

"The Stones Cry Out"

(STUDIES IN BIBLICAL ARCHEOLOGY)

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INTRODUCTION.

This study course in Biblical Archeology should meet a long felt need for a brief, systematic study of the subject, suitable for young people and adult Bible classes. The author prepared this study booklet while teaching the course for college students, and he hopes that others, too, will find the same fascination and joy in the study that these college students found.

Archeology makes the Bible "live". Its scenes "come to life" as we fit them into ancient history, and such men as Hezekiah and Sennacherib seem to have stepped right out of today's newspaper with a fresh interest for us.

Archeology seems to be God's answer to the sneers which liberals had used against the Bible. Again and again the spade unearthed evidence to show that the Bible is true and the critic is wrong! This study may well be the evidence some young person is needing to convince him that the Bible is true, that it is God's word, that it does have for us the truths of eternal life.

We have no apology for dropping the extra "a" out of the spelling of "archeology" for long ago some encyclopedias dropped the extra "a" out of the spelling of "encyclopedia".

LESSON 1. TREASURES HIDDEN IN THE GROUND.

INTRODUCTION.

A treasure hunt is always exciting. Whether we are digging for pirate's gold or for dinosaur bones or for scraps of ancient writing, there is excitement and adventure in finding something hidden away in the ground.

In the early days of archeology, say 150 years ago, treasure hunting was the chief attraction. Fantastic amounts of gold and jewels have been carried away from ancient tombs and ruins, enriching the finders. Many beautiful statues and monuments were carted away from their original place to adorn the museums of other countries.

Today the governments usually put tight controls on archeologists, so that all work has to be done systematically, and all findings remain the property of the country in which they are found. The motives today are scientific and educational, endeavoring to enlarge mankind's knowledge of his ancient past.

WHAT IS ARCHEOLOGY?

Archeology in general may be defined as the study of ancient things. But in order to define more clearly what we mean and to differentiate this study from other sciences such as geology and palaeontology, which also dig into past ages, we usually limit archeology to the things which man has produced. These man-made materials may be written documents, coins, pottery, jewels, and the like that show man's cultural achievements. Or they may be incidental findings, such as skeletons, foundations of walls, layers of ashes, or weapons. Anything that tells us something about ancient peoples and how they lived is valuable for the archeologist to examine.

If you will look at a silver quarter dollar for a moment, you can learn a lot about your own people. You will see that they knew how to melt metals, that they believed in God, etc. In the same way the archeologists study ancient things and draw lots of conclusions about the people that lived in those long gone days.

HOW DOES BIBLICAL ARCHEOLOGY HELP US?

Biblical archeology deals with those ancient materials that may directly or indirectly be related to the Bible. The history of those nations mentioned in the Bible comes within this study. But more specifically we are interested in facts that are mentioned in the Bible or which help us to understand the Bible.

There are two main purposes in Biblical archeology. One is to confirm or prove the Bible record. The other is to explain Bible passages.

Take the first purpose, that of proving the Bible. Those of us who have a deep faith in God and His word may not need this proof. But those whose faith is weak do need it, and unbelievers need it. Over and over again the archeologists have proved the Bible to be true at some point or other where the unbelievers sneered at it as being wrong. For instance, the Hittites are mentioned dozens of times in the Old Testament. Up to 150 years ago there was no record of the Hittites in any history book or on any monument. The unbelievers said that the Bible was untrue, that its writers had invented a race of people that never did exist. But today we have information from archeology showing that the Hittites once had a mighty empire. Ruins of their cities are found and their writings have been read. The archeologists have proved that the Bible was true in regard to the Hittites.

The science of archeology grew up along with the rise of that humanizing and destructive study of the Bible that attempted to destroy man's faith in it as God's revealed word. In other words, Biblical archeology seems to be God's gift to man to refute the attacks of modernism and liberalism against the Bible.

In regard to the second purpose of Biblical archeology, Bible students depend upon archeology continually to help them understand the Bible. Mention practically any subject found in the Bible, and you will find that archeology provides the information for understanding it. For example, have you often wondered how Samson could pull a temple down simply by pulling down two columns of stone? Our modern buildings sometimes have stone columns outside on a sort of porch, but even if these were suddenly jerked away the structure would not collapse. Why did the whole temple come crashing down when Samson pulled out the pillars? The answer is that the Philistine temples were so constructed that the second floor rested upon two stone columns in the middle of the building. If these two columns were removed, the whole upper floor would come crashing down.

HISTORY OF MODERN ARCHEOLOGY

Modern archeology is said to have begun with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt. He took along with his army many scholars who were to study the country, especially its ancient monuments. No one was able to read the ancient Egyptian language inscribed upon the many monuments scattered over the land, but these scholars copied the inscriptions and made efforts to read them. The key that unlocked the ancient writing was the Rosetta Stone. This stone had three different kinds of writings on it. By comparing these three accounts, scholars, after many years, were able to break through and decipher the ancient Egyptian writings.

Travelers in Babylonia and Assyria took notice of inscriptions in the early 1800's. As was true for the Egyptian record, no one could read these inscriptions

either. But Henry C. Rawlinson deciphered the Behistun inscription in the middle of the century. At the risk of his life on a long ladder he managed to copy this mountainside inscription which had been carved there about 500 years before the birth of Christ by Darius I of Persia. It was in three languages, one of which was the ancient Akkadian. By working from one language to another, scholars were able to read the ancient language.

For most of the 19th century archeology was largely in the "treasure hunt" stage, but in the 20th Century it has become a fine science for the study of ancient civilization. Expeditions to dig into these ruins usually are financed by some university or other educational organization. Every available modern invention including color photography and computers are made use of in analyzing the things found.

HOW THE ARCHEOLOGIST WORKS.

In many of the Bible lands ancient cities have been destroyed time and time again. A city might be destroyed by war, by pestilence, by fire, by earthquake or other tragedy. Years afterwards another city would be built upon the same location. The new builders would simply level out the old ruins and build again. Sometimes layers of dust from the desert completely covered the old ruins. Thus it is usual to find several cities built one on top of another so that today a mound or hill marks the location of an ancient city. These mounds are called "tells" from the Arabic word for hill. An archeologist cuts a trench through a part of the tell to get an idea of the various layers of cities therein. Then he will excavate from the top down, uncovering a whole layer, then going down to the next layer. On top he might find a city of Roman times, beneath it a Greek city, then a Persian city, and so on back through history.

Many ancient buildings and palaces of kings are found to be in very good state even after being buried under the sand for thousands of years. Wall paintings, for example, still sometimes retain much of their original color and beauty.

Tombs and cemeteries are especially valuable, for whenever these are found unrobbed they yield a valuable amount of data about civilization at that time in the way of writings, tools, jewelry, furniture, clothing, etc.

The archeologist draws out a map of the site, and marks everything he finds, showing at what place it was found and at what level in the mound. Pictures are taken continually, so that it is possible to keep a record of the way the site looked, for once it is dug up it can never be replaced.

THE LANDS OF THE BIBLE.

The center of the Bible story is Palestine itself. From the time of Abraham

onward this land is the center of the events recorded in the Bible. Other lands have importance for Bible study only as they had contact with God's people in the land of Palestine.

In this study we shall see many discoveries in Palestine that help us to understand the Bible, such as the Lachish letters, written during the last days of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of the land, and the Dead Sea scrolls, which tell of life and beliefs contemporary with Jesus.

Egypt figures prominently in the Bible. Many discoveries there will have a bearing on the Bible. Egyptian conditions as shown in Genesis and Exodus are confirmed by drawings and writings on the monuments, such as having slaves make bricks out of mud and straw. The Tell El Amarna tablets include letters from Ebed Hepa, king of Jerusalem, describing an invasion of the land that some conservative scholars identify with the conquest by Joshua.

In Babylonia and Assyria the ruins of ancient capital cities yield much valuable information for Old Testament studies. Ancient laws, such as those of Hammurabi, help us to understand customs that prevailed in the days of Abraham. The city of Ur, thought by most scholars to have been the Ur that Abraham lived in, has been unearthed and found to have been a highly cultured, commercial city.

Towards the end of the Old Testament period Greece began to appear on the scene, and in the New Testament times both Greece and Italy had importance in the Bible account. Many of these archeological studies help us in the study of Paul's journeys particularly.

If you are not already fairly familiar with the map of the Bible lands, spend a few minutes studying it. Let the relative positions of Persia, Assyria, Babylonia, Syria, Palestine and Egypt fix themselves in your thinking. Notice smaller countries, too, like Moab and Edom. Notice the chief rivers, such as Tigris, Euphrates, Jordan and Nile. The Dead Sea, Red Sea and Mediterranean Sea should be noticed. A relief map giving some idea as to where the mountains are, and where the deserts are, will also help you in understanding and re-living the Bible situations.

QUESTIONS.

1. Define archeology.
2. What are some of the materials the archeologist examines?
3. What does Biblical archeology include?
4. What are the two main purposes of Biblical archeology?
5. What significance did the discovery of Hittite ruins have for the Bible

scholar?

6. How has archeology helped in regard to the study of the life of Samson?
7. When did modern archeology begin?
8. What was the significance of the Rosetta Stone?
9. What was the importance of the Behistun Rock?
10. Explain how a tell or mound may have several cities buried one on top of another.
11. Name the chief countries involved in Bible history.

TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. Take an American coin. See how many facts you can write down about American civilization from examining the coin.
2. What kind of training would be helpful to you if you wanted to go on an archeological expedition?
3. Give a report to the class on the Rosetta Stone or the Behistun Rock.
4. Draw a map of Bible lands and be able to tell what connection each major country had with the Bible.

LESSON 2. "IN THE BEGINNING, GOD"

INTRODUCTION.

In studying ancient things we wish that we could go back to the very beginning of all things.

However, the beginning of all things goes farther back than archeology can take us. If we limit archeology to the study of things that mankind has made and left, archeology can only go back as far as the origin of man. To study the beginnings of the universe we would need to study geology, astronomy, philosophy, and, above all, theology or God's word.

How can archeology help us in the search for the beginnings of all things? For one thing, it can carry us back to the very beginnings of human civilization. And in addition it can provide us with accounts of Creation, the Fall, the Flood, etc., as found in other countries and in other religions. These stories contain some details that resemble or closely parallel the Bible accounts.

HOW FAR BACK CAN ARCHEOLOGY TAKE US?

Archeology can take us back only to the beginning of mankind on the earth. Really, it has not taken us that far back, for nothing as yet has definitely been established as having been made before the Genesis Flood.

Most of the findings of archeology are within the period of time covered by known history. Nearly all of this period is covered by written records of one sort or another. To go back earlier than written records often involves a lot of theories and speculations. Archeologists can find "stone age" civilizations. But to place a date on these old stone axes or other relics is difficult. Since we still have stone age tribes in the world today, even in the highly technical Space Age, it is rather uncalled for to say that Stone Age things have to be millions of years old. Where these remains are found on the bottom layer of a mound, we can know that they are the oldest civilization in that particular mound, although we could not say how much older they were than the layer above it. But when these things are found by themselves as in an isolated cave, dating is difficult.

It is to be assumed that after leaving the Garden of Eden, Adam and his descendants had to learn the arts of civilization, so that it is not wrong to speak of a stone age or of a cave man period of civilization. But to assign thousands or even millions of years to such a state of human existence is purely imaginary.

Within 1600 years after the beginnings of the human race civilization had developed to such an extent that Noah could build a huge ship, which indicates

good use of tools and lots of mathematical skill.

WHAT WERE THE ANCIENT WRITING MATERIALS?

Let us consider for a moment the written records that archeologists study.

The writing materials were mainly stone, clay, papyrus and leather. In Egypt the kings usually carved their records on stone, such as walls and columns in temples. On the walls of their tombs they often painted pictures and writings. Likewise in Palestine and other countries, stone monuments furnish valuable information for archeologists, though not as general as in Egypt.

In Babylonia the main writing material was clay. School boys could work their arithmetic problems on clay, then "erase" them by smoothing out the clay, and then write something else. Government and business documents were written on clay. In order to make the records permanent, the clay could be baked into hard bricks. Hundreds of thousands of these brick records have been studied by archeologists.

Papyrus was a rough sort of paper. It was made from the pithy substance in reeds or canes that grew along the Nile River. While these documents easily rotted in damp climates, some have been preserved in tombs or other places, going far back into Old Testament times.

Leather or vellum or parchment was made from the skins of animals and became the more expensive type of writing material, especially in New Testament times. Two of our oldest copies of the whole Bible are on vellum, and go back to about 300 to 350 A. D. The famous Isaiah Scroll, found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, goes back to many years before the time of Jesus.

Both papyrus and leather were made into long rolls, or scrolls, which rolled up. Books as we know them, made up of separate pages and sewed together at one edge, were not devised until after the time of the apostles.

When scribes or writers wrote on papyrus or on vellum, they used pens made from canes and ink -- not at all unlike our writing methods today. Ink could be made from mixing soot and olive oil -- regular household articles -- or from expensive dyes.

To write on clay a sharp stick was used to make marks in the clay. These sticks made wedge-shaped impressions, so that this type of writing is usually called cuneiform, that is "wedge-shaped".

There are three main systems of writing words. One is the picture writing, where a drawing of a house might stand for the house. This was the type of

writing used in the ancient inscriptions in Egypt. It is often called hieroglyphic, or "priestly writing". Later on a simpler type of writing is found in Egypt, called "demotic" or "people's writing".

A second method of writing words is the syllabic type. In this kind of writing, words are spelled out in syllables, there being just a few hundred basic syllables needed to spell out all words. This was the type of writing used in Babylonia and Assyria in the ancient cuneiform script on clay tablets.

The third type of writing is the alphabet, where a letter stands for a sound and words are spelled out according to their sounds. No one knows just when the alphabet was invented, but on some Egyptian monuments we find alphabet spelling of some words thousands of years before Jesus. The old theory that the alphabet was invented around 800 B.C. by Phoenicians has long been discarded.

WRITTEN RECORDS CONCERNING THE BEGINNINGS.

Archeology and history provide us with many written records concerning the creation of the universe, the creation of man, the flood, etc. Similarities in all these legends make us think that they all came from a common source, namely the events that actually occurred. Thus, the Bible gives us the true account of these events. These legends retain much of the main story, but have garbled it up, added numerous gods, destroyed the concept of sin, etc.

The clay tablets in Babylonia give accounts of creation. One of them narrates of a hero god Marduk, who killed an evil monster Tiamat. He cut her body in half, and from half of it he made the heavens and from the other half the earth. While this legend has very little similarity to the Bible account, it does at least explain the origin of the universe as an act of a god, and describes a time of chaos before orderliness prevailed.

Another discovery in Babylonia, at first publicized as the Chaldean Genesis, is famous for its flood account. The "Babylonian Noah" named Utnapishtim, was warned of a coming flood and was told to build a boat and to get animals into it. Many things in the story closely parallel the Bible account. But two basic things are changed. The Babylonian account has many gods, who hovered around like flies when Utnapishtim made a sacrifice. The Babylonian account omits any reference to man's sin, but has the flood sent at the caprice of a female god.

These legends, and the legends of other nations, surely point back to a time when all people knew the truth about Creation, the Fall, the Flood, etc. Presumably when God garbled up the speech of mankind at the Tower of Babel, the nations that went out from there took with them the common storehouse of knowledge that the human race had at that time. As centuries went by, these

facts became more and more garbled, until they retained only a small similarity to the Bible account. It is in the Bible that the true God has preserved for us the true account of these matters.

HOW OLD IS THE EARTH?

Archeology cannot help us to establish the age of the earth. To attempt to learn this we must look to other sciences and to the Bible.

Many scientists talk in terms of billions of years. Do they have any basis for such claims?

There are some evidences that point to billions of years for the age of the earth and the universe. For example, the universe is expanding. By measuring the speed of the stars and figuring back to a time when the whole universe might have been one mass, they can estimate that it took so many billions of years for such and such a star to reach the point where it now is. Such theories always involve certain assumptions, however, as in this case that the universe was once one mass and that these stars have always traveled at the same rate of speed.

Another way of figuring the age of the earth is to measure the decay of uranium. A uranium ore deposit may be analyzed to see how much of it has decomposed. The rate of decomposition is known. So, by figuring backwards to a time when the bed of ore was one solid mass of uranium, a figure of some billions of years can be arrived at. Again, there are assumptions in the argument, such as that the mass was once pure uranium and the rate of decay has been constant under all temperatures and pressures, etc., of the ages.

DOES THE BIBLE GIVE THE AGE OF THE EARTH?

Assuming that the earth has been here for billions of years, how can we fit this information into the Bible account? There are two main ways whereby the Bible is made to allow for the earth's being billions of years old. One is to let the six days of creation in the first chapter of Genesis be symbols for six geological ages of millions of years each. The other is to assume that there was some great catastrophe between the first verse of the Bible and the second verse, so that you can have as many billion years as you want between those verses. According to this position, God originally created a perfect universe, but something, usually said to be the sin of the devil in rebelling against God, caused God to destroy that beautiful creation. The second verse of the Bible, according to this teaching, describes the earth in its waste and void condition after God had destroyed that original creation, and says nothing about how long it remained in that condition of chaos.

While this writer can see the possibilities in these various attempts to har-

monize the Bible and science, he is inclined to think that the scientists have not yet proved that the earth is billions of years old. If ever they do conclusively prove such to be a fact, then we can take one of these positions in regard to the first chapter of Genesis. But until they can definitely prove the age of the earth there is no need to try to match the Bible to their theories.

THE IMPORTANT FACTOR: GOD'S POWER!

Furthermore, the power of God is such that He can do anything instantly. Suppose it would have taken a deposit of uranium ore 4 billion years to have reached its present state of decay under ordinary circumstances. Could not God have created the deposit 9/10th decayed already? Suppose it would have taken the earth 4 billion years to have reached a state where human life could survive on it if ordinary conditions prevailed -- could not the Almighty God have created it ready to be inhabited? According to the Bible account it seems that Adam was a "grown" man, able to look out for himself, when first created. He did not have to grow up as the rest of us do, but was full grown at the start. So, could not the universe have been created in a "full grown" state, appearing to be four billion years old at the moment of creation?

Thus, we conclude that whenever and however the universe originated, it was God in His Almighty Power that brought it into being, so that the age of the earth is of no particular importance to us. If we accept the theory that the earth has been here billions of years, we still see a systematic orderliness such as requires the handiwork of an intelligent Being in control of it. And, admitting the presence of that intelligent Being, we are not limited to the operation of natural laws, but must understand that this Being, God, made these things as He saw fit.

QUESTIONS.

1. Why cannot archeology take us back to the beginning of the universe?
2. Is it possible that there was a Stone Age period of man's existence on earth?
3. What four materials were used to write upon in ancient times? Explain each.
4. Explain the three main systems used for writing a word.
5. Who was Utnapishtim?
6. What are two of the main features of the Babylonian Flood story that mark it as different from the Bible account?
7. Give two lines of evidence that point to billions of years as the age of the earth. What are the assumptions in each argument?
8. What are the two main ways used to allow for billions of years in Genesis 1.

9. What is the important factor to remember in discussing the age of the earth?

TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. Find a copy of the Gilgamesh Epic and read the part about the flood. Report to the class on its similarities to the Bible story and on its differences.

2. See what you can find in an encyclopedia regarding the history of writing or the alphabet and report to the class on it.

3. Find in encyclopedias or science books two or more theories as to the origin of the universe. Is there any general agreement among scientists themselves as to how the universe began or when?

4. In archeology books or encyclopedias find pictures of hieroglyphic writing and alphabetic writing and cuneiform writing. Explain the nature of each.

LESSON 3. "THIS THEY WILFULLY FORGET".

"For this they wilfully forget," wrote the Apostle Peter in regard to those scoffers who reject the teaching about the Lord's return. These scoffers espouse a theory of the uniformity of nature, saying "What is, always has been and always will be." They deny that God has any control over nature. They deliberately reject any knowledge of Creation and the Flood, as Peter pointed out in I Peter 3:5-7, because they do not want to acknowledge that God created them or that He will judge them.

Abundant evidence exists all over the planet to show that some major catastrophe or catastrophes destroyed this planet in ages past. Scientists generally explain these conditions as being the result of millions of years of slow changes. But there are many reputable scientists who hold to the Bible teachings on the Flood, and who hold that the Flood brought about these changes in the earth.

In this lesson we are to deal with the events recorded in the Bible in connection with the Flood, the period immediately prior to it, and the period immediately following it.

CONDITIONS OF THE EARTH PRIOR TO THE FLOOD.

If we take it for granted that the changes in nature associated with the Flood completely wiped out the civilization of that time and changed the natural world surrounding this planet, then we can probably never recover complete knowledge of the earth as it was before the Flood. But the immense coal deposits and petroleum deposits, the skeletons of dinosaurs, the evidence of dense tropical growth in the Arctic regions, the preserved bodies of mammoths--these are some of the evidences pointing to a tremendously fertile earth in ages past, abounding with plant and animal life almost beyond our comprehension.

The Bible speaks of the ground's being watered by a mist in Genesis 2:6. Critics have long considered this as evidence of the legendary character of the Genesis stories, saying that in a dry country, such as Egypt, where rain is seldom seen, legends would have grown up about fog coming up from the river to water the ground. But many Bible-believing scientists are taking this statement as literal. They claim that prior to the Flood, rain was unknown. They believe that the statement about "the waters which were above the firmament" in Genesis 2:7, indicate that the earth was once surrounded by water vapor, making the entire earth a sort of hothouse with uniform temperate climate in which animal and vegetable life could thrive in great abundance. In connection with the flood it is stated that "the windows of heaven were opened", see Genesis 7:11. These scientists take that statement to mean that God caused these water vapors to condense and fall upon the earth as rain.

If this is the correct view as to the nature of the earth prior to the Flood,

it would provide a simple scientific explanation for the conditions that once prevailed over the earth.

What about the long life these people had before the Flood? Babylonian records also speak of long lives for some kings prior to the Flood. One scientist has argued that death is somehow related to cosmic rays. According to his view, this canopy of waters surrounding the earth shielded the earth from most of the cosmic radiation that we are now subjected to, so that the death processes were much slower in those days.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

Man's original home was the Garden of Eden. We have no way of locating it today. A river came out of it and parted into four streams. Only two of those streams can today be identified with certainty, the Tigris (Hiddekel) and the Euphrates. The likelihood then, is that the Garden of Eden was somewhere in the area where these two rivers have their source.

Are we to take literally the story of the temptation and the fall of Man? True, there are features in it that we do not ordinarily encounter, such as a tree that will make one wise, or snakes that talk. In this account, however, we are not dealing with the ordinary natural processes of today, but with a special state of affairs that existed in that glorious age, and with miracles under the control of supernatural beings, God and the devil,

Archeologists found a clay tablet showing a snake, a woman, and a tree, indicating that early Babylonians believed this story about the temptation and the fall. In Greek mythology, Pandora opened a box, out of which came all the troubles on the earth. That Greek legend has very little parallel to the Bible story, but does reflect the main principle that a woman's curiosity brought about the entrance of disease and trouble on the earth.

ANIMAL SACRIFICE.

Philosophers and sociology professors have searched in vain for some humanistic explanation of the origin of sacrifice. How could it have ever entered the mind of man that a god would be pleased with the killing of an animal and the pouring out of its blood? The Bible offers the simple, easy explanation. God ordained animal sacrifice when he made clothes for Adam and Eve out of the skins of animals. Whether God explained it or just let man figure it out for himself, He seems to have been saying to Adam, "You have sinned, and I told you that when you sinned you must die. But I will accept the deaths of these animals as a substitute for your deaths. Whenever you sin you must make a sacrifice of an animal."

HIGHLY DEVELOPED CULTURE PRIOR TO THE FLOOD.

Civilization had attained unto a high peak prior to the flood. The account in Genesis 4 indicates that cities were built, cattle domesticated, musical instruments invented, and tools of brass and iron made. If our position is correct, namely that the flood completely obliterated all traces of pre-flood civilization we would hardly expect ever to find any archeological remains earlier than the flood. But archeology does show that from very early times man did have knowledge of musical instruments and metal tools.

Was there ever a time of cave-man existence? Of course. There are tribes on earth today who live a very crude type of life, having only stone age type of weapons and tools and pottery, etc. But we doubt that there was a very prolonged period on earth when man lived in this primitive way. When Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden, it may have taken them many years to figure out how to live and care for themselves. We might allow for several hundred years before man made great progress in the use of tools. But by the time of Noah, only 1600 years or so after Adam was created, mankind had enough knowledge and skill to build a huge boat. This required knowledge of mathematics and skill in use of tools. The Bible certainly would allow for a development of culture from very simple type of life to complex civilization. But man's own brain power and his abilities were probably better at the start than later. To assume an indefinite period of hundreds of thousands, maybe millions of years, for man to acquire brains enough to devise tools, etc., is purely imagination, based upon theory, not upon fact.

The same is true in regard to language. God gave Adam the power of speech when He created him. It did not take man thousands of years to learn to put grunts and growls together to make speech. Animals have been here all that time, but they have never developed skill in communication through language. Speech is a gift from God.

WERE THERE GIANTS IN THE EARTH?

The King James Version of the Bible states that there were giants in the earth in those days. But the Hebrew word here is not exactly clear, so that modern versions usually keep the Hebrew word, Nephilim, without trying to give a meaning for it.

These terrible conditions seem to have been related to intermarriage between the sons of God and the daughters of men. Some think this means that angels took on human bodies and lived with human wives, producing unusual offsprings, or giants. Heathen religions usually have lots of stories about gods and goddesses having children by human mates. Some Bible teachers associate

this Genesis situation with the fall of angels mentioned elsewhere in the Bible.

Other students of the Bible, however, point out that angels apparently do not reproduce, see Matthew 22:30, and they find other objections to this explanation. They claim that the passage means that the godly people intermarried with the wicked people, so that the whole earth became wicked. The passage would then be a warning to Christians today not to marry unbelievers.

EVIDENCES FOR A FLOOD.

Archeological records regarding the flood are mainly the Babylonian clay tablets that tell the Flood story. In the Gilgamesh Epic we read of a man named Utnapishtim, who built a boat and took in some animals to save themselves from a flood. The story has many similarities to the Bible account, but differs in two major factors: (1) the Bible gives the cause of the flood as man's sin, but the Babylonian account has it come as a whim of a female god; (2) the Bible has only one God, whereas the Babylonian account has many gods, who "hovered like flies" around the sacrifice which Utnapishtim made after the flood.

Many other nations have flood stories. They must all point back to the truth that there once was such a flood, and that all mankind had the knowledge of it, but as nations departed farther from the true God, they garbled up the stories about Creation, the Fall, the Flood, etc.

At places archeologists encounter "flood layers" where clay separates one layer of a city from an older civilization. But these layers indicate local floods, not a worldwide catastrophe such as the Bible describes.

Geology and Palaeontology give much evidence of a flood, although non-believing scientists refuse to accept the evidence. Take, for example, huge layers of coal, sometimes several layers one above another, with layers of mud or rock in between. How did this occur? Scientists have tried in vain to find ways of explaining these coal deposits by ordinary processes of nature. But just imagine huge tidal waves hundreds of miles long and hundreds of feet high sloshing over the continent. A wave from one direction could sweep in a huge drift of wood, then a wave from another direction slosh this over with huge amounts of mud, and then another wave bring in more wood, etc., until several layers of coal were formed. Or take the big deposits of fossils or skeletons found at certain places in the earth. Instead of its requiring millions of years for these animals to die and be buried there in a pile, one big whirlpool could have collected dead animals and put them all there at one time.

Many books have been written on this subject. An exceptionally good one is **THE GENESIS FLOOD**, by Whitcomb & Morris (Baker, Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan).

A NEW START AFTER THE FLOOD.

Every so often someone reports having seen part of a boat or a shadow of a boat beneath the surface in a lake in the mountains of Armenia. It is conceivable that some remains of Noah's ark could still be intact, since it was made of wood that hardly rots, and covered with pitch. But we have no confirmation of these rumors.

God promised Noah that never again would He destroy the earth with water, and put His rainbow in the cloud as a sign of that promise. If the teaching is correct that prior to the Flood the earth was surrounded by water vapor and it had never before rained, this could be the first time a rainbow had ever been seen. Or, it could be that men had seen a rainbow before, but now God made it the particular symbol of His promise.

Why did Noah get drunk? It is possible that prior to the Flood fermentation was impossible and this was the first alcohol produced and the first time anyone became drunk. Thus, Noah did not intend to become intoxicated, but was a victim of his ignorance. On the other hand, God has never spared his servants, but has revealed their sins as well as their good points. Noah, like all the rest of us, sinned at times and needed forgiveness.

In connection with Noah's drunkenness the Bible records a curse which he put upon the descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham, see Genesis 9:25-27. This prediction has been verified in history in that the servant races of the world have been traceable to Ham and are sometimes called the Hamitic races.

QUESTIONS.

1. Why have some people wanted to forget the Flood?
2. What are some evidences in nature that some great catastrophe changed the nature of the earth?
3. How would a canopy of water vapor surrounding the earth explain some of the statements in Genesis about conditions existing prior to the flood?
4. What do we know about the location of the Garden of Eden?
5. Explain how and why animal sacrifices originated.
6. What were some of the arts of civilization which were invented prior to the Flood?
7. What are two explanations of the statement that the sons of God married daughters of men?
8. In what two major ways does the Babylonian Flood account differ from the Bible account?
9. Give one example from geology that could be a proof of the Flood.
10. Has history verified the prediction that the Hamitic races would be the servant races?

LESSON 4. THE DAYS OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB.

Following the flood God gave man a new start, but again human beings rejected God and went their own sinful way. God brought judgment upon that rebellious world-order at the Tower of Babel and scattered the nations out over the earth. Later, God chose one man, Abraham, through whom He planned to redeem the rest of the race. From Abraham onward the Bible concerns itself chiefly with the people of Israel, and other nations figure in the account only as they have dealings with Israel. Scoffers have considered this as proof that the Bible is simply a Jewish book, glorifying the Jewish history while ignoring the mighty empires of the world. This sneer misses the whole point that the purpose of the Bible is not to give a history of the world, but to give a history of Redemption. Since the Bible is pointing to Christ, it concentrates on the events that lead up to the coming of Christ into the world. The Bible is not trying to be a history book, but to emphasize the teachings and prophecies that point to salvation in Christ.

ORIGINS OF THE NATIONS.

Genesis 10 is often called "The Table of Nations." It lists the major nations of the ancient world and shows from which son of Noah each was descended. Archeologists can identify the majority of these names from ancient writings and inscriptions. In general, this list shows that the Indo-European nations (such as Greece, Rome, Germany, England, etc.) came from Japheth; the Semites (largely the Jews and Arabs) from Shem; the Egyptians, Canaanites and Ethiopians from Ham. No mention is made of such faraway races as the Chinese and the Indians, probably because they were unknown to the Israelites and had no bearing on the Bible record. We have no way of tracing their origin. Nor can we tell when the difference in skin color developed.

Modern scholars in general accept the Bible position that the whole human race came from a common ancestor and constitutes one species. If we were to breed human beings like animals are bred or that plants are controlled, we could probably develop varieties of human beings by the same process of selection by which different strains of animals or plants are developed. There is no problem in that regard. The Bible gives no information on the origin of races and colors, but does show the origins of the various nations of antiquity.

THE TOWER OF BABEL.

Genesis 11 gives the account of the Tower of Babel. Men started out to build a high tower and make a great name for themselves. We are not told the details, but because God brought judgment upon the project, we conclude that it was evidently in defiance of Him.

Babylonian legends likewise speak of the making of a tower, which they say the gods destroyed with a great wind.

There are ruins of several such towers in Babylonia today. Probably the Tower of Babel was the first of the towers of ziggurats so popular in that area. The most famous one is that at Ur of the Chaldees, which has been extensively excavated and studied by archeologists. It was built in a sort of pyramid form. It served as the center of the community. Rooms on the lower floors were for various official purposes, perhaps comparable to our court houses today. On the top of the tower a religious shrine was built, dedicated to the moon goddess of Ur.

The Bible states that the tower of Babel was built out of bricks and held together by asphalt. Ruins of these old towers confirm the fact that these were the building materials used. Babylonians had no mountains from which to hew out stones for building purposes, but they had plenty of clay and numerous asphalt pits.

High places for worship are found all over the world, raising the question, "Why do people want to get up high to worship?" Probably it can be explained by the psychological fact that we get a feeling of exhilaration from being up high, and we find a sense of awe when gazing out from a high mountain. Some other explanations have been offered, such as that mankind still remembered the flood and wanted to build a high place for refuge.

ABRAHAM'S CHILDHOOD HOME.

The general picture of life in the days of Abraham as shown in the Bible is verified by the facts from Archeology. Even the name Abraham is found in ancient records dug up in Babylonia. None of these Abrahams were the Abraham of the Bible, but these records do show that the name was used in ancient Babylonia.

Until recently most scholars were agreed in accepting the ruins of Ur as Abraham's childhood home city. Now some scholars want to make other identifications. But, even if this Ur is not the same Ur that Abraham came from, it still illustrates conditions that existed in Babylonia in the days of Abraham.

Ur was a highly cultured city, a city of art and education and commerce. Banking and trade techniques were highly developed. Artisans today marvel at the skill the people had in making jewelry. Abraham was told to leave this comfortable, luxurious city and go out to dwell in tents. Sarah must have often wished for a fine house like she probably had back in Ur.

Abraham is called "the Hebrew". This word comes from a Hebrew word meaning "to cross over", and might be simply translated "the migrant", that is,

a traveler passing through. Christians today should be merely sojourners and pilgrims in this present world, merely passing through it to reach our heavenly home.

CONFIRMATION OF CONDITIONS IN ABRAHAM'S TIME.

Again and again the archeologists have found that the Bible is accurate in details about life in the days of Abraham. They have found that the Hittites did exist, that circumcision was practiced in Egypt, that people did wear nose rings, that travelers could enter Egypt, that money was weighed, etc. On the other hand, in some matters they have not verified the Bible as yet. For example, they still have not found proof that there were Philistines in that land so early in history, but then they have not found anything to the contrary, either. (Incidentally, the name Palestine for the land, comes from the Romans who named it after the Philistines, spelling it "Palestina" in their Latin language.)

Some day we may have more information about the cave of Machpelah, where Abraham buried Sarah, and where he himself later was buried. For centuries this place has been in the hands of Arabs, who would not let scholars investigate it.

Two episodes of special interest to us are the destruction of Sodom and the birth of Ishmael.

ARCHEOLOGY AND SODOM.

No trace has been found of the ruins of Sodom. Some think that the ruins may be beneath the Dead Sea. Or, it could be that God utterly destroyed all traces of the city.

But archeology does confirm that fact that once that area was a densely populated and prosperous area. One archeologist thought to expose the errors in Genesis about this matter, but soon discovered the ruins of many towns in the area, confirming the Bible picture.

Abraham's battle with the kings that earlier captured Sodom likewise fits the picture, which archeology gives of that era. While we have not found any record yet of that particular invasion, we know that such wars in that area were possible. Some scholars are inclined to identify one of the kings, Amraphel, king of Shinar, in Genesis 14:1, with Hammurabi, king of Babylon. The names are very similar in the ancient languages, but there is no specific evidence yet to prove the identification. However, Hammurabi and Abraham were living in roughly the same period of time, so that conditions in Hammurabi's time can be considered as the background in which Abraham lived. This is of significance for us in studying the episode about the birth of Ishmael.

ARCHEOLOGY AND THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL.

God had promised a son to Abraham and Sarah, but both were old and Sarah in particular was past the age when women bear children. So, Sarah told Abraham to take her slave girl, Hagar, and have a child by her. The idea was that since Sarah owned the slave-girl, the child would belong to Sarah, too, and thus indirectly be her child. Abraham agreed, and so it came to pass that Ishmael was born to Abraham and Hagar.

This matter had seemed very strange to modern minds until the archeologists found that this custom was common practice in those days. Hammurabi, king of Babylon, had laws written down in a code and inscribed on stone pillars at various places in his kingdom. These laws provide for this very arrangement Sarah used. She was acting in accordance with established law and custom of their home country, for these laws provided that when a wife bore no children the husband could have a child by a slave girl, and the child would be considered the heir of the father.

Later, however, Sarah acted in defiance of those laws. The code of Hammurabi stated that if later the wife herself bore a child, the slave girl could not be cast out of the household, but that her child would be guaranteed an inheritance. So, when Sarah demanded that Abraham send Hagar away, she was violating the law. However, God told Abraham to send away the slave girl and her child for He would provide for Ishmael.

CONDITIONS IN THE DAYS OF ISAAC AND JACOB.

The customs of the days of these patriarchs have been illustrated by findings by archeology. For example, old men did pronounce such blessings upon their deathbeds, and these declarations were binding upon all concerned. Such matters as digging wells also are verified by archeological discoveries.

Of special interest is the matter of Rachel's stealing of her father's images. These "teraphim" were small household images or gods. Rachel stole them when Jacob and his family returned to Canaan. Her father, Laban, pursued after Jacob in order to get his gods back. Jacob declared that whoever stole the gods would be put to death. Rachel hid them and sat upon them so that they were not found. The question long has been, "What was so important about those gods that the death penalty should have been inflicted for stealing them?"

Records unearthed at a city called Nuzu give us the answer. These gods were a sort of title deed to the property, so that whoever had the gods was considered the owner of the property and the head of the clan. Thus, if Jacob had Laban's gods, he had legal title to Laban's property and the rights of rulership over all the kinfolds.

STUDY QUESTIONS.

1. Why does the Bible tell us mainly about the history of the nation of Israel, ignoring the rest of the world after Genesis 11?
2. Name the three sons of Noah from whom the nations have descended.
3. Tell how ziggurats were used in ancient Babylonia.
4. What building materials were used in the Tower of Babel?
5. Describe the type of city that Ur of the Chaldees was.
6. What is a possible meaning of the word "Hebrew"? How does this illustrate the place of a Christian in the world today?
7. List some details mentioned in the life of Abraham that archeologists have verified.
8. What have archeologists found out about the density of population around the Dead Sea in the time of Abraham?
9. What was the name of the famous king of Babylon who perhaps was living when Abraham was living?
10. How do we know that it was a legal arrangement for Abraham to have a child by the slave girl?
11. What was so important about the possession of the household gods?

TOPICS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION.

1. See if you can obtain a translation of the Code of Hammurabi in some archeology book and read it. Compare its moral standards with some of the Bible laws.
2. Make a report on the archeological findings at Ur, especially on the ziggurat.
3. Tell the Bible story about the births of Ishmael and Isaac. Show how Ishmael's birth was by human planning, but Isaac's was by God's promise and miracle. What application does Paul make of this in Galatians 4:21-31?

LESSON 5. STRANGERS IN A FOREIGN LAND.

God told Abraham that his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan, but that they would be "a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years." (Genesis 15:13). This was fulfilled in that the Israelites went into Egypt in the days of Joseph, and stayed there until the Exodus under Moses.

Archeologists have found these chapters dealing with the Israelites in Egypt to be true to the historical situation of that day, showing again the reliability of the Bible even in details of everyday life. Furthermore, Genesis and Exodus contain quite a few Egyptian words, indicating that their author was acquainted with that language.

JOSEPH SOLD INTO SLAVERY.

Jacob had twelve sons by his four wives. The wife he really loved was Rachel, and it was natural that he should regard her sons with special favor. He gave to her oldest son, Joseph, a coat of many colors, probably the sort of garment which would mark him as chief of the clan. His brothers envied him and hated him. Some wanted to kill him, but they settled for selling him as a slave.

Details of the story fit the situation as archeologists find it. Cisterns, for example, such as the pit into which the brothers had thrown Joseph, are common in Palestine. Slavery was common, of course. Formerly historians thought no foreigners were allowed into Egypt, but sketches on monuments portray traders entering into Egypt, and other records indicate that they could rise high in the government.

Some scholars sneered at the possibility that a slave would have opportunity to enter the family quarters of his owner's house. Excavations of Egyptian houses show grain was stored at the rear of the other rooms, so that Joseph would have to go through the house in his duties in checking on supplies. Thus Joseph had access to the family rooms, and thereby he was trapped by Potiphar's wife.

An ancient Egyptian story, "The Tale of Two Brothers", is sometimes cited as having a similar plot, in that one brother wanted to kill another brother on the accusation of adultery. But such plots are so common and true to life that the Joseph story could not be considered as another version of the other story.

Incidentally, another old Egyptian tale by Sinuhe, is interesting in that it shows the relationships between Egypt and other nations even earlier than Joseph's time. Sinuhe fled from Egypt upon getting into disfavor. He traded up in Canaan for years, but returned to Egypt in his old age.

JOSEPH'S RISE TO POWER.

Details of Joseph's rise to power also are known to be accurate to that day and time. For example, Joseph interpreted the butler's dream as meaning he would again be serving wine to Pharaoh. Formerly there was a problem in that one ancient historian had stated that the Egyptians did not grow grapes nor drink wine. But drawings on ancient monuments show occasions of drinking. One drawing has a man pressing out grapes and handing the cup to the king.

Other incidental confirmations of the Bible story include such matters as the favored position which the priests held, that cups were used for divination, that gold chains were worn about the neck by high officials, that Pharaohs did ride in chariots, etc.

Famines, of course, were common enough in that land in ancient times. Egypt does not depend directly upon rainfall for watering its fields, but irrigates them by taking water from the Nile. Thus it often came about that Egypt had grain when other nations were in want. Later on in Roman times Egypt was the main source of supply of grain for Rome.

Probably Egypt was being ruled by invaders called Hyksos at the time that Joseph went into Egypt. The Hyksos ruled the land for about 150 years, and were later driven out by an Egyptian king, perhaps Ahmose I, who came to the throne around 1580 B. C. If this be the correct historical background, then the favoritism which the Hyksos king showed to Joseph and his family might in part be explained by the fact that the Hyksos too were foreigners in the land. And the fact that later the Israelites were oppressed by "a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph," (Exodus 1:8) would mean that when the native Egyptians threw out the invaders they also turned upon the friends of these invaders, the Israelites, and oppressed them.

OPPRESSION OF THE ISRAELITES.

This new king made a determined effort to reduce the number of the Israelites. Exodus 1:7 shows that the Israelites had increased greatly and verses 9-10 show that the Egyptians feared them because of their numbers. Just how many Israelites there were has often been the subject of dispute. More than 600,000 men of military age are spoken of, so that the entire nation must have been over 2,000,000 -- maybe much higher. Since we do not fully understand the Hebrew system of numbers, some scholars have wanted to reduce the figure to about 2,500 or so persons. But it is hardly thinkable that the king of Egypt would fear a small number like that, and a figure in the millions better explains the situation.

Exodus 1:11 informs us that the Israelites built Pithom and Rameses. This is the starting point for those scholars who date the Exodus in the time of Rameses

or Merneptah, since the Israelites built the city that is named for Rameses. Those that prefer a date much earlier argue that the Israelites could have built the city and that later Rameses renamed it after himself. Archeologists think they have established the identity of this city.

One of the interesting facts about the bricks the Israelites made is that they used straw in making them. Archeology confirms this fact both by evidence of actual straw in some bricks themselves, and by pictures on monuments showing the use of straw in the brick making process. Just what purpose the straw served is a matter of dispute, some arguing that it was a binding material to hold the clay together and others claiming that a chemical in the straw worked on the clay to make better bricks.

The monuments also show drawings of beatings being given to slaves, and of taskmasters with whips.

MOSES RAISED IN THE PALACE.

Although Hebrew boy babies were to be killed, the mother of Moses managed to save his life by putting him in a basket in the river. The princess found him and raised him as her son. Scholars who prefer an early date for the Exodus identify this princess as Hatshepsut, who ruled Egypt through her husband and stepson. Very little was known about her until recently, for her successors had destroyed every reference to her, so that her very existence was not known. The historical situation indicates that if she is the princess who drew Moses out of the water, Moses, as her son, would likely have been king over Egypt some day.

By a play on words the princess called him "Moses", which sounds like a Hebrew word meaning to draw out. In the Egyptian language, however, that is the ending given to names of several Egyptian kings, such as Thutmosis, Ahmose, etc.

ISRAEL IN EGYPTIAN RECORDS.

So far, the only reference made to Israel on Egyptian monuments is on an inscription made by Merneptah, who ruled around 1225-1215 B. C., which lists Israel among the places which he had subdued, showing that Israel was already settled in Canaan at the time. It is not likely that we will ever find any record of Moses or the Exodus on Egyptian monuments. The ancient kings only recorded things that were in their favor, omitting reference to defeats. Furthermore, it was customary among Egyptian kings to destroy records and monuments of their predecessors, even the good ones. It is not likely that we will ever find any reference to the Exodus, since it was a humiliating defeat for the Egyptians.

Occasional references are made both in Egypt and elsewhere to the Apiru, Hapiri, Habiru, etc., probably variant spellings of the same name. They appear to be sort of wandering tribes who might do slave type work, and perhaps are to be identified with the "Hebrews".

THE PLAGUES.

Moses' first attempt to help his people failed and he fled into the wilderness, where he lived for forty years. God appeared to him and told him to go down to Egypt and deliver the people. Centuries before the time of Moses the Egyptians had operated mines in the Sinai peninsula, but in the time of Moses Egyptian authority did not seem to extend that far.

God sent ten plagues upon the Egyptians before they relented and let the people go. These plagues were for the most part a terrible increase in natural things like hail, frogs, lice, sores, locusts, etc. The fact that God was in control is shown by the timing of the plagues. They began and ended under the control of Moses. Even the magicians, who could duplicate the earlier ones, such as turning water to blood, were forced to admit that God was doing these things.

In many of the plagues God also set the bounds, so that the Israelites were not made to suffer from them. In the last great plague, the death of the first-born son, God provided a way of escape through slaying a lamb and putting the blood about the door. This marked the beginning of the most solemn feast of the Israelites, the Passover, which commemorates their deliverance from Egypt.

DATE OF THE EXODUS.

Scholars are divided over the date of the Exodus, some wanting to put it in the Rameses - Merneptah era, 1292 - 1215 B. C., and others placing it in the Thutmose III - Amenhotep II era, or around 1440 B. C. While the matter cannot be definitely settled with the present knowledge we have, conservative scholars lean towards the earlier view, both because it fits the Bible statements better and also because the historical situation is such as the Bible describes.

In favor of this earlier date are the letters written by the king of Jerusalem, Ebedhepa, in the time of Ikhnaton (Amenhotep IV), who ruled 1370-1353 B. C. These letters kept urging the king of Egypt to send troops or the "Habiri" would take all the land. This seems to be a first hand account of Joshua's invasion of the land. These letters were one of the most significant discoveries of modern archeology. They are usually referred to as the Amarna tablets or the Tell-El-Amarna tablets, and were written on clay tablets in cuneiform script.

Ikhnaton is sometimes called "the world's first monotheist" because he tried

to make all Egypt worship one god, Aton. Scholars who put the Exodus later sometimes claim that Moses might have been influenced by Ikhnaton's views. Scholars who place the Exodus earlier wonder if perhaps Ikhnaton had not been influenced by what he knew of Moses and the Israelites.

THE ROUTE OF THE EXODUS.

The Bible gives us place names where the Israelites stopped, but archeologists are not able to identify them with certainty today, so the lines drawn on a map to show the route the Israelites took are largely guesswork. The camps the Israelites made in the wilderness were of temporary nature, so that it is not likely that they ever left anything of lasting nature that archeologists could find today. Even the identification of the mountain top where Moses received the Law is not absolutely certain, although the traditional site called Jebel Musa (Arabic for Mount of Moses) is probably correct and there has been a monastery there from early centuries of Christian times.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Joseph's brothers hate him?
2. List some of the details in which archeology has shown the Bible to be accurate in the story of Joseph.
3. Who was Sinuhe?
4. What proof do we have that Egyptian kings did drink wine?
5. What do we know about the Hyksos? Why would they be friendly to the Israelites?
6. Why did the Egyptians later oppress the Israelites?
7. What proof do we have that straw was used in making bricks in Egypt?
8. What is the only reference to Israel found so far in Egyptian records?
9. Why is it not likely that we will ever find any Egyptian records of Moses or of the Exodus?
10. What indicates the miraculous nature of the plagues?
11. What is the significance of the Amarna tablets for Bible study?
12. What is the name given today to the generally accepted site of the Law of Moses?

TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. Read an encyclopedia article on Hatshepsut and see how Moses could have fitted into her schemes if she is the princess who took him out of the Nile.
2. Read the letters from Ebed hepa and see if you can find any names or places mentioned in Joshua.
3. What is monotheism? From the Bible viewpoint, could Ikhnaton have been the first monotheist?

LESSON 6. IN THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES.

A FURTHER WORD ABOUT EGYPT.

Not all of the fascinating ruins of ancient Egypt have any bearing on Bible study, of course. We have had to select only a few things out of the great mass of data available in regard to Egypt. The pyramids, for instance, are extremely interesting, but they are not mentioned in the Bible and are of no help in Bible study. The pyramids were erected perhaps more than a thousand years before the days of Moses.

The Egyptians were very skillful in embalming bodies. Embalming is mentioned in the Bible in connection with the deaths of Jacob and Joseph. In the case of Jacob the embalming process took 40 days, see Genesis 50:3. These embalmed bodies, or mummies, are quite common in Egypt. Many people have thought that there was some mysterious science known to the Egyptians, but this is not the case. Their process is well known, the main feature being to soak the body in a solution of natron until it was thoroughly hardened. The chief reason, however, that the bodies have remained in such good state is the dry climate of Egypt.

THE WILDERNESS WANDERINGS.

Archeologists cannot help much in a study of the 40 years that the Israelites spent in the wilderness. But there are a few items of interest.

Some liberal scholars have tried to identify the manna which the Israelites ate in the wilderness as the gum that exudes even today from a plant there. It is nourishing, and could have sustained life for a few people for a little while. But if we accept the Bible figures as to the number of people and the length of time they lived out there, this theory about the manna is unthinkable. Only a divine miracle, such as the Bible describes, could have fed so many people over such a long time.

The materials used in the building of the tabernacle and the ark have been shown by archeologists to have been available in that age, even to the bronze mirrors which the women gave (Exodus 38:8). As to writing on stone, such as in the case of the Ten Commandments, we find this was common in ancient times. Furthermore, we have already seen that law codes were already set up by other kings, such as Hammurabi. Critics used to make fun of this part of the Bible because they thought that writing had not been invented and that ignorant desert savages, as they regarded the Israelites, could not have produced such skills as required to build the tabernacle or to organize a nation. So, although archeology hardly expects ever to find remains of the temporary camps made by the Israelites in the wilderness, it has confirmed that the general background was as the Bible describes it.

CONQUEST OF THE LAND.

Actual details of the conquest of the land under Joshua may never be verified exactly, but the general picture of a change in culture is clearly indicated in archeological discoveries. Excavations show that a cruder, poorer civilization replaced an older Canaanite culture in the period roughly that of the times of the Judges in the Bible. This bears out the Bible picture that the newcomers tried to exterminate the Canaanites completely and forbade intermarriage with them.

Excavations at Jericho show that the city was destroyed many times, but at least one time it was burned by fire. Furthermore a portion of a wall was found lying flat where the wall had fallen. Archeologists are not in agreement in the conclusions drawn from their studies of Jericho, especially as to the date of its complete destruction, but their findings verify many of the details of the book of Joshua.

The Amarna tablets, referred to in an earlier lesson, show that some invaders were taking over the land in the days of Ikhnoton, king of Egypt, and these letters appear to be a contemporary record of the Israelite conquest.

CANAANITE RELIGION.

Liberal scholars of bygone days claimed that the Israelites took over their religion from the Canaanites. But in 1928 discoveries began to be made at a mound in Syria called Ras Shamra by the Arabs. It turned out to be the ancient city of Ugarit, and its temples and library were found practically intact. Scholars now have first hand information about Canaanite religion and culture in days of the Conquest and the Judges. The wide gulf between the religion of the Canaanites and that of the Israelites makes it all the more evident that the Bible is true.

The chief god of the Canaanites was El, and his main wife Asherah. Their son, Baal, was a sort of nature god, especially of the storm. His wife was Anath. These gods, like the gods of Greece, were guilty of immorality and excesses of all kinds. Sex was a dominant theme in their religion, and their priestesses would be called prostitutes today. Boiling a kid in its own mother's milk was one of the crude rites of this religion. The command in the Law of Moses against that practice was a condemnation of the vile religious rites practiced by the Canaanites.

Thousands of clay plaques are found in ruins of Canaanite homes depicting a female goddess. Sometimes these are found in ruins of Israelite villages also, showing that the Israelites probably gave in to the allurements of the idolatrous religion about them. But the interesting thing is that not yet has any archeolo-

gists ever uncovered any kind of image or drawing of Jehovah, the God of Israel. It is thought that even the golden calves which Jeroboam made were not to represent Jehovah's appearance, but that God was thought to be riding on top the animal. In drawings found of a Syrian god Hadad, Hadad is pictured as riding on a bull. So maybe the Israelites thought Jehovah was riding unseen on the golden calf. Thus in a negative way archeology helps to confirm the Bible by showing no evidence that the Israelites ever broke the commandment against making an image of Jehovah. This is amazing when you stop to think that all ancient peoples had idols and images in abundance. Israel was different.

SAMSON AND THE TEMPLE.

Archeology explains how Samson was able to destroy a temple by pulling down two pillars. In our modern construction it probably would not greatly damage a building to pull out two of the columns in front of the building. But in the Canaanite construction the upper floor of a building often was sustained by two pillars in the middle of the building. Timbers would not be long enough to go from one wall to another. So the builders would place one end of a log on the wall, and the other end of the log on a pillar of stone in the center of the building. Another log would come out from the other side and meet it, and a pillar would hold up the end of that log too. The upper story would then be built up on these timbers. When Samson pulled the pillars out, the timbers and the whole upper floor came crashing down.

THE PHILISTINE POWER.

After the Canaanites had been largely conquered the Israelites ran into increasing trouble with the Philistines. Archeology shows that the Philistines were a powerful nation in the latter years of the Judges. They even fought with Rameses III, king of Egypt. The great advantage the Philistines had over the Israelites was in their use of iron. They were excellent craftsmen in making iron tools, and they kept the Israelites from having blacksmiths, so that the Israelites could not make weapons of war. (I Samuel 13:19-22). Abundant evidence has been found by archeologists to show that the Philistines used iron extensively, but hardly any evidence is found that the people in the hills (the Israelites) used iron in the time of the Judges.

GIBEAH.

A great war was fought between the tribe of Benjamin and the other tribes of Israel, in which the Benjamite town of Gibeah was destroyed by fire. Archeologists find that the city was destroyed by fire in that period, and not rebuilt. Later we find that King Saul placed a garrison of soldiers at Gibeah, and archeologists have uncovered the foundations of what they think was Saul's fortress there.

THE STORY OF WENAMON.

A trader named Wenamon, who lived around 1100 B. C., or about the end of the period of the Judges, has left a report of his trip to Dor, a city at that time on the coast of northern Palestine. Wenamon gives a contemporary account of conditions that prevailed in that day and time. They are like the situation which the Bible describes. One thing that surprised the historians was the great number of papyrus rolls mentioned by Wenamon, showing how common writing must have been in that period. Wenamon had come to buy timber for building a temple in Egypt, but he ran into all sorts of troubles. Among other things, we learn from the narrative that Egyptian power was not respected nor feared anymore in Palestine in that century.

DESTRUCTION OF SHILOH.

The Bible does not tell us about the destruction of Shiloh. But we can gather from Jeremiah 7:12, 14 that Shiloh had been destroyed and was still a ruin in the days of Jeremiah. We would assume that this occurred in connection with the battle mentioned in I Samuel 4, in which the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant and took it to their own country. Surely they must have destroyed Shiloh at that time.

Archeologists have found that Shiloh was destroyed around 1050 B. C. and was not inhabited for some 700 years or more after that. Here is a good example wherein archeology helps to explain something in the Bible. The fact that Shiloh had been destroyed explains why the ark was not taken back there when the Philistines returned it to Israel.

REFUTING CRITICAL THEORIES ABOUT THE BIBLE.

Over and over again archeology has disproved the attacks which liberals had made against the Bible. We have referred to many such matters already, such as the proofs that writing was known in very early times, and that the Hittites not only existed but that they were a powerful people.

The usual liberal explanation of the origin of the first five books of the Bible is that they were a series of legends first written down in the 800's B. C. Later, further additions were made, and they were put into their final form around 400 B. C. The theory gained strength in the days when it was supposed that writing was not invented until around 800 B. C., so that it was taken for granted that traditions before that time were orally handed down and were therefore very unreliable. Not only has archeology verified that the accounts could have been written early, for writing was known long before the days of Abraham and Moses, but that the details were accurate to that day and age. Furthermore, these historical details often are the opposite to what they were in the

800's, and a writer that late could not have made these accurate statements.

The usual theory about the origin of the first five books is called the Documentary Hypothesis, or the JEDP theory. These last four letters stand for the supposed original documents from which the final books were made. In some parts of the books the name used for God is the Hebrew word "Elohim", so they argue this proves there was an "E" document using that name. Then there are other parts using the name "Jehovah", so this proves there was a "J" document. Later a Deuteronomist included the legal provisions and a Priestly writer added the sacrifices, making the "D" and "P" parts of the final composition. It is alleged that these documents contained irreconcilable contradictory accounts, but that in order to unify Israel the writers included all traditions to keep everyone happy.

There are better explanations of the use of the names. Look at Genesis 1. There "Elohim" is the name of God. In Genesis 2 the name Jehovah is introduced. The liberals say here are two contradictory accounts of the creation of man. But Chapter 2 merely gives additional details. The change in names for God is due to the fact that in Chapter 2 we begin the story of God's personal dealings with mankind, and therefore it is time to introduce his personal name.

We have seen that again and again archeology has proved the accuracy of the Bible in this early period, showing the fallacy of the liberal arguments. One special place that archeology would refute the "E" and "J" document theory is in connection with the Flood. Liberal scholars have claimed that our Flood story as we now have it was made by combining two variant legends, the "E" and "J" accounts. But, the Babylonian Flood story also contains a unified account that theoretically should be divided between "E" and "J" documents. In other words, the liberals would have to invent some kind of "E" and "J" origin of the Babylonian story, too, to prove their point. We cannot answer all the questions about the early chapters of Genesis, or the rest of the Bible for that matter, but again and again the archeologists have shown the JEDP theory is wrong and that Moses could have written these books.

QUESTIONS.

1. What was the main part of the Egyptian embalming process?
2. What is the liberal explanation of the manna?
3. Give two instances in which archeology has a bearing on the events in the wilderness.
4. What discoveries at Jericho seem to point to the destruction by Joshua?
5. What important discovery was made at Ras Shamra?
6. Tell the relationship between El, Ahserah and Baal.
7. What is significant about the fact that no images or plagues are found

representing Jehovah?

8. Explain how Samson was able to destroy a temple by pulling down two pillars.

9. What was the main way in which the Philistines were superior to the Israelites?

10. What does archeology tell us about Gibeah?

11. Who was Wenamon?

12. How does archeology help explain the reference to Shiloh in Jeremiah?

13. What is the JEDP theory.

14. Show how the use of names for God in Genesis 1 and 2 can be explained logically instead of by the JEDP theory.

TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. Make a report on Egyptian embalming and the reasons for doing so. What ideas did they have about life after death?

2. Tell the story of the conquest of the land as found in the Bible. From what archeologists tell us about the Canaanite religion, do you see why God wanted those nations completely destroyed? What happened to Israel when she served Canaanite gods?

3. Read Jeremiah 7:1-16. What is Jeremiah warning the people about? What is the significance of Shiloh in his warning?

LESSON 7. THE UNITED KINGDOM.

Conditions had been chaotic in the days of the judges, so that the people of Israel concluded that a central government under a strong king would be better for them. Instead of looking to the invisible God for their defense, they desired a visible human king to lead them in their battles and to deliver them from their foes. In response to the people's request, God authorized Samuel to proceed to anoint Saul to be king over them.

From this time onward in the history of Israel we find an increasing amount of material in archeology to confirm the Bible accounts and to give us additional information. Although a great amount of excavating has been done in Palestine, archeology has hardly begun to touch the large number of available sites to be studied. Now that archeologists are no longer treasure hunters but have to operate in a highly technical scientific manner under government controls, it takes a vast amount of money and a large number of trained specialists to excavate a mound, so that progress is necessarily slow. But, as the years go by, we can expect an ever increasing amount of data to be accumulated, helping us to understand the Bible better.

THE DAYS OF SAUL.

Saul began the task of coordinating the poor and downtrodden people of Israel into a unified, strong nation. He did not possess the power nor the wealth for carrying on a huge building program. Not until the days of Solomon would the Israelites be able to produce palaces and fortresses that would impress the nations of their own day and to stand the ravages of time. We have very little as yet from the days of Saul, but several findings are significant.

The foundations of Saul's fortress at Gibeah have been uncovered. It showed the place to be simple in design, but strong, and sufficient for the need at the time. Interestingly enough, the earliest iron plowpoint found in Israelite ruins was found there, reminding us of the fact that Saul himself was known to plow fields.

Discoveries in Philistine territory of blacksmith forges bears out the truth of I Samuel 13:19-22 that the Philistines did not allow the Israelites to have blacksmiths. No forges are found in Israelite ruins of this era.

In I Samuel 31:10 it is stated that the Philistines put Saul's armor in the house of Ashtaroth, but fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan. Then in I Chronicles 10:10 we learn that his head was placed in the temple of Dagon. Archeologists have unearthed the foundations of two temples at Bethshan, which they identify as these two temples mentioned, namely that of Ashtaroth and that of Dagon.

THE DAYS OF DAVID.

David took Jerusalem and made it to be the capital city of the united nation. Archeology has yet to uncover any identifiable sites in Jerusalem of the days of David. In fact, archeology in Jerusalem has met several special difficulties not encountered elsewhere. Some of these are (1) The city was often destroyed completely, practically obliterating any earlier remains. The Romans, for instance, plowed the ancient temple site to remove any traces of it. (2) When a new city was rebuilt on the old site, the builders usually dumped all the old materials into one of the many ravines or uneven places, so that the remains which archeologists do find to study are thrown together in helter-skelter fashion. (3) As long as the Mohammedans had control of the city, archeologists had very little opportunity to conduct studies.

Translators and archeologists are not altogether sure just how David's men captured the city. One possibility is that the men managed to climb up through a shaft which was used by the defenders for obtaining water. This shaft can be seen today, and British officers have been able to duplicate the feat of ascending it. However, some translators think the Hebrew words refer rather to scaling the wall of the city by means of some kind of hook and rope process (See II Samuel 5:8).

Critics of the Bible used to claim that David could not have had choirs and musicians in his day. Now, of course, there is ample proof of widespread use of many instruments a thousand years and more before the days of David. In particular the discoveries at Ras Shamra show that musical guilds were known among the Canaanites. Probably David borrowed many of their techniques and applied them to the worship of Jehovah. Even the metrical arrangement of some of the Psalms resembles Canaanite literary compositions. The Ras Shamra discoveries show that Canaanite music influenced David, while the same discoveries show the wide gulf of difference between the theological ideas of the Canaanites and those of the Israelites. The Israelites were able to use Canaanite tunes and musical techniques while rejecting Canaanite religious ideas.

THE DAYS OF SOLOMON.

Under Solomon the nation reached a high level of culture, trade and industry. His long reign was a peaceful one, so that the money and energy of the nation could be expended in a building program rather than in wars. Besides the revenues in the way of tribute from countries which David had conquered, Solomon enriched himself through trade, and through taxing the caravans that moved through his country.

Solomon dedicated himself to the task of building a temple for the Lord. While the Lord gave the pattern for the temple, the craftsmen that fashioned it

were imported from Tyre. No traces have been found of Solomon's temple but archeologists have unearthed in Syria a temple of about the same time, which probably was builded by craftsmen from Tyre also, so that some facts can be learned about the construction of Solomon's temple. For example, there were two ornamental columns out front of Solomon's temple, named Jachin and Boaz, see II Chronicles 3:15-17. Such columns were found in the Syrian temple.

Solomon acted contrary to the decrees of God in building up a military force of horses and chariots. Remains of what are usually thought to be his stables have been found at Megiddo, bearing out the fact that he did have such a force stationed there.

EZIONGEBER.

One of the most significant findings of archeologists is Eziongeber, a seaport and copper refining town. Here Solomon's navy was harbored, and here his copper smelting industry was located. Not many years after his death the site was destroyed by Sheshonk I, King of Egypt, called Shishak in II Chronicles 12:2. Shehonk has left us his own account of this invasion, mentioning many places in Palestine. Later on Jeshoshaphat attempted to operate a fleet out of Eziongeber, but a storm destroyed it.

One archeologist identified some ruins there as an old copper refinery. The building was so constructed that it took advantage of the prevailing winds to make a kind of forced draft for firing the furnaces. When we consider the terrific heat needed to melt the copper out of its ore and the limited types of materials available for fuel we are truly amazed at the accomplishments of these ancient metal workers! The brass laver for the temple and the brass oxen etc., required great quantities of copper and great skill in casting them.

SOLOMON'S FAILINGS.

Solomon's many marriages were often politically inspired, since agreements between rulers were often sealed with a marriage between the two royal houses. These international alliances helped maintain freedom and prosperity for his country, but they brought into Israel the idols and religions of these women, and Solomon himself fell into the sin of worshipping idols.

It took vast labor gangs to conduct the building programs of Solomon. People resented Solomon's regimentation of the nation and were ready for rebellion even before Solomon's death. The rebellion came to a head when his son Rehoboam ascended the throne, with the result that the northern tribes set up a new kingdom with Jeroboam ruling over them.

OTHER DATA.

An interesting finding from the days of Solomon is the Gezer calendar, so called because it was found in Gezer. It is a sort of school boys' poem about the twelve months of the year, showing what crops were planted and harvested in the various months. It is important both for learning more about agriculture of that day and also for the type of writing used on it, an early form of the Hebrew alphabet.

Both David and Solomon had dealings with a king of Tyre named Hiram. Archeologists have found the name Ahiiram inscribed upon a stone coffin of a king at Byblos. This king probably lived much earlier than David, but it shows that the name Hiram was a bonafide name of a king among those people.

Cedar was used in the building of the temple. Archeologists find evidence of the use of cedar in various buildings, including one piece of charred wood still subject to analysis and shown to be cedar.

Although the archeologists have identified only a few of the specific items mentioned in the Bible, the accumulation of evidence about the political and cultural situations in the days of these kings fits the Bible data.

BIBLE CHRONOLOGY.

As we enter into the period of the kings of Israel, it is easier to fix dates for persons and events mentioned in the Bible. Ancient peoples generally had no way of recording dates other than by the year of the reigning king. Modern scholars have great difficulty in assembling this information from various countries in a systematic way that enables them to assign dates to the events.

Within the Bible itself we have a framework of dates for the period of the kings, since we usually find some such statement as "In the three and twentieth year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned seventeen years." (II Kings 13:1). By assembling a series of such statements we can work out a fairly good ladder of dates for the kingdom period. But how can we assign a year before Christ to these dates?

One of the most valuable items of information is the Assyrian Eponym lists. This list of officials in the Assyrian Empire gives us the official's name for the year over a period of more than two hundred years, 893 - 666 B. C. An eclipse mentioned in one of these lists can be dated by astronomers at 763 B. C. Starting with that fixed date the historian can assign a date to each of the eponyms. King Ahab of the Bible is mentioned on one Assyrian king's records so that we can connect him with the Assyrian chronology and thus obtain a date for Ahab.

By working backward and forward from Ahab it is possible to assign dates to the rest of the kings of Israel. While there is still some difference of opinion on these dates, these differences are measured in terms of a few years, affording us more accuracy than we have in the case of earlier men like Abraham.

QUESTIONS.

1. Why is archeology moving slowly in excavating sites in Palestine?
2. What was the name of Saul's fortress which has been excavated?
3. What bearing does archeology have on the Bible statements that the Philistines did not permit the Israelites to have blacksmith shops?
4. What special difficulties do archeologists encounter in Jerusalem?
5. In what ways do the Ras Shamra findings help us in regard to David's music?
6. What discoveries have been found at Megiddo that bear on Solomon's military machine?
7. What was the importance of Eziongeber?
8. What use was made of copper in the days of Solomon?
9. What was the Gezer calendar?
10. How do the Assyrian eponym lists help us in fixing dates for the kings of Israel?

TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. See if you can find anything in an encyclopedia about ancient methods of smelting iron and copper. Discuss the problems involved. Is it possible that iron and copper may again be mined in Palestine?

2. Solomon broke God's laws in marrying foreign women and in acquiring a standing military force including horses. Were both of these moves wise from a human, political viewpoint? Why were they wrong in the sight of God?

3. Discuss the problems involved in assigning dates to ancient events. Is it a great advantage to have all nations following one system of dating, such as generally is done in modern times? (Maybe some member of the class would like to report on the origin of our present system of dating, showing when nations began to use A. D. and B. C. as a means of dating events.)

LESSON 8. THE HISTORY OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM.

Although the nation attained wealth and fame under Solomon, the common people felt the burden of the building program and the military service. Shortly after Solomon's death the northern tribes revolted and set up an independent kingdom under Jeroboam.

JEROBOAM'S GOLDEN CALVES.

Jeroboam felt that he would lose his people if he allowed them to return to Jerusalem to worship. So he set up two golden calves, one at Dan in the northern extremity of his kingdom, and one at Bethel in the southern end. He told his people to come to these shrines to worship. He made other changes, too, in the worship, such as setting new dates for feast days. Also, he allowed anyone, whether of the tribe of Levi or not, to serve as a priest. God pronounced condemnation upon these shrines, but throughout the period of the northern kingdom the kings and people continued to sin by worshipping there.

Many guesses have been made as to why Jeroboam chose the calf to represent the God of Israel. Archeology shows us that heathen people often thought of their gods as riding on the backs of a bull. Sculptured figures of the storm-god, Hadad, for instance, are found, showing him riding on the back of a bull. Probably Jeroboam did not intend that the calf itself be an image of God, but that the invisible God was to be thought of as riding on this calf. Followers of Jehovah could consider themselves as still worshipping Jehovah, and followers of other gods could imagine their own god as riding the calf.

SHISHAK'S INVASION.

The Bible tells us that in the fifth year of Rehoboam, Shishak, king of Egypt, plundered Jerusalem. It has sometimes been thought that Shishak came up in the interests of his kinswoman, whom Solomon had married, and used her as an excuse to plunder the land. But now we know from Shishak's own inscriptions that this Egyptian king set out on a campaign of conquest with the intention of restoring the Egyptian empire to its former size and splendor. He overran much of the Middle East but died before he could consolidate his gains, and his successors did not have the ability to follow up his conquests and take advantage of them. (Note: Shishak is called Sheshonk in most historical records.)

EXCAVATIONS AT SAMARIA.

The Bible tells us that Omri built Samaria upon a hill which he bought. Diggings by archeologists confirm the fact that the city was first built at that time, upon bed rock (not upon the ruins of previous cities as is so often the case in a mound). Although Greek and Roman builders later built upon the site,

some of the original foundations and materials have been unearthed by archeologists, showing extremely fine workmanship and skill.

Of special interest are the ivory plaques found in the ruins. The Bible tells us that Ahab built a palace of ivory, probably meaning that the walls were highly decorated with ivory carvings. This must have been a very beautiful sight, and very expensive, and thus indicated the extent of his wealth and influence. The prophet Amos rebuked those princes who loafed upon beds of ivory, enjoying luxurious pleasures rather than attending to their duties as rulers. Archeologists thus have proof that ivory was used in Samaria in this period of history, confirming the Bible statements.

Many ostraca (broken pieces of pottery) are found with writing on them, giving details about daily life in Palestine at the time. Many of the names found are compounded with the name of the god Baal, while other names use a form of the name Jehovah, showing, as the Bible indicates, that people worshipped both Baal and Jehovah in the days of these kings.

FOUNDATION SACRIFICES.

The Bible tells us that in the days of Ahab a man named Hiel rebuilt Jericho. Joshua had put a curse upon anyone who rebuilt the city, stating that he would do so with the loss of sons. "He laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub." (I Kings 16:34). Some translations give this as meaning that he would lose a son with each act. But the literal rendering is probably correct, namely, that he actually laid the foundation "in" his son, burying the boy in the foundation as a sacrifice. Some ancient Canaanite structures are found with the bones of a child in the foundations, seemingly indicating a practice of dedicating the building with a child sacrifice.

THE BLACK OBELISK OF SHALMANESER.

Shalmaneser III fought battles with the northern kingdom of Israel, as shown in the record he left on an inscribed stone usually referred to as the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser. His records indicate that Israel must have been a powerful kingdom in the days of Ahab and Jehu. The Bible gives only slight hints as to Ahab's power, for the Bible is concerned with the fact that Ahab was a sinner.

Shalmaneser claims to have defeated a coalition of kings in a battle at Qarqar in 853 B. C. In a list of enemies he devastated he included "2,000 chariots, 10,000 men of Ahab the Israelite." At this time Benhadad of Syria was an ally with Ahab and these other kings. The Bible speaks of Ahab's making peace with Benhadad after warring with him, see I Kings 20:34.

After a time the king of Assyria was able to follow up that campaign and to conquer most of those lands. His monument shows pictures of various kings bringing tribute to him. One picture portrays Jehu, king of Israel, bowing down before him, and lists the things of gold and other items in the tribute that Jehu paid. From this time onward the kings of Israel could hold power only by being vassals of the king of Assyria, and when they rebelled they received severe punishment, leading at last to the complete destruction of the northern kingdom.

THE MOABITE STONE.

One of the most interesting stories in the Bible is to be found in II Kings 3. In that chapter we read of an expedition that Jehoram, king of Israel, made against Mesha, king of Moab, to try to bring Moab under bondage again. Judah and Edom joined in on Israel's side. The battle was going against Moab at first, but after the king of Moab made a sacrifice of his eldest son, the battle turned in Moab's favor.

In 1868 a discovery was made of an inscription which has come to be known as the Moabite Stone. It was put at the border of Moab and Israel by Mesha to celebrate Moab's obtaining independence from Israel. He claims to have destroyed quite a few of the towns of Israel. He gives the credit for victory to Chemosh, his god.

While the Bible gives details that the Moabite Stone does not give, and likewise the Moabite Stone gives details which are not mentioned in the Bible, they agree in that Moab gained its independence from Israel after a bitter war. And in both accounts King Mesha is shown to be a devout worshipper of the god Chemosh.

The Moabite Stone was a sensation when it was first discovered for two reasons: (1) It was one of the first records ever found that mentioned names and places and events of Bible times, giving a firm reality to the Bible setting at a time when higher criticism was scoffing at the Bible history as unreliable, and (2) It showed the antiquity of alphabetic writing at a time when critics were sneering at the Bible, claiming that writing was unknown in the days of the patriarchs. This stone showed that alphabet writing was common in the 9th century B. C. Since even atheists today admit the reliability of Bible history these two points are no longer so important, but we should all remember that the attacks which were made against the Bible a hundred years ago have nearly all been refuted by archeological findings.

Omri had made a great name for himself among the nations, Mesha states that Omri was the king that oppressed Moab. The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser calls Jehu a son of Omri (Jehu was a "son" in the sense that he succeeded to the throne at a later time.). Adadnirari refers to the Israelite land as "the land of

Omri." Tiglath Pileser III calls it the house of Omri, and also mentions the land of Naphtali.

LAST DAYS OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM.

Tiglath-Pileser III, who ruled Assyria from 745-728 B. C. tells of his taking the people of Israel captive into Assyria and of placing Hoshea as king over the land, demanding a heavy tribute on the remaining people in the land. Tiglath-Pileser is called Pul in the Bible. Archeology shows that he was known by both names.

Tiglath-Pileser also claims to have placed "Azariau of Yaudi" (Azariah of Judah) under tribute at this time, which the Bible does not mention.

Sargon was the king who finally destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel completely and resettled it with subjects from other lands. He tells of this in his own records, stating that it was in the first year of his reign. For a long time critics had thought that Sargon was a make-believe person in the Bible, since he was unknown to historians. But in 1843 diggings began to be made at Khorsabad, which turned out to be the palace of Sargon, and some beautifully carved stonewinged bulls were found there. One of them, weighing forty tons, was transported to the Oriental Institute Museum at the University of Chicago.

RELATIONSHIP OF ISRAEL TO OTHER NATIONS.

From archeology it now becomes clear that Israel's prosperity in the days of Omri and following kings was due to the weakened condition of mighty empires like Egypt and Assyria, so that the Middle Eastern states enjoyed freedom, and fought among themselves. With the renewal of Assyrian strength these small states were beaten back and forced either to surrender or to look to Egypt for aid. Egypt proved a broken reed upon which it was useless to lean for strength, even as the prophets foretold. II Kings 17:4 tells of Hoshea's conspiracy with Egypt, which availed him nothing and brought upon Hoshea imprisonment by the King of Assyria. Judah continued for a century and more after the downfall of Samaria, trying to maintain independence between Egypt and Assyria. But the game of international politics was not the road to Israel's preservation. She needed to repent and serve the Lord. By disregarding her God-given role as a nation of priests, she tried to be like the nations around her, and brought disaster upon herself.

QUESTIONS.

1. From archeology, what was probably the intended meaning of the gold-calf which Jeroboam set up for worship?
2. What did Shishak intend when he invaded Judah?

3. Has archeology confirmed the fact that Samaria was built upon a new site not previously used as a city?
4. What significance is given to the ivory plaques found at Samaria?
5. What religious implication do the names found on the Samaria ostraca have?
6. Explain I Kings 16:34.
7. What mention did Shalmaneser III make of Ahab?
8. What is Jehu shown to be doing on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser?
9. Who set up the Moabite Stone, and to commemorate what event?
10. What connection does the Moabite Stone have with the Bible?
11. How do we know that Sargon is not a make-believe name?
12. To what country did the kings of Israel and Judah look to for help against the Assyrians? To whom should they have turned for help?

TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. Read the account of the war between Israel and Moab in I Kings 3. Get a copy of the translation of the Moabite Stone. Find points that the two accounts have in common. Are there any differences?
2. Make a list of the kings of Assyria from around 860 B. C. to 606 B. C. Use a concordance to see how many of these are mentioned in the Bible.
3. See what the Bible tells us about Jeroboam's sin in regard to the golden calves. Tell the story of I Kings 13. Was the young prophet's prediction ever fulfilled?

LESSON 9. DECLINE OF JUDAH.

Judah continued to exist for nearly a century and a half after the fall of Samaria and the deportation of the northern tribes. Samaria fell in 722 B. C. Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 B. C. In general it is correct to say that the kings of Judah held power as vassals of the great empires, Assyrian and Babylonian on the east, and Egyptian on the south. The land was continually overrun by first one, then the other, of these great powers.

Two great men of faith stand out among the kings of this period, Hezekiah and Josiah. The other kings were not loyal followers of the Lord, and Manasseh sinned so grievously against the Lord that he sealed the doom of his nation.

Isaiah was the great prophet in the earlier part of this period, Jeremiah in the latter part. They called the people to repentance, but their call went unheeded.

HEZEKIAH'S FAITH SAVES JERUSALEM.

Sennacherib, king of Assyria from 704-681 B. C., extended his kingdom even into Egypt. He devastated the land of Judah and exacted heavy tribute from Hezekiah. He made blasphemous and defiant insults against Jehovah. Hezekiah put his trust in the Lord, and the Lord sent His angel through the camp of the Assyrians, killing 185,000 soldiers in a night. Sennacherib returned home, where he later was killed by two of his own sons.

The ancient Greek historian Herodotus has left an account of this episode. Herodotus, however, assigns the credit for the victory to an Egyptian god. He wrote that in answer to the prayers of an Egyptian priest, an army of field mice overran Sennacherib's camp, eating up all the leather, such as bowstrings off the bows and the thongs by which the armor was worn by the soldiers. With their equipment useless, the Assyrians fled and many were killed.

The account given by Herodotus is very similar to that found in the Bible, the main difference being that he gives the credit to an Egyptian god. Since Sennacherib had boasted of destroying the gods of many nations, doubtless many people were praying to many gods for Sennacherib's destruction, so that each probably gave the credit to his own god. Both accounts agree that the army was destroyed, the Bible mentioning the angel, Herodotus mentioning the mice. Presumably the angel used the mice to spread the plague and kill off the army.

SENNACHERIB'S OWN VERSION OF HIS INVASION.

Sennacherib's own version of this invasion is available to us. He inscribed it on a clay cylinder, and carved scenes from it on his palace walls in Nineveh.

Like all monarchs, Sennacherib makes no mention of humiliating defeats or disasters. Rather he boasts of the towns he did capture and the booty he did take.

The Bible account agrees that he did devastate the land and that Hezekiah did pay him tribute. It is interesting to note that Sennacherib makes no claim of having captured Jerusalem. He says of Hezekiah, "He himself I shut up like a caged bird in Jerusalem, etc."

One of the scenes carved on his palace walls shows the siege of the city of Lachish and the booty taken from it. The inscription on this picture reads, "Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, seated himself on his throne, and the prisoners of Lachish marched before him." A part of the inscription shows his army attacking the city and making a break in the wall.

Among the many interesting findings at Lachish in this period are some skulls that show evidence of brain operations. On two of them the saw marks show no sign of healing, probably indicating that the patient did not survive the operation. A third skull, however, shows that the patient lived at least long enough for much of the bone to grow back. Evidently medicine was at a high stage of development in ancient Judah.

THE SILOAM INSCRIPTION.

The problem of an adequate water supply was bad enough in times of peace, but in war the problem of providing water for the people inside a besieged city was one of extreme magnitude. Somewhere along this time in history people learned the art of slaking lime and making cement to be used in coating the walls of cisterns to make them watertight. Without this cement the water would gradually seep through the limestone walls. In some towns practically every house would have a cistern, and larger public cisterns have been found.

Hezekiah solved the water problem for Jerusalem by cutting a tunnel through a rock hill, bringing water from the spring Gihon through this tunnel into the pool of Siloam. This shaft was first explored by Edward Robinson in 1838. In 1880, as the story goes, a small boy played around where the water pours into the pool of Siloam slipped down and in getting up he noticed some scratchings on the wall, which turned out to be an inscription telling about the digging of the tunnel.

The Siloam inscription tells how the stone cutters started from both sides of the hill and how they finally met in the middle. This inscription is one of the most valuable ones found by archeologists, since it is one of the oldest Hebrew writings. It is also valuable because it enables us to determine with accuracy the length of the Biblical cubit. The inscription gives the length of the tunnel

as 1,200 cubits. By measuring the length today in feet and inches we find that the cubit was just a little bit under 18 inches.

EMISSARIES FROM MERODACH - BALADAN.

Other incidental items are mentioned in the records of Assyria that have a bearing on Bible study. We learn, for instance, that the terms Tartan and Rabshakeh and Rabsaris are not names but military titles. Esarhaddon, the son of Sennacherib who succeeded him to the throne, left an inscription confirming the Bible statement that Sennacherib's own sons slew him.

Merodach - Baladan, king of Babylonia, sent a present to Hezekiah after learning that he had been sick, see II Kings 20:12ff. From Sennacherib's records we learn that Sennacherib had fought wars with Merodach - Baladan, and that this latter king gave presents to another king to get his help in these wars. Probably, then, Merodach - Baladan's real purpose in sending a present to Hezekiah was to get him to join him in a war against Sennacherib.

JOSIAH LEADS REFORM.

Josiah came to the throne of Judah after a long period of apostasy under Manasseh and Amon. He began to rid the country of idolatry and to reinstate the temple worship. In cleaning up the temple the workmen found a copy of the Law. Probably this copy had been placed in the foundations of the temple after the manner in which a copy of a charter or even a Bible is sometimes placed behind a cornerstone in modern buildings. The ancient Babylonian king Nabonidus tells how he dug into foundations to find ancient records. If this is the way the Law was preserved, it would have been placed there when Solomon built the temple.

Josiah called out his army to try to stop Pharaoh - Necho of Egypt from passing through his land. The older translations of the Bible would indicate that Necho was going to fight against Assyria. But archeology now shows that Nineveh had already fallen and that Necho was going to the aid of the Assyrian army. Necho recognized a greater threat in the new coalition involving Babylon, and Josiah was siding with Babylon. Necho was severely defeated, and Babylon was able rapidly to take over the lands once controlled by Assyria. Josiah was killed in this attempt to stop the Egyptians, and Necho set up first one, then another of Josiah's sons as king over Judah.

JEHOIACHIN TAKEN TO BABYLON.

Jehoiachin came to the throne upon the death of his father in 597 B. C. Nebuchadnezzar took him away to Babylon in that year. For thirty seven years

he lived there, and although he was a captive king, documents still were dated as of the year of his reign, as in Ezekiel 1:2 where mention is made of the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity.

Archeological evidence of Jehoiachin is found both in Palestine and in Babylon. In Palestine two jar handles were found stamped as follows: "belonging to Eliakim steward of Yokin." In Babylon clay tablets for receipt of oil and grain were found on which the name of Yaukin king of Judah occurs.

THE LACHISH LETTERS.

Evidence from archeology shows that Lachish was completely destroyed during the campaign on which Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem. Intense heat produced from continually burning fires reduced the limestone walls to powdery cement, probably the means whereby the Babylonians were able to conquer the city.

Contemporary records of the siege are available to us in the Lachish letters. These letters, written on pottery, were perhaps smuggled through enemy lines in the form of pots. They give us the same picture that the book of Jeremiah does of the last days of Judah, mentioning places and individuals referred to in Jeremiah. The situation was evidently very desperate when this officer from some outpost sent in these reports to his superior officer in Lachish. They made reference to a prophet, but we have no way of knowing that this was Jeremiah.

END OF THE JUDAH KINGDOM.

Nebuchadnezzar completely destroyed Jerusalem and other fortified cities, leaving the land in ruins. Most of the people were carried away into Babylon, but some, including Jeremiah, were left in the land. Archeology finds a long gap indicated in regard to the occupancy of the cities, such as would have been caused by a carrying away of the population.

Already there had been earlier deportations, especially in 597 when Jehoiachin was taken to Babylon. A sizeable Jewish community was already living in Babylon before Jerusalem was destroyed. Jeremiah wrote to them to settle down there, because the captivity would be long. The prophet Ezekiel ministered to the Jewish people in Babylon while the young Daniel was rising to prominence in the government.

The book of Lamentations gives us a vivid picture of the grief and horror associated with the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. Psalm 137 gives us some of the miserable feeling of the captives who were taken to Babylon.

QUESTIONS.

1. What was the military and political situation in Judah during its last century?
2. What does the Bible tell us about the destruction of Sennacherib's army?
3. What does Herodotus give as the cause of the disaster to Sennacherib's army?
4. What claim does Sennacherib make in regard to Hezekiah?
5. A carving on the wall of Sennacherib's palace shows the destruction of what city in Judah?
6. For what purpose did Hezekiah dig the tunnel through the hill?
7. How do we know that the cubit is approximately 18 inches long?
8. How is the gift from Merodach-Baladan to Hezekiah to be interpreted in light of Sennacherib's records about that monarch?
9. Where was the Law probably found by the workmen?
10. What evidence do we have that Jehoiachin was in Babylon?
11. What are the Lachish letters?
12. Has archeology confirmed a gap in the history of towns in Palestine?

TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. Discuss the life of Jeremiah. What was his pronouncement from the Lord about the doom of Jerusalem? What treatment was he given by the princes of Judah. What choice did Nebuchadnezzar give him? Discuss the heartache the people endured in this terrible calamity. Must God's people always be victorious, or must we suffer defeat at times?
2. Make a report to the class on either the Siloam inscription or the Lachish letters. Tell about the finding of the writings and their significance for Bible study.

LESSON 10. CAPTIVES IN BABYLON.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MESSIANIC HOPE.

In 586 B. C. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, burned Jerusalem with fire and took most of the people away into captivity in Babylon. Thus ended the nation of Israel as an independent unit for thousands of years, except for a brief period of semi-independence under the Maccabees.

For the prophets of God this disaster was difficult to explain. It seemed that God's promises of a land and a kingdom were unrealized. David's throne, which was supposed to endure forever, was cast down. It was a difficult trial of faith for the believers.

The prophets found the answer to the problem in that (1) the people were being punished for their sins, and (2) their Messiah would come some day to redeem them and to restore the people to the land and to rule on the throne of David. Already Isaiah and Jeremiah and others had said much about their future king and kingdom. Prophets during the exile, Ezekiel and Daniel, would give further predictions. Prophets after the exile, particularly Zechariah and Malachi added to the body of knowledge, so that the Old Testament points forward to the coming one, the Messiah, whom we know as the Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom God would fulfill His promises.

While this doctrine is not particularly a concern of our present study of archeology, it does show that this period of Jewish history was not a haphazard matter of chance, but that it was controlled and guided by God to the fulfilling of His purposes.

BREAK IN THE OCCUPATION OF JUDEA.

The science of archeology has been God's answer to the sneers of learned critics of the Bible. Scholars had sneered at the story of the exile, some holding that the whole story was false. Now, however, archeology confirms the fact that Judea lay waste and uninhabited for many years, whereas the northern part of Palestine continued to be occupied. This is what the Bible shows, for the Assyrians sent in other settlers after the deportation of northern Israel, so that the towns there continued to be used. But in Judah most of the people were taken away, and the few that remained soon left voluntarily to go to Egypt.

BABYLON THE GREAT.

The Jewish captives were settled near the city of Babylon. In Daniel 4:30 King Nebuchadnezzar is quoted as boasting, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the

honour of my majesty?" God punished him for his pride by causing him to become insane and to live as an animal for a period of time.

Archeologists find that indeed Babylon was a magnificent city. Its hanging gardens, a sort of terraced man-made mountain, was regarded as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Whether the remains of it have been found we are not sure, but much of the city has been excavated. Twenty-five gates of bronze protected its entrances. Its main entrance, the famed Ishtar Gate, was ornamented with glazed decorated life-sized lions, bulls and dragons, as well as geometric figures and flowers. Its broad avenues, magnificent palaces and beautiful temples made it a city of wondrous beauty, and its high and wide walls made it a military fortress thought unconquerable.

Nebuchadnezzar's own inscriptions tell of his building of the city. Bricks inscribed with his name are further evidence of his great building program.

EZEKIEL AND DANIEL.

Two prophets of God lived in the Babylonian exile and wrote books in the Bible. They are Ezekiel and Daniel. Both of these books have been attacked by critics as forgeries.

Evidence for the genuineness of Ezekiel is that the book fits the facts as we know them of the conditions in Babylon at that time. Already we have referred to the evidence for dating things in the reign of Jehochin, and have noticed that clay tablets for daily rations were issued to him and his sons. The river Chebar by which Ezekiel saw visions is one of the well known canals near Babylon. Ezekiel's digging through the wall of his house fits the Babylonian conditions where walls were made of clay and sun dried brick, whereas it would have been impossible to dig through a stone wall of Judea. Efforts to discredit the book have failed because of the accuracy of it as shown by archeology.

Likewise, archeology confirms the book of Daniel. Critics usually assign it to some unknown writer of the days of the Maccabees, who, they say, was writing a sort of patriotic fable to stir up the Jews to fight. Their main objection to accepting it as a genuine writing of Daniel is the accuracy of its prophecies regarding the Persian and Greek empires, so that the critics say the book had to be written after the events had occurred. For those who believe that God can and does predict the future, this objection carries no weight. Nearly all of the objections to the book of Daniel have been answered by archeologists. For example, critics said that the Greek musical instruments mentioned in the book could not have been known in Babylon at that time. Now we know from pictures on the walls of Assyrian palaces that these musical instruments were used in Assyria a hundred years earlier than the days of Daniel. The use of Aramaic language in several chapters of the book is no surprise, since a man in Daniel's

high position in the government would be required to write in that language daily. Archeologists have found that burning by fire was used as punishment in Babylon.

VERIFICATION OF BELSHAZZAR AS KING.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in the book of Daniel was that it speaks of Belshazzar as being king when the Persians took Babylon. A few years ago nobody had ever heard of Belshazzar, and the historical records, including Cyrus's own inscriptions, referred to Nabonidus as king of Babylon at the time. It certainly looked like the Bible was in error.

Now, however, archeologists have cleared up the riddle and Belshazzar is a well known individual. Several inscriptions refer to him, and clay tablets show that oaths were taken in the names of Nabonidus and Belshazzar together, indicating that both were reigning. It turns out that Nabonidus, the father of Belshazzar, preferred to stay in his desert paradise, Tema, so he appointed Belshazzar as co-regent of Babylon. This was particularly important inasmuch as the king had to be present for the annual religious festivals. Belshazzar could handle these matters, and his father could go on his way of scholarly pursuits while the son attended to governmental duties. However, the priestly caste seems not to have been satisfied, and it is probable that with their connivance the city was betrayed to the Persians, for Cyrus claims to have taken the city without a battle. The Bible tells us that Belshazzar was slain, but we are not told that he was slain in battle. He could have been murdered by his own men.

CYRUS PERMITS THE JEWS TO RETURN HOME.

Cyrus, the first king of the Persian Empire, is well known to historians. In addition, archeologists have dug up many records of his reign, especially the Cyrus Cylinder of baked clay on which he recorded his exploits. Also, the Nabonidus Chronicle, prepared seemingly by Cyrus, tells of the last days of Babylonian rule. It would seem that as a last desperate measure to save his city from the Persians, Nabonidus had gathered into the city all the gods of neighboring states, hoping that these gods would protect the city. Cyrus reversed this policy and let the captured peoples go home, taking their gods with them. Thus the permission which he granted the Jews, as shown in the Bible, was characteristic of his policy towards the captured people in Babylon. The decree of Cyrus, recorded in II Chronicles 36:23 and Ezra 1:2-4, is typical of the sort of form he used for all the returning peoples. When writing for the Jews he honored their God, but when writing for other peoples he would likewise honor their gods.

Incidentally, this background of religious division and confusion in Babylon gives a very practical reason why the king would make a decree that no one

would make a petition of any god or person for thirty days, as recorded in Daniel 6, which resulted in Daniel's being thrown into the den of lions. The decree amounted to a ban on any kind of religious service for a month. With so many gods in Babylon, and with so many conquered peoples feeling that their own particular god had come to deliver them, there was serious threat of riots and bloodshed by religious zealots. Thus, instead of regarding the king as a vain fool who wanted to be worshipped, archeology points out that a very practical political purpose could have been served by the ban on prayer.

Isaiah had prophesied that Cyrus would be the one to let the people return, see Isaiah 44:26-45:4. Critics who deny the inspiration of the Bible claim that this had to be written after the time of Cyrus, but, of course, they have no evidence to back up their claim. For those who believe the Bible, this prophecy of Isaiah's is another proof of God's marvelous power, power not only to predict the future, but power also to control history and to make His will be done.

WHO WAS AHASUERUS?

In the book of Esther we have a fascinating story about a Jewish girl who became queen of the Persian Empire. While archeologists have yet to find any information about her, the book is known to fit the times and circumstances. Extensive excavations at Susa (Shushan) confirm fact after fact in the book, such as belief in lucky and unlucky days, or in dispatching carriers with royal messages.

Ahasuerus is now known to be the famous Xerxes who ruled from 486-465 B. C. The great feast in the first chapter of Esther probably was at the time when he and his generals were planning the campaign against Greece. That campaign ended in disaster for the forces of Xerxes, and he is said to have spent the rest of his reign in seclusion enjoying life with his many wives. All that history tells us of him fits well into the type of personality presented in the Bible.

No evidence has been found yet of the order to exterminate the Jews, but after Hitler's attempt in recent times to destroy them, no one would doubt that such a thing could well have occurred in Persian times.

THE MURASHU FAMILY AT NIPPUR.

The Bible indicates that many Jews preferred to stay in Babylonia rather than to return to Jerusalem. They had found a profitable and happy life in Babylonia, so why return to the ruins of Jerusalem and risk all in an effort to rebuild a wasted land?

Excavations at Nippur in Babylonia reveal the presence of a large number of Jews there during Persian times. Evidence comes from a collection of clay

tablets belonging to a business firm, the Murashu family. These wealthy people were in league with the Persian rulers and charged exorbitant rates of interest, such as 40% per year, which parallels the complaints made to Nehemiah about mortgages and high interest. There are many Jewish names among their clients, such as Benjamin, Haggai, and Mordecai. The name Mordecai was common in the days of Artaxerxes I, who succeeded Xerxes on the throne. This could indicate that the Mordecai of the book of Esther was such a famous personage that many Jews named sons after him.

QUESTIONS.

1. What explanation did the prophets give about the destruction of the nation and the seeming end to the promises?
2. How does archeology confirm the Bible account as to a period of exile from Judah?
3. Did Nebuchadnezzar have a right to be proud of the city of Babylon? Tell of some of its wonders.
4. Name two items in which the book of Ezekiel is shown to be accurate.
5. Do the Greek musical instruments mentioned in the book of Daniel prove it was written centuries after the time of Daniel?
6. Why did critics sneer at the mention of Belshazzar in the Bible?
7. What have archeologists found out about Belshazzar?
8. What was the religious situation when the Persians took over Babylon and why was it dangerous to the new government?
9. Explain how the decree of Cyrus in the Bible is typical of his treatment of conquered people.
10. What prophet had foretold that Cyrus would free the Jews?
11. Show how the book of Esther fits into what history tells us of the life of Xerxes.
12. What conclusion can be drawn from the fact that Mordecai was a popular name among Jews at Nippur?

TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. Read an encyclopedia article on the life of Cyrus and report to the class. What was the difference between his way of treating conquered peoples and the way the Assyrians and Babylonians had treated them?
2. Report on the city of Babylon, especially its defenses. Are the gates of brass in Isaiah 45:2 to be taken literally?
3. What conflict is described in Daniel 7? (See verses 20 and 21 for explanation.) How could Daniel know all of this in advance?

LESSON 11. FROM MALACHI TO MATTHEW.

RETURN TO JERUSALEM.

The decree of Cyrus was well received by the Jews and more than 42,000 of them returned to Judea. There they began to clear away the rubble and to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. Work was started on rebuilding the temple. Some of the old men could remember the temple in its former glory as they had seen it when boys, so they wept when the foundation of the new temple was laid, since it seemed so insignificant by comparison. Nevertheless, they rejoiced that again God's temple was being set up in the holy city. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the people in those difficult years.

The leader of the people in those days was named Zerubbabel, which name means "Seed of Babylon", probably signifying that he was born in Babylon.

CONFLICT WITH ENEMIES.

Immediately the newly returned Jews ran into conflict with surrounding peoples who did not wish to see them be re-established in their land. They succeeded in getting the building of the temple stopped for a while. Even 80 or so years later when Ezra and Nehemiah came to Jerusalem very little seems to have been accomplished and the people were much discouraged.

Archeology has verified the names of the chief enemies mentioned. Sanballat is mentioned in the Elephantine papyri, which we shall discuss later in this lesson. Geshem is mentioned on two inscriptions. The tomb of the Tobiad family has been found, with their names cut into the rock. A century or so later we find a letter from a Tobiah in the Zeno papyri in Egypt, telling of his gifts to the Egyptian king Ptolemy II.

SUCCESSION OF EMPIRES.

The Persians were ruling Palestine when the Old Testament closed. Several of the emperors of this empire are mentioned in the Bible, including Cyrus, Xerxes, Artaxerxes and Darius I. This empire was destroyed by Alexander the Great, the final great battle being at Arbela in 331 B. C. Alexander's Empire extended as far east as India and south into Egypt. When he died at the early age of 33, his empire broke up into the sections which each general controlled, but a Greek culture and influence prevailed in all the sections. Of main concern to Bible students were the sections controlled by Seleucus and Ptolemy. The descendants of Seleucus usually were named Antiochus, and their capital city was Antioch in Syria. The Ptolemies ruled Egypt until the last of their line, Cleopatra, was conquered by the Romans. First the Ptolemies controlled Palestine, later the Seleucids. Then the Maccabee family gained a semi-independence for Judea until it was taken over by the Romans in 63 B. C.

This succession of empires had been so accurately foretold by Daniel that critics of the Bible claim that the book of Daniel was written after the events, so that instead of its being prophecy it was merely history of things that had already happened. In the previous lessons we showed that archeology has helped to establish the genuineness of the book of Daniel.

HELLENIZATION OF THE MIDEAST.

The Greek word for Greece was "Hellene". By Hellenization we mean the spreading of Greek culture. Alexander brought with him the Greek culture and customs, and made the people accept them. He started the city of Alexandria in Egypt, which became a center of Greek education and influence. Everywhere the Greeks introduced their games and their gods. Most nations gladly accepted the new ways. Only in Judea was there any great opposition, and even there the people were divided. Some collaborated with the new rulers and adopted the new customs. Others held tenaciously to the old Jewish ways and the Law of Moses. During this time the major sects that we find in the New Testament grew up, the Sadducees presenting the collaborators, and the Pharisees, consisting of those that stood for the old laws and customs. The Greeks built large theaters and stadiums wherever they went. They loved athletic competition. These track events were an abomination to the old line Israelites for several reasons. Usually they were devoted to some heathen god or other. Contestants participated nude, which was offensive to the Jews. These sports took the minds of the young people off of God and the hereafter, and made them seek the pleasures of the present.

ARTIFACTS IN JUDEA

Some findings both in the Persian and the Greek periods give us a picture of the land in those days. Greek pottery and coinage were known in Judea even before 500 A. D. Jars stamped with seals and with the names Jerusalem and Judah are found, indicating that they were used in collecting the taxes, being used to measure whatever grain or oil was used for payment. Much Arabian influence is seen in architecture and graves in the Intertestamental period.

Some pits have been found with skeletons in them, indicating that these cisterns quite often served as disposal places for the dead, whether by natural causes or by murder, as in Jeremiah 41 where a man named Ishmael filled a pit with dead bodies of men he had slain.

THE ELEPHANTINE PAPYRI.

We saw in the last chapter that not all the Jews returned from Babylon, but stayed on and prospered under Persian rulers. Likewise in Egypt there seem to have been Jewish settlements. One of these was at Yeb, a fortress on the island

of Elephantine, down in southern Egypt. This island was an archeologist's delight, for it had many temples and buildings to be studied, but now the waters of the Nile cover it because of the huge dam built at Aswan.

There was a large Jewish community on the island. Many letters and documents from this community have been recovered, in the period from 500 to 400 B. C. Many of the documents deal with matters of everyday life, showing that interest rates went as high as 60%, that divorce was rare, that slavery was common, etc.

Our chief interest in the Elephantine papyri is in regard to their letters about re-building their temple there. They could not get a reply from the Jerusalem authorities. They had also written to two sons of Sanballat in Samaria. In Nehemiah 13:28 we learn that a priest in Jerusalem had married the daughter of Sanballat, and for this reason Nehemiah chased him out. It seems that he went up to Samaria and built a place of worship there, which rivaled that in Jerusalem.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

Our two main sources of information for the period of time between Malachi and Matthew are the Apocrypha and the works of Josephus.

The Apocrypha consists of several books and parts of books which are part of the Catholic Bible but usually not accepted by Protestants. The Jewish people never considered them as sacred books, perhaps because they were in the Greek language rather than in the Hebrew language. The most important books among them are I and II Maccabees, which books tell us of the wars of the Maccabees whereby they obtained some measure of freedom for their country.

Josephus was a Jew in the days of the apostles. He was a Jewish general in charge of Galilee in the war against Rome, but sold out to the Romans, and helped them conquer Jerusalem in 70 A. D. His books on the ANTIQUITIES OF THE JEWS gives much information on this interbiblical period of history. Some historians question the reliability of Josephus at times, but he is our best and in fact, for many things, our only source of information. Some of his tales, such as the one about Alexander's visit to Jerusalem, seem more likely to be legend rather than fact, but we have no way of knowing for sure.

THE MACCABEES.

A Syrian king, Antiochus IV, called Epiphanes, a title which acclaimed him as a god, oppressed the Jews terribly. He went so far as to set up a statue of a Greek god in the temple at Jerusalem and to sacrifice pigs on the altar

there. He went to extremes in trying to destroy the Jewish religion. One such cruel measure, for instance, was that if a mother allowed her baby to be circumcised, the mother was to be crucified with the baby hanging around her neck.

An aged priest named Mattathias raised a revolt against Antiochus. His sons led the nation to a time of semi-independence. One of the sons, Judas, was nicknamed "Maccabaeus", which some scholars say means "Hammer", because of the striking power of his guerrilla forces. This name came to be applied to the whole family, although the family name was Hasmonaeus. Through various intrigues and rivalries they held the government for a hundred years, sometimes semi-independently, sometimes with the backing of the Syrians, finally the Romans. Then Herod the Great married a Hasmonean girl, affording him by marriage some right to the throne in the eyes of some Jews.

Archeological findings of the Maccabean times include many coins. One of these rulers, Alexander Jannaeus, had the title "King" put on his coins.

THE ROMANS TAKE OVER.

The Maccabees were of the priestly tribe, so when they became political rulers they had a combination of king and priest in one man. From this time on the high priesthood was more of a political office than a religious office. An aspirant to the place of power would offer bribes to the Syrians to back his bid for office. This sort of rivalry led finally to the Romans taking over this country. Two brothers had appealed to Pompey, a Roman general, to decide who would rule. When the brother whom Pompey backed failed to fulfill his promises Pompey marched on Jerusalem and in 63 B. C. took it over. From that time on Palestine was ruled as a Roman possession.

In 37 B. C. the Romans appointed Herod the Great as king over Palestine. He was an Idumean, descended from the ancient Edomites. These people had settled in southern Palestine during the Intertestamental period. Probably they had been forced out of their homeland by the Nabateans, or perhaps earlier by Arabs. Nabateans first appear in history shortly before 300 B. C., at which time they were strongly entrenched in the old Edomite stronghold of Petra. Most of the famous ruins in Edom are actually Nabatean, not Edomite.

Thus when the New Testament opens we find Herod the Great ruling as king over Judea, backed up by Roman power. The interbiblical period explains for us such matters as Greek influence, difference between Pharisees and Sadducees, political importance of the high priesthood, etc. Devout Jews were looking for the fulfillment of the prophecies about the coming King when John the Baptist came preaching, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of God is at hand."

QUESTIONS.

1. What conditions did the returning exiles find in the land?
2. Name three of the enemies of the Jews in the postexilic period that have been identified by archeology.
3. What happened to Alexander's empire at his death?
4. What do we mean by "Hellenization"? Why did the Jews resist this policy?
5. How did the Sadducees and Pharisees originate?
6. What significance does it have for Bible study that pits are found with skeletons in them?
7. What are the Elephantine papyri?
8. What do we learn from the Elephantine papyri that correlates with the religious situation of Nehemiah's day and later?
9. What are the two main sources of information for the interbiblical period?
10. What abominable things did Antiochus Epiphanes do at Jerusalem?
11. Who were the Hasmoneans, or Maccabees?
12. How did the Romans become involved in Palestine?

TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. Read about the atrocities of Antiochus Epiphanes in I Maccabees and report on him to the class.
2. Find out more about the Elephantine papyri and report to class.
3. Make a report on the ruins at Petra.
4. Discuss the problem of living as a conquered people under cruel oppressors. Would you be a Sadducee (Collaborator) or a Pharisee (traditionalist)? To what extent could one modify his beliefs and practices to meet the conditions imposed by the conqueror?

LESSON 12. IN THE DAYS WHEN JESUS LIVED.

INTRODUCTION.

As we enter into New Testament times we find an overabundance of materials in archeology. The whole background of the Roman and Greek civilizations has a bearing on New Testament study, so that all the records and ruins around the Mediterranean world are useful in Bible study. Even in Palestine itself many Roman and Greek cities are yet to be studied by archeologists.

Although the background materials are abundant, when it comes to specific details, archeology is limited in what it can connect with the New Testament. While there are many sites shown to tourists, such as the supposed birthplace of Jesus, His tomb, etc., none of these can be accurately identified by scholars. The reason for this is that in the wars between the Jews and the Romans the whole land was devastated. At Jerusalem the Emperor Hadrian had a plow run over the ancient temple site, completely obliterating any landmarks. Then there was a two hundred year gap of silence before Constantine's mother, Helena, began to search for sites connected with the life of Christ. No reliable testimony was available for identifying these places. Her finding of the true cross, for example, even if true, could not be scientifically verified.

WORLD CONDITIONS IN THE DAYS OF JESUS.

We can fairly well reconstruct daily life in the times of Jesus through the writings of historians such as Josephus and Tacitus, and through examining the ruins readily available to the archeologists. Of special value is the city of Pompeii, which was covered with ashes when Mt. Vesuvius erupted, preserving it intact, so that we can see how people lived in Roman times.

The terrible Romans with their ghastly atrocities ruled all the lands around the Mediterranean Sea in the days of Jesus. Cruelty and horror were the order of the day, and their greatest sport was the gladiatorial shows in which human beings killed each other while the crowds in the grandstands enjoyed the sight. Conquered people had few rights, for Roman soldiers kept them in subjugation. Perhaps half of the people living at that time were slaves, being bought and sold like cattle in the market places.

The language and culture of the Roman world were Greek. There were many Greek settlements in Palestine, one section being known as the Decapolis, or Ten Towns. Samaria had been re-built by Herod the Great and named Sebaste in honor of Augustus Caesar, the Greek word "sebaste" meaning the same as the Latin word "augustus". Caesarea on the seacoast was the main port and the center of Roman military control. The Jews generally tried to avoid contact with these Greek and Roman towns. Some of the Roman rulers tried to avoid

antagonizing the Jews, but others, such as Pilate, seemed to enjoy insulting them. His insistence, for example, on bringing Roman standards, regarded as idols by the Jews, into Jerusalem brought on bloody riots.

The intermingling of the three cultures, Jewish, Roman and Greek, is indicated in that the writing placed over the head of Jesus on the cross was written in three languages: Latin, Greek and Hebrew. All three languages were used in the country.

DATE OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

Theoretically our calendar is dated from the birth of Jesus. But a mistake was made in calculating that date, and we know that Jesus was born several years earlier. Herod died in 4 B. C., and we know that Jesus was born before Herod died.

Some scholars have argued that the star which the wise men saw was a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of Pisces, and this can be dated in 7 B. C. Those who follow this reasoning date the birth of Jesus in that year. But those who regard the star as a special miraculous star find no help in this line of reasoning.

Luke 2:1-5 tells us that Jesus was born in Bethlehem because Joseph had to go there to enroll for a taxation under Caesar Augustus and that this taxation occurred when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. Historians know that Cyrenius was governor of Syria in 6 A. D., when a census was taken. But this would be too late for the one mentioned in the Bible. Some archeologists think they have evidence of Cyrenius' being governor of Syria at an earlier period. He seems to have been on a military mission in that area between 10 and 7 B. C.

From papyri records, archeologists have established the fact that the Romans took a census every 14 years and that people went to their home towns to be enrolled. Emperor Augustus began the practice. Since one census was taken in 6 A. D., 14 years earlier would have been 8 B. C. Allowing time for the decree to reach Judea and time for the people to comply with it, we arrive at something like 7 B. C. as the year of Christ's birth.

IDENTIFICATION OF SITES.

Some general areas Jesus visited can be identified, such as the pool of Siloam. But when it comes to finding specific buildings and roads, we cannot identify these for certain. Perhaps future excavations will give more definite data.

One place for which many claim definite identification is the place where

Jesus was tried by Pilate. It could well be that Jesus stood on these very stones for his trial. On the other hand, some argue that the more logical place would have been Herod's palace, which is yet to be excavated. The Via Dolorosa, or Road of Sorrows, supposedly traveled by Jesus to the crucifixion has no archeological proof of its authenticity. That the church built over the supposed tomb of Jesus is truly the place of his burial, also is beyond proof at present. In regard to his tomb, it would help if we knew where the wall ran in the days of Jesus, for the tomb would have been outside the city wall. Both ends of the wall are known, but no one has traced the route the wall took, so there is no way of stating that the church is built over a tomb that was outside the wall in Pilate's day. Other tombs also are shown to tourists as the one where Jesus was buried.

TOMBS FROM THE DAYS OF JESUS.

Tombs from New Testament times contain many interesting materials for Bible study. For one thing, some of them had a round stone which served as a door to the tomb. This round stone could be rolled like a wheel to cover the entrance to the tomb itself. The stone was heavy, and it required much strength to move it, which explains the question the women asked on their way to the tomb of Jesus, "Who shall roll away the stone for us?"

An interesting feature of many of these tombs is the ossuaries they contain. An ossuary is a stone box for holding bones. A body would be laid in the tomb and remain there until all the flesh rotted away. Then the bones would be collected and placed in one of these stone boxes. Tombs were used again and again. We are told that the tomb in which the body of Jesus was placed had never been used before.

Very little evidence is found in the tombs prior to 70 A. D. to show Christian beliefs. Some archeologists do claim that the markings on some of the ossuaries are Christian symbols or words. Perhaps not many Christians had died before 70 A. D., or perhaps they had not yet developed symbols that were specifically Christian at that time, or perhaps archeologists have not yet run across Christian tombs.

OTHER ARCHEOLOGICAL MATERIALS.

The greatest archeological discovery from the times of Jesus is the Dead Sea scrolls, which shall be discussed in the next lesson. Other materials include coins, ruins of buildings, pottery, milestones, inscriptions, etc.

There is an abundance of coins from this period, including all those mentioned in the Bible. The denarius was the coin Jesus used in the famous lesson about paying tribute. The assarion was the smallest, most insignificant coin used, famous as the "widow's mite".

The Famous Wailing Wall in Jerusalem is thought to be part of the foundation of the temple area wall built by Herod the Great. Some of the city's wall and towers are identified. Some remains of an aqueduct built by Pilate can be seen. Pilate confiscated temple funds to pay for building this aqueduct, and this brought on riots which Pilate put down with bloodshed, which is the probable background for the statement in Luke 13:1 about the "Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices." Pilate's troops slaughtered them while they were worshipping so that their own blood got mingled with the blood of the animals being killed for sacrifice.

The famous Roman roads were probably not built in the times of Jesus but were constructed later in connection with the war of 66-70 A. D. for the purpose of moving troops and military supplies and equipment. Jesus and his disciples probably traveled dusty roads, making footwashing a necessary and refreshing convenience for guests entering one's house.

PAPYRI AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE.

In various parts of the old Roman empire some papyri documents have been unearthed by archeologists. Some of these contain parts of the New Testament. Their chief significance for New Testament study is that they prove the existence of many of the New Testament books early in the second century A. D. This helps to establish their genuineness. For example, some scholars had taught that the gospel of John was a forgery of around 200 A. D. But now the archeologists have a fragment of the book of John from around 125 A. D.

A second tremendous value of the papyri is that they help us understand the Greek words of the New Testament. A hundred years ago it was thought that the New Testament Greek was a sort of "Holy Ghost language," since it differed considerably from classical Greek and had 500 or more words not found anywhere else in the Greek language. But a study of the papyri has shown that the Greek of the New Testament was the common (Greek, "koine") language of the man of the street. And the papyri are found to contain most of the special words in the New Testament, greatly increasing our knowledge of their meaning. For example, when Jesus stated that the hypocrites who did their works to be seen of men had received their reward, he used a word that in the papyri is used on receipts to mean "Paid in full". In other words, Jesus used a current business term to indicate that these hypocrites had received the only recognition they would ever get, contrasted to the eternal rewards in store for the sincere, righteous workers.

Some sayings of Jesus have been found, including some that are not found in the New Testament. It is quite possible that these are genuine sayings, since we know that in the New Testament we find recorded only a few of the things which Jesus said and did. Luke 1:1 tells us that many had written books about

Jesus before Luke wrote, and John 21:25 tells us that Jesus did many other things which were not recorded by John. So, we should not be surprised to find other writings about Jesus besides those in the New Testament.

CRUCIFIXION.

Jesus was executed by crucifixion. This horrible type of death was used by the Romans on condemned criminals and slaves. No Roman citizen could be executed this way. Crucifixion was a particularly horrible kind of death, carrying with it contempt for the person being so killed.

Crucifixion perhaps was derived from the ancient practice of the Assyrians and others of impaling captives or criminals with sharp stakes and leaving them to die. Sometimes the stake would be pushed through the victim from his seat and made to come out his neck. Usually death would quickly result from this treatment, but the body could hang on the pole for days as a sign of contempt.

Romans for many centuries before Christ had been using the cross for killing people. Other nations too used it. Constantine later outlawed its use, so that doctors and scholars today have no modern observations to use in analyzing crucifixion. Victims usually suffered on the cross for days in terrible pain until death finally gave them welcome relief. Pilate was amazed that Jesus had died so quickly. Some think that death for the victims came about as a result of the blood accumulating in the lower part of the body until finally the heart could not pump enough blood to the brain to keep life going. This theory explains why breaking the legs hastened death, because it resulted in poorer circulation in the body causing the blood to collect swiftly in the lower regions, depriving the lungs and brain of necessary flow of blood. For those who lived several days many factors helped bring on death, such as hunger, exhaustion, disease, blood poisoning, etc.

There were several types of crosses used in the days of Jesus. Presumably His cross was the usual design we see, with a cross bar at right angles to the upright pole, and low enough for a sign to be placed across the top. Sometimes a platform was placed for the victim to stand on as long as he had strength to do so, but in Jesus' case His feet were nailed to the cross in some way, see Luke 24:39, where the reference to feet must indicate some sort of wounds on them.

WHY THE INABILITY TO IDENTIFY ITEMS CONNECTED WITH JESUS?

Naturally it is within the realm of possibility that someday we shall find the true cross, the seamless robe, the cup used at the last supper, etc. But as the situation now stands we cannot identify for sure even the birthplace of the tomb of Jesus. Strangely enough, even the day on which He died is questioned by many, although most Christians consider it to have been Friday. The day of

his birth is unknown as well as the year. Why did not God see fit to reveal these specific facts to us?

Evidently God wants us to have our emphasis upon Christ as the risen Lord, living in heaven at God's right hand. While relics from his earthly life would have interest to us, they would detract from His living presence available to those who believe on Him. Our attention should not be upon a man who died centuries ago but upon a Lord "who ever liveth to make intercession for all those that draw nigh to God through Him." (Hebrews 7:25).

QUESTIONS.

1. What happenings in the history of Palestine explain why it is difficult to identify with certainty the places mentioned in the life of Jesus?
2. Who ruled Palestine in the days of Jesus? What do we know about their cruelty?
3. Did Jews and Jesus have much contact with Greek cities in Palestine?
4. How does the date of Herod's death indicate that our calendar is wrong?
5. What findings by archeologists have a bearing on the date of Christ's birth?
6. How would it help to identify the tomb in which Jesus was buried if we could trace the wall of the city at that time?
7. What is an ossuary? Explain how ossuaries were used.
8. How can we explain the fact that hardly any tombs can be identified as Christian before 70 A. D.?
9. Why did Pilate's building an aqueduct get him into trouble with the Jews?
10. What is "koine" Greek? How have the papyri helped us understand the New Testament?
11. What is one theory as to what brought on death for victims on crosses?
12. What may be one explanation as to why God prevented our making definite identifications of things connected with Jesus' life on earth?

TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. Read articles in encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries about crucifixion. See what you can figure out about the procedure of nailing Jesus to the cross.
2. See how much you can find out about Pilate. Was the sign he put on the cross intended to insult the Jews? Was this characteristic of his attitude toward them?
3. See what information you can find on the date of the birth of Jesus. In what ways can archeology help on this problem?

LESSON 13. THE CHURCH GOES INTO ALL THE WORLD.

INTRODUCTION.

The Lord returned to heaven after having commissioned his disciples to carry the gospel into all the world. Beginning at Jerusalem they were to spread out all over the earth.

At first the Christian movement was regarded merely as a Jewish sect, not a separate religion, and thus shared in the legal privileges the Romans had granted the Jews. But as it became more and more a Gentile movement it became a distinct religion, one not protected by Roman Law. Over two centuries of persecution were to be endured by the Christians before they were to receive official recognition and tolerance by the Roman government.

Archeology offers much material to illustrate the spread of the church both in New Testament times and the centuries following it. Some of that material we will study in this lesson.

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS.

The most exciting archeological discovery of recent years relating to Bible study is the Dead Sea Scrolls. When the first discoveries were made of this religious sect at Qumran, liberal scholars proclaimed that here at last was the true origin of Christianity. Conservative scholars pointed out differences which made it doubtful that the church borrowed from the Qumran community. While there are some parallels in doctrines and practices, such as baptism and an emphasis on the end of the world, no definite connection has been made to link the church to the Qumran community.

The Qumran community was a religious group on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, existing from about one hundred years before the time of Jesus until around 70 A. D. when it was seemingly disbanded under threat of attack by Roman legions. The members of the community hid their books and writings in caves. Some of these were accidentally found by a shepherd boy in 1947. After the importance of these scrolls was recognized, archeological expeditions were organized which have thoroughly explored the whole area, finding hundreds of scrolls in the caves, as well as unearthing much of the ancient community.

The main significance of the scrolls found in the caves is that they provide us with copies of Bible books earlier than the time of Christ. Previous to this discovery the oldest copies of the Bible in Hebrew were dated around 900 A. D. One Isaiah scroll found in the caves goes back earlier than 100 B. C., moving our knowledge of the Old Testament back 1,000 years closer to the original writing. Parts of nearly every Old Testament book have been found in the

caves. The accuracy of our present text is sustained, showing very few changes have occurred throughout centuries of copying by hand. The scrolls also indicate the accuracy of the Greek Old Testament, called the Septuagint, in many places.

Also found in the area, although without any connection with this Qumran religious sect, were over valuable discoveries. A copper roll told of vast treasures hidden away. Presumably this was money taken from the temple and hidden to prevent the Romans from confiscating it. Other discoveries include letters from Bar Kochba, leader of the last Jewish revolt against Rome in 135 A. D., who must have had his headquarters in the area.

VINDICATION OF LUKE'S WRITINGS.

Our main source of information regarding the spread of the church in New Testament times is the book of Acts. A hundred years ago it was popular to point out the mistakes Luke had made and thereby to discredit faith in the Bible. Archeologists, however, have again and again shown Luke to be accurate and his critics wrong. One archeologist, William Ramsey, began his investigations feeling sure that Luke was grossly in error again and again. To his surprise, Ramsey found evidence proving Luke to be correct, and so he became a staunch defender of the accuracy of Luke's account.

For example, Luke spoke of Sergius Paulus as proconsul (English "deputy" in KJV) of Cyprus, and historians said he could not have had that title. Discoveries, including coins, have vindicated Luke, for at that time Cyprus was controlled by the Roman Senate and its governor was of the rank of proconsul.

Another unusual term Luke used was "politarch", in regard to the rulers of Thessalonica. This title was unknown in Greek and Roman literature, so Luke was accused of inventing a title. Now, however, the archeologists have several inscriptions on which rulers of Macedonian towns are designated by that title.

Luke has been shown to be accurate on many other points, too, such as that Iconium was in the region of Phrygia, that a famine did hit Judea in the days of Claudius Caesar, that officials at Philippi did call themselves praetors (magistrates), etc.

THE CITIES WHERE PAUL PREACHED.

Many discoveries in the cities where Paul preached give interesting background materials for the Bible story.

At Corinth was found a stone door lintel bearing part of the title "Synagog of the Hebrews", which may well have been on the very building where Paul

preached at first. An inscription mentioning Gallio the proconsul helps us to date Paul's visit to Corinth, since Paul was brought before him for judgment, see Acts 18:12.

Paul mentions "Erastus the chamberlain of the city" in Romans 16:23, the city being Corinth. An inscribed stone found at Corinth states that the pavement was put down by Erastus. Scholars generally think that the Erastus who was a convert of Paul's is the same as the Erastus mentioned on the inscription, since both were prominent officials.

Many ruins visible today at Corinth and Athens show us places where Paul must have stood. But at other cities the ruins were long ago covered with dust or mud. At Ephesus the swamp had so taken over the old city site that it was necessary to remove 25 feet of dirt or mud in order to find the market place and temple of Diana mentioned in the Bible.

Paul's last trip to Jerusalem brought about his imprisonment when the Roman soldiers delivered him from death at the hands of a Jewish mob. The Jews accused him of bringing Gentiles into the temple. An inscribed stone had been found by archeologists which marked the point beyond which no Gentile was permitted to go, on threat of death if he did go beyond it.

ROMAN EMPERORS.

Several Roman Emperors are mentioned in the Bible, and several not mentioned figure in the background. These are well known because Roman historians have recorded facts about them. Coins and inscriptions have added much to our knowledge of these emperors. From the time of Augustus onward the emperors were given status of gods and incense was to be burned before their statues. Efforts on the part of Caligula to set up his statue in Jerusalem nearly brought on a war before the project was abandoned. The refusal of Christians to worship the emperor brought on persecution for them. In a letter from the Emperor Trajan to Pliny, governor of Bithynia in 103-105 A. D., the orders were that Christians were to be allowed to go free if they would burn incense before the emperor's statue.

Titus was in charge of the Roman armies when they captured Jerusalem. He tried to prevent the destruction of the temple, but the battle was so savage that the destruction was complete, the whole temple area being burned with fire. He did rescue some items, however, for trophies, having personally entered the holy of holies before it was destroyed. A memorial arch commemorating his triumph can be seen in Rome today, with the seven pronged golden candlestick taken from the temple shown as being carried in the victory procession in Rome.

REFERENCE TO CHRIST AND CHRISTIANS IN CONTEMPORARY WRITINGS.

The question is often asked whether or not anyone living in the days of Jesus, other than the writers of the New Testament, have left any record of Jesus. The implication is that since the New Testament writers were biased in favor of their faith, their record is not to be taken seriously, so that we need other proof of the existence of Jesus.

The Jewish historian, Josephus, who participated in the Jewish wars and was a traitor to his people, helping the Romans capture Jerusalem, makes a reference to Jesus, but some scholars think this was put into Josephus' writings by a later writer. He also mentions John the Baptist. Acts 18:2 tells us that Claudius had expelled all Jews from Rome. The Roman writer Suetonius tells us that this order came about as a result of riots over one "Chrestus". Many scholars think this "Chrestus" is Christ, and that the riots reflected Jewish persecution of the followers of Jesus.

Tacitus tells about Nero's persecution of Christians, and he explains that they took their name "from one Christus, who was executed in the reign of Tiberius by the procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate."

We have already referred to the letter from the Emperor Trajan to Pliny, which shows that by 100 A. D. Christians were scattered all over the empire. This would indicate a rapid spread of the religion, such as the book of Acts indicates.

Since the work of Jesus was confined to Palestine, during his own lifetime he would not have been noticed by writers of other countries, so that even if we had such writings in abundance it is not likely that Jesus would have been mentioned. And we have seen that the Roman destruction of Judea was so thorough in the vicious wars that not much was left of Jewish civilization of that period. So the prospect of discovering contemporary documents are not good. However, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, going back even earlier than the time of Jesus, opens the possibility that other such discoveries in the future may give us eye witness records of the deeds of Jesus and his disciples.

THE CHURCH AFTER NEW TESTAMENT TIMES.

Some interesting discoveries tell us something of the life of Christians in the two hundred years of the church under persecution, that is, up to the time that the Emperor Constantine began to favor Christianity. From his time onward, of course, there is no end to information about the church.

One interesting find was a church building at Dura-Europos in Syria, one of the Roman farthest east outposts. The building was erected as a private house

in A. D. 232, and was used as a chapel that could seat around 100 people. It contained a baptistry and many wall paintings depicting scenes from the Old and the New Testaments.

Recently the Catholic scholars have claimed proof that they have identified Peter's tomb. While many Protestant scholars are willing to accept the identification, the essential facts still depend upon tradition, not definite archeological evidence.

The most fascinating archeological findings associated with these centuries are the catacombs of Rome. These are underground tunnels for burial purposes, miles and miles of them, with perhaps several million persons buried there. Inscriptions on many of them show that they were Christians. The sign of the fish occurs frequently. Early Christians adopted the fish as a secret symbol of their faith, because the letters of the Greek word for fish, "ICHTHUS," represented for the Christian the statement, "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior".

Romans often put Christians to death, so that their services had to be in secret. At the same time, Romans had a superstitious awe of the dead, and they honored burial places. Thus the Christians could meet in secret in these catacombs, and if discovered by officers, could pose as a burial party and so not be molested.

SUMMARY.

In closing out this short survey of archeological findings bearing on the Bible, it is hoped that the student will have found his faith strengthened and his zeal increased by the realization of the fact that so much evidence exists to prove the genuineness and accuracy of the Bible. Since the Bible has been shown true over and over again in regard to things of this world, we accept it as true in regard to things revealed about the spirit world. Its doctrine of salvation is just as true as its historical and geographical facts. The historical facts can be somewhat verified by archeology, but the facts of salvation must be verified through personal experience. This study is intended to point us not only to the reliability of God's word, but to a saving faith in Jesus Christ as God's Son.

QUESTIONS.

1. What was the Qumran community?
2. How have the Dead Sea Scrolls helped in studying the text of the Old Testament?
3. Name two instances in which Luke was shown to be right in regard to titles for rulers.
4. What mention is made of Erastus in an inscription? Why do we think

this was the same Erastus whom Paul mentions?

5. What is the significance of the "Gentile stone" found at Jerusalem?
6. What test did the Emperor Trajan tell Pliny to make of a Christian?
7. What significant trophy did Titus picture on his triumphal arch?
8. What does Tacitus say about the origin of Christians?
9. What interesting items are found in the churchbuilding at Dura-Europos?
10. What were the catacombs of Rome? Why were they useful to Christians?
11. Why was the fish a symbol for the Christians?
12. How must the Bible teachings about salvation be verified?

TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND DISCUSSION.

1. Read about the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and report on them to class. Find pictures of the area if you can.
2. Make a report on the catacombs, emphasizing how they could be used for secret Christian meetings.
3. Discuss how we can know the certainty of the truths of salvation as revealed in the Bible. Can archeology help us to come to a soul-saving faith? How?

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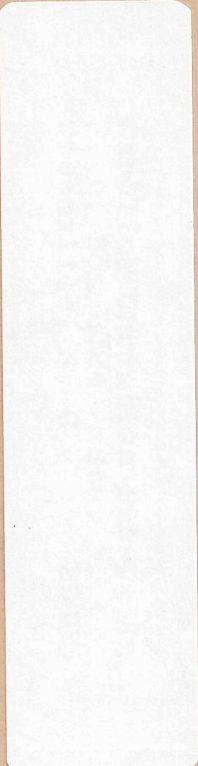
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