Earth's Treasure Heaps! A Study of Archaeology: Booklet Number 2

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Earth's TREASURE HEAPS!
A Study of Archaeology

Booklet Number Two

The Bible Institute of Los Angeles
FOREWORD

This booklet is the second in a series containing discussions conducted by Dr. Louis T. Talbot, President of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, and Dr. Paul R. Bauman, Vice President. These discussions are presented just as they were given over the microphone to a Pacific Coast chain of radio stations.

No science in recent years has done as much to strengthen the belief of young people and old alike in the veracity of the Word of God as this science of Archaeology.

These booklets are sent forth with the prayer that our God will be pleased to own them and use them for His glory.

THE BIBLE INSTITUTE OF LOS ANGELES
Incorporated

Post Office Box 151                Los Angeles, Calif.
DECIPHERING LANGUAGES

Dr. Talbot: Well, good morning, Dr. Bauman, and here we are again before this microphone and I trust that you are ready and anxious to go on with our interesting and profitable discussions concerning the science of archaeology. If I remember correctly, at the close of our last broadcast, we had just begun to think about the problem of deciphering the ancient hidden languages found in profusion in the lands of antiquity. Tell us just how did the Archaeologists learn the secrets of the language?

Dr. Bauman: The answer to this problem came shortly after the discovery of the Rosetta Stone. In 1835 an English army officer, named Henry C. Rawlinson, on duty in Persia discovered a large inscription high on a cliff among the Zagros mountains located in that country. The inscription was about five hundred feet from the base of the cliff, and it was difficult to get at it. It had been placed there about five hundred years before Christ by Darius as a chronicle of his own achievement. It was with considerable difficulty that Mr. Rawlinson copied this inscription, for it was necessary to stand at the top of a ladder placed on a narrow ledge of rock only fourteen inches wide. After four years of painstaking labor, the task of copying was completed, after which the real job of decipherment began.

Dr. Talbot: Was there a similarity between the Behistun inscription and the Rosetta Stone?

Dr. Bauman: Yes, there was. Like the Rosetta Stone, the key to the Egyptian language, this inscription contained three languages, two no longer known and one known. As in the case of the Rosetta Stone, what was written in one language was written in all three. As in the earlier
discovery, the one known language viz., Persian, became the key which unlocked the secrets of the unknown. In this case the honor of decipherment of the Babylonian language belongs to the man who also made the discovery—Sir Henry Rawlinson.

**Dr. Talbot:** That is tremendously interesting and now will you suggest something as to the practical value of this discovery?

**Dr. Bauman:** Perhaps its greatest value consists of the way it opened a new knowledge of Babylonian and Assyrian history, corroborating and supplementing that of the Bible. Prior to this time there was no history of these nations which dated back beyond 400 B.C. The critics, as a result, had challenged the sacred records. Today, fairly complete histories of these nations have been written, and these many times bear testimony to the historical accuracy and serve to enhance the beauty of the Scriptures—our Bible.

**Dr. Talbot:** Now in our last broadcast you were telling us about the discovery of the Behistun-rock Inscription and of how it was used to unlock the secrets of the Babylonian civilization. Will you now give us an example of a record which the decipherment of this language made possible?

**Dr. Bauman:** Certainly. Back in 1835 an archaeologist by the name of Layard unearthed at the site of ancient Nineveh, the library of Asurbanipal II, the last great king of Assyria. In his day Asurbanipal himself was somewhat of an archaeologist, for he sent scholars throughout that portion of the world to gather together ancient records for his library.
Dr. Talbot: Yes, but just what bearing did this discovery have on the problem at hand?

**DISCOVERY**

Dr. Bauman: Well, in 1872 a British scholar by the name of George Adam Smith began an examination of one of these tablets which had been recovered from Nineveh. It was written in the Babylonian Cuneiform which the scholars were now able to read for the first time in more than a millennium. Deciphering a broken portion of the tablet, this is what Smith read: "I released a dove; it flew about, and having no resting place it returned." It is said he was so overcome with excitement that he fainted.

Dr. Talbot: I suppose I would have done the same thing, for the discovery of an ancient account of the deluge surely must have been epoch-making. Did the archaeologist succeed in recovering more of that account?

Dr. Bauman: Yes, indeed. When Dr. Smith announced his discovery, a trip to Nineveh was immediately financed. As a result of this expedition, not only the remainder of this Flood story was recovered, but also a Babylonian account of Creation and of the Fall. A study of these accounts has revealed a great number of similarities to the records found in our Bible.

Dr. Talbot: That is fascinating to say the least. Would you mind telling us something about these similarities?

Dr. Bauman: The Babylonian tradition of Creation begins somewhat similarly to that of our Bible. It tells the story of a primeval chaos, then the division of this primeval ocean by a firmament which held up a part of the waters. Both describe the creation of man, and where the Hebrew account ends in the institution of God’s Sabbath
rest, the Babylonian closes with praise to Marduk, the Babylonian god of creation. The Babylonian account consisted of seven tablets, whereas the Biblical presents a record of God’s work in seven creative periods called “days.” The events narrated in the tablets correspond roughly to those given in our Bible.

Dr. Talbot: Because of these similarities, I have heard it suggested that our Biblical account of creation was derived from ancient Babylonian tradition. What do you think about this?

Dr. Bauman: An honest comparison will give as much attention to differences as it does to similarities. It is from both that an honest investigator must draw his conclusions. Now, the Babylonian account tells the story of long wars fought by newly-created gods until finally the victorious Marduk smote the goddess Tiamet in twain, and, spreading out part of her body, he formed the heavens. With the other part he created the earth. From her blood, he made the rivers. The other monsters which he slew were transformed into the signs of the Zodiac. You will note that in this Babylonian story the conception of deity is degenerate. The gods are generated; the God of the Bible is eternal. The whole Babylonian story is highly polytheistic and tremendously degraded. On the other hand, the God of the Bible from the very beginning is one God, and the Biblical record reveals a purity never even approached by the Babylonian cosmogeny.

Dr. Talbot: Yes, that is evident. Even such a casual examination reveals the vast superiority of the Genesis record of the creation. How can anyone dare to suggest that the story in our Bible, so exalted in its conception of God and so free from the grotesque details of Babylonian tradition could ever be derived from such a story?
Dr. Bauman: That is hard to believe, but this conclusion is the result of an attempt on the part of liberalistically inclined scholars who teach that Monotheism is the product of an evolutionary development of religion. In other words, they hold that man's conception of God at first was very simple, beginning with his attempt to explain the forces of nature which he could not understand. As a result, he gradually evolved the idea of many gods and finally of one God. While I cannot discuss this view now, may I say that the evidence both from archaeology and from anthropology offers conclusive evidence to the contrary and directly supports the conception of one God given in our Bible.

Dr. Talbot: How then do we account for the polytheistic and highly-degraded conception of God to be found in the Babylonian creation story? What is your conclusion as to its relation to the Bible?

Dr. Bauman: It is a well-known and self-evident fact that as traditions are passed from father to son—from one generation to another—they tend toward corruption; that is, they gather details not in the original story. Since the discovery of these Babylonian tablets, other accounts have been found dating back to a much earlier period. All of these have their similarities to the story contained in our Bible. The older the tradition, the more nearly a Monotheistic conception of God we find. Hence, inasmuch as on the face of it the Biblical account is by far the purest of all the creation accounts, we conclude that the record in our Bible must be the original, while these other accounts are derivations from the same original story but which have become corrupted by centuries of tradition.

Dr. Talbot: I believe your conclusions are entirely logical, and that these facts should be given to our Christian
young people all over the country. A little while ago you referred to similar stories of the Fall and the Blood. I believe we have time yet for you to tell us something about the Babylonian story of the Fall.

**STORY OF THE FALL**

*Dr. Bauman:* I shall be happy to do this, and there are two accounts which I should like to mention out of several which have been discovered by the archaeologists. One of these, found at Asurbanipal's library along with the Flood and Creation traditions, is known as "The Adapa Myth." This story is too long to relate in detail here, but I will try and give you a resume of it, in order that we may consider its bearing upon our Bible. Adapa was a kind of semi-divine person, possessed of a certain amount of wisdom but not immortal. He was a priest and sage of the temple at Eridu. According to the story, one day while fishing on the Persian Gulf, the southwind suddenly swooped down and over-turned his craft, throwing him into the sea. Enraged by this insult, he broke the wing of the south wind and destroyed its power for seven days. The gods Anu and Ea called him to account. Ea admonished him when he should reach heaven's portal not to eat the food and drink offered to him, stating that they would be potions of death. But instead, this food and drink was that of immortality, and bad counsel from the gods robbed Adapa of an opportunity to receive immortal life. Thus, he was obliged to return to earth finally to know suffering and death.

*Dr. Talbot:* I can see plenty of differences between this story and that contained in our Bible. Can you list any similarities?

*Dr. Bauman:* Yes, there are several which show that the
Babylonian story is a corruption of the original pure account. In the first place, Adam like Adapa came into possession of a certain amount of knowledge. In the next place, the Babylonian story tells of "the food of life" while the Biblical describes a "tree of life." There is a relation between immortality and the eating of certain kinds of food. Adapa, like Adam, became subject to disease, restlessness, and destruction for what he had done. He was eventually clothed with a garment provided by his god, and you will recall that Adam's nakedness was covered with garments of skin provided by God.

Dr. Talbot: There is one interesting difference which I notice and I believe this is worthy of mention. This man, Adapa, apparently failed to obtain eternal life because he obeyed a god who deceived him. On the other hand, Adam lost eternal life because he disobeyed God, who had given him the truth. It seems to me that the conclusion here would be the same as that which we reached in regard to the Babylonian account of creation. The story must have been an outgrowth of time. The Biblical picture is not an imitation but the original painting.

Dr. Bauman: Yes, these ancient traditions are of interest because they serve to corroborate and enhance the true value of our Bible. There were other stories of man's original estate among the nations of antiquity. The ancient Sumerians, representing probably the oldest civilization known to us, agree in placing the Fall of man at the beginning of things. There was a paradise "in Sumeria" as there was a garden in Eden. There was a primitive state of innocence among men and of harmlessness among beasts. At the beginning there was perfectness of health and longevity for a considerable period after the Fall. In the Sumerian account, the entrance of sin came through
a complaint from one of the gods concerning neglect by men; that is, there is alienation in both accounts. The culmination and consequences of the Fall finally resulted in the destruction of the antedeluvian world by the Deluge, and thus we could continue.

Dr. Talbot: I understand that, in addition to these accounts, which archaeology has revealed there are similar traditions of the creation and fall to be found among primitive tribes of people all over the world. Common traditions, similar in a number of details, call for a common source. Since corruptions represent the outgrowths of time, these traditions serve to strengthen one’s faith in the only pure record of creation and the entrance of sin—the record of God’s Word.

GARDEN OF EDEN?

Dr. Talbot: In this connection have the archaeologists discovered any evidence bearing upon the existence and location of the Garden of Eden?

Dr. Bauman: The most ancient records tell the story of a primitive paradise. As for its location, both the archaeologists and the anthropologists agree that civilization began somewhere in central Asia. The garden itself may have been destroyed by the flood. Here is an example. An ancient Sumerian epic speaks of a god and his wife who “ruled over mankind and paradise.” The account goes on to say, “In that land there was no infirmity, no sin, and man grew not old.”

Dr. Talbot: Well, that is interesting. Are there other records like that?

Dr. Bauman: Yes, many, but here is one more, also from
the ancient Sumerians, who represent perhaps the oldest civilization we know anything about:

“That place was pure. That place was clean;  
The lion slew not, the wolf hurt not the lamb;  
The dog did not worry the sleeping kids;  
The birds forsook not their young,  
The doves were not put to flight,  
There was no disease nor pain.”

Archaeological records of a similar nature have been found among many of the more ancient nations. These would include along with the Sumerians, the Chaldeans, Egyptians, Assyrians, Phoenicians, Persians, Hindus, Chinese, Etruscans, Goths and Greeks. Such legends have also been found among the Peruvians, Mexicans and other primitive peoples of the new world. Some pictorial representations have been found.

Dr. Talbot: Would you mind mentioning one or two of these?

Dr. Bauman: There is the so-called Temptation Seal, found at Lachish. In the center of the picture is a tree. On one side sits a man; on the other a woman, and leering over the head of the woman is a huge snake. Another, found at Tepe Gawra, one of the oldest cities to be excavated, pictures a man and a woman, clad only in a head-dress and walking bent over as if in dejection. Behind the woman again and looking over her shoulder is a snake. Both of these are thought by some to be related to the story of man's temptation and the fall.

Dr. Talbot: Well, belonging to the period immediately following the fall, another question was sent in. One of our listeners, apparently a university student, has asked
about the first civilization on this earth? Just how long, according to authentic archaeological records, has man’s civilization existed upon the earth?

CIVILIZATION’S AGE

Dr. Bauman: Permit me to answer that question with a quotation from a well-known college textbook, "The Biology of Vertebrates," by Walter: "One of the famous riddles that perennially charms and challenges us, is the origin of mankind upon this earth, for the farther back we go, the more vague is our knowledge about man. As a matter of fact, it would be much easier to consider the iniquity of man than his antiquity, for then we would find abundant material at hand for our discourse. The subject of the antiquity of man must always remain more or less shrouded in mystery" (page 98).

Dr. Talbot: Well, it’s not hard to believe the truth of that statement, is it?

Dr. Bauman: No, it isn’t, but listen to this. Dr. Walter continues: "Record human history goes back with undoubted assurance only about 5,000 years and then, in Egypt and Mesopotamia, continues with halting steps for perhaps 2,000 years more, after which the historical record fades and it becomes necessary in tracing the history of man, to resort to the unwritten records of prehistory" (ibid, pp. 99-100).

Dr. Talbot: Well, that agrees fairly well also with the statements of the Bible, doesn’t it?

Dr. Bauman: Yes, and to this all legitimate archaeology and anthropology agree. For instance, the history of agriculture cannot be carried back beyond 10,000 years at the most, according to Boaz, in his book, General Anthro-
pology. R. H. Lowie, in his "Introduction to Cultural Anthropology," says that domesticated animals can be traced back about 6,000 years (ibid, p. 38). The primitive dog is now known to have descended from the Asiatic world.

**Dr. Talbot:** Now, just a minute! You refer to the beginnings of civilization as going back possibly 10,000 years. How do you reconcile that with the commonly accepted view, that according to the Bible, man is only about 6,000 years old?

**Dr. Bauman:** Here we need to remember that most of us have been influenced, perhaps too much, by the chronology of Archbishop Ussher, (1650 A.D.), rather than by the inspired writers. The Bible gives no dates. Instead, it records genealogical lists, and those lists may often pass from grandfather to grandson. Dr. James Orr, one of the greatest conservative scholars of modern times, believed that the lists were never intended to be complete. It should be remembered that the Jews had no word for grandson, so they used the word son. For example, Matthew, in his genealogical list passes from Joram to Uzziah, omitting three kings, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, all in the direct succession (Matt. 3:8). We Christians can satisfy ourselves with the knowledge that nothing has been discovered which denies the Biblical record of man's earliest appearance upon this earth, either with reference to the beginnings of civilization or the time of those beginnings.

**Dr. Talbot:** Speaking of beginnings, the Bible says in Genesis 4:16 that "Cain builted a city." Other verses in this same chapter indicate an early development of civilization. What does archaeology suggest in this regard?
Dr. Bauman: The fact that the oldest civilizations yet discovered have proven to be some of the highest has been just a bit disconcerting to many of the critical scholars. For instance, Dr. Speiser, of the University of Pennsylvania, says concerning the civilization of the ancient Sumerians which he dates at about 3,000 B.C., "Increasing knowledge of the available evidence showed that the Biblical estimate of the country accords better with the facts . . . The high level of their civilization as revealed by the royal tombs was certainly unexpected. There is nothing nearly as early that equals those grave furnishings in wealth, variety and sophistication . . . Egypt had to try for centuries before she could produce objects in gold, silver and bronze comparable to the Sumerian smiths at Ur." That is the archaeologist's estimate of one of man's earliest civilizations, which existed about 5,000 years ago.

Dr. Talbot: Well, these are certainly facts which every young person today should know, for so many are gravely exercised respecting man's beginning. But our time is already gone. However we'll continue this intensely interesting subject in our next broadcast.
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