

KING SOLOMON'S RICHES

Putting together the pieces

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The lady's baby

Two prostitutes came to King Solomon to have an argument settled.

"Please, my lord," one of them began, "this woman and I live in the same house. I gave birth to a baby while she was with me in the house. Three days later this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there were only two of us in the house.

"But her baby died during the night when she rolled over on it. Then she got up in the night and took my son from beside me while I was asleep. She laid her dead child in my arms and took mine to sleep beside her. And in the morning when I tried to nurse my son, he was dead! But when I looked more closely in the morning light, I saw that it wasn't my son at all."

Then the other woman interrupted, "It certainly was your son, and the living child is mine."

"No," the first woman said, "the living child is mine, and the dead one is yours." And so they argued back and forth before the king.

Then the king said, "Let's get the facts straight. Both of you claim the living child is yours, and each says that the dead one belongs to the other. All right, bring me a sword." So a sword was brought to the king.

Then he said, "Cut the living child in two, and give half to one woman and half to the other!"

Then the woman who was the real mother of the living child, and who loved him very much, cried out, "Oh no, my lord! Give her the child—please do not kill him!"

But the other woman said, "All right, he will be neither yours nor mine; divide him between us!"

Then the king said, "Do not kill the child, but give him to the woman who wants him to live, for she is his mother!"

When all Israel heard the king's decision, the people were in awe of the king, for they saw the wisdom God had given him for rendering justice. (1 Kings 3:16-28)

If one is to believe the Bible story, Solomon's wisdom was legendary among other nations. We are told that "all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom that God had put in his heart." (2 Chronicles 9:23)

There is an historical tradition that two vases of flowers were placed before King Solomon. One contained natural flowers. The other contained exquisitely life-looking man-made imitations. The artificial flowers were so cleverly made that it was thought nobody would be able to tell the difference. And so it was that Solomon was asked, without touching them, to distinguish between the artificial and the natural.

What would you do? Solomon went to the window and said, "Bring in the bees."

Every one watched, as a little bee came buzzing its way in. Ignoring the first vase of flowers, it headed straight to the second.

"These flowers are natural," pronounced Solomon. "Those in the first vase are not."

Today our technology permits us to manufacture silk or plastic flowers so like nature's originals that it is often difficult to tell the difference. I am tempted to wonder what kind of technology existed in Solomon's day that could produce such perfect specimens of artificial flowers, such as we see in our shops today.

However, King Solomon of ancient Israel is famous for his great wealth and the majesty of the temple he constructed in Jerusalem, his capital city.

But this is where my friend George voiced his skepticism...

“OUT WITH DAVID AND SOLOMON”

George folded his arms smugly. “Out with David and Solomon!” he exclaimed. “Archaeology has dismantled the Bible's claim to history.”

I looked at him intently. “Okay, George, you have my ear.”

“Well,” he continued, “archaeologists have examined the remains from the Late Bronze to Early Iron Age, when King Solomon is supposed to have reigned, and found that, in the Late Bronze to Early Iron Age, Canaan was in poverty, with a depleted population, scant building activity, and a ridiculously tiny Jerusalem. Certainly no evidence of any world famous great monarch like Solomon. So...what do you say to that?”

“I totally agree.”

“You agree?” he said in surprise.

“Yes, if we accept the dates popularly assigned to the archaeological eras your argument is absolutely valid.”

“So you admit so-called Bible history is pure fiction!”

“If your dates are right... yes.”

Before we go any further, you may be wondering how George reached his conclusion?

HOW CITIES GOT LAYERED

You see, the procedure with ancient cities was to rebuild on top of the occupational debris that accumulated. Storms, earthquakes and invasions often destroyed part or all of these cities and subsequent occupants simply levelled off the area and built on top of it.

And today, as archaeologists cut into this debris, it is possible to distinguish the successive layers of occupation by the style of identifiable

pottery they contain. These layers have been named Early Bronze, Middle Bronze, Late Bronze and Iron Age. No one will dispute these identifications.

BUT WHAT DATES ARE THESE LAYERS?

However, the question is, what are the dates of these successive layers?

Ignoring the chronological data supplied in the biblical account, certain archaeologists in their wisdom have assigned their own approximate dates to these eras - which mean that David and Solomon would have lived at the beginning of the Iron Age.

And that makes the Bible account dead wrong.

Let me show you how this works.

<u>Theoretical periods</u>	<u>What is found</u>	<u>It is claimed</u>	<u>Therefore:</u>
Early Bronze Age	An absolute break; new people		
Middle Bronze II	Thriving urban culture Magnitude of palaces, temples		
Late Bronze, Early Iron Age	Poverty, depleted population, scant buildings, tiny Jerusalem	“The Bible says this was the great period of Kings David and Solomon”	“The Bible story is not true history”
Iron I Period	Dramatic upswing in population		

As you can see from the chart, in the supposed time of King Solomon (dubbed Late Bronze – early Iron Age) Canaan was in poverty – with a depleted population, scant building activity, and a very tiny Jerusalem.

And that contradicts the Bible account: "Solomon built Gezer, Lower Beth Horon, Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness (Palmyra in Syria), in the land of Judah, all the storage cities that Solomon had, cities for his chariots and cities for his cavalry, and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion." (1 Kings 9:17-19)

“That’s fiction,” says the skeptic, “because not one goblet, not one brick, has ever been found to indicate that such a reign existed.”

Again, the Bible says, "The king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as abundant as the sycamores which are in the lowland." (2 Chronicles 1:15)

“But the artefacts and pottery from this Iron Age indicate pitiful poverty and few people.” says the critic. “Jerusalem was scarcely a city.”

So if the popular chronology is correct, the Bible is wrong. It’s as clear-cut as that.

It seems the critic has won.

Is it as clear cut as that? Not quite. A problem arises for the critic. Two problems, in fact. And there appears no way to solve them.

What problems? Let’s look at that chart again.

THE DILEMMA

<u>Theoretical periods</u>	<u>What is found</u>	<u>Two problems:</u>
Early Bronze Age	An absolute break; new people	
Middle Bronze II	Thriving urban culture Magnitude of palaces, temples	
Late Bronze, Early Iron Age	Poverty, depleted population, scant buildings, tiny Jerusalem	1. Why and how did half of the Middle Bronze II population vanish?
Iron I Period	Dramatic upswing in population	2. Where did this sudden influx of people come from?

Do you see the dilemma? This was well expressed in an article in *The Financial Review* 28 March/1 April 2002:

MB II, Late Bronze and Iron I periods ... leave two critical questions for which satisfactory answers must be found. Why and to where did over half of the MB II population, i.e., virtually all the inhabitants of the hill country, 'vanish'? From where did the people who settled the hundreds of sites in Iron I 'materialise'?" (*The Financial Review* 28 March/1 April 2002, "False Testament, Daniel Lazare explains how archaeology has dismantled the Bible's claim to history.")

THE ANSWER: JUST CHANGE THE DATES

Okay, is there a solution? Yes. But it is going to require some radical thinking - it necessitates lopping anything up to six centuries off the traditional dates.

Change the dates and the dilemma goes away.

But how can we justify this revision of dates? Can we just fiddle the figures just to make them fit what we want?

Yes, we can, when we consider that the dates for the archaeological strata have been assigned, NOT on information that comes **from the strata themselves**, but simply by their **correlation with the dynasties of Egypt**. And such Egyptian dates are now being seriously challenged.

EGYPTIAN CHRONOLOGY IN ERROR

Now brace yourself for a shock. Our current conjectured history of Egypt is probably 600 to 800 years too long!

Some six to eight supposed “dynasties” never existed!

In case you didn’t know, inscriptions we dig up don’t carry a date, nor a ruler’s sequence number. It means we can easily get our dates wrong, even by hundreds of years.

The problem began in the early days of Egyptology. Modern archaeologists were giving highly exaggerated datings for the Egyptian dynasties. Dates like 6000 BC... 4000 BC.

Scholars built up a system of Egyptian dating that went back thousands of years earlier than is possible if one accepts the chronology in the Bible. Clearly one party was wrong – either the modern scholars (with their longer system), or the Bible (with its shorter dating system).

So why were the longer dates for Egypt accepted?

Simply because all the listed kings were placed one after another, in succession. This added thousands of extra years to Egyptian history. These lists of pharaohs had been provided by 3rd century BC Egyptian priest Manetho in his *Aegyptica*.

Manetho's exaggerated time period

Herodotus vouches for the fact that at one time there were no fewer than 12 kings of Egypt reigning at the same time. However, Manetho made no allusion to this (Wilkinson, *Egyptians*, vol. I, p. 148), but rather made his Thinite, Memphite and Diospolitan dynasties of kings, and a long list of other dynasties, all successive!

The duration of all these dynasties, commencing with Menes, is so long, it passes all rational belief.

Virtually all of the ancient kingdoms – Egyptian, Babylonian, Phrygian, and so on - were ***fond of exaggerating their antiquity*** in competition with each other. It has been suggested that Manetho, who recorded Egyptian king-lists, was probably in competition with the contemporary Babylonian historian Berossus to exaggerate the antiquity of their respective nations.

In Egypt the method was to add up the number of years in the reigns of all the kings on their lists (even though several kings had reigned simultaneously in different parts of Egypt) and tot them all up to wildly inaccurate figures.

So when the Greek historian Herodotus visited Egypt around 450 BC, he was given by this method an authoritative date of 12,040 BC for the founding of Egyptian civilization.

The present chronology of Egypt is largely the product of Eduard Meyer of the Berlin School of Egyptology. (E. Meyer, *Aegyptische Chronologie, Philosophische und historische Abhandlungen der Koeniglich preussischen Akad. Der Wiss.* Berlin, 1904)

Meyer realised that the lists of pharaohs provided by the ancient chronologer Manetho were greatly exaggerated. It certainly did not correlate with the more precise information of the monuments.

The Egyptians did not keep clear records of eclipses and other astronomical events that could help in establishing a precise chronology.

But Meyer read that the Roman author, Censorinus (3rd century AD) had recorded that a Great Sothic Year had concluded in 140 AD. (Censorinus, *De die Natali Liber ad Q. Caerellium*, trans. D. Nisard. Paris: Hildesheim, 1965)

The Sothic Cycle was the number of years it took the star Sirius to pass from one heliacal rising (that is, first visible rising of the star before dawn) on New Year's Day to another such rising. This cycle took 1460 years.

So with 140 AD as a starting point, Meyer calculated backwards (using multiples of 1460), and concluded that Sothic cycles must have commenced in 1320 BC, in 2780 BC and in 4240 BC. This latter date of 4240 BC, Meyer called the first fixed date in history of which one could be absolutely certain... based upon the notion (presumed from some Egyptian texts) that the ancient Egyptians counted time by the heliacal rising of the star Sirius.

Universities behind the times

However, the most reliable archaeoastronomers today (for example, B. Schaeffer, "Predicting Heliacal risings and Settings", *Sky and Telescope*, September, 1985, pp. 53-55; R. Purrington, "Heliacal Rising and Setting: Quantitative Aspects", *Archaeoastronomy* No 12, JHA, xix, 1988, S72-75) have abandoned this theory, and the Egyptologists have abandoned Meyer's date of 4240 BC in favour of another date, 3100 BC.

Despite this, it is Meyer's Sothic chronology of Egypt, basically, that is still the one found in the text books of colleges and universities. Meyer rearranged Manetho's lists of Pharaohs according to the Sothic rule. It was thought that he had thereby created so mathematically precise a history of Egypt that Egyptologists still claim to be able to pinpoint the very day certain events occurred, back as far as the 15th century BC. They believe these events to be "astronomically fixed".

The problem is that, whilst various Classical texts do make allusion to the Great Sothic Year, the Egyptian documents that refer to Sirius never do. The truth of the matter is that there is not the tiniest shred of evidence from Egypt to suggest that the Egyptians ever computed calendrically according to the Great Year of Sothis.

5 ways we have been misled

Here are some facts of which early Egyptologists were not aware:

Problem 1: Rulers were known by a title, as well as by a personal name. For example, it has now been discovered that Rameses II was not Rameses II, at all! He was most probably Rameses XLII – that is, the 42nd ruler called Rameses, which was rather a title, like Pharaoh. (Charles V. Taylor, *Creation Ex Nihilo*, September-November, 1987, p.9)

So where a ruler's title and name both appeared, Egyptologists had listed them separately, as though they were different pharaohs. Correcting this would shorten the list.

Problem 2: Then it was discovered that pharaohs regularly had as many as five, and even more, names. The Egyptologists had taken these and listed them one after another.

So, again, the chronology had to be shortened.

Problem 3: It was also discovered that other listed pharaohs ruled at the same time over different parts of Egypt. (*Ibid.*) Rulers sometimes appointed others as co-regent during their lifetime. This means that two “names” ruled concurrently.

Egyptologists have been adding many of these names on to a long list of what they thought were “consecutive” reigns.

What a mix-up! The dating was thrown into chaos. More shortening!

With such discoveries, the span of Egyptian history had to be progressively reduced. So that today it is commonly believed that Egyptian civilization began about 3000 BC.

Now take a deep breath. It turns out that even this is too long!

Problem 4: To add fuel to the fire, linguistic expert and university lecturer Edo Nyland of Canada has recently decoded and translated some 120 of the pharaohs' names. These appear in his book *Linguistic Archaeology*. In a personal communication to the author, Ed reported:

In doing my research I came upon some disturbing mistranslations by the ‘specialists’. I found two early pharaohs whose

names could not possibly be correct, because instead of names, they were curses aimed at intruders to the tomb. When I pointed this out to an archaeologist, I was brushed off with: 'All pharaohs' names have been properly translated, the book is closed on that subject'. (*Edo Nyland, private letter*)

Do you see? If some pharaohs were *not* really pharaohs at all, but merely curses...

More shortening of the chronology? Oh, boy! But that's not all!

Problem 5: Comparing documents on a generation-by-generation basis, Immanuel Velikovsky matched the history of Egypt with those of Babylon, Assyria, Israel, Greece and Persia, from roughly 1400 BC to about 330 BC.

His conclusion was startling: events of Egyptian history are described twice - and 600 years later they are repeated exactly, to the detail.

Boycott threat

Velikovsky's findings evoked an uproar. His original publisher was threatened by astronomers and professors. They warned that if his books were published, there would be a boycott of the publisher's standard textbooks!

So popular history is too long

The mistake lies not with history, but with the historians. This has led to a mistaken increase in the total year count.

"Scholars" sabotage ancient documents

Now at this point the *Turin Papyrus* enters the picture. This ancient document was prepared during the late 18th Dynasty of the Pharaohs and included lists of all the kings of every dynasty of ancient Egypt through to the 18th Dynasty.

This papyrus was found during a temple excavation in the 19th century. The King of Sardinia carefully preserved it and entrusted it to some "scholars" at Turin for translation. It arrived in perfect condition, but then something went wrong. The "scholars" destroyed or hid most of it. Why

would scholars do that? Horror of horrors, it proved the “LONG dynastic” history of Egypt to be UNTRUE! *So to “explain” the “changed condition” of the papyrus, they accused the King of Sardinia of sending it “unwrapped”.*

The Palermo Stone contained a similar list. And while many “scholars” quote from “missing parts” of the stone, “unapproved researchers” can have access to only a few fragments. It is obvious that the stone was broken recently, since all inner edges of the fragments show recent fracture conditions.

Our Egyptian knowledge mostly guesswork

W.B. Emery is one of the rare few who admit how limited our knowledge of ancient Egypt really is:

“Unfortunately,” he says, “our knowledge of the archaic hieroglyphs is so limited that reliable translation of these invaluable texts is at present beyond our power and we can only pick out odd words and groups which give us only the vaguest interpretations.” (W.B. Emery, *Archaic Egypt*. Penguin Books Reprint, 1984, p.59)

Yet, in most books we read, translations and conclusions are never stated as being theory; they are stated as firm fact.

Dating of early world history in chaos

The truth is, Egyptologists have been contracting the Egyptian chronology for decades.

For instance, down Bobbin Head Road in Turramurra, Sydney, Australia, stands a memorial in the bush. It is close to the gates of the park leading down to Bobbin Head – and within walking distance of the Lady Davidson Hospital, where after World War I wounded or gassed soldiers could recuperate.

One such soldier, Private Shirley, used to walk to this spot from the hospital. Out of a rock in the bush he carved a pyramid, sphinx and other objects, as a memorial to his friends who had served with him in Egypt - but never returned!

According to a plaque fixed at the spot, he completed his work in 1926, featuring “the Great Pyramid and Sphinx dating back to the 4th Dynasty in 4700 BC”. (A colleague of mine, Bruce Price of Sydney, has photos showing this date on the original plaque.) However, by the time Bruce visited the park in 1996 - seventy years later - the date given for the 4th Dynasty was 2600 BC! The Egyptologists had themselves in seven decades contracted it by 2,100 years!

How embarrassing! It now turns out that the scientific structure of Egyptian history is built on the framework of a mistaken chronology. The result of the artificial Sothic scheme is a vastly over-extended chronology of Egypt.

Such an Egyptian chronology, far from serving as a suitable gauge for the histories of other nations, only manages to throw one nation out of alignment with another. Does that help you to understand why the accepted Canaanite (Palestine) dates are all wrong?

Due to this mis-alignment (especially for the period prior to the 9th century BC), archaeology is seldom able to bring face to face contemporaries from one nation to another right across the board.

This impediment of mis-alignment that the conventionally trained scholars have inherited has led them into trying all sorts of clumsy techniques to make their data fit.

Consider early Greek history, for example. In order to make the shorter Greek history align with the Sothic chronology of Egypt, archaeologists have found it necessary to insert into Greek history a so-called “Dark Age” of about 300 years (c. 1200 to 900 BC). And they have inserted Dark Ages in many other places as well.

The painful fact is, there is absolutely no archaeological evidence for the existence of these Dark Ages. (Peter James, *Centuries of Darkness*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1991. This book comes with a high recommendation, in the *Foreward*, from Colin Renfrew, Professor of Archaeology at Cambridge University.)

And since Egyptian chronology is the rule and the standard for the entire world history, ***the history of the entire ancient world is consequently now in a most chaotic state.***

Adjustments and revisions of Egyptian history ***will tend to considerably shorten human history in general.***

The point now is that the dating of layers of rubble in the ancient cities of Canaan is in error – simply because it has been pegged to Egyptian dating.

So if the critic of the Bible changed his dates he would soon discover that the Bible was not at fault after all. And he would discover the answers to his own problem of data that frustrates him because it just won't fit together neatly.

In the introduction to Peter James' book *Centuries of Darkness* the highly regarded Cambridge Professor, Colin Renfrew wrote,

The revolutionary suggestion is made here that the existing chronologies for that crucial phase in human history are in error by several centuries, and that, in consequence, history will have to be rewritten ... I feel that their critical analysis is right, and that a chronological revolution is on its way. (Peter James, *Centuries of Darkness* pp. XIV, XVI)

In 1995 David Rohl published his book *A Test of Time*. A series of programmes based on the book was also aired on prime time TV by the BBC in UK. He wrote,

The new chronology has determined that Rameses II should be dated to the tenth century BC - some three hundred and fifty years later than the date which had been assigned to him in the orthodox chronology." (David Rohl, *A Test of Time* p. 143)

DATES FIT BIBLE RECORDS

And what happens when the dates are corrected? Just this: They are found to be in remarkable accord with the biblical records. David and Solomon did exist and were the triumphant builders of a great nation that dominated Palestine and the surrounding areas.

FOUR ERAS OF HISTORY

The Bible history of Israel is divided into four neat periods for which, if it is true, we should expect solid archaeological evidence:

1. The Exodus from Egypt and occupation of Palestine followed by the period of the Judges.
2. A period of prosperity and power during the Israelite monarchy of King David, then Solomon
3. The national exile into Assyria and Babylon.
4. The return from exile.

NO MORE MISSING PIECES

Examine this chart again and see how this solves the critic's problem of things not fitting:

<u>Theoretical periods</u>	<u>What is found</u>	<u>The answer:</u>
Early Bronze Age	An absolute break; new people	The Exodus, the occupation of Canaan, and the Judges era
Middle Bronze II	Thriving urban culture Magnitude of palaces, temples	Kings David and Solomon and the Monarchy
Late Bronze, Early Iron Age	Poverty, depleted population, scant buildings, tiny Jerusalem	Exile; the land emptied
Iron I Period	Dramatic upswing in population	Return from exile

You see how it now makes sense? And also the two mysteries that plague the critic regarding periods 3 and 4 (in the chart repeated below) are solved:

<u>Theoretical periods</u>	<u>What is found</u>	<u>The problem</u>	<u>The answer</u>
1. Early Bronze Age	An absolute break; new people		
2. Middle Bronze II	Thriving urban culture Magnitude of palaces, temples		
3. Late Bronze, Early Iron Age	Poverty, depleted population, scant buildings, tiny Jerusalem	Why and how did half of the Middle Bronze II population vanish?	Exile to Assyria and Babylon; the land emptied
4. Iron I Period	Dramatic upswing in population	Where did this sudden influx of people come from?	Return from exile

The dating, once adjusted, not only fits Bible chronology, but also solves the dilemmas caused by the critic's dating errors.

You see, the problem was not with the Bible, but with the critic.

What the critics say

With this in mind, let's examine a few of the problems the critic has raised concerning the Bible record.

1. THE EXODUS, OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE, AND THE JUDGES PERIOD

(a) THE HEBREWS ONLY MYTHICAL?

IT IS CLAIMED:

The Hebrews were not a historical people, but only mythical. There was no Hebrew sojourn in Egypt.

IN REALITY:

Some Egyptian monuments mention an enigmatic people: the "*Apiru*". In one of these was carved on the stone walls a scene depicting men working at a wine press. Beneath the picture was a title which ran: "Straining out wine by the *Apiru*". The date of the monument is calculated to be during the reign of queen Hatshepshut and Tutmoses III, about the year 1470 BC.

Scholars immediately recognized the similarity of the word "*Apiru*" to "*Hebrew*", with a scene depicting manual labour, as described in the biblical book of Exodus concerning Hebrew people under bondage in Egypt.

The "*Apiru*" are called elsewhere "*Habiru*" or "*Habiri*".

(See other evidence for the Hebrews in Egypt: *The Weapon the Globalists Fear*, ch. 15, "Were the Hebrews Really in Egypt?" <<http://www.beforeus.com/weapon-ebook.html>>)

1. THE EXODUS, OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE, AND THE JUDGES PERIOD

(b) NO EXODUS FROM EGYPT?

IT IS CLAIMED:

There was no sojourn in Egypt and no Exodus.

IN REALITY:

The book of Exodus records the Hebrew escape from slavery in Egypt and their pursuit by the Pharaoh's army. It recounts the opening of the Red Sea, the safe passage of the Hebrews to the opposite shore, and the drowning of the Egyptian army.

Since 1992, our archaeological teams, comprising some 35 international divers on more than 200 dives, have been discovering skeletal remains of men and horses strewn across the floor of the Red Sea and mixed among chariot cabs, axles and wheels, at the precise location where the Exodus account says the event occurred.

Furthermore, Dr Ali Hassan of Egyptian Antiquities dated a sample from this discovery as belonging to the 1400s BC, which is consistent with the biblical date for the Exodus.

If these are not remains of the Egyptian army that pursued the Hebrews during the Exodus, I would like to know what they are.

(For comprehensive evidence of this discovery, see *Discoveries: Questions Answered*, pp. 175-221 – < http://www.beforeus.com/shopcart_hc.html >)

1. THE EXODUS, OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE, AND THE JUDGES PERIOD

(c) NO HEBREW DESERT WANDERING?

IT IS CLAIMED:

The slate is blank concerning the 40 years that the Israelites supposedly wandered in the Sinai. Not so much as a skeleton, campsite or cooking pot has turned up.

IN REALITY:

It is correct that there are no such remains found in the traditional Sinai peninsula. And with good reason. This is not where the Hebrews camped for 40 years. Archaeologists have been looking in the wrong place! The Sinai peninsula has always been under Egyptian control (except for a brief period after 1967, when Israel took over that area). For that reason, it would not be a safe place of refuge for runaway slaves!

However, we are not left to speculate. An ancient record clearly informs us that the true Sinai was not in Egypt but in Arabia (Galatians 4:25)

And in Saudi Arabia several of our team have been discovering, documenting and filming evidence of a large encampment of people. And, preserved in the dryness of the desert, monuments, artefacts and other remains answering the descriptions given in the book of Exodus.

Certainly, these are exciting finds –and precisely what you would expect if the biblical account were true. These have been copiously documented with photographs in my books *Discoveries: Questions Answered* and *Sinai's Exciting Secrets*.

The critic's problem is he has been searching in the wrong place!

Were there slaves in Egypt called "*Apiru*", "*Habiru*", "*Habiri*" or

"*Hebrew*"? Did they escape a pursuing Egyptian army through the Red Sea? Did they camp in the desert? Physical evidence says YES.

The biblical record says the Israelites stayed for 40 days at a place called Kadesh Barnea, while twelve spies went in to search the promised land of Canaan and bring back a report.

Dr Rudolph Cohen, former Deputy Director of the Israel Antiquities Service, excavated for 25 years in the Negev (southern Israel), including Kadesh Barnea where the Israelites stayed for 40 days while the twelve spies searched the promised land. He claims there is so much evidence for the presence of a large number of people there at the beginning of the MBI period that he is of the firm conviction that these were the migrating Israelites.

In the July 1983 edition of *Biblical Archaeology Review* Dr Rudolph Cohen, recently retired Deputy Director of the Israel Antiquities Service wrote an article entitled "The Mysterious MBI People, in which he stated,

"In fact, these MBI people may be the Israelites whose famous journey from Egypt to Canaan is called the Exodus." (*BAR* p. 16)

He even claims that, from the pottery they left behind, he could trace the route the Israelites took. He wrote:

It is interesting, however, to note that this migratory drift, as I have reconstructed it, bears a striking similarity to that of the Israelite's flight from Egypt to the Promised Land, as recorded in the book of Exodus." (*Ibid.* p. 28)

In 1993, David Down's Australian group worked with Dr Cohen in his excavations at Ein Hatzeva, south of the Dead Sea. During the course of the excavations site supervisor Egal Israel came by to see what they were finding.

Down asked him whether he agreed with Dr Cohen's views identifying the MBI people with the Israelite migration.

Without hesitation he replied, "Of course I do, and so do all the archaeologists down here."

Down said, "The archaeologists in the north do not accept it."

He replied, "They do not know what they are talking about."

1. THE EXODUS, OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE, AND THE JUDGES PERIOD

(d) NO HEBREW INVASION OF PALESTINE?

IT IS CLAIMED:

There is no evidence of any Hebrew invasion of Canaan.

IN REALITY:

If such an invasion took place, there should be evidence of destruction, fire, and the appearance of a new people with new pottery styles, different burial practises and manufacturing skills. After all, they had come from the advanced civilization of Egypt.

This is exactly what we find at the end of the Early Bronze Age and the beginning of the Middle Bronze I Period. }

Kathleen Kenyon, who excavated Jericho, wrote:

The final end of the early Bronze Age civilisation came with catastrophic completeness. The last of the Early Bronze Age walls of Jericho was built in a great hurry, using old and broken bricks, and was probably not completed when it was destroyed by fire. Little or none of the town inside the walls has survived subsequent denudation, but it was probably completely destroyed, for all the finds show that there was **an absolute break**, and that **a new people** took the place of the earlier inhabitants. **Every town in Palestine that has so far been investigated shows the same break.** The newcomers were nomads, not interested in town life, and they so completely drove out or absorbed the old population, perhaps already weakened and decadent, that all traces of the Early Bronze Age civilization disappeared. (Kathleen Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, page 134)

"An absolute break ... a new people ... every town in Palestine ... newcomers were nomads ... completely drove out or absorbed the old population ... " Could we expect to find a more apt description of the Israelite invasion - nomads from the desert who initially were not interested in living in the cities?

James Pritchard, who excavated in Gibeon in 1956, found the same types of evidence. Writing of his own discoveries at Gibeon he stated:

These relics of the Middle Bronze I people seem to indicate a fresh migration into the town of a nomadic people who brought with them an entirely new tradition in pottery forms and new customs in burial practices. They may have come into Palestine from the desert at the crossing of the Jordan near Jericho and may then have pushed on to settle eventually at places such as Gibeon, Tel el-Ajjul and Lachish, where tombs of this distinctive type have been found. (James Pritchard, *Gibeon, Where the Sun Stood Still* page 153)

Nothing could more aptly fit the Biblical record of the Israelites coming in from their desert wanderings, crossing the Jordan at Jericho and occupying the Promised Land.

In this connection, why don't we explore the old city of Jericho, on the Jordan's West Bank?

According to the biblical book of Joshua, this was the first outpost standing in the way of the Hebrew tribes occupying the Promised Land of Canaan (Palestine).

It is recorded that the Hebrews camped nearby. Then they marched around the city every day for a week. Except, on the seventh day they marched around it seven times. Yes, seven times in a single day. They then blew a chorus of trumpets. And the walls came crashing down.

A bit far-fetched, you think?

THE WALLS OF JERICHO

How big, really were the walls of Jericho?

The city of Jericho was built upon a large mound of earth surrounded by an embankment with a stone retaining wall at its base. On top of this 12-15 foot high retaining wall was another mud-brick wall 6 feet thick and

about 25 feet tall. Then, at the crest of this embankment was another similarly sized wall whose base was about 45 feet above the ground level outside the retaining wall.

So if you were standing in front of the retaining wall, it would appear to you that the wall was over 70 feet tall. Without a doubt, the wall was impossible for the Israelites to overcome on their own. The city and its several thousand occupants were prepared for a long siege. The harvest had just been taken and water was plentiful, so the city could easily have handled a siege of many months or possibly several years.

Yet, regardless of its mighty wall, the city of Jericho fell around the year 1400 BC.

Today, you can see what remains of ancient Jericho.

Archaeological evidence confirms that an earthquake truly did bring down the walls of Jericho. According to Dame Kathleen Kenyon, who excavated the site in the 1950s, scorching and ashes throughout the city prove that ‘the destruction of the walls was the work of enemies.’ This is precisely how Joshua’s capture of Jericho is portrayed in the Bible – an earthquake that broke down the city walls and the whole city burned to the ground. (Joshua 6:24)

During his excavations of Jericho (1930-1936), John Garstang found something so startling that he and two other members of the team prepared and signed a statement describing what was found. In reference to these findings Garstang says:

As to the main fact, then, there remains no doubt: the walls fell outwards so completely that the attackers would be able to clamber up and over their ruins into the city. Why so unusual? Because the walls of cities do not fall outwards, they fall inwards. And yet in Joshua 6:20 we read, ‘The wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him and they took the city.’ The walls were made to fall outward. (John Garstang, *The Foundations of Bible History; Joshua, Judges*. New York: R.R. Smith, Inc., 1931, p.146)

The fallen walls of Jericho seen today are precisely those that came tumbling down in the face of Joshua’s army.

Kenyon's expedition uncovered a portion of a house wall and floor, with an oven and a small jug, which appeared to be 'part of the kitchen of a Canaanite woman, who may have dropped the juglet beside the oven and fled at the sound of the trumpets of Joshua's men'. (Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Digging Up Jericho*, p. 263)

The single dipper juglet was beside the oven, lying on the floor. It was found *in situ*.

The biblical story has been substantiated in a number of ways.

1. There was a king for each of the small city-states, just as the Bible suggests.
2. There were double walls.
3. Only one gateway was found. This harmonizes with the biblical comment about 'shutting of THE gate.'

Apparently all of the city of the time of Joshua (and parts of even earlier levels) was eroded away. This is not surprising. The crumbling mud-brick structures were not preserved by being built upon by later inhabitants, because the city was unoccupied for centuries after Joshua's time. (Joshua 6:21) Pottery finds in the tombs outside the city, indicate that Jericho was inhabited in 1400 BC, just as the Bible states.

The point is, these physical facts are all true. And if so, then there was truly an invasion – and the benefit of the findings must go not to the critic but to the Bible record.

1. THE EXODUS, OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE, AND THE JUDGES PERIOD

(e) 7 TIMES AROUND A CITY IN ONE DAY?

IT IS CLAIMED:

Surely it would seem impossible to march around a city seven times in one day, as the Bible says.

IN REALITY:

I have enjoyed the privilege of exploring those ruins. It turns out that Jericho was a collection of tiny dwellings compactly crowded together on such a scale that you can easily walk around the foundations in 30 minutes or less! The city's total size was less than 8 acres. Seven times around would be less than 3 miles.

It is now evident that the Bible stands up to this investigation remarkably well – certainly better than the opinions of scholars!

1. THE EXODUS, OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE, AND THE JUDGES PERIOD

(f) CONQUEST IN THE 14th CENTURY?

IT IS CLAIMED:

The Hebrew Exodus and the subsequent conquest of Canaan, was not around 1400 BC, but as late as 1200 BC.

IN REALITY:

In Egypt there has been discovered a complete royal archive, dating from around 1400 BC. This comprises hundreds of official letters received by the Egyptian kings Amenhotep III and IV from their Palestinian and Syrian vassals.

Known as the Amarna Letters, these documents prove Egypt was politically weak around 1400 BC, during the very time which the Bible claims the Hebrews were invading Palestine (Canaan).

Some of these letters come from the king of Jerusalem, Abdu-khepa – a Hittite. He pleads for weapons and soldiers from Egypt to defend his city from the invading *Habiru*.

He writes that they have already taken over great parts of the country, and that they threaten to overrun the whole land. He wanted to know why the king was leaving them to behave in this way; why was he not sending archers to protect his, the king's, properties. If he did not send military help the whole land would be given to the Habiru.

So here is a description of the *Hebrew* conquest of Canaan as the Canaanites saw it.

WHY DID EGYPT IGNORE THE CANAANITE PLEA?

Where was the well-trained Egyptian army? Maybe it was at the bottom

of the Red Sea. (Exodus 14:22-28) And Egypt had still not recovered from that devastating event.

The activities of the *Habiri* in Southern Canaan concerns many scholars; they believe this area was not attached to Israelite territory until much later. However, Chapters 10 to 12 in the Book of Joshua describe just such conquest, with the very names listed in the Amarna tablets, including Lachish, Gezer, Gath, and the king of Jerusalem.

A quote from one tablet shows the state of affairs: "See the deed which Milkilu and Shuwardata have done to the land of the king, my lord! They have the troops of Gezer, troops of Gath, and troops of Qeila. They have seized the land of Rubute. The land of the king has fallen away to the *Habiri*. And now, even a city of the Jerusalem district, Bit-nin'ib by name, a city of the king, has fallen away to the side of the people of Qeila. Let the king listen to Er-Heba, your servant, and send an army of archers that they might restore the land of the king to the king. For if there are no army of archers the land of the king will fall away to the *Habiri*."

The identification of groups of *Habiri* and their activities corresponds well to the conquest of Canaan described in the Book of Joshua. The Amarna letters suggest that this class of people held unique status in the Near East. All these documents lead to fully identify these *Habiru* with the Israelites.

And there is further evidence – this time, proving that in the 13th century BC the Hebrews were *already* in Canaan – long before the time claimed by critical scholars.

Monuments in the form of high stone pillars were frequently erected by Egyptian pharaohs to commemorate their victories and political success. One such stele set up by Pharaoh Merneptah mentions Israel as a people he had defeated in a battle in one of his Palestine campaigns. This bears witness to the existence of the Israelites in Palestine in the 13th century, just as the Bible says.

1. THE EXODUS, OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE, AND THE JUDGES PERIOD

(g) WAS ISRAEL ONLY AN INDIGENOUS CANAANITE STATE?

IT IS CLAIMED:

Israel, Judah and Samaria were simply Canaanite states that arose out of indigenous Canaanite culture and not from the invasion of a mythical people called the Hebrews. (To put it another way, Israel and Judah were only indigenous Canaanite states.)

IN REALITY:

There are two credible witnesses that can help us:

- (a) physical archaeological discoveries
- (b) the ancient book of Genesis.

Archaeology is a science which deals with physical objects from the past that one can see, smell and touch. In deciding between theories and facts, physical facts must always take precedence.

Physical archaeological evidence unearthed confirms the book of **Genesis** to be a *supremely credible* witness to the past. Any discussion on this should take into account the stunning evidence documented in my book *The Weapon the Globalists Fear*. (<[http://www.beforeus.com/ weapon-ebook.html](http://www.beforeus.com/weapon-ebook.html)>)

Regarding the Table of Nations found in Genesis chapter 10, the greatest of Middle East archaeologists, Professor William Albright of John Hopkins University, declares:

... [It] stands absolutely alone in ancient literature without a remote parallel...an **astonishingly accurate document**. [and] shows such remarkably “modern” understanding of the ethnic and linguistic situation in the modern world, in spite

of all its complexity, that scholars never fail to be impressed with the author's knowledge of the subject. (William F. Albright, *Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands*. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1955, pp.70ff)

In fact, Albright begins his classic essay, *The Biblical Period*, by stating:

Hebrew national tradition **excels all others in its clear picture of tribal and family origins**. In Egypt and Babylonia, in Assyria and Phoenicia, in Greece and Rome, we look in vain for anything comparable. There is nothing like it in the tradition of the Germanic peoples. Neither India nor China can produce anything similar.

So you can ignore the skeptic who pretends it's only folklore.

What do the Genesis chronologies tell us?

On one hand, that the Hebrews are descended from **Eber** (hence the name "**Hebrew**").

Descendants of Noah's son Shem are known as Semites. The Semitic people include the Hebrews, Arabs, and ancient nations such as Babylonians and Assyrians. Eber, in the third generation from Noah's son Shem, was the progenitor of both the *Israelites* (including *Judah*) and Arabs.

On the other hand, the Canaanites were descended from **Canaan**, second generation from Noah's son Ham. HAM is the progenitor of the Negroid groups.

It is clear, therefore, that the Hebrews (including **Israel** and **Judah**) were not indigenous Canaanites at all!

So were Israel and Judah indigenous Canaanite states? You be the judge.

2. DAVID, SOLOMON AND THE MONARCHY

(a) NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE?

According to the Bible record, this second period was one of affluence and power, during the centuries of the Israelite monarchy when King David and his son Solomon, under the direction of God, enlarged and enriched the nation.

IT IS CLAIMED:

But there is no archaeological evidence to support the stories of David and Solomon.

IN REALITY:

This argument is rather irrelevant. It is simply an argument from silence. There is no inscriptional evidence to prove the existence of dinosaurs, but scientists see no problem with that.

2. DAVID, SOLOMON AND THE MONARCHY

(b) DAVID NEVER RULED ISRAEL?

IT IS CLAIMED:

The House of David never ruled in Israel. It ruled over the Canaanite State of Judah. Not over *Israel*. Only over *Judah*.

IN REALITY:

In 1993, a team of archaeologists led by Prof. Avraham Biran, were excavating Tel Dan, a beautiful mound at the foot of Mount Hermon in northern Galilee, beside one of the headwaters of the Jordan River.

On July 21, they came upon a triangular piece of basalt rock, measuring 23 x 36 cm. It was inscribed in Aramaic.

This was later identified as part of a victory pillar erected by the king of Syria and later smashed by an Israelite ruler.

The inscription on the stone is dated to the 9th century BC. This was about a century after David was believed to have ruled Israel. The inscription includes the words "Beit David" (which means "House" or "*Dynasty*" of *David*") and also refers to "*King of Israel*".

This reference to David does strongly indicate that *a king called David* established a dynasty *in Israel* during the period that the Bible states.

2. DAVID, SOLOMON AND THE MONARCHY

(c) DAVID'S EMPIRE NOT EXTENSIVE?

IT IS CLAIMED:

The empire of King David was not as extensive as the Bible implied.

IN REALITY:

On the contrary, archaeological discoveries now show that a significant city given in the record of David's empire lies far to the north.

Anson Rainey, professor of ancient Near Eastern cultures cautions the unwary about assuming that David did not have an empire such as the Bible describes:

As someone who studies ancient inscriptions in the original, I have a responsibility to warn the lay audience that the new fad, the 'deconstructionist school', ... is merely a circle of dilettantes. Their... denial of the existence of a United Monarchy [over Israel], is a figment of their vain imagination. The name 'House of David' in the Dan and Mesha inscriptions sounds the death knell to their specious conceit. (*Biblical Archaeology Review*, November-December, 1994, p.47)

This period was one of affluence and power. Concerning the Middle Bronze IIB Period, prominent Israeli archaeologist Dr Amihai Mazar wrote,

"The Middle Bronze Age architecture was to a large extent innovative and original. Together with the massive fortifications of this period, it evidences a thriving, prosperous urban culture. The magnitude of the palaces and temples manifests the wealth and power concentrated in the hands of the autocracy and theocracy of the period." (*Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* page 213. Double Day 1990)

2. DAVID, SOLOMON AND THE MONARCHY

(d) SOLOMON'S JERUSALEM SMALL, UNIMPORTANT?

IT IS CLAIMED:

In the time of David and Solomon, Jerusalem was an unimportant very small town.

IN REALITY:

In the 1990s, Dr. Avi Ofer conducted an archaeological survey in the hills of Judea. His findings were that in the 11th-10th centuries BC, the population of Judah almost doubled compared to the preceding period.

He employed the so-called Rank Size Index (RSI), which is a method of analyzing the size and positioning of settlements, to evaluate to what extent they were a self-contained group. He found indications that during this alleged period of the reign of David, a strong centre of population existed at the edge of the region. Jerusalem is the most likely candidate for this centre.

The facts of archaeology show that:

1. In the 10th century BC, a dynasty was established by David.
2. The population in the hill country of Judah doubled.
3. This acquired a strong central point, probably Jerusalem.
4. Jerusalem was an already settled site, **important enough to be mentioned in Egyptian documents.**

These facts are also consistent with the biblical record.

2. DAVID, SOLOMON AND THE MONARCHY

(e) ONLY VASSALS TO OTHER KINGDOMS?

IT IS CLAIMED:

The Babylonians and Assyrians were probably not happy with sharing their territory with the Jews and there IS PROOF that these empires physically occupied the territories allegedly attributed to Solomon's "Empire". Israel and Judah were, comparatively speaking... *very* humble Kingdoms *indeed* and were vassals to both Egyptian AND Babylonian/Assyrian monarchs.

IN REALITY:

In the 20th century, France was a “vassal” to Germany. But this applies not to that century as a whole - but only to a brief period in the 1914-1918 war, then again from 1940 to 1944. For most of the 20th century France was a powerful, independent nation.

One should not generalise from temporary examples.

From the accession of Saul as the first king of Israel in 1050 BC to the destruction of Judah in 586 BC, we have 464 years. The term “vassals” applies to a very limited period of this long sweep of history. In all honesty, we must examine the 5 centuries in total.

We discover that there were two periods:

1. The united monarchy, under Kings Saul, David and Solomon.
2. The two kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

THE UNITED MONARCHY

Concerning this period, we have archaeological evidence from the nations of Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia.

According to the biblical record, under Solomon's rule (around 1000 BC), Israel reached the pinnacle of wealth and power. Solomon's rule was also a time of peace. (1 Chron.22:9)

From contemporary Egyptian, Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions (around 1000 BC) we find these once-powerful nations afflicted by military weakness. This would have left Solomon free to greatly develop and enrich his nation through many profitable commercial alliances, as the Bible reports.

In fact, Israel gained respectability among its neighbours, and for a short period became one of the strongest powers in the Middle East.

The conditions described in the Bible for 1000 BC (the period of Solomon's reign) fit the political climate of the surrounding nations perfectly.

THE SUBSEQUENT 2 KINGDOMS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

Israel sat at the crossroads of the world, close to where Africa, Europe and Asia converged. It would be odd if such a strategic location would not be the envy of other world powers.

After Solomon's death the kingdom split into two separate weaker nations, Israel and Judah.

In subsequent times, invaders cast their eyes upon this coveted region. And occasionally the sovereign countries of Judah and Israel were attacked.

1. Pharaoh Shishak of Egypt came against Judah and plundered the Temple. "And it happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, that Shishak, king of Egypt came against Jerusalem because they transgressed against the Lord. . . So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house; he took everything. He also carried away the gold shields which Solomon had made." (2 Chronicles 12:2, 9).

2. The Assyrians attacked Israel on several occasions, finally conquering it in 719 BC, after which the kingdom of Israel ceased to exist.

3. The Babylonians invaded Judah three times, until they finally burned the Temple in 586 BC, along with most of the city.

However, throughout most of this period, both Judah and Israel survived as independent sovereign nations. They were not vassals of other countries.

It is significant that wherever Egyptian, Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions speak of events recorded in the Bible account, they harmonise.

Because so many names– and events – were *known only from* the Bible, the critics calmly told us that these were pure myth. This skepticism prevailed for many years. But now archaeology has turned the whole situation around. Here is a handful of the many examples:

- Pharaoh Shishak’s successful Palestinian campaign in the fifth year of King Rehoboam: a fragment of his victory monument found at Megiddo, confirms the biblical account. (1 Kings 14:25,26)
- Many fragments of beautifully carved ivory plaques originating from Ahab’s ivory palace. (1 Kings 29:39)
- Assyrian inscriptions of Sennacherib’s siege of Jerusalem in 701 BC, against Hezekiah. (2 Kings 18:13 to 19:36)
- Assyrian inscriptions mentioning the biblical kings Joash, Azariah and Manasseh, Ahab, Jehu, Jehoash, Menahem, Pekah and Hoshea.
- Babylonian receipts confirming the exile and food rations of Judah’s king Jehoiachin. (2 Kings 24:8-15; Jeremiah 52:30-34)
- Excavations at Susa in Iran, show the layout of the Persian palace in such perfect agreement with the biblical description of it (in the Book of Esther) that scholars have been led to admit that only someone well acquainted with the palace, its environs, its divisions, and its court ceremonial could have written it.
- Almost every Assyrian, Babylonian, or Persian ruler mentioned in the Bible has been rediscovered in contemporary documents – Shalmaneser, Tilgath-pileser, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Cyrus, Darius the Great, Xerxes, Sargon, and many others.
- Even officials whose names are in the Bible, such as Nebuzar-adan (2 Kings 25:8) or Nergal-sharezer (Jeremiah 39:3) are met with in the official documents of their time.

- During the excavation of Gezer in 1969, a massive layer of ash was discovered. Sifting through it yielded pieces of Hebrew, Egyptian, and Philistine artefacts. Apparently all three cultures had been there at the same time. This greatly puzzled researchers. And then they examined the Bible account, which confirmed exactly what they found: “Pharaoh king of Egypt had attacked and captured Gezer. He had set it on fire. He killed its Canaanite inhabitants and then gave it as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon’s wife.” (1 Kings 9:16)

Archaeologist Horn was forced to conclude:

Archaeological discoveries show us that the historical setting is true to fact and that the events described **did really happen**. (Siegfried H. Horn, *Records of the Past Illuminate the Bible*. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1975, p.62)

I have to agree with the renowned archaeologist Nelson Glueck when he draws attention to

...the almost **incredibly accurate** historical memory of the Bible, and particularly so when it is **fortified by archaeological fact**. (Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert*, p.31)

It can now be stated with confidence that in every case where the physical science of archaeology has been able to test the Bible’s historical details, the “myth” charge has failed.

Yet, oddly enough, the critics’ out-dated anti-Genesis propaganda is still rehashed and served to us deceptively as “new information”.

2. DAVID, SOLOMON AND THE MONARCHY

(g) ONLY JEWS OR CHRISTIANS BELIEVE IN THE GLORIES OF SOLOMON?

IT IS CLAIMED:

But I suppose the main reason why I question all this talk of the splendours of Solomon is that the ONLY people that claim this as fact are either Jews and/or Christians.

IN REALITY:

And why do Jews and Christians speak of the splendours of Solomon? It so happens they have the benefit of a document which is increasingly confirmed by archaeological discovery. You could say that gives them a unique advantage.

This is a fact with which every skeptic must come to terms.

Interesting isn't it, how a critic would rather believe a modern writer who lives 3,000 years after the events, than a scribe who recorded the events of his own day.

Does the critic assume that witnesses cannot be reliable if they were close to the events about which they give testimony?

Come on, now, who is more likely to be correct?

In court stands a person who has survived a vicious attack. Isn't he in the best position to give an accurate report of what happened to him? Or a survivor of a bomb attack in Iraq or Israel - isn't he more qualified to recall the event?

Wouldn't Old Testament writers contemporary with David, Solomon, or the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, be in the best position to know what

happened? ...especially if they were there ...if the events happened to them?

Does any clear thinking person believe these witnesses should be disqualified because they were close to the events they relate?

So what is the issue... really?

It boils down to this. On the one hand, Old Testament writers state that their reports are factual. On the other hand, the critic in the year 2010 accuses them of lying, misrepresenting the truth, or not knowing what he was writing about.

Good scholarship will follow Aristotle's Dictum:

The benefit of the doubt is to be given to the document itself, not arrogated by the critic to himself.

In other words, one must listen to the claims of the document under analysis, and not assume fraud or error unless the author disqualifies himself by contradictions or known factual inaccuracies.

It is to be accepted that a document is genuine, unless there is compelling reason to believe otherwise.

In our case, we have an accused and an accuser.

In my country a man is considered innocent till proven guilty. Would it be fair to apply this same ruling to the Old Testament writers?

After all, no classical scholar would doubt the authenticity of the classical authors. So I invite the critic to answer honestly: Why treat the Old Testament writings differently?

I press this point, because it reflects on the critic's honesty. Unless the accuser can prove the professed "eyewitnesses" are phony, isn't his own integrity on the line if he refuses to accept their testimony?

VERDICT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

So the issue is not at all about Jews and Christians versus others. The issue is **the physical facts of archaeology – and our honesty with these**

facts.

And what is the truth? This may surprise you, but:

1. Thousands of finds from the ancient world support in broad outline and often in detail the biblical picture.
2. There exists today not one unquestionable find of archaeology that proves the Bible to be in error at any point.

My own findings – from some 25 expeditions – compel me to agree with renowned archaeologist Nelson Glueck, who admits:

It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference.

Glueck draws attention to

...the almost **incredibly accurate** historical memory of the Bible, and particularly so when it is **fortified by archaeological fact**. (Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert*, p.31)

One of the greatest archaeologists of all time, William F. Albright, agrees:

There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of Old Testament tradition.” (Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1942, p.176)

Do you get that? In every case where the physical science of archaeology has been able to test Bible history, the “myth” charge has failed.

Donald J. Wiseman, Professor Emeritus of Assyriology, University of London, says:

It has been my long experience that when the Bible is rightly understood and interpreted it is never contradicted by archaeological and historical evidence when that too has been subjected to strict scrutiny.” (Forward to Victor Pearce’s book *Evidence For Truth: Archaeology*, 2nd edition, 1998)

Experts in archaeology reject the empty pretenders to knowledge, who try to discredit the ancient records.

2. DAVID, SOLOMON AND THE MONARCHY

(h) NO GREAT SOLOMON TEMPLE?

IT IS CLAIMED:

In the time of David and Solomon, Jerusalem had no great Temple.

IN REALITY:

I have personally examined and photographed an artefact from the Temple built by Solomon. It is a beautiful ivory head of the priestly sceptre from Solomon's Temple. It has been termed "the only surviving relic from the Solomonic Temple". (*Biblical Archaeology Review*, Jan-Feb., 1984)

It bears an inscription, identifying it as belonging to "the House of Yahweh" [the Temple built by Solomon].

So now we have an actual artefact, long listed in the old writings as belonging to the items from Solomon's Temple, now found.

You'd better believe it. Solomon's magnificent temple was real. But there's more...

1. SOLOMON'S TEMPLE TABLET:

Israeli geologists announced on January 12, 2003 that they had examined a stone tablet dating to 800 BC which detailed repair plans for the Jewish Temple of King Solomon. Tests confirmed it to be authentic.

About the size of a legal pad, the sandstone tablet contained a 15-line inscription in ancient Hebrew. The inscription strongly resembles descriptions in the Bible's Book of Kings (2 Kings 12:1-6,11-17). Israel's Geological Survey, which examined the artefact said that the words refer to King Joash, who ruled the area 2,800 years ago.

According to the Israeli daily *Haaretz*, the piece was claimed to have

been found during renovations carried out by the Muslim administrators of the Temple Mount.

It eventually found its way into the hands of a major antiquities collector in Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem collector has failed to identify himself, and his lawyer, David Zailer, declined to say where the tablet was found or give further details.

Biblical archaeologist Gabriel Barkai, reported that the collector asked the Israel Museum to determine the authenticity of the inscription. He had been told that the museum's experts could not rule out a forgery.

The tablet was then taken to Israel's Geological Institute. Their experts studied it over the year.

Shimon Ilani, who performed geological tests on the inscription, announced, "Our findings show that it is authentic."

In the outer layer of the tablet, Ilani and his colleagues found microscopic flecks of gold. This may have been burnt into the stone when a building containing both the tablet and gold objects was destroyed.

Amos Bean, director of the institute, said this might suggest that the tablet was actually part of Solomon's Temple, which the Babylonian army destroyed in 586 B.C.

"These specks of gold are not natural material, but a sign of human activity," said Bean. "They could be from gold-plated objects in the home of a very rich man, or a temple. ... It's hard to believe that anyone would know how to do these things to make it look real."

The stone itself was probably from the Dead Sea area and was originally whiter than its current dark grey, Bean said.

Hershel Shanks, editor of the Washington-based *Biblical Archaeology Review*, said the tablet, if authentic, would be "visual, tactile evidence that reaches across 2,800 years."

Of significance is the inscription's resemblance to biblical passages. This has far-reaching implications of the historical importance of the biblical text. (Laurie Copans, The Associated Press, January 14, 2003)

2. PHOENICIAN-SOLOMON TREATY:

Independently kept copies of a treaty that King Solomon made with Hiram, king of the Phoenician city of Tyre (just as the Bible records), were preserved by the Phoenicians.

The Bible records a treaty that King Solomon made with the Phoenicians at the time when the temple was being built: "...and there was peace between Hiram [king of Tyre] and Solomon, and the two of them made a treaty together." (1 Kings 5:1,12)

A thousand years later, independently kept copies of this treaty could be read in the public archives of Tyre in Phoenicia.

The copies of these epistles remain at this day, and are preserved not only in our books, but among the Tyrians also; insomuch that if any one would know the certainty about them, he may desire of the keepers of the public records of Tyre to shew him them, and he will find what is there set down to agree with what we have said. (Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book VIII, Chapter II, Section 7)

A word concerning this testimony. Joseph Scaliger, who was highly familiar with Josephus' work, concludes:

Josephus is the most diligent and the greatest lover of truth of all writers: nor are we afraid to affirm of him, that it is more safe to believe him, not only as to the affairs of the Jews, but also as to those that are foreign to them, than all the Greek and Latin writers, and this, because his fidelity and his compass is of learning are everywhere conspicuous." (Joseph Scaliger, In the Prolegomea to *De Emendations Temporum*, p.17)

So our critic the good professor still wants us to believe that in the time of David and Solomon, Jerusalem had no great Temple?

SOLOMON'S MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE

The tremendous wealth that poured into Israel from these global expeditions can be appreciated to some extent when we reflect on the magnificence of Solomon's Temple.

It has been calculated that this famous building contained 86 tons of gold and 126 tons of silver.

INCREDIBLE CONSTRUCTION METHOD

And the technological expertise involved was ingenious.

The first book of Kings reports that it "was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building." (1 Kings 6:7)

SIZE AND BEAUTY

Can you imagine it? Surviving stones from the second temple, which was inferior to the temple of Solomon, hold us in awe. Some of those massive stones were as long as a bus... from 10 to 40 feet long by 6 feet wide. One of them at least weighed approximately 445 tons.

We are told that the massive stones for Solomon's Temple were pre-cut, then transported from the quarry and slid into place so accurately that it would be difficult to find the seams.

The splendour of Solomon's Temple would defy comprehension.

Nowhere on the face of this planet did a structure of such size and beauty command the awe of man.

Travellers from many lands would travel great distances just to set eyes on this Temple, never to be disappointed.

Its array of shining metals and precious stones was dazzling beyond belief.

This enormous Temple featured planks of cedar and cypress - fir trees hand-crafted to expose their elegant grains.

The entire structure was overlaid on the inside with gold. Precious stones of onyx and marble were seen in abundance. Silver, brass and iron were used in the Temple. Outer courtyards and inner chambers were adorned with high-reaching palm trees and colourful flowers.

Using modern equipment capable of determining very precisely the isotopic content of different metals, it has been shown that the lead used in drainpipes in the area of Solomon's Temple came from the Mendip Hills in Somerset, Britain.

This type of analysis is made possible because lead samples from different locations contain varying amounts of the isotopes of lead, resulting from the decay of radioactive materials.

Similarly with tin. The Temple was adorned with plenty of bronze, and this alloy was made by adding tin to copper in the smelting. The presence of tin caused the copper to become much harder and less easily tarnished. Tests show that it was British tin that was used by Solomon. The date was about 1000 BC.

MYSTERIOUS TECHNOLOGY USED

Two cast pillars of brass stood boldly at the entrance. According to an old tradition, the two great pillars were hollow. Stored inside them, according to the same tradition, were "ancient records" and "valuable writings" pertaining to the past of the Hebrew people.

And included among these records had been information on something known as the shamir. (Alexander Home, *King Solomon's Temple in Masonic Tradition*, p.219)

You may wonder, what was this mysterious shamir?

Moses had instructed his people not to use "any iron tool" in the construction of the holy places.

And Solomon likewise directed that no hammers, axes or chisels should be used to cut and dress the stone blocks with which the Temple would be built.

Instead, according to Jewish sources, he provided the workmen with an ancient device called the shamir, that had been used in the time of Moses to engrave writing on the precious stones of the high priest's breastplate. (Louis Ginsberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, vol I, p.34 and vol. IV, p.166)

Known as "the stone that splits rocks," the shamir was capable of cutting the toughest materials without friction or heat. This included "the remarkable property of cutting the hardest of diamonds".

There must have been something special about the shamir, for it was said: “The shamir may not be put in an iron vessel for safekeeping, nor in any metal vessel: it would burst such a receptacle asunder. It is kept wrapped up in a woollen cloth, and this in turn is placed in a lead basket filled with barley bran.”

With the destruction of the Temple the shamir vanished.

Islamic traditions concerning the shamir paralleled those of the Jews, with the additional statement that it had been quite noiseless while it was at work.

BUILT SPECIFICALLY FOR THE ARK

Why did King Solomon build his famous Temple? Would you have guessed this?: It was for one purpose - to house the Ark of the Covenant! That reason was actually given in the records they left behind. That magnificent Temple of fabulous wealth and world renown was specifically conceived and built, for what purpose, but to enshrine the Ark of the Covenant! That was its reason to be!

The actual room known as the Holy of Holies, in which the Ark stood, was a perfect cube - and immensely strong. It measured just over 34 feet long, by 34 feet wide, by 34 feet high.

Its floor, walls and ceiling were lined with fine gold, weighing an estimated 45,000 pounds, that is, more than 20 tons! And it was all riveted with golden nails.

So, what was so important about the Ark of the Covenant? And what became of it when Solomon’s Temple was destroyed?

There have been many decoys, if you wish – and many claims. It took our team years to track down the facts. And a recent expedition took it further.

This priceless artefact has been found – and its location will stagger you! So much so, that the Middle Eastern host government walks on a knife edge. So you won’t see it yet.

Perhaps that’s enough for you know. But if you would like to dig into this further, here’s where to start: <http://www.beforeus.com/aoc.html>

2. DAVID, SOLOMON AND THE MONARCHY

(i) SOLOMON'S GOLD WEALTH AN EXAGGERATION?

IT IS CLAIMED:

Some critics have claimed that the Bible descriptions of Solomon's gold are gross exaggerations - that the quantity of gold mentioned is simply unbelievable, even unimaginable.

IN REALITY:

Just place the Bible beside other ancient texts since discovered and you will find that the Bible record is wholly in keeping with the practices of the ancient world, not only in the use of gold, but also in its records of quantities. While this does not confirm the actual figures given for Solomon, it does show that the quantity is reasonable.

But where is this precious treasure?

- * What happened to the hidden gold of Solomon's Temple?
- * Has the most priceless artefact on earth – the Ark of the Covenant - now been found?
- * Is its location really known?

The truth will stagger you! So much so, that the host government walks on a knife edge. So you won't see it yet.

And linked with these tantalising questions, are others:

- * Did Phoenician ships really come to the Americas?
- * Where did King Solomon get his gold?
- * What was the SINGLE stated reason that his magnificent Temple was constructed?

Stay tuned....

2. DAVID, SOLOMON AND THE MONARCHY

(j) NO TEMPLE OR BIG STONES FOUND?

IT IS CLAIMED:

Solomon's Temple has yet to be found! NO blocks of several hundred tons were found to be used in its construction because there has been no temple found.

IN REALITY:

Even in the absence of a “body”, the convergence of other evidence can be so overwhelming, so powerful, so evident, that the truth shouts at us anyway.

It is true that Solomon’s temple has not been uncovered and excavated. However, its location has now been visually confirmed and physically measured.

Dutch archaeologist Leen Ritmeyer, one of the leading scholars in Temple Mount research, has found the location of Solomon's Temple with a keen eye, biblical and historical knowledge and a tape measure.

Ritmeyer served as surveyor and field architect of the archaeological expedition at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem for many years as well as throughout the Jewish Quarter.

In his story appended to the end of this article you will see reasonable evidence to agree with his conclusions.

HUGE SIZE OF TEMPLE BLOCKS

But concerning the huge stones used in Solomon’s temple.

Solomon's temple was built of stone quarried and prepared by masons from the Phoenician cities of Tyre and Jbail (Byblos).

Actual physical discoveries show that the Phoenicians **always used huge stones** for foundation. Why? Because the Levant is located on the Great Rift Valley - the big stones helped make buildings earthquake-proof.

And who helped construct Solomon's temple? Phoenician craftsmen, no less!

Now notice the following facts carefully.

Solomon's temple was destroyed in 586 BC when the Babylonians captured Jerusalem.

When the Persian Empire took over from the Babylonian Empire, King Cyrus allowed the Hebrews to return to Jerusalem and build a second temple on the site of the first.

This second temple was built by Zerubbabel from 538 to 516 BC and refurbished by King Herod about 500 years later. Both constructions are considered one temple, as the religious functions did not cease during Herod's reconstruction.

In the restoration of the second temple, a trench was dug around the mountain, and huge stone "bricks" were laid. Some of these weighed well over 100 tons, the largest measuring 44.6 feet by 11 feet by 16.5 feet and weighing approximately 567 to 628 tons. (Dan Bahat: *Touching the Stones of our Heritage*, Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2002. The History Channel cited the 16.5 depth 567 ton estimate in "Lost Worlds of King Herod")

This second temple was completely destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD and has never been rebuilt. All that remains is the foundation of the west wall. Jews go there to lament the second temple's destruction so it is now known as the wailing wall.

The blocks of stone are huge, **following the Phoenician model of 1,000 BC** (King Solomon's time), in which blocks of stone commonly weighed hundreds of tons.

This second temple, although containing such huge blocks of stone, was still inferior to Solomon's temple. (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, B-XV, C-XI, V.1. Haggai 2:3-4)

So you can be certain that King Hiram's Phoenicians from Tyre who helped build Solomon's temple (1 Kings 5:18) used large stones consistent with their normal building practice, just as the Bible says: "...they brought GREAT stones, costly stones" (v. 17).

2. DAVID, SOLOMON AND THE MONARCHY

(k) SOLOMON'S DOMAIN NOT SO BIG?

IT IS CLAIMED:

I do not think Solomon was the *type* of king the Bible says he was... with so big an Empire.

IN REALITY:

Remember that splendour and greatness does not depend on land size. Great powers in history have often been small in land area. For example, Great Britain and Japan. But they have enjoyed access to resources held by other nations, resources which they have utilised to propel their homeland to greatness.

Having said that, it should be understood that Solomon's kingdom extended from the borders of Egypt to the Euphrates (1 Kings 5:1). That was a fairly vast area, which quickly prospered from trade. Around this time travel greatly increased, since it was possible for caravans to cross the desert with a two and three day supply of water.

Ample archaeological evidence indicates that there were extensive trade routes between the Fertile Crescent and southern Arabia. Solomon monopolized the entire caravan trade between Arabia and Mesopotamia and from the Red Sea to Palmyra or Tadmor (2 Chronicles 8:4), an oasis 140 miles north east of Damascus that he built (1 Kings 9:18).

Controlling the trade routes to both the east and west of the Jordan the Israelite monarch collected enormous sums of revenue from merchants seeking passage through his territories (1 Kings 10:15).

Archaeological exploration indicates that Solomon possessed deposits of copper. With the help of Phoenician technicians a seaport was built at Ezion-geber. These technicians and craftsmen were experts at setting up copper furnaces and refineries at similar settlements in Sardinia and Spain. Copper refining and exporting was another source of Solomon's

proverbial wealth; and it indicates that he was the first to place the mining industry in the Wadi Arabah on a national scale (Nelson Glueck, *The Other Side of the Jordan*, 1941, p. 98).

The royal fleet departed from Ezion-geber carrying raw ore, and returned with valuable imports from all around the world.

Considerable research has discovered evidence of these Hebrew voyages in South America, Australia, Samoa and Tahiti.

Remember, Solomon had an alliance with the globe-trotting Phoenicians, which gave his crews access to wealth from the remotest corners of the planet.

PHOENICIAN VOYAGES

Do you want the truth? Navigation across open ocean was no problem to these explorers.

Due to the insufficient attention paid to this aspect of the subject, we have tended to belittle the size and sophistication of Phoenician shipping.

There is evidence that they had the benefit of sophisticated instruments and large, fast, modern vessels carrying over 500 people. This will be a surprise to many readers.

SILVER AS CHEAP AS STONES

Anyway, suddenly, in the 10th century BC we find gold and silver in such abundance in Jerusalem that Israel's king Solomon "made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones for abundance." So reports the book of 1 Kings. (ch.10:27)

And why? "... for the king had at sea a navy of Tarshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tarshish, bringing gold and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks." (v. 22)

Hiram was a Phoenician king. And the Israelites and Phoenicians were allies. They sent out global expeditions together.

There can be no question that the peacocks came from south-East Asia. But whence the abundance of silver?

This we shall later investigate.

OUR WOEFUL MODERN IGNORANCE

Because of the depth of ignorance into which Europe fell during the Dark Ages, at times we are apt to forget how advanced were the ideas of the ancients, and how much they knew about the earth and about astronomy and navigation.

Harvard professor Barry Fell concurs. (*America BC: Ancient Settlers in the New World*, p.88)

Field researchers in South America are firmly convinced that the Phoenicians traded with South America. Today there is a whole library full of their reports. The Phoenicians even left inscriptions there.

KING SOLOMON'S RIVER

It now appears that the Americas were the source of much of the gold and silver that found its way to Solomon's temple.

There is good reason to believe that the ships of King Solomon (975-935 BC) had once come to the Amazon; that the gold countries of Ophir, Tarshish and Parvaim were NOT to be looked for in the Old World at all, BUT HERE in the Amazon region on the Rio Solimoes, Solomon's River.

But that is another subject. (It is covered in my book *Ark of the Covenant*, chapters 10,11 <<http://www.beforeus.com/abook.html>>)

2. DAVID, SOLOMON AND THE MONARCHY

(I) OTHER NATIONS TESTIFY TO THE GLORY OF SOLOMON'S EMPIRE

According to the Bible record, the most opulent golden structure in the world was erected in Jerusalem in Israel. The walls of Solomon's Temple were lined with gold. There was not enough gold in all of ancient Israel to accomplish that task.

The builder — King Solomon — sent huge ships to the ends of the earth in his quest for gold and silver. The voyages took three years.

And the question arises, Where did the ships go?

Why did each voyage take three years?

The ultimate destination of the ships of Hiram and Solomon was a place or region called *Ophir*. (1 Kings 9:28; 10:11) But just where was it, that land of gold, the fabled land of *Ophir*?

Scholars have driven themselves wild on the matter for years, but no one seems to have a satisfactory answer.

For centuries, historians, scholars, and archaeologists have tried in vain to find the source of King Solomon's gold.... to determine the location of *Ophir*, the biblical name of a secret land, where Hiram's Phoenician sailors loaded their ships with gold and precious stones from King Solomon's mines to adorn, in Jerusalem, the walls of Solomon's Temple.

Was it in Arabia? Was it in eastern Africa? No evidence of the name *Ophir* anywhere... except in the Bible story.

“That’s because the whole story is fiction,” says a critic. “There never was an *Ophir*. And in the time of David and Solomon, Jerusalem had no great Temple. So you can stop looking for *Ophir*. It never existed.”

For what it's worth, the book of Genesis and the historian Josephus both speak of *Ophir* as the general name for the rich southern countries lying on the African, Arabian and Indian coasts. (Genesis 10:29,30; Josephus, *Flavius Antiquities of the Jews* vi.4)

But when we ask, Where was that *Ophir* which could be reached that provided silver in such abundance, we are faced with a problem.

It can be shown that the source was not Asia, the greater portion of whose silver was imported. Silver was so scarce in Arabia, that it was assessed at ten times the value of gold. (Thomas Crawford Johnson, *Did the Phoenicians Discover America?* London: James Nisbet and Co., Ltd, pp.127,128,131)

Yet in Solomon's Jerusalem it became as common as stones.

I am aware of the nineteenth century explorers' tales that supposedly identified the mines of *Ophir* with central Africa. Such identification with King Solomon must be regarded as romantic fiction.

That the expeditions pushed into regions much more distant than the Indian Ocean is apparent from the "three years" required for the double voyage, only nine months being required for a return journey to the extremities of Arabia. (*Ibid.*, p.130)

An American destination accords well with the fact that the world's largest silver deposits are in the Americas — in the United States, Mexico, Canada and Peru.

And this is where ancient Israel's next door neighbour enters the picture. The Bible story says that King Solomon teamed up with his royal Phoenician buddy, King Hiram of Tyre.

If you didn't know, Phoenicia was the great manufacturing nation of the ancient world. Her dyed textiles, glass technology, superb stonework, ceramics and gem engraving were unsurpassed.

Indeed, L.A. Waddell (citing Sir Flinders Petrie) asserts that the

Phoenicians "had a civilization equal or superior to that of Egypt, in taste and skill.., luxury far beyond that of the Egyptians, and technical work which could teach

them rather than be taught.” (Waddell, L. A. *Phoenician Origin of the Britons, Scots and Anglo-Saxons*. London: Williams and Norgate, Ltd 1924, p.220. P.H.E. 2.146)

The city of Tyre was the London of antiquity, the centre of a vast global trading network.

Phoenicia, mistress of the seas, sent ships to all ports and traversed all oceans. From the thirteenth century BC she was the dominant naval and commercial power. Her mercantile operations were enormous. This great naval power had the trade of the planet in her hands. She was a great distributing nation; her people were the carriers of the world.

The famous Indian epic, the *Mahabharata*, states that:

The able Panch (Phoenicians) setting out to invade the Earth, brought the whole world under their sway. (*Maha-Barata*, Indian epic of the Great Barats. Book 1, ch.94, sloka 3738)

They were termed "leaders of the Earth" (Waddell, p.1, quoting, Rig Veda Hymn)

And Phoenicia was, in the tenth to eleventh centuries BC as great as Babylon or Egypt.

The coasts and islands of the Mediterranean were rapidly covered with colonies. Today's "Venice" preserves the ethnic title of "Phoenicia".

The Straits of Gibraltar were passed and cities built on the shores of the Atlantic. They founded Gades (Cadiz) on Spain's west coast, 2,500 miles from Tyre, as the starting point for the Atlantic trade.

In the expanding range of their voyages, Phoenician ships out of Spain were battling the wild Atlantic en route to the tin of Cornwall and even to Norway (2,000 miles beyond Gades).

Eastward, there is evidence that Phoenicia built factories on the Persian Gulf and traded as far as Ceylon.

Phoenician ships probed ever further. Navigation across open ocean was no problem to these explorers.

Due to the insufficient attention paid to this aspect of the subject, we have tended to belittle the size and sophistication of Phoenician shipping.

If we conceive of it as represented by types of marine craft as outlined on Phoenician coins and tombs, we shall not be able to suppose that the nation was ever employed on such voyages as those that shall shortly engage our attention.

There is evidence that they had the benefit of sophisticated instruments and large, fast, modern vessels carrying over 500 people. (Johnston, Thomas Crawford *Did the Phoenicians Discover America?* London: James Nisbet and Co., Ltd, 1913, pp.70-104, 289. Compare with Jonathan Gray's *Dead Men's Secrets*, pp.77-81) This will be a surprise to many readers.

The type of vessel built especially for ocean travel was designated "ship of Tarshish" to distinguish it from the smaller craft which merely plied the eastern Mediterranean.

From West Africa, it would be a simple matter to follow the trade winds to where, but South America.

To some, the idea that ancient mariners would have known the Americas may appear too ridiculous to consider, and it will be cast aside. But before such actions are taken, surely the evidence for this position should be carefully considered.

As Michael G. Bradley aptly put it, "The truth is just now being glimpsed by a handful of specialists - it is still almost completely unsuspected by the average civilized citizen." (Michael Bradley, *The Black Discovery of America*. Toronto: Personal Library Publishers, 1981)

Voyages to the New World at around the time of King Solomon of Israel now seem more likely than not.

Some twelve years' research for the book *Dead Men's Secrets* finally convinced me that these colonists of a forgotten age were indeed part of a great network of ancient civilizations that once maintained a flourishing trade between Europe, Asia, and the Americas, some 3,000 years ago.

I was surprised to discover that Harvard professor Dr. Barry Fell, from his own research as one of the world's foremost epigraphers, had reached the same conclusion. He considered the ancient visitors to North America were probably not explorers, but rather merchants, trading with well-established fur trappers and very likely also mining precious metals on those sites where ancient workings have been discovered.

Fell states:

Because of the depth of ignorance into which Europe fell during the Dark Ages, at times we are apt to forget how advanced were the ideas of the ancients, and how much they knew about the earth and about astronomy and navigation. (Barry Fell, *America BC: Ancient Settlers in the New World*. London: Wildwood House Ltd, 1978, p. 88)

Fell is also convinced that "America shares a history with the Old World, and ancient Americans must have been well acquainted with much of that history as it took place."

Between 1850 and 1910, travellers in the Amazon region and other parts of Brazil were reporting the finding of old inscriptions on rock faces.

Former rubber tapper Bernardo da Silva Ramos, in a now rare book in Portuguese, has published 1,500 reproductions from such rock carvings. They are all covered over with the letters of the Phoenician alphabet.

One by one competent scholars who hold responsible positions in universities and museums are now coming forward with confirmations of the decipherments.

We know that Hiram I, king of Tyre, shared a friendship with Israel's King David, and with his son Solomon.

There was also a religious sympathy. These early Phoenicians — contrary to the now current notions of popular writers — were monotheists.

As a result of a commercial treaty, Hiram assisted in the erection of Solomon's Temple and Israel granted Phoenicia the two ports of Eilat and Ezion-geber on the Gulf of Aqaba. There is evidence suggesting that these ships contained both Phoenicians and Israelites. (Jonathan Gray, *Ark of the Covenant*, chapters 10,11 <<http://www.beforeus.com/abook.html>>)

So where was this legendary *Ophir*?

Before pursuing that further, I shall share with you some information which is both unexpected and startling.

From Ethiopia to India to Mexico to South America, we find pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that one by one fit together to form a picture consistent with the Bible account of the greatness of King Solomon of Israel.

In these widely scattered regions we discover local people independently speaking of the greatness of this man *Solomon (Samon)* and of a great temple.

1. **India:** In Srinagar, India, is a mountain called Tahkti Suleiman (“Solomon’s Mountain”).

Think about that for a moment. Is it not strange that a mountain in far away India should be named Solomon’s Mountain – after a Hebrew king? Except that an ancient Moslem tradition declares that King Solomon came there and arranged for the construction of the temple on the summit. It also speaks of the high technology that Solomon used. Indeed, Solomon’s fame reached to India.

2. **Ethiopia:** The Bible recounts the visit to King Solomon by the queen of Sheba. And did you know that an ancient Ethiopian epic has been discovered, the *Kebra Nagast* (from about 850 BC), which tells that very same story from the other side?

But it goes further.

It records that King Solomon lavished on a visiting Ethiopian queen enormous riches and gifts. Here is evidence that Solomon’s fame reached to Ethiopia.

May I ask you this question: Why would we find two different reports, or claims if you wish –FROM TWO DIFFERENT CONTINENTS - one from Africa, the other from Asia, concerning Solomon of Israel and flying machines? Doesn’t that make you wonder?

But there is more...

3. **Mexico:** Votan, historian of the Maya, living around the time of King Solomon, recorded his visit to a magnificent temple being built.

If one believes the biblical record, the splendour of Solomon’s Temple would defy comprehension. Nowhere on the face of this planet did a structure of such size and beauty command the awe of man. The Bible states that visitors from many lands would travel great distances just to set eyes on this Temple, never to be disappointed.

And now, from the other side of the world, we have the independent record of Votan, the first historian of the Maya, who lived around 1000

BC.

Votan had come originally from the Phoenician city of Chivim, on the eastern Mediterranean coast. He records that he later made four or more visits to his former home on the eastern Mediterranean coast, not far from the land of Israel.

On one of these trips he visited a great city wherein a magnificent Temple was in the course of construction, thought by a number of researchers to have been Jerusalem.

Was it Solomon's Temple that visitors from as far away as the Americas came to see? According to the Bible record, "all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom." (2 Chronicles 9:23) It appears that Solomon's fame did reach to Mexico.

4. Brazil: And now we pick up the *Ophir* story again. In the barely explored eastern Andes region of north-west Brazil's Amazon jungle live the Ugha Mongulala tribe. These people, now primitive, have within their possession records written by their ancestors that mention an ancient city called *Ofir (Ophir)* which once stood at the mouth of the Amazon River.

The Bible says that Solomon's ships went to *Ophir* to obtain gold.

This primitive Amazon tribe (with no knowledge of the Bible) says that ships from the east, from *Samon's* empire, came to their city of *Ofir* to trade for gold.

Their tradition states that:

Lhasa, the prince of Akakor... commanded the construction of *Ofir*, a powerful harbour city at the mouth of the Great River [the Amazon]. Ships from *Samon's [Solomon's?]* empire docked there with their valuable cargoes. In exchange for gold and silver... (Karl Brugger, *The Chronicle of Akakor*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1977, p.58)

Perhaps, like that of *Tarshish*, the name *Ophir* became displaced, and as the trade of the Phoenicians moved further eastward and westward, it moved with the trade, until in course of time it came to be applied to a more distant region controlled by the Phoenicians.

Corroborating this, the Phoenician *Ophir* or *Ofir* means, in their language, the Western Country. (Fontaine, *How the World was Peopled*. Cited

by Bancroft, *Works of Bancroft*, Vol. V, p.65)

And what land lay to the west? The Americas, no less. Yes, Solomon's fame reached to South America.

My very first expedition was into the Amazon. I was greatly astonished to learn about this Ugha Mongulala tribe preserving written records of an ancient city of their ancestors called *Ofir* (*Ophir*) which was related to the gold trade.

To my knowledge this was the ONLY independent mention of a specific locality called *Ophir*, of the Solomon period, outside of the Bible.

5. Peru:

Then I learned of the explorations of Gene Savoy. In the 1960s this intrepid explorer achieved international fame with a series of daring expeditions into the dense Peruvian jungles of the eastern Andes and Amazon region.

Numerous ancient and mysterious stone cities and settlements were discovered where none were thought to exist, including the now well-known Vilcabamba, one of the most dramatic and important archaeological finds of the 20th century.

In the winter of 1966, Savoy found in Amazonas, Peru, a series of figures inscribed on the wall of an ancient tomb. High up in the Andes, in the region of the legendary Chachapoyas, the largest and most imposing of the glyphs resembled a figure that Savoy knew to be of Middle Eastern origin. He translated the glyph as saying "*Ophir*".

After Savoy had discovered that enigmatic glyph in the Andes, another inscription appeared, but this time in Israel, at Tel Qasile, an ancient site near Tel Aviv that dates from King Solomon's time. The inscription, on a potsherd unearthed by archaeologists, bears this message in Phoenician-Hebrew:

*Gold of **Ophir**, the possession of Beth-Horon, thirty shekels.*

The inscription once marked a pot of gold stored in the hold of an ancient Phoenician merchant ship.

At its centre was the same symbol Savoy had found cut into the cliff face of the mountain in South America.

The inscription on the potsherd in Israel verifies two important facts:

- (1) Voyages to *Ophir* actually took place.
- (2) Phoenician ships acquired gold there during the time of *Solomon*.

It is believed that this symbol marked all the ships that travelled to *Ophir* in Solomon's navy.

For years, Savoy's expedition team had called the South American glyph a "ship figure" because it resembled the shape of an ancient vessel at sea. Now it is simply referred to as the "*Ophir* symbol."

Then, in 1985, a startling announcement was made to the world: the discovery in Amazonas of a vast ancient metropolis that may prove to be not only the largest pre-Columbian city in South America, but also one of the largest and most unique ancient cities yet discovered in the history of archaeology. This intricate network of well over 24,000 round, ovaline and walled cut-stone structures covers an estimated 100 square miles in the Department of Amazonas west of the Utcabamba River and east of the Maranon.

Savoy named the city, centred on and around the Vilaya River drainage, Gran Vilaya, and from 1985 through 1994 led six expeditions into the region.

Near the end of the 1989 Gran Vilaya expedition, the explorers came upon a set of inscribed tablets on the outskirts of the city, hidden away high in a cliffside cave.

Among the many inscriptions contained on these large dolmen-type tablets was a symbol similar to the previously discovered "*Ophir* symbol" as well as the one discovered in Israel.

Summary

So what have we discovered? Totally unexpected, but conclusive, witnesses to the truth of the Bible claims concerning Solomon.

3. NATIONAL EXILE TO ASSYRIA AND BABYLON

THE LAND EMPTIED

The third period was the exile into Assyria and Babylon when large portions of the population were despatched into captivity.

Writing soon after the Assyrian conquest of Israel in 722 BC the prophet said: "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire; strangers devour your land in your presence; and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers." (Isaiah 1:7)

We should find in this next layer, the Late Bronze Age, evidence of a depleted population, and we do.

Israeli archaeologist Israel Finklestein wrote,

The entire country flourished in MBIIB - fortified cities, villages, and individual farms were founded throughout the region ... In contrast to the extraordinary prosperity of MB II, the Late Bronze period was characterized by a severe crisis in settlement ... Moreover, those sites where occupation did continue, frequently shrank in size." (Israel Finklestein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*, pp. 339-341. Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem 1988)

This matches precisely the condition during the period of the exile in Assyria and Babylon. It fits the Bible account like a glove.

4. THE RETURN FROM EXILE

DRAMATIC UPSWING IN POPULATION

The fourth period was the return from exile when many of the Israelites migrated back to their original lands. "The whole congregation (which returned under Ezra) together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty." (Ezra 2:64)

Finklestein wrote:

The Iron I period again witnessed a dramatic swing in the population of the hill country, this time in the opposite direction.

WHAT ABOUT CARBON DATING?

It may be asked, But what about carbon dating? Does not that establish the traditional chronology?

I do not know of any archaeologist who has ever altered his dates from the results of carbon 14 testing. Dates are assigned on pottery styles. Samples of organic material may be sent for testing but the results will not influence the conclusions already reached.

As David Rohl says in his book:

All too often a dozen or so radiocarbon dates are included in an archaeological site report merely as scientific window dressing. This attitude is clearly reflected in a regrettably common practice: when a radiocarbon date agrees with the expectation of the excavator it appears in the main text of the site report; if it is slightly discrepant it is relegated to a footnote; if it seriously conflicts it is left out altogether ... As the senior radiocarbon scientist Professor Ingrid Olsson frankly concluded at the Gothenburg conference: 'Honestly, I would say that I feel that most of the dates from the Bronze Age are dubious. The manner in which they have been made ... forces me to be critical.'" (David Rohl, *A Test of Time* p. XIX)

To learn more about the scandalous dating coverups, I invite the reader to study my book *The Great Dating Blunder*. (< http://www.beforeus.com/shopcart_ebooks.html > - Scroll down to item No.52)

THE CRITIC'S MISTAKE

Yes, there are arguments against the reliability of the historical records of the Bible, but there are also some powerful arguments supporting them.

For a critic to live in his little world of tells, strata, Carbon 14 dating, Jericho IV, the Early, Middle and Late Bronze Age, Iron Age I and Iron Age II, pottery shards, architectural styles, and what have you – but to neglect to keep himself updated on discoveries elsewhere which impact on all this, is not very smart.

Many critics, acting with woefully incomplete information, have simply rushed to judgment.

One who presumes to teach others should avoid such negligence.

CRITICS OUT OF DATE

Until recent times, many ancient customs, names and events were *known only from* the Bible. And critics had a field day, blasting them as pure myth. There was virtually no modern biblical archaeology to “test” their assertions.

But now archaeology has turned the whole situation around. From numerous independent records we know that people, places and events the biblical writers wrote about, were real. Time and continued research have demonstrated that historically the Bible is better informed than its critics.

In fact, *on every point* where critics and the Bible have taken opposite sides, when the evidence comes in, the Bible has won. In every case!

Today, the critic has no excuse.

The most eminent of all Middle East archaeologists Professor William Albright, after examining a critic's argument and the flawed reasoning that prompted it, noted, “This is typical of the **utter absurdity of much so-called ‘critical’ work** in the Biblical field.”

It's enough to make one cringe. Should not an honest critic do himself a favour by reassessing his position?

Discoveries are turning the critic's theories upside down.

The records of the Bible are supported more and more by archaeological discovery.

I think it was F.F. Bruce of Manchester University who observed:

A man whose accuracy can be demonstrated in matters where we are able to test it is likely to be accurate even where the means for testing him are not available. Accuracy is a habit of mind, and we know from happy (or unhappy) experience that some people are habitually accurate just as others can be depended upon to be inaccurate.

The track record of the Bible entitles it to be regarded as a document of habitual accuracy.

Without it we would be greatly impoverished.

APPENDIX

For interest only

Dutch archaeologist Leen Ritmeyer, one of the leading scholars in Temple Mount research, has found the location of Solomon's Temple with a keen eye, biblical and historical knowledge and a tape measure.

Ritmeyer served as surveyor and field architect of the archaeological expedition at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem for many years as well as throughout the Jewish Quarter.

According to Ritmeyer, the original Temple Mount platform measured 500 cubits by 500 cubits. The "royal cubit" used for the temple was 20.67 inches long. Later, King Herod expanded the platform on the Temple Mount, doubling its size. It is the expanded, Herodian platform that tourists in Jerusalem visit today.

The current platform has two levels. Eight staircases lead from the lower level to the higher level where the Muslim Dome of the Rock shrine stands.

Because the Muslims who control the Temple Mount will not allow excavations, Ritmeyer relied on observational skills as he searched for the location of Solomon's Temple. And on the surface of the platform, he found his breakthrough.

At the bottom of a staircase in the northwest corner of the higher section, Ritmeyer noticed a stone with a unique chiselled edge. The stone resembled the pre-Herodian blocks visible on the eastern wall of the platform. He also noted that the stone was not aligned with the rest of the raised platform.

Ritmeyer believed the stone was not placed there as a step, but was actually part of the original temple platform wall built by King Hezekiah (eighth century B.C.). Such a find would be helpful in locating the original temple.

"This step was the archaeological beginning of my research into the pre-

Herodian Temple Mount," Ritmeyer said.

Ritmeyer tested his theory by measuring the space between the stone and the eastern wall. It was exactly 500 cubits -- the measurement listed in the Mishnah, a book on Jewish law from the second century A.D. He then measured the pre-Herodian foundation visible on the eastern wall from the north to the south. It also was exactly 500 cubits.

The measurements confirmed the location of the original Temple Mount platform. The stone Ritmeyer discovered now bears his name in many archaeological texts and graphics.

According to Ritmeyer, Muslim authorities repaved the area around the stone step in 1974 after learning of the discovery. The top of the stone is still visible, but the chiselled side that Ritmeyer first noticed is not. Ritmeyer, however, keeps a photograph that attests to his discovery.

From there, Ritmeyer searched for the location of the temple and the altar. From information in the Mishnah, he theorized that the temple stood where the Dome of the Rock shrine now stands. If so, the Holy of Holies and the Ark of the Covenant would have rested on the rock inside the Dome of the Rock. Though some archaeologists dispute his claims, Ritmeyer presents a compelling case for his view.

The Mishnah stated that the temple was not located in the centre of the 500 cubit by 500 cubit platform but was slightly northwest of centre. This gave credence to his view. Ritmeyer then looked for confirmation on the surface of the rock.

The archaeologist saw that the large rock had numerous cuts, lines and indentions on its surface. Many other archaeologists had rejected the rock as a source for clues because of the number of cuts on the surface. Not so with Ritmeyer.

"I look at every stone on the Temple Mount as archaeological evidence," Ritmeyer said.

Ritmeyer searched for marks consistent with the information he knew about the Holy of Holies. Again, he relied on the Bible, historical records and a tape measure to test his theory. He speculated that some of the cuts were made to level the site for the temple's foundation.

Ritmeyer knew the dimensions of the Holy of Holies from 1 Kings 6 -- 20

cubits by 20 cubits. He also knew the thickness of the walls. Ritmeyer discovered that cuts on the rock matched the thickness of the walls and the width of the room. He also found cuts made for the back wall of the Holy of Holies.

Another rectangular mark caught Ritmeyer's attention. He believed that this depression was the place the Ark of the Covenant stood in Solomon's Temple. Ritmeyer went to Exodus 25 for the ark's dimensions -- two and a half cubits by a cubit and a half. Using photographs and computers to measure the depression, scholars have found that the cut measures two and a half cubits by two cubits -- ample space to receive the ark.

Ritmeyer then measured from the back of the Holy of Holies to find the boundaries of the original temple.
