archaeologists wonder is how they lit their tombs. Did they use electric light? They have gone underneath the ground and they have carefully noted that there were no signs of soot. They obviously didn't use torches because there would be soot around. Also if they used torches they would have used up the oxygen, and couldn't work there. So how did they light their tombs? It is a very interesting question.

One widespread belief is that the Egyptians used a complicated system of mirrors and lenses in order to reflect the Sunlight down underneath the burial chambers. But the trouble with this theory is that there is no evidence such a system existed. They've never found any lenses or mirrors in all their excavations. In fact a number of tombs have passageways that are too complex for a mirror system. So the question remains. Did they have electric light?

In 1938 Dr. William Koniggs, a German archaeologist employed by the state museum in Baghdad, came across a find that was to drastically change all concepts of ancient science. It was a strange box containing 2,000 year old clay tablets and jars. When they looked at these clay jars at first glance there was something unusual about them. They were about six inches high and they housed a copper cylinder about five inches high and about one and a half inches in diameter. The edges of the cylinders seem soldered with 60/40 lead tin alloy which is comparable to solder in use today.

The bottoms of these mysterious cylinders were capped with copper discs and sealed with bitumen and asphalt. When they looked at the rods there was unmistakable evidence of having been corroded by an acid solution long since evaporated. Dr. Konigg was very impressed with this and he immediately recognised that the arrangement of copper and iron and acid was not a chance arrangement but that these clay pots were ancient battery cells. So today this is helping us to unravel the mystery as to how the Egyptians actually illuminated their tombs.

Now we know for certain, as the archaeologist August Marriette discovered that the Egyptians possessed electricity to electroplate gold jewellery, and they probably used it to illuminate their tombs. Now how sophisticated were the Egyptians in their understanding of electricity?

In room 17 of the Egyptian temple of Denderra, is a mysterious picture on the wall. Now Egyptologists for quite a number of years have been endeavouring to unravel and to explain what this picture is all about. Some have tried to explain it from the idea of a religious picture or mythology or something like that but none of the answers have come to explain the whole of the picture. Now several electronic engineers however, believe that it contains information of a very different order. Two peculiar objects look like television picture tubes, an impression that may not be too far away from the truth. Electronics expert M. Zecharias has identified them as Crooks's tubes, the forerunner of the modern television tube. Now the Crooks's tube is not only the forerunner of television, but it is also the forerunner of the fluoroscope, an instrument that uses x-rays for diagnosing internal injuries. While at this stage we don't have absolute certainty that the Egyptians used the fluoroscopes we do have indications that the Hindus and Chinese did.

Contrary to what orthodox historians would like to admit, the ancient ancestors seem to have inherited a sophisticated knowledge of metal hardening techniques that they got from earlier civilisations. For example, not long ago in the ancient Peruvian ornaments, they discovered they found that they were using Platinum. Now this possesses a very serious problem because in order to melt Platinum you need to be able to get a temperature up to 1755 Degrees Celsius. We have no satisfactory answer as to how the ancient Peruvians were able to produce such a heat.

Now we know the ancient Palestinians seemed to have specialised in metal-hardening techniques. Professor Clifford Wilson of the Australian Institute of Archaeology made an observation while over in the Middle East, when he discovered an image of Baal. One of the legs was missing so they commissioned some workers to replace and put a modern leg to replace this ancient leg. They were staggered to find that they couldn't duplicate the original bronze. It was so much harder than anything they could make.

Over in India, in New Delhi, is the Ashoka Pillar, a column of cast iron that weighs about six tons. It's 23 feet 8 inches high, and it has a diameter of 16 inches. Now this pillar poses a real mystery because not only for its size which you can imagine would require a sizeable pre-casting job, but because of its age. A normal piece of Iron under Indian monsoon conditions and tropical heat would have long since corroded away. But on that piece of metal, there is no indications of rust at all. What a testimony to the sophisticated unknown science which the ancients possessed, once again showing us that the further you go back in history the more brilliant is the civilisation.

In the writings of the Lord's messenger, is the statement;

"There perished in the Flood greater inventions of art and human skill than the world knows of today. The arts destroyed were more than the boasted arts of today." (Letter 65, 1898).

When you travel through Egypt you never get very far away from the Nile River, for Egypt is the Nile and the Nile is Egypt. If it wasn't for the Nile Egypt would be totally desert, but today only

3% of the whole of Egypt is under cultivation; 97% of the land is practically uninhabited desert. So 3% of Egypt is feeding between twenty and thirty million people. From its mouth to its source the Nile River flows about 6,400 kilometres.

Travelling down the Nile there are places you can literally put one foot on the desert and one foot on the cultivated area. That's how marked the difference is between where the water is and where the water is not. When you fly and look down along the Nile River, the only cultivation is that little strip along the Nile. Once you leave that, it's just uninhabited desert. Today the Nile has very largely been controlled by the Aswan Dam. Originally the Nile used to flood every year and put top soil over the area. But today that doesn't take place and Egypt's fertility rate is declining. With modern technology there are some benefits and some disadvantages.

One of the most famous inscriptions found on the walls of the temples, tombs, and the palaces of Egypt are to do with the exploits of Rameses the Second against the Hittites. Scholars before the decipherment of the hieroglyphics refused to believe that such a people ever existed. Although the Hittites are mentioned about 48 times in the Old Testament, there was no other record of them anywhere. Most scholars took the position, that whatever cannot be proved is to be doubted. However as they began to read the hieroglyphics they found evidence of the Hittites every where. Again the Bible proves true!

As recently as 1871 a classical German encyclopaedia gave only seven lines to its discussion of the Hittites. Not only was this very brief but many of the things that they said about the Hittites were wrong. They suggested that they were a relatively unimportant Canaanite tribe; now how the picture has changed! The Hittites were a great nation extending all over Asia Minor and into northern Syria. They conquered Babylon and fought against the Egyptians. It's an incredible thing that such a mighty nation would have been forgotten and lost so completely, but its amazing discovery is equally fantastic and serves as a remarkable illustration of how the records of the stones today confirm the historical reliability of the Bible.

In London, on the edge of the Thames, not far from Big Ben and Westminster Abbey, there is the great obelisk called Cleopatra's Needle. Actually, it has nothing to do with Cleopatra at all because it was there long before Cleopatra ever drew a breath. It was built by Thutmose the Third, the husband of Queen Hatshepsut who was the foster mother of Moses. It was he who was the one that Moses fled from when he fled to Midian. He raised that obelisk, and then many years ago it was taken to London.

He was a ruthlessly cruel king; history records his name as Thutmose III the scull-crusher because when his army would go through a place he would follow them, any of the injured and hurt, he would come along and hit them on the head with his mallet. All over the walls you can see the beheaded bodies of the victims of the Sun god. Sun worship was a very cruel and brutal religion.

The giant colossi tells of the wonders of the past, the very likeness of the Pharaoh was carved into these at the entrance to the Mortuary Temple of Thutmose IV. He was the Pharaoh that followed Moses. If Moses had thrown in his lot with the Egyptians rather than serve the Lord with the Hebrews, then he would have been this Pharaoh.

The floor was made of solid silver, walls were of alabaster and the ceiling was of mother-of-pearl and gold and precious stones were studded right throughout the building. Its sheer magnificence made it a very easy prey to plunderers and robbers. They stripped everything that was valuable, all that remains today are a few crumbling remains of that once beautiful temple.

“Moses” is a very interesting name. People think that it’s a Hebrew name, but actually it’s Egyptian. Back in the 18th dynasty of Egypt’s history you’ll find that many of the Pharaohs took the name “Moses” as part of their name. Pharaohs or the kings, regarded themselves as god-kings, children of the gods, so you have Kar-Moses—born of the god Kar; Ah-Mose, born or drawn out of the god Ah. Thutmose, claimed he came out of the god Thut. Even the famous Ramose II is another name for Ramose and means born of the Sun god Ra.

Moses’ name as far as the Egyptians were concerned was probably Hapimose. Hapi was the name of the Nile god and Moses was rescued from the Nile River. When we understand a little about the glories and grandeur of ancient Egypt, we faintly understand what it meant for Moses to give up the riches and the glories of ancient Egypt and to throw in his lot with the Hebrew slaves. Moses realised there is more to life than just our 70 years, there is a life beyond, only gained by trusting in the true God.

Mesopotamia:

Our story of archaeological discovery takes us to the Mesopotamian Valley. “Mesopotamia” means, the land between the rivers. To the north is the Tigris River and to the south the Euphrates River. The whole area is about 900 miles long; 300 miles across at its greatest width.

In 1840 Dr. Paul Botta was appointed consular general at Mosul in the Upper Tigris area. For recreation he used to dig in the mounds that were in abundance all through that area. He observed some strange looking mounds that were covered by a black sand of the desert. His curiosity grew and finally without any plan to guide him he began to dig. After Botta had dug for about a year with rather meagre results, an Arab suggested that he ought to dig about 10 miles away. He followed this man’s advice and with great excitement he found richly carved walls. There were many kinds of pictures over the walls. There were reliefs of bearded men and fierce looking stone animals, some with wings. Botta was convinced that he had discovered Nineveh, however, he was wrong. It was Khorsabad, the suburb of Nineveh about ten miles away from the centre of the city where Sargon II reigned. He lived about 722 BC and erected one of the stateliest palaces of antiquity.

Here were the remains of a culture perhaps even older than the Egyptians, that had flourished for about 2,000 years. Then for the next 2,000 years it had been completely forgotten and buried beneath the sands. Here was debris of a city, lost from sight that once had been the metropolis of the world, but for the next sixty generations it had been completely forgotten.

A few more extensive excavations were carried out, by Austin Henry Layard. He was intrigued by the Nimrod Mound, and considered this to be near the cradle of civilisation. As he began to dig he was rewarded with rich and abundant treasures. Later he excavated and explored the magnificent palace of Sennacherib, and discovered the famous library of Ashurbanipal with 30,000 clay tablets. Here was assembled the vast knowledge of the ancient world, books on

history and astronomy, mathematics, philosophy, poetry and even songs. They shipped these tablets to London and for many years they just lay in the basement of the British Museum.

Then George Smith, a famous bank-noting engraver was given the task of cataloguing all these stone tablets. As he was going through he came across what is now known as the famous Gilgamesh Epic which is recorded as the greatest piece of cuneiform writing ever discovered. When he published his find, there was great excitement around the world. There was a great desire among archaeologists to find the rest of the Gilgamesh Epic because only part of it had been discovered. Now looking for a piece of rock is like looking for a needle in a hay stack, but wonder of wonders, Smith actually found the rest of the Gilgamesh Epic. This was of tremendous significance because part of the story is similar to the story of the Biblical flood of Noah's day. It also showed that the ancients had the same belief as the Old Testament writers in a universal flood.

Visitors to the mounds and ruins of this once proud city of Nineveh, at all familiar with the Bible records, are especially amazed and impressed with this very remarkable fulfilment of prophecy. When Nineveh was at the height of its power, Zechariah and Nahum foretold its utter destruction. Zechariah said "He will stretch out His hand against the north and destroy Assyria and will make Nineveh a desolation and dry like a wilderness and flocks shall lie down in the midst of her. All the beasts of the nations."

The prophet Nahum, who wrote shortly after, went on to say, "It shall come to pass that all that look upon you shall flee from you and shall say. Nineveh is laid waste,"

So complete was the destruction of Nineveh that its very location was soon forgotten. When Xenophon and his 10,000 men marched along the Tigris 200 years later, no one could tell him the name of the ruins where the city lay, so completely were these prophecies fulfilled.

Ebla: Until 1975 Ebla was no more than a shadowy name in the north of Syria. But since 1975 discoveries have taken place that shocked the world. Here they actually found an archive of 159,000 cuneiform tablets which had originally been stacked on wooden shelves on their edges like phonograph records. When the palace was destroyed by fire about 4,000 years ago, the shelves were burnt and the tablets fell in heaps to the ground. Some broke as they hit the ground, but fortunately the vast majority have been preserved. As they began to read these tablets, they found them written in the Sumerian language, the earliest known language reduced to writing. Others were written in an early Canaanite language which was adapted by the patriarchs and known as Hebrew.

Ebla was a city with a population of 260,000, of which 11,000 were employed as civil servants. Tablets that have come to light shed tremendous interest on the old record. Names like Abramoo which of course is equivalent to Abraham; Ishmaeloo which is equivalent to Ishmael, and Israeloo which is equivalent to Israel. The name of the third king of the six kings of Ebla whose name we now know to be Ebram, equivalent of the Biblical Eba, also appeared as one of the ancestors to the Biblical Abraham.

Also of interest is the cities of Palestine with which the kings of Ebla were in correspondence were names like Lachish, Megiddo, Gaza, Dor, Sinai, Ashtoreth, Joppa and quite a few others.

The name 'Jerusalem' doesn't appear in its later form but appears in its early form, Salem, as it did back in the book of Genesis.

in 'Scientific America' was recorded this interesting statement, "The listing of the five cities of the plains Sodom, Gomorrah, Admar, Zeboim and Bela, Genesis 14:2 is duplicated in the Ebla text and the names appear in the same order. That just seems too good to be true. But Dr. Noel Preemen the director of the W. P. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem, now claims that the king of Gomorrah mentioned in the tablets bears the same name Birsha as the king of Gomorrah in Abraham's day. Much more could be said and no doubt will be said over the next few years as more of these tablets are unearthed and read."

The finds of Ebla today, and everywhere around the Middle East, simply bears out that the Book is true. Out of the dust heaps of these countries, evidence upon evidence is coming forth almost daily that proves the Bible to be genuine and trustworthy. Dead men are telling tales in the dust heaps of past civilisations.

Petra:

South of the Dead Sea lies the ancient land of the Edomites that very few white men have seen. It was lost from sight for over 1,500 years. Petra is the Greek word 'rock'. The wild fantastic shapes of the hills, the great chasms, the brilliant colours, everything must be seen to be believed. Leaving the little village of Wadi Musa, you reach the foot hills of the valley and get the first glimpse of this wilderness, the strange mountains that really look like nothing on earth, it's almost like another planet.

The only entrance into the city of Petra is through a tiny crack into the rock that they call a Siq; it is no wider at any spot than 60 feet wide and so narrow in many spots that you can actually put both your hands out and touch the side walls. The sheer cliffs on either side rise higher and higher as you penetrate further and further into the heart of the mountains. Most of it is in perpetual twilight with the occasional glint of the sun streaming through. There's an eerie silence, the only thing that breaks it is the crunch of pebbles under the horses' hooves.

On one side a channel has been cut out of the side of the mountain. This originally carried water to the inhabitants of Petra from a spring, into the city. The road twists and turns and seldom can be seen for more than a few yards ahead and it just seems to be going on forever. Suddenly at the end of the chasm, framed in the cleft in the rock façade, is a beautiful great tomb. It is so brilliant you're taken by surprise as your eyes gaze upon it.

As you stand before this great sculpture, the beauty and perfect proportion hits you. The tomb is called the treasury and the urn at the top in the centre carries the marks of many bullets, as the Arabs believed that inside was stored a great treasure, and have been shooting their guns at it for years. This tomb has been sheltered from sun and weather and very largely stands just as it was thousands of years ago.

Beyond the clearing the gorge narrows again with a great tomb on either side and then a little further you face this magnificent theatre that has been cut out of the living rock. Then the hills fall back and on either side they leave a space about a mile long and about three quarters of a mile wide. This is the actual place of the city. There were paved streets and shops and temples and bathes and private homes. This was the great capital of the Nabateans and in this area the

earlier Edomite civilisation first established the city. Just a few decades ago unbelievers ridiculed the Book that spoke about the Edomites; "You show us a single relic of the Edomites anywhere." Well, there wasn't a person on the earth who could do it. But when they discovered Petra they realised that the critics were wrong once again.

While most of the ruins are of Roman or Nabataea times, the best evidence of the earlier civilisation of the Edomites was right up on the mountains, the Arabs call Um el Biyara, the mother of cisterns because of a large number of cisterns that they've made up there to store water. It takes about an hour, sometimes even on hands and feet, for any army that could get through that Siq and conquer this city and then climb this great mountain it would be some army indeed. We understand now what the prophet Jeremiah 49:16 meant of the Edomites, "Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldst make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD."

He predicted that Edom would become a desolation. No words could better describe the favourable location of the rock city; Jeremiah saw that it was an impregnable fortress indeed, but it would go to destruction, but it is now a ruin. A prediction that discoveries bear out.

How did they discover this amazing city? They were excavating in Nineveh and turned up a tablet which said that the king of Nineveh had fought against the Edomites. So the British scientific circles sent in a Swiss explorer. He heavily disguised himself as an Arab or he would have been killed. As he went into that area, he befriended some of the Arabs and one of them told him of some amazing ruins that lay in through this gigantic crack in the rock. So Berkart and his little donkey were leading a goat that he said he would offer on Mount Hor which was sacred to the Arabs, for they believe that Moses' brother Aaron was buried there, and went right through that Siq and discovered Petra, the rose red city, half as old as time.

During the First World War, Lawrence of Arabia retreated in here with a group of Arabs and followed by some Turks and Germans. When they got up the top, they rolled stones down on them and killed the lot. This was the only city that Alexander the Great never conquered. It's the most amazing natural fortress in the world.

If you get tired, you can sleep in the tombs carved into the mountain. Some people are afraid of the dead, but if you sleep in those tombs you have a good night's sleep, if you can put up with the snakes and scorpions, for the place is crawling with them. In his book, Lawrence and Arabia, it tells about one expedition that Lawrence took in of about twenty odd Arabs or more, and lost just about all of them in about two days through snake bite. It will give you some idea of what's inhabited Petra over the years.

The tooth of time has just about eaten away the majority of the buildings because it was a large city, certainly fantastic in shape and beautiful in colour. Again the prophet says "But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness." Isaiah 34:11.

Petra has been referred to as the rose red city because of its colours. The rock that has been protected from brilliant sunlight you can see just about every colour in the rainbow, reds, browns and purples, yellows and oranges. The pictures of the colours are no exaggeration, and



the colours often change during the day. For nearly 2,000 years no white man saw the city. It was a lost city of the dead.

There are the high places where they offered human sacrifices. The obelisks that stand on the mountain are quite different to what is in Egypt. The Egyptians actually built their obelisks up but the Edomites cut the rest of the mountain top away and left the obelisks standing and they've been standing there for a long, long time. All this of course is associated with sex worship. We won't go into detail as to what it represents, but it's a very corrupt and evil worship.

They would take a sharp knife, remove the heart from the victim and while still beating hold it up to the Sun. Then they would place it on a little round altar the shape of the Sun. The blood of course would trickle out through a channel and they would worship the Sun. They have found remains of these things. The Bible speaks of Baal worship; they have found small idols of Baal that they used to offer human sacrifices to. Critics may ask why God would destroy people just because they did not worship Him, but it was this monstrous cruelty in the high places that brought the curse of God on these things.

Biblos; on the coast of Lebanon is a little city called Biblos. This city gave the Bible its name. Biblos is probably the oldest city in the world; in the Old Testament it is Gebal. The Egyptians were the first people to make paper and they made it from the papyrus reeds. When the Egyptians conquered the coast of Lebanon they planted papyrus reeds up along there. When the Greeks were fighting against the Egyptians their paper supply from Egypt was cut off end so they endeavoured to capture Biblos. They called the paper by the name of the city. But they couldn't pronounce the 'G.' They found it very difficult to call it Gebal and so they called it Bebal, and eventually Bebal become known as Biblos. So the paper that came from Biblos was called Biblos. Of all the books in the world, there is only one called the Biblos, the Bible, the Book, and that's the oldest book we have.

This old poem says it well:

“Last eve I stood before a blacksmith's door  
And heard the anvil ring its vesper chime,  
Then looking in I saw upon the floor  
Old hammers worn with the beating years of time.

How many anvils have you had said I  
To wear and batter all these hammers so?  
Just one he answered, Then with twinkling eye  
The anvil wears the hammers out you know,

And so the Bible anvil of God's Word  
For ages sceptic blows have beat upon.  
Yet tho' the noise of falling blows was heard  
The anvil is unworn, the hammers gone.”

How true, because from the dust of these old cities in rising much evidence that the old Book is true!