Earth's Treasure Heaps! A Study of Archaeology: Booklet Number 6

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Earth's TREASURE HEAPS!

A Study of Archaeology

BOOKLET NUMBER SIX

The Bible Institute on the Air

Radio Voice of

THE BIBLE INSTITUTE OF LOS ANGELES
FOREWORD

This booklet is the sixth 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
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THE "HABIRU"

Dr. Bauman: In our last broadcast, Dr. Talbot, I referred to the discovery of the Tel-el-Amarna Tablets, which were letters written by vassal kings throughout Palestine and Syria to two Pharaohs who reigned at the very time Joshua marched into the land of Canaan. In these letters are found the most pathetic and wailing appeals, advising the King of Egypt of the great danger to his possessions. They beseech him to send troops to save his cities and his lands from a seemingly irresistible and war-like people, called the "Habiru." Here is an example of one of these letters written by a king in Jerusalem: "The cities of my lord, the king, have fallen away, and the whole territory of the king will be lost . . . The king has no longer any territory . . . if no troops come, the territory of my lord the king is lost to the Habiru." The word used in these letters immediately suggests the Hebrews. One of these letters likewise contains in a significant place the name of Joshua, though we cannot absolutely be sure that this man was the Joshua of the Bible.

Dr. Talbot: The various peoples occupying Palestine at this time are often called "tribes." Our modern use of that word suggests uncultured people. Is there any evidence that the Canaanites were more highly civilized?

Dr. Bauman: There is much indeed. The Bible tells us that the Canaanite cities were walled, that Joshua took possession of their olive orchards and vineyards, and that the Israelites occupied their houses "full of all good things." The literal truth of the Biblical description is now fully understood. Macalister, an eminent British archaeologist, estimates that there are two hundred buried cities in Palestine alone. A number of these have been excavated and they furnish a store of information. The ruins of these
cities show that they were surrounded by great walls of uncut stone. More than that, they were centers of industry. For example, Kirjath Sepher, excavated by Dr. Kyle, proved to be a center of the dye industry. The mound of Megiddo revealed many beautiful art objects dating back to the days of Joshua.

Dr. Talbot: In this connection, I recall the old criticism against the Biblical statement that these Canaanites possessed "chariots of iron" (See Joshua 17:16-18). We were told a few years ago by the critics that iron was not used in Palestine for two hundred years after Joshua.

Dr. Bauman: It is almost amusing to see the way archaeology has massed evidence against this objection. Iron is mentioned in a letter from a Hittite king who lived during the thirteenth century B.C.; nineteen articles made of iron were taken from King Tutankhamen's tomb (14th century B.C.); reference is made to daggers of iron and steel weapons in a Tel-el-Amarna letter (15th century B.C.); and a tempered iron battle-axe was discovered at Ras Shamra (15th century B.C.). All of these have completely silenced the destructive critics!

DESTRUCTION OF CANAANITES

Dr. Talbot: Dr. Bauman, there is one question of considerable interest and importance which I should like to ask you to discuss. It has to do with God's command in Deuteronomy 7:1-5 and elsewhere to completely destroy the Canaanites.

Dr. Bauman: This command has caused unbelievers to scoff at the Bible and to say that God in the Old Testament is represented as "blood-thirsty" and cruel. Many Christian people likewise have wondered why it was necessary to "slay utterly."
Dr. Talbot: That is exactly what I mean. This question involves what is probably the most loudly voiced objection of unbelief. For example, they say that no God of love would ever give such a command as that recorded in Deuteronomy 7:1-5. Here we read God's instructions to Israel concerning the Canaanites, "And the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them" (verse 2). Now I understand that archaeology has given us the answer to this most difficult moral problem.

Dr. Bauman: An entirely different light is thrown on the situation, thanks to the added knowledge concerning the Canaanites which the spade has made possible. There is an old saying, "Never render a verdict until the evidence is all in." So many of the criticisms against the Bible have been rendered on the basis of insufficient evidence. Men should think carefully before they rashly charge God. Nowhere has this been proven more true than in the problem of God's command to destroy the Canaanites. This truth becomes especially evident as one by one their cities are being uncovered.

Dr. Talbot: The many instances in which archaeology has answered these problems should certainly cause one to be careful in his criticism of the Bible, but tell me, just what has been found?

Dr. Bauman: Dr. Macalister, the eminent British archaeologist, located and excavated the ancient Gezer of the Bible a few years ago. Of special interest was his discovery of the place where the pagan dwellers of that city worshipped. It was an example, almost complete in all its details, of a typical high place such as the Bible mentions many times. A large area proved to be a cemetery where
children, who had been sacrificed to a pagan deity, were buried. The bones of these infants, probably the firstborn, were found in earthen jars, some of them burnt in sacrifice to Moloch, the Canaanite fire god (cf. Lev. 17:21). One of the pits at Gezer contained the bones of fourteen men, two women, one child, and an infant. These remains were mingled with the bones of sheep and goats.

Dr. Talbot: The presence of animal bones would probably suggest sacrifice, and that the humans themselves did not die a natural death. Was that Macalister’s conclusion?

Dr. Bauman: Yes, it was, especially after he discovered in another pit the skeleton of a young girl sawn in half, two additional decapitated skeletons, and the upper half of a skeleton of a boy.

Dr. Talbot: What a horrible and revolting religious practice! It must have been a gruesome sight indeed. No wonder God had something to say about this form of religion. This is the part of the story that the infidels do not tell!

Dr. Bauman: Speaking of gruesome sights, probably the most monstrous sacrifice of all was the so-called ‘foundation sacrifice,’ which was especially prevalent. Occasionally the foundation pillars of a building were found actually embedded in an adult skeleton. More frequently, an earthen jar containing the bones of an infant was found under the floor. These victims may have died from interment, but the most inhuman rite of all was that of entombing a living child within a hollow cavity under the foundation. Skeletons have been found still contorted by the agony of suffocation. The Canaanites believed that through this procedure the life and vigor of the victim would enter into the building.
Dr. Talbot: Well, it is certainly no wonder that God felt it necessary to declare war on the Canaanitish religious practices, and on all those who insisted on indulging in them. I can understand why God gave the instructions found in the third and fourth verses of this chapter (Deut. 7), “Neither shalt thou make marriages with them: thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods.”

The truth of this warning was demonstrated in the history of Israel when, on more than one occasion, the women were spared, contrary to God’s command. These turned the hearts of their husbands and children away from the Lord. I have often wondered, however, why it was that God gave no direction for sparing the infants who might have been trained up in the true faith.

Dr. Bauman: This problem too ceases to exist when we learn that, worst of all, the religion of the Canaanites was in a large part a form of sex worship and temple harlotry. So degenerate did this become, that it is not possible for me to discuss it all in detail. Suffice it to say that sacred poles or pillars, such as those found at Gezer and elsewhere, were associated particularly with the goddess Asherah. Her name has been found in Palestine as well as at Ras Shamra in Syria. She is mentioned in the Bible among the pagan deities, and was considered by the Canaanites to be the wife of Baal. Many representations of this naked sex goddess have been found. Sometimes she is pictured in association with the serpent, and these representations are so vile that many of them are not fit for public exhibition. They are such that I cannot possibly describe them publicly. Suffice it to say that her worship was one of religious prostitution. Careful study of this religion has led the archaeologists even sometimes reluctantly to admit that
of all the peoples of antiquity probably the most immoral were these Canaanites.

Dr. Talbot: It is surely no wonder then that God said, "Utterly destroy them . . . nor show mercy unto them" (verse 2). When we learn some of these things we marvel that God spared them as long as He did.

Dr. Bauman: Yes, and what a sad commentary on a civilization which had become so exceedingly wicked that it became necessary for God to perform a surgical operation, as it were, on a portion of the race to save them from destroying themselves and all who would dare to mingle with them. It is evident that the people had become so filled with the effects of social sin that the situation was hopeless, even for the infants who were born under such conditions. It is no wonder that God was compelled to act in behalf of His people.

Dr. Talbot: Thank you for answering this rather difficult question. There are certainly some good lessons here for us today, especially in view of the tragic conditions of loose living all about us. Men and women in America should realize that no nation in history ever permitted itself to become morally corrupt without going down to destruction. Truly, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psa. 33:12).

THE KINGS OF ISRAEL

Dr. Bauman: Yes, and we cannot help but be impressed by that statement, especially as we consider something of the history of Israel herself under the kings. Suppose we begin a discussion of archaeological discovery in relation to this particular period?
Dr. Talbot: That is a very good idea. What would you like to discuss first?

Dr. Bauman: Suppose we begin with Saul inasmuch as he was first. King Saul ruled at Gibeah. Here excavations were carried on in 1922 and 1923 by Dr. Albright. He found that the city had been destroyed exactly as described in the last chapter of Judges. This confirmation of the Biblical narrative is particularly interesting since the historicity of the story in question had often been doubted. This city was replaced by another built upon the same site which later became the residence of Saul. The ruins of Saul's citadel showed it to be very much in keeping with the character of the Biblical picture.

Dr. Talbot: What about the circumstances surrounding Saul's death?

Dr. Bauman: You will recall that the Philistines fastened the bodies of Saul and his sons to the city-walls of Bethshan, and we are told that "They put his armor in the house of Astaroth." (I Sam. 31:8-10). The mound of Bethshan has been discovered and it is interesting to know that a Philistine temple which lay among the ruins has been excavated.

Dr. Talbot: What light does archaeology shed on the life and work of David?

Dr. Bauman: Thus far there has been little contact in the monuments. This is partly due to the fact that Jerusalem has been destroyed many times. Also, for a number of reasons, it is not possible to do a large amount of excavating in the city of Jerusalem. However, the archaeologists have been able to locate the ancient Jebusite wall on the hill of Ophel, which was captured by David (II Sam. 5:9). Dr. Duncan was so greatly impressed by this fortress that
he pronounced it almost impregnable. Other discoveries fit the descriptions given in the Bible.

**SOLOMON**

*Dr. Talbot:* Because of the descriptions given in the Scriptures, Bible students have always known that the Age of Solomon was a glorious one. We are told that peace and prosperity came to Israel during his reign, and I Kings pictures the extent of his dominion.

*Dr. Bauman:* Yes, some of the details of Solomon’s reign support a glory that was almost unbelievable to those who were inclined to be a bit skeptical. A few years ago the critics held that the Biblical stories of Solomon’s wealth and power were developed after the time of Solomon, and that they did not reflect the actual conditions in Israel at that time.

*Dr. Talbot:* Do you mean the Biblical statement that “Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariots and 12,000 horsemen?” (I Kings 4:26).

*Dr. Bauman:* Yes, that was one of the statements, Dr. Talbot, and let me suggest briefly the answer for those who would object to such a statement. In recent years a number of stone stables dating back to about 1000 B.C., the period of Solomon, have been discovered in Jericho, Megiddo and Bisan. The archaeologist, Guy, excavating at the mound of Megiddo uncovered one stable large enough to care for more than 100 horses. Smaller stables were also found until it is estimated that there was sufficient space at Megiddo alone to care for more than three hundred horses, with added room for chariots and grooms.

*Dr. Talbot:* Well, such stables would be considered sizeable in any country. I think most of us are interested in know-
ing if any remains of Solomon’s great temple have been discovered. Has anything of interest in this connection been found?

Dr. Bauman: You will recall that the Bible records the destruction not only of Solomon’s temple but of those built later so that we could not expect to find much in the way of remains. However, Sir Charles Warren was able to identify what is believed to be the foundation stones of the temple. These were still numbered with Phoenician marks of Solomon’s Gebalite masons (I Kings 5:18 R. V.). One of the corner stones, resting on bed rock was 26 feet long, 6 feet high, 7 feet wide. It was composed of hard lime stone, and weighed over a hundred tons.

Dr. Talbot: Well, that gives us at least some idea of the splendor of the temple. It seems all the more remarkable when we consider the fact that these stones must have been transported from some quarry. Is there any knowledge as to the source of these large stones?

Dr. Bauman: Not far from the Damascus gate of Jerusalem there is a small hole which leads into a huge labyrinth-like cavern underground. The entrance seems to have been a natural cave, but the pillars which support much of the present ceiling indicate that it had been extended into a huge rock quarry. An examination shows that the stone is relatively soft until removed and exposed to the atmosphere, after which it becomes very hard. It is believed by most scholars that this was actually the quarry from which Solomon cut the rock for his temple.

Dr. Talbot: One is struck with considerable wonder as he realizes something of the wealth of copper (or brass, as it is called in the Bible) which was used in Solomon’s temple (See I Kings 7:13-47). I can recall that a few years ago
the critics challenged the Biblical description of Palestine as "A land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayst dig brass" (Deut. 8:9). We were told that Palestine had neither iron nor copper ore. I understand that archaeology has answered this objection.

Dr. Bauman: Yes, it has. An enormous wealth of iron and copper ore has been found south of the Dead Sea. Some of the iron deposits yield from fifty to ninety percent pure iron ore, and some of the copper ore is up to thirty percent copper. Once again the enemies of the Bible spoke too soon.

Dr. Talbot: In this connection I have noticed in various magazines during the past few years articles and pictures of the excavations now in process at Solomon's ancient sea port, Ezion Geber.

Dr. Bauman: Yes, the Bible tells us in I Kings 9:26 that "King Solomon constructed a fleet of ships in Ezion-Geber. Just a few years ago Dr. Nelson Glueck began the excavation of this ancient city. It was proven to be not only a great naval base and port but an important manufacturing center as well. Dr. Glueck says that the diggings show that it contained "the finest and largest smelting and refining plant ever discovered in the ancient East." Forty-five blast furnaces were unearthed. In describing one of these, Dr. Glueck says, "It was provided with a complicated system of flues and air channels, almost modern in aspect and function." Ezion-Geber's site suggests something of the wisdom for which Solomon was famed, for he put his blast furnaces at the one place where strong, steady winds from the north could fan the flames. Afterwards these same winds blew the smoke and fumes on out to sea. The smelting principles used by Solomon were not rediscovered until within the memory of men living today.
REHOBOAM

Dr. Talbot: What a shame it is that the splendor of Solomon's kingdom should pass so soon! History has proven repeatedly the truth of the Biblical statement, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." But Israel soon was gripped in the throes of spiritual apostasy. As a result we read: "It came to pass in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, that Shishak, king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem; and he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house" (I Kings 14:25-26). Do the Egyptian monuments record anything about this invasion?

Dr. Bauman: On the southern wall of the temple at Karnak, in Egypt is a record of Shishak's conquests. The list of captives includes a cartouche surmounted by a head in profile, obviously Semitic. It is inscribed "Judah Malek," or the "King of Judah." This is believed by some to refer to Rehoboam and the incident recorded in the Bible. Incidentally, you may be interested to know that the mummy of King Shishak was found in Egypt in 1939.

AHAB'S IVORY PALACE

Dr. Talbot: I think most of us have always been interested in the story of Elijah and his contests with wicked King Ahab and his Queen, Jezebel. The Bible tells us that Ahab built an ivory house (I Kings 22:39). Do you suppose this house was actually made of ivory? Or, does the expression merely refer to its color?

Dr. Bauman: Let me give you the answer as it has been given to us by Dr. Caiger: "Hitherto most people thought that ivory here was only a figure of speech, referring perhaps to the dazzling whiteness of the masonry; but that the palace and its furnishings were really of ivory, or at
least of ivory inlay, is proved by the recent (1933) discoveries of Crowfoot. The city was destroyed, with all its fragile beauty, by the Assyrians in 722 B. C., but 'by amazing good fortune, some ivories had entirely escaped the fire and were found embedded in the clay floor, sufficiently well preserved to reveal the beauty of their carved work.' Many of the ivory pieces bear marks showing that they had been inlaid over other substances, 'decorating the panels or framework of furniture, and let into the wainscoting of the walls'.” There were several other discoveries of interest. For instance, in a list of Ahab's stewards, the name Obadiah was found (I Kings 18:3ff.). The Bible mentions only one gate to the city, and only one gate has been unearthed (I Chron. 18:9). The pool of Samaria, where Ahab's chariot was washed after his death, is still to be seen.

Dr. Talbot: Well, that is most interesting, and there is certainly an abundance of confirmation. But, tell me, did the archaeologists find anything reminiscent of wicked Queen Jezebel and her Baal worship?

Dr. Bauman: Yes, potsherds were unearthed, bearing upon them the name Baal. But, speaking of Jezebel herself, here is a little detail of some interest to the ladies of our radio audience. The Bible tells us that "she painted her face" (II Kings 9:30). We should not be surprised, therefore, to learn that the excavators unearthed, among other articles, some little cosmetic vessels!

Dr. Talbot: It seems to me, Dr. Bauman, that there ought to be some sort of a lesson here for our Christian women, but this is rather a sensitive subject, and besides, our time is nearly up, so perhaps it would be better to confine ourselves to archaeology!
THE MOABITE STONE

Dr. Bauman: You’re probably right, Dr. Talbot! Perhaps we’d better leave Jezebel, and the story of her painted face! I do want yet to mention the discovery of what is known as the Moabite Stone, inasmuch as it belongs to this particular period in the history of Israel. It was discovered at Dibon in the land of Moab back in 1868 by a missionary named Klein. While funds for its removal were being raised in Europe, the Arabs roasted the stone and poured cold water on it to break it into pieces so as to exact a large price for it piece by piece. Fortunately an impression of the stone had been made, and when the pieces were finally gathered, the stone could be restored. The Moabite stone proved to be a valuable discovery for several reasons. It was erected by Mesha, King of Moab, commemorating his rebellion and deliverance from Omri and Ahab, kings of Israel. It belongs to about 850 B.C. and is the earliest inscription known written in the Phoenician alphabet. Mesha concedes the vassalage of Moab to Israel. Israel is mentioned six times and Omri is mentioned by name. The stone also mentions the name of Jehovah. All these, you see, have a very direct bearing upon the record given in our Bible.

Dr. Talbot: They certainly do. There are so many discoveries relating to the Old Testament kings. Which one shall we consider next?

KING JEHU

Dr. Bauman: Among those which bear on the period we were considering is the discovery of an inscription mentioning Jehu, the tenth King of Israel, who began to reign about 884 B.C.
Dr. Talbot: Oh, yes, I remember reading about him. He was apparently one of the early speed demons of history. I remember that when he was driving to Jezreel in his chariot a watchman saw him at a distance and said of him, "The driving is like the driving of Jehu . . . for he driveth furiously" (II Kings 9:20). Anyone driving through the streets of our cities well realizes that Jehu must have a good many descendants here in America! But, tell me, Dr. Bauman, what was the nature of the discovery to which you just referred?

Dr. Bauman: It has to do with the actual existence of King Jehu, which was confirmed by a discovery among the ruins of the Assyrian royal palace in the mound of Nimrud, near Nineveh. The monument is known as the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser. The four sides of the upper portion are covered with pictures, twenty in all. Above these pictures are inscriptions, telling what they mean. On one side, in the second picture from the top, is the figure of a man with marked Jewish features, kneeling on the ground, as if to kiss the feet of the Assyrian king. Behind are servants bearing gifts. The inscription above reads, "The tribute of Jehu, son of Omri" etc. The man pictured may be Jehu or his ambassador. This discovery was valuable, not only because it confirms the Biblical history, but because it adds a number of details not given in the Bible.

Dr. Talbot: Well, Dr. Bauman, if I rightly recall my Old Testament history, several Assyrian monarchs are mentioned in the Bible by name. How many of these have the archaeologists identified in recent years?

Dr. Bauman: I can best answer that by saying that all the Assyrian kings mentioned in the Bible appear in the monuments and a considerable number of details about their campaigns are given. In addition the Assyrian monuments
mention such Jewish kings as Ahab, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Menahem, Pekah and Hoshea, as well as Hazael of Syria. The siege and capture of Samaria by Shalmaneser and Sargon is described, and the number of captives is given as 27,280. All this accords with and supplements the Biblical records, and it should be remembered that in many cases the accounts contained in the Bible were the only ones known for many centuries.

KING SENNACHERIB

Dr. Talbot: Just a minute ago you referred to the name of King Hezekiah of Judah, as having been mentioned in the Assyrian monuments. To me, one of the most interesting stories in Old Testament history is the deliverance of Hezekiah from the devastating armies of the terrible Sennacherib. It appears that his military forces captured virtually all of Palestine except the city of Jerusalem, where his army met with complete disaster through the intervention of the angel of Jehovah. To what extent has archaeology confirmed this interesting story?

Dr. Bauman: No portion of Biblical history has received more perfect confirmation from the records of Assyria than those verses which describe Sennacherib’s invasion of Palestine, Dr. Talbot. A number of years ago the archaeologist, Layard, located at the site of ancient Nineveh the palace of this mighty monarch. Among the ruins were numerous sculptured stones and inscriptions on clay, recording and illustrating the principal events in the life of the king. The scenes of that very campaign into Palestine were found by Mr. Layard. Over the head of the king in one of these pictures is the inscription, “Sennacherib, king of the Universe, king of Assyria, sat upon a throne and reviewed the spoil of Lachish.”
**Dr. Talbot:** Say, it doesn't seem as if Sennacherib spent very much time cultivating the violets of modesty in his own garden, does it?

**Dr. Bauman:** No, but in this case the description of the destruction of Lachish given us by this vain and boastful monarch agrees exactly with that recorded in the Bible. What is more, within the past ten years, almost a century after Sennacherib's account was recovered by Layard, the archaeologists began the excavation of Lachish. There the spade has brought to light graphic evidence of the tragedy of Sennacherib's conquest.

**Dr. Talbot:** Well, after the destruction of Lachish, the Assyrian armies were dispatched to conquer Jerusalem. While Hezekiah was a godly king, apparently he was like a lot of the rest of us. When he first sensed the danger to Jerusalem, he tried to depend upon his own resources to settle the problem, for we are told that he sent a huge amount of gold and silver to Sennacherib at Lachish in an attempt to buy him off. Like most human attempts it failed, for Sennacherib took the money, but he continued to advance on Jerusalem. Then Hezekiah did what he should have done in the first place: He prayed, and the angel of the Lord delivered Jerusalem from the Assyrian host in a single night. Tell me, Dr. Bauman, do the monuments tell us anything about this siege of Jerusalem and Sennacherib's defeat?

**Dr. Bauman:** Yes, they do. On a large six-sided prism now in the British museum is Sennacherib's own account of the siege of Jerusalem. This monument reads in part: "I besieged Hezekiah of Judah, who had not submitted to my yoke, and I captured forty-six of his strong cities and fortresses... Hezekiah himself like a caged bird I shut up in
Jerusalem, his royal city. I threw up mounds against him, and I took vengeance upon any man who came forth from his city. The fear of the majesty of my sovereignty overwhelmed him."

Dr. Talbot: I note that Sennacherib mentions Hezekiah as a caged bird. Does he say how the cage was broken and the bird delivered? In other words, does he tell how Hezekiah was delivered through the disaster that overwhelmed the Assyrian host?

Dr. Bauman: No, he says nothing about that and that is not surprising, for it was not the custom of the Assyrian kings to record their failures. They chronicled only their victories. However, it is significant that nowhere does Sennacherib claim to have taken Jerusalem. Had he done so, he certainly would have recorded it. In this case the Bible is confirmed by the silence of the Assyrian record. However, as for the disaster which befell the Assyrian king on that fateful night when 185,000 of his army died, there is other confirmation. Heroditus from Egyptian sources gives the curious explanation that mice were responsible for the catastrophe. Confirmation also comes from Berosus, the Chaldean historian. It is a well-known fact that certain infectious diseases are capable of bringing about a disaster of such suddenness and magnitude. Some scholars believe Sennacherib’s army was destroyed by the bubonic plague.

Dr. Talbot: Well, there is certainly no reason why the angel could not have used that method, had he so desired. It is evident that many of the things recorded in God’s Word, which have seemed so incredible to some people, are not so hard to believe after all, when the facts are known.
THE SILOAM INSCRIPTION

Dr. Bauman: I have found that true many times, Dr. Talbot. I know my own faith was strengthened through the discoveries we have just discussed. There is one more of interest, bearing upon the period of the kings, which I believe should be mentioned in passing. It is known as the Siloam Inscription, and its discovery dates back to the year 1880 when a truant school boy went swimming in the Pool of Siloam. It is said that near the mouth of the aqueduct he slipped and fell into the deep water. When he came to the surface, he noticed on one of the stones in the wall something which appeared to be writing. Upon returning to school, he told his teacher of his discovery, which proved to be one of the most valuable treasures ever recovered from the ruins of Palestine. While it has neither name nor date, yet scholars say that the characters indicate the Siloam Inscription to be nearly as old as the Moabite Stone, and it has proven also to be the oldest known writing in the pure Hebrew of the Bible, coming from the very time when the Historical Books were written. Scholars also agree that this was the pool and conduit built by King Hezekiah to bring water into the city of Jerusalem, the record of which is found in II Kings 20.

Dr. Talbot: Well, the discussion of these kings has been very interesting, and it has served also to refresh our minds with a portion of Old Testament history. May I ask you yet, how many kings mentioned in the Old Testament have been identified as a result of archaeological discovery?

Dr. Bauman: That is not an easy question for year by year the number changes. Dr. Robert Dick Wilson, one of the greatest linguists of modern times, examined more than 100,000 references in the ancient inscriptions. He found
the name of forty-one kings mentioned in the Old Testament from the days of Abraham to the end of the Old Testament period. Others have recently been discovered.

Dr. Talbot: Well, surely no honest investigator can doubt greatly the accuracy of the Scripture or believe that it is merely a legendary work. The records in the books of Kings and the Chronicles are not always particularly interesting, but they are proving to be tremendously valuable as a weapon against unbelief in these last days when it is a popular thing to deny the authenticity of so much of God's word. Let us continue to thank God for this wonderful science.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Dr. Talbot: One of the most fascinating books in the entire Bible, especially to students of prophecy, is the book of Daniel. It is a favorite of mine, and I considered its contents so very practical that sometime ago I gave over the radio a whole series of studies in this book. These were later put into book form. Now, I understand that the book of Daniel affords an admirable example of the way in which modern archaeology tends to confirm traditional views of the Holy Scriptures. Is that correct?

Dr. Bauman: It certainly is. No book in the Bible a few years ago was more attacked by the critics, especially from the standpoint of its historicity, and nowhere in the field of archaeology has the evidence more completely vindicated the accuracy of the Scripture.

Dr. Talbot: I believe our friends would appreciate hearing something about these discoveries. I know there are a number of questions that I should like to have you discuss. One of these has to do with the size and glory of the city
of Babylon. We are told that Nebuchadnezzar became vain and swaggered up and down as he looked out upon the glories of the city, and that he boasted, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the royal dwelling place, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" (Dan. 4:30). What do we now know as to the size of this city?

Dr. Bauman: We now can be certain that Nebuchadnezzar's statement was no idle boast. According to the Greek historian, Heroditus, who lived in the fifth century B.C., the city was laid out in the form of a square, with the Euphrates River flowing through its midst. Each side of this square was fifteen miles long, and the whole city was surrounded by a wall 350 feet high and 87 feet thick in which there are said to have been "a hundred gates all of brass." Nebuchadnezzar was undoubtedly the greatest builder the world has ever seen. There is hardly one of the thousands of mounds in Babylonia which does not contain bricks bearing his name. The Hanging Gardens which he built for his Median Queen became one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Many of Nebuchadnezzar's building inscriptions have been unearthed, and they add their support to the suggestions of splendor given in the Bible.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Dr. Talbot: Well, in these inscriptions of which you speak is there any evidence that the heart of Nebuchadnezzar was filled with such pride and self-praise?

Dr. Bauman: There is considerable evidence. For example, one of his inscriptions, recovered several years ago, began something like this: "I am Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, the exalted prince, the favorite of Marduk, the noble
emperor . . . the possessor of wisdom, the seeker after truth, the untiring ruler . . . the wise, the pious, the first-born son of Nebopolassar."

Dr. Talbot: There isn’t much he left out of that bit of self-eulogy, is there? Now, the Bible tells us that because of his spirit of pride, he became insane for a period of seven years. Do the inscriptions indicate any lapse in his reign such as that which the Bible suggests?

Dr. Bauman: No one who understands the mentality of dictators, would expect to find details in the royal record, which would speak of the king’s madness, especially in view of the fact that Nebuchadnezzar recovered from his insanity. However, a mutilated inscription was found some years ago which Sir Henry Rawlinson translated as follows: “For four years, the seat of my kingdom in the city . . . which . . . did not rejoice my heart; in all my dominion I did not build a high place of power; the precious treasures of my kingdom I did not lay up; in Babylon buildings for myself and the honor of my kingdom I did not lay out; in the worship of Merodach, my lord, the joy of my heart; in Babylon, the city of his sovereignty and the seat of my empire, I did not sing his praises, and I did not furnish his altars; nor did I clear out the canals.” It is possible that this rather strange confession may have some relationship to the period of Nebuchadnezzar’s madness. Otherwise, what could have been the reason for the king’s inaction during this period?

Dr. Talbot: That is tremendously interesting, but I note that the inscription speaks about four years of inactivity, while the book of Daniel says the king’s illness lasted for “seven times.”

Dr. Bauman: There is probably no discrepancy here for
“seven times” does not necessarily mean seven years. It may refer to periods of summer and winter, and if so, there is a close approximation to the four years of Nebuchadnezzar’s inscription.

THE HEBREW CHILDREN

Dr. Talbot: One part of the book of Daniel which unbelievers relegated to the field of folklore is the story of the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace. Has anything been discovered in the ruins of Babylon which would shed light upon this portion of Daniel?

Dr. Bauman: In some of the earlier excavations of the city, the archaeologists uncovered what they at first believed to be an ordinary brick kiln. However, when the debris was cleared away, they found an inscription accompanying the structure which read: "This is the place of burning where men who blaspheme the gods of Chaldea die by fire." The critics had said such a fiery furnace never existed. The discovery served to prove that such a place actually did exist.

Dr. Talbot: While we’re talking about strange experiences in the book of Daniel, what can be said about the story of Daniel in the lion’s den?

Dr. Bauman: Perhaps it would be almost as appropriate to use the words, “Daniel in the Critics’ den,” Dr. Talbot, for here again Daniel was hailed for the purpose of being torn into pieces. However, the critics became the ones to fall into the lion’s den, so to speak. This is what I mean. An archaeologist by the name of Dieulafoy was working one day among the ruins of the city, when suddenly the ground gave way and he fell into what was first believed to be an ancient well. However, further examination re-
vealed it to be a pit or open cage, belonging to an ancient zoological park. At the base of the cage was an inscription which read: "The place of execution where men who angered the king died torn by wild beasts."

**Dr. Talbot:** Is there any evidence that this was the den into which Daniel was cast?

**Dr. Bauman:** No, but the discovery proved that there was a pit of execution such as the Bible describes. The prominence the lion had in Babylonian life may be seen in many of the panels of colored bricks with figures of lions moulded upon them. Then, too, it may be well to bear in mind that at the time of Daniel's experience, Babylon was under the domination of the Medo-Persian empire. The discovery of an ancient record in excavating the royal palace at Shushan revealed a list of four hundred eighty-four men who died in a den of lions.

**Dr. Talbot:** Well, it is certainly evident that the critics, rather than Daniel, have been the ones to land in the "lions' den!" I'd like to have you answer several questions about King Belshazzar. Apart from those we have discussed, he is about the next most important character in the book.

**BELSHAZZAR**

**Dr. Bauman:** That is a welcome question, for much of the battle over the historicity of Daniel raged around Belshazzar's existence. No such person was known to secular history, and his name had never been discovered among the ancient records. It looked like a clear case for the critics, because the Babylonian chronicles showed that the king on the throne at that time was Nabonidus. His name occurred many times among the monuments, but it bore no resemblance to the name, Belshazzar. That was a problem.

[25]
Dr. Talbot: Just how was this difficulty cleared up?

Dr. Bauman: It came about through the discovery at Ur of little clay cylinders which not only mentioned Belshazzar by name, but clearly indicate that he was the son of Nabonidus, King of Babylon, and that he was associated with him on the throne. One of these cylinders contained a prayer by the anxious father for his son, Belshazzar. It reads: "As for me, Nabonidus, king of Babylon, cause that I may not sin against thy great divinity, and bestow upon me a life of many days. And may reverence for thy great divinity dwell in the heart of Belshazzar, my firstborn, favorite son; may he commit no sin, and with fulness of life may he be satisfied."

Dr. Talbot: Evidently, Nabonidus had some fear for his son's character. Such was the character attributed to him in the story of the drunken feast which was held on the night his doom was foretold by the hand-writing upon the wall. It was this writing which Daniel interpreted, and for his work he was proclaimed "the third ruler in the kingdom" (Dan. 5:29).

Dr. Bauman: Yes, you will be interested to know that the archaeologists have laid bare the very throne room of the royal palace where much of the drama of the book of Daniel must have taken place. And, here is another thing of interest. The expression, "the third ruler of the kingdom," was never understood until the inscriptions revealed the fact that Belshazzar shared the throne with his father. Nabonidus was the first ruler of the kingdom; Belshazzar, therefore, was the second; and the best he could offer Daniel was the position of third ruler.

Dr. Talbot: This is certainly an evidence of the remarkable accuracy of the book of Daniel. There are quite a number
of questions which we have not covered, but tell me, is there any evidence for the violent death of Belshazzar?

Dr. Bauman: Yes, the closing line of a royal record from Babylon reads, "On the night of the eleventh day Gobrias killed the son of the king." This Gobrias was probably the Darius of whom the Bible speaks. Thus, Dr. Talbot, practically every problem suggested by the critics has been answered by the recent discoveries.

Dr. Talbot: Well, this has proven to be a most practical discussion, and I am sorry that we shall have to draw them to a close for the time being. It is my earnest hope that through this series of broadcasts the faith of many may have been strengthened in the truth of God's eternal Word, which "endureth forever." I trust that there may be some who have had their doubts settled to such an extent that they will be ready to accept the Bible, not only as a record of historical facts, but also as a revelation from God.

Dr. Bauman: That would be the only logical thing to do if one is convinced concerning the truth of this wonderful Book. The Bible itself is careful to show that the plan of salvation is based squarely upon the true and living Word. This is what Peter means when he says that we are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." (I Peter 1:23-25).

Dr. Talbot: Yes, and it should be remembered that we Christians are not asked to be credulous. The Scripture also says "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good"
(I Thess. 5:21). Archaeology is the science through which this "proving" is being done in an ultra-rationalistic age. Let us not forget that thousands of discoveries have been brought from the ruins of by-gone civilizations. Hundreds of these have sustained the accuracy of the Bible where a few years ago its records were challenged. How can we account for the fact that out of all the discoveries of archaeology, not one has been made which would rob us of our faith in the accuracy of the Scriptures?

Dr. Bauman: The Bible contains the oldest history in the world, yet it possesses the most authentic. Other ancient histories are filled with error and garbled traditions. One by one, as the facts are recovered, they parallel with the truths of the Bible. Can this book be anything else, then, but a book inspired of God? We join the Psalmist in his tribute: "Thy word is true from the beginning" (Psalm 119:106). Let us believe the Bible! Let us accept it! Let us trust its plan of salvation! Let us live and work by it! Let us face eternity in the light of its precious pages!
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