



Modern Archeological Verification of the Old Testament

TO: LEGISLATORS

FROM: RALPH DROLLINGER

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A special thanks to Congressman James Lankford for substitute teaching the Members Bible Study last week in my absence. The schedule change caught me in a previous commitment that I needed to fulfill with a new potential Ministry Leader (possible candidate) for a Midwest State Capitol.

Legislators, Staff and Lobbyists who are bent toward an outdated theological liberalism, questioning the reliability and trustworthiness of the Bible, might find this study especially interesting and perhaps ideologically threatening.

Whereas theological liberals tend to stereotype conservative Christians as simpletons who clench to their beliefs in blind faith—ignorant and lacking in intellectual support—this study suggests quite the opposite. Is not the crutch of the liberal theologian wrought with termites?

When I state the above words, “selective exposure” could set in. That is to say we all tend to expose ourselves only to things we are already predisposed toward. We don’t want to be proven wrong; so in our biases we avoid studying contrary positions. Such is human nature. If you are fighting with those feelings right now, I ask you to open your mind to what follows. Learn about the testimony of modern archeology. The evidence for the veracity and trustworthiness of the Bible is compelling and overwhelming; this is stuff you won’t read about in your morning paper! Take a look at what I mean....

INTRODUCTION

During the 19th Century, at the height of Deism and Darwinianism, a theory was floated regarding the origins of the first five books of the OT. These books are known to the Hebrews as the Torah and referred to by the Greeks as the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. This theory

attempted and attempts to discount Mosaic authorship, and postulate instead that these books were written much later...supposedly they were germinated from other sources.

If this is true, then it stands to reason that what the Torah attests of itself (that it was written by Moses) and what other OT books and their authors attest of the Torah (that it was written by Moses) and what Jesus Christ attests to in the NT (that Moses was the Torah’s author) are false statements.¹ Therefore,

EMBRACING A THEOLOGICALLY LIBERAL POSITION REGARDING THE ORIGIN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IS TANTAMOUNT TO CALLING JESUS A LIAR.

Furthermore, if the first five books of the Bible are inherently untrustworthy, at what point can one begin to trust in the Scriptures whatsoever? The predominant liberal theory regarding the origin of the Torah is known as the Wellhausen theory, or better, the J.E.D.P. theory. This hypothesis postulates that supposedly, “The Pentateuch was a compilation of selections from several different written documents composed at different places and times over a period of five centuries, long after Moses.”² A few words will be said to describe the establishment of this commonly accepted theory, but one must state from the outset that for want of a better premise most non-conservative institutions in America persist even today in teaching this viewpoint—as if nothing has changed in OT scholarship, especially archeological findings, since 1880 when it was first popularized! What is doubly sad is that ever since its inception, theologically liberal scholarship in Europe “has time and again administered fatal blows to nearly all its foundations.”³ Triply sad, the liberal professors have no bench whatsoever...no substitute for their admittedly weak superstar player. But nonetheless, even though they have been drastically outplayed during the second half, in their stubbornness they continue to resist forfeiting the game. (How embarrassing!) Here’s how JEDP came into existence...

MEMBERS WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CONCLUSION OF FIRST-VOTES-BACK (MONDAY OR TUESDAY NIGHT)

THE CAPITOL FAMILY ROOM

DINNER SERVED

SPOUSES WELCOME



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A. STAGE ONE OF LIBERAL OT THEOLOGY

The theory's foothold can be attributed to Jean Astruc, A French physician who in the mid 18th century conducted a literary analysis of the Book of Genesis and discovered that sometimes God is referred to in Hebrew as *Elohim* and at other times *Yahweh*.⁴ From that discovery he formed the supposition that Moses relied on and used two different sources in writing Genesis (versus the simple explanation of providing two names for God). His notion received little attention, but what is most significant is that he set the stage for a criterion of "source division."

B. STAGE TWO OF LIBERAL OT THEOLOGY

The second stage of development is evidenced in the work of Johann Gottfried Eichhorn in his 1783 publication, *Einleitung in das alte Testament* (Eng: *Introduction to the Old Testament*). His work dissects the Book of Genesis and the first two chapters of Exodus between two sources: The Jahwist and the Elohist (J and E). At first, Eichhorn believed that Moses was the editor who combined these materials. In later editions, he would yield to the consensus of the movement he helped create, and state that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses at all, but rather, it was written at a much later date.

C. STAGE THREE OF LIBERAL OT THEOLOGY

The third stage of development of the J.E.D.P. theory can be attributed primarily to Willem Martin Lebrecht De Wette in his *Dissertation Critico-Exegetica* published in 1805. His main attribution to the basis of the growing conjectural hypothesis was that none of the Torah came from a time earlier than King David's reign. And more specifically, He introduced the idea that the essence, or source of the Book of Deuteronomy was extracted from a book of law which was found in the Jerusalem temple having originated around the time of the biblical account of King Josiah's reform, e.g. 621 B.C. Herein is the birth of source "D" as it came to be called.⁵ "D" stands for the Deuteronomistic source.

A paragraph (or two ☺) need be added here about the compelling reason for the broad acceptance of a later date of authorship of the Torah. Such is primarily motivated from the *prophetic* passages within the Torah:

Specifically Leviticus 26:27-45 and Deuteronomy 28:58-63. These passages *prophecy* the Babylonian captivity of Israel and their later restoration from Exile—events which are undisputed in history. Generally speaking, fulfilled prophecy sets the Bible apart from all other books, both religious and secular, and lends vast credibility to divine inspiration. No less is that true in and of the books of the Torah.

Accordingly, the way in which liberal theologians have chosen to deal with and explain away fulfilled prophecy is to invent a later date for the origin of the book that foretells the event. It is quite convenient to postulate that biblical books containing prophecies of future events—events history records as having occurred—were written after the event they predict. Of course this critical repositioning is akin to double jeopardy: Either it destroys the credibility of the book's author or the critic himself, casting one or the other into the darkest light of honesty and reliability. The phrase that capsulates this common practice amongst liberal theologians is called...

VATICINIA EX EVENTU...

**PROPHESIES INVENTED AFTER THEY HAVE ALREADY
BEEN FULFILLED**

This saying is commonly and regularly espoused to explain away fulfilled prophecy in Scripture. And it is a convenient way of dealing with the fulfilled prophecies of the Torah, specifically in Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

D. STAGE FOUR OF LIBERAL OT THEOLOGY

Although many other individuals would contribute to this theory, for the sake of brevity, the next major contribution would come in 1853 from Hermann Hupfeld's *Die Quellen der Genesis* (Eng: *The Sources of Genesis*) and its refinement by the Dutch Scholar Abraham Kuenen. Kuenen believed that the Priestly, or Holiness Code found in the Pentateuch (Lev. 17-26) stemmed from a source existing *after* Israel's exile. This Code has to do with Israel's rituals, forms of sacrifice, genealogical lists and their origin as a people. "P" then, (as in "Priestly") stands for the supposed source that provided the Torah's contents pertaining to the above.

JEDP supposedly represent a combined confluence of documents that inform the Pentateuch.. Granted, this is



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quite complicated to understand, but what it so unfathomable is this: It is all conjecture! *The documents and authors for each of the sources, J, E, D and P remain unknown and remain undiscovered!* The amount of faith required to buy into this concocted explanation of Scripture's origin only serves to illustrate the bias of its authors. In this way it is similar to the theory of evolution: Nothing times nobody equals everything! All is human conjecture!. In parallel thought:

DARWIN ADMITTED AT THE END OF HIS LIFE THAT ANY THEORY, NO MATTER HOW FAR-FETCHED, WAS BETTER THAN THE ALTERNATIVE OF BOWING IN SUBMISSION AND OBEDIENCE TO A HOLY GOD WHO CREATED THE WORLD.

Such is the rationalizing abilities of the fallen mind: To expunge any and all accountability to the only true God who has revealed Himself in Scripture.

E. MOSES: THE ACTUAL AUTHOR OF THE PENTATEUCH

Moses on the other hand, had every qualification to write the Pentateuch. He had the education, background and experience necessary. Keep in mind by God's sovereign arrangement he was brought up and tutored in Egyptian society, whose culture far surpassed that of the remaining ancient world. Plus he had the motivation to compile the Torah, being the patriarchal leader of Israel. And lastly he (much more than the Apostle Paul in prison) had the time: Having spent forty years in the wilderness he could have written something even larger. As will be seen by what follows, writing was prevalent in his day and his early Egyptian upbringing in Pharaoh's court most certainly accommodated the honing of his literary skills. For sure he was buff but don't take him for a dumb jock.

F. THE REFUTATION OF THE WELLHAUSEN THEORY

Before examining some illustrations of the testimony of subsequent archeological discoveries, it is important to make mention that the Wellhausen theory was *discounted* early on by such men as Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg, a leader in conservative biblical scholarship in Germany during this time. His work, *The Genuineness of the Pentateuch* (1847) represented a profound conservative position in refutation of Wellhausian thought. In America, Princeton Seminary scholar Joseph Addison

Alexander and William Henry Green also eruditely upheld Mosaic authorship. These men, long before the archeological finds that will follow, dealt strong blows to Wellhausen and his wonkies⁶. Liberal theologians have never successfully rebutted the scholastic criticism of these men...and subsequent published excavation findings have reinforced their orthodox positions.

I. ARCHEOLOGY AND THE ANTIQUITY OF THE TORAH

The Wellhausen Hypothesis formulated its judgment on the historicity of the OT based upon, in some part, the then-available archeological evidence scantily existing in the nineteenth century. That data was meager at best. As mentioned, even more unfortunate is the bias that existed amongst the theory's proponents; they did not give the benefit of the doubt to the documents they critiqued, a hard and fast rule and discipline in the science of hermeneutics. They quite easily discounted statements of Scripture because no where did there exist archeological confirmation for the same. They failed to believe the archeological axiom that...

THE ABSENCE OF EVIDENCE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF ABSENCE

For example, at the time of Wellhausen, archeological evidence for the biblically-explicit people groups of the Hittites (Gen. 15:20) and the Horites (Gen. 36:20), the historicity of King Sargon II (Isa. 20:1), or the existence of King Belshazzar (Dan. 5:1) were unconfirmed by archeological discovery. Wellhausians' condemned these people as mere fiction on the part of the late authors of the Torah. And in their arrogance the liberals railed on the incredulity of these biblical accounts, refuting the biblical record with their "erudite intellectual superiority." But be sure of this, one's sins of arrogance will find them out. states Gleason,

It has come about that in case after case after case after case where alleged historical inaccuracy was pointed to as proof of late and spurious authorship of the biblical documents, the Hebrew record has been vindicated by the results of recent excavation, and the condemnatory judgments of the Documentarian Theorists have been proved [to be] without foundation.⁷



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States England's William F. Albright, the man esteemed as the world's leading archeologist of his generation, who formerly held to the Wellhausen theory,

Archeological and inscriptional data have established the historicity of innumerable passages and statements of the Old Testament...Wellhausen still ranks in our eyes as the greatest Biblical scholar of the nineteenth century. But his standpoint is antiquated and his picture of the early evolution of Israel is sadly distorted.⁸

John Elder states,

It is not too much to say that it was the rise of the science of archaeology that broke the deadlock between historians and the orthodox Christian. Little by little, one city after another, one civilization after another, one culture after another, whose memories were enshrined only in the Bible, were restored to their proper places in ancient history by the studies of archeologists.⁹

States J.A. Thompson before the year 2000,

Finally, it is perfectly true to say that biblical archeology has done a great deal to correct the impression that was abroad at the close of the last century and in the early part of this century, that Biblical history was of doubtful trustworthiness in many places. If one impression stands out more clearly than another today, it is that on all hands the over-all historicity of the Old Testament tradition is admitted.¹⁰

With those overall statements in mind regarding the verification of archeology relative to an early date for the Torah, it will prove beneficial to examine some scientific discoveries that substantiate Mosaic authorship and discount the JEDP Documentary Hypothesis Theory...

II. A SAMPLING OF ARCHEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES

What follows are some Wellhausian premises of the 19th Century that are refuted by specific archeological discoveries in the 20th Century.

A. THE RAS SHAMRA TABLETS

These tablets were discovered by Schaeffer in 1929 and are composed in a 30-letter Semitic alphabet that closely parallels the Hebrew dialect and symbol usage more so than any other language of ancient origins. The tablets

date to around 1400 B.C. and reveal a depraved polytheistic Canaanite culture existing (very importantly) at the time of the Israelite conquest of the Promised Land.

In addition the dialog existing on the tablets reveals poetic clichés that are characteristic of the poetic forms found in the Pentateuch and in the Psalms. For instance the tablets refer to Baal's home as being located "on the mountain of his inheritance." This closely parallels Exodus 15:7 which states, "The mountain of Thine inheritance." There are numerous other examples that space will not allow to record, suffice to say other poetic forms similar to Hebrew poetry are in evidence: Tricolonic forms of prose and elevated writing skills.

This discovery, along with those dating to 1500 B.C. from the turquoise mines of Serabit el-Khadim (discovered by Petrie in 1904) and the Gezar Calendar (found by Macalister in the 1900's) display beyond any shadow of doubt an ability to write in the Mosaic period.

WHY IS THIS SO SIGNIFICANT?

The J.E.D.P. liberals had earlier postulated that the art of writing was virtually unknown in Israel prior to the Davidic Kingdom, therefore there could not have been any written records during the time of Moses.

B. THE NUZI TABLETS

These discoveries were found by Chiera and Speiser at Nuzi (near Kirkuk) on the Tigris River in 1925. They date from the 15th century B.C. Revealed from the study of these thousands of tablets are the customs of the time. They display Abraham's culture prior to his sojourn to Egypt such as the acceptable practice of selling one's birthright. An illustration of this within the tablets is the story of a brother being recompensed for selling his primogeniture to his younger brother in exchange for three sheep. This parallels Genesis 25:33 wherein Esau sold his birthright to Jacob. Another instance is the binding character of a deathbed will, which is characterized biblically between Isaac and Jacob in the book of Genesis.

Another discovery in a similar support role of negating Wellhausianism is provided by **The Mari Tablets**. They



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were discovered by an Archeologist name Parrot near the city of Tel Hariri on the Euphrates River in 1933. They contain direct evidence that during the 18th century B.C. a people group existed referred to as the *Hibiru*, which as it turns out is an ancient Akkadian reference to Abraham's people found in the Book of Genesis. The philological understanding of the word relates to a Canaanite meaning of "wanderers" or "people from the other side."

WHY IS THIS SO SIGNIFICANT?

Those who would have one believe that the OT is nothing more than a man-made collection of myths claimed that the Genesis account of Abraham and his descendants was and is unhistorical and fictional. One prominent proponent of the theory went so far as to deny the existence of Abraham.

Furthermore **The Ebla Tablets** nail the liberals' coffin shut as it pertains to Abraham. This 1964 archeological discovery of a whole ancient library (subsequently unearthed in 1974) testify to the veracity of the secular Kings *as recorded in Genesis 14* whom existed during the time of Abraham.

C. THE BABYLONIAN CODE OF HAMMURABI

This 1901 discovery by Scheil serves to indicate the numerous similarities between the societal laws indicated in the biblical books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers and Babylonian culture. This account of the law code of ancient Babylon displays forms of crime punishment for breaches in contracts. There is an "if...then" structure to the writings. For sure some laws and forms of punishment differ due to societal ideologies, but that is not the issue. Rather, the archeological discovery serves to illustrate the existence of a penal code at the time of Moses.

WHY IS THIS SO SIGNIFICANT?

The liberals had earlier theorized that the Pentateuch was fallacious on the basis of their belief that the legislation of the Priestly Code in these biblical books represented a later, post-exilic stage of development in the Hebrew culture. They boasted that laws of this level of

sophistication could not have been developed until the 5th century B.C. States Millar Burrows of Yale,

SCHOLARS HAVE SOMETIMES SUPPOSED THAT THE SOCIAL AND MORAL LEVEL OF THE LAWS ATTRIBUTED TO MOSES WAS TOO HIGH FOR SUCH AN EARLY AGE. [THESE DISCOVERIES] HAVE EFFECTIVELY REFUTED THIS ASSUMPTION."

D. THE TELL EL-AMARNA TABLETS

Carrying the name of the city in which they were discovered in 1887, they date to 1370 B.C. and are made up of correspondence by and between Palestinian and Syrian princelings. In part they reveal fierce invaders to the south and request Egyptian troops. Those invading are the Hibiru. The cities which have already fallen are listed as Gezer, Ashkelon, and Lachish. Accordingly, this secular archeological find parallels Numbers 21:1-3, a record of the Hebrew conquest of Canaan. Interestingly, this account is from the vantage point of those being conquered.

WHY IS THIS SO SIGNIFICANT?

Wellhausen proponents propagated their belief that the account of the conquest of Palestine and the Transjordan as recorded in the biblical books of Numbers and Joshua was grossly unhistorical. But subsequent archeological excavations indicate that it was historical! It is interesting to note who turned out to be "grossly unhistorical."

SUMMARY

Numerous other archeological finds could be recounted to make the point of this week's Bible study, but suffice to say that archeology has played a major role in supporting the veracity of the Old Testament.

IT WOULD BE FOOLISH TO PROPAGATE THE J.E.D.P. THEORY TODAY IN LIGHT OF ALL THE DISCOVERIES THAT REFUTE IT.

States Albright (my favorite archeologists)

New discoveries continue to confirm the historical accuracy or the literary antiquity of detail after detail in it...It is, accordingly, sheer hyper-criticism to deny the



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substantially Mosaic character of the Pentateuchal tradition.”¹²

Here are some applicable thoughts to take away from this week’s faith-building study:

A. BE DISCERNING OF FALSE TEACHERS

Much can be learned from the arrogant scholarship of Wellhausianism. What follows are keys to identifying liberal theologians. The NT has many warnings about false religious leaders who lead people astray, leaving them shipwrecked regarding the faith. They will shipwreck nations too if you let them. One of the significant biblical indicators of spiritual maturity is spiritual discernment: The ability to distinguish truth from error. This requires an intellectual acumen that is only gained through in-depth Bible study. Conversely, as I minister to people in the Capitol and travel around our country I often hear of spiritual maturity being defined otherwise: As if it only means loving others. But what do you do when liberal theologians attempt to win political/ideological debates based upon their unscriptural premises? Do you respond with nothing but “love”? No. “Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth” (1 Cor. 13:6). Consider the words of Philippians 1:9 “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in *real knowledge* and all discernment.” What follows are identifying characteristics of liberal theologians. Learn to discern them for whom they are:

KEYS TO IDENTIFYING LIBERAL THEOLOGIAN¹³

1. They are predisposed to devaluing textual evidence from Scripture
2. They assume lower literary standards of the scriptural authors than their own
3. They assume the religion of the Bible is of purely human origin
4. They artificially concoct “discrepancies” to substantiate supposed biblical errors
5. They assume a superior knowledge of ancient history over and above the original authors who lived 1000’s of years closer to the events which they record

B. HOLD TO A HIGH VIEW OF SCRIPTURE

In the capital community, do not be caught up in old myths (which never seem to die) regarding the supposed lack of integrity of God’s authoritative Word, the Holy Scriptures. His Word is just as true when it speaks in the historical narrative as it is when it commands our obedience or provides us with principles for wise living. The Scriptures claim to be the Word of God not once or twice, but thousands of times. And indeed they are. Foolish is the man or woman who suppresses that truth—for they know it to be the case when they are honest with themselves (cf. Rom. 1)

C. REALIZE WHO IT IS THAT POSSESSES BLIND FAITH

Lastly, it is not the conservative Christian who is the simpleton, who clenches to his or her beliefs with blind faith, ignorant and lacking intellectual, scientific and historical support. Rather, it is the one who espouses a liberal understanding of God’s Word. Romans 1:22 is an apt summary: “Professing to be wise they became fools.”

¹ Cf. Exodus 17:14; Joshua 1:8; John 5:46-47 resp. In the NT passage herein, Jesus states, “For if you believed in Moses, ye would believe in Me; for *he wrote* of Me. But if ye believe not *his writings*, how shall ye believe My words?” In John 7:19 Jesus states further, “Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you doeth the law?” These passages evidence Jesus’ testimony that Moses wrote the books of the OT law. How can one claim Christ and reject scriptural inspiration?

² Gleason, Archer *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994) p 89

³ *Ibid.*, p 97

⁴ Astruc’s writing, published in 1753 was titled, *Conjectures Concerning the Original Memoranda Which It Appears Moses Used to Compose the Book of Genesis*.

⁵ At the start, it must be said that De Witte was not a part of the Documentary Hypothesis School. Rather, he was a Fragmentary Theorist. They believed the Pentateuch was composed from separate fragments, some of which were as old as Moses, and were fitted into a historical context.

⁶ When something goes “wonky” it is said to be awry, or wrong.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p 174

⁸ As quoted by Gleason Archer in *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, p 174

⁹ *Ibid.*, p 174

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p 174

¹¹ Burrows, *What Mean These Stones?* (New Haven, Conn: ASOR, 1941) p 56

¹² Albright, William F. *The Archeology of Palestine* (Rev. ed. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Pelican, 1960) p 224

¹³ Excerpted in part from Gleason, p. 112