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Earth's Treasure Heaps! A Study of Archaeology: Booklet Number 5

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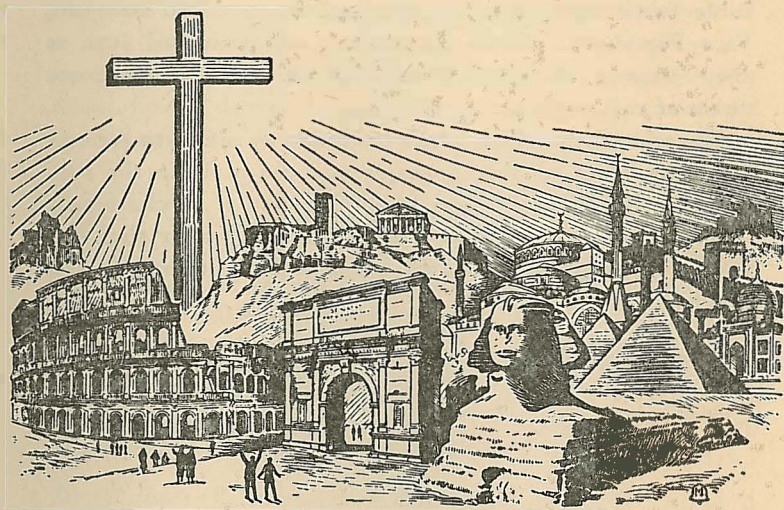
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Earth's TREASURE HEAPS !

A Study of Archaeology



BOOKLET NUMBER FIVE

The Bible Institute of the Air

Radio Voice of

THE BIBLE INSTITUTE OF LOS ANGELES

FOREWORD

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

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

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

THE BIBLE INSTITUTE OF LOS ANGELES

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THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT

Dr. Talbot: A few years ago it was rather customary for the critics to deny that the Plagues of Egypt ever actually occurred.

Dr. Bauman: Yes, a few years ago they were considered by many to be nothing more than Hebrew folklore, but it would be easy to show that the Bible writer exhibits a firsthand knowledge of events which actually occurred as well as an astonishing familiarity with Egyptian names and religious customs.

Dr. Talbot: The tendency in recent years on the part of a good many people has been to say that these plagues were merely a series of natural calamities, magnified by Moses into judgments to try to force Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. Have you noticed this tendency, Dr. Bauman?

Dr. Bauman: Yes, I have. It is a dangerous half-truth. There is no doubt but what the Plagues followed the seasons of the year, or that God intensified certain natural phenomena, but not all then can be explained on a natural basis. For example, in the Tenth Plague, it is possible that some children's disease could have attacked the babies of the land of Egypt, but hardly on a natural basis could it be confined to "the first-born both of man and beast." This points to nothing less than a miracle.

Dr. Talbot: Is it not true that many people find it hard to accept the account of the Plagues because they seem to them to be rather fantastic, and to be given with no apparent reason? For instance, why a plague of frogs, a plague of lice, or a plague of flies?

Dr. Bauman: You are right, and the following experience will illustrate this very problem. Some months ago I was

preparing an illustrated lecture on the Plagues of Egypt. One evening after a day of rather intensive study on this subject, I called at the home of a man, whom I had recently led to the Lord. This young man was a graduate of a large university, and typical of so many who there are given problems about the Bible which they cannot answer. Going into the home on this particular evening, I told him something about my findings in connection with the Plagues of Egypt. He listened with intense interest, and when I had finished, he said, "Dr. Bauman, that answers another of the problems I had before I became a Christian. I always wondered why it was that if God was the kind of a God Christians believed Him to be, namely, an all-powerful God, why didn't He with one sweep of His mighty arm send a catastrophe so compelling that the Egyptians would immediately have been forced into submission. Why was it necessary for Him to use all the time and energy of sending ten peculiar plagues, just to wear down the resistance of the Egyptians. But now the story makes sense. I can understand it. You have given me reasons for the plagues, and for the first time they mean something to me."

Dr. Talbot: Well, I think there is a pretty good lesson in that for the rest of us Christians to remember, namely this, that God never does anything without a reason. If things in the Bible seem fantastic or unreasonable, it is probably due to our own limited information. Don't you think so?

Dr. Bauman: Yes, I know this to be true in my own experience, particularly with regard to the story of the Plagues. A study of the Scripture record alone will reveal something concerning the reason for them. When Moses asked permission to take the people into the wilderness

to hold a feast unto Jehovah, we read that "Pharaoh said, Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go (Ex. 5:1-2)." Here a challenge to Jehovah's existence and power was given. That God was not willing to permit this challenge to go unanswered is evident, for we read in Exodus 7:17 at the beginning of the first Plague that Moses was instructed to speak to Pharaoh, "Thus saith Jehovah, in this *thou* shalt know that I am Jehovah: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in my hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood."

Dr. Talbot: It is clear then that God was endeavoring to prove to Pharaoh the fact that He alone was the true God. Are any other reasons given in the Bible?

Dr. Bauman: Yes, and we are also told that God said to *Israel*, "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments . . . and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God" (Ex. 6:6-7). Again God said, "And the *Egyptians* shall know that I am Jehovah, when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt" (Ex. 7:5). Thus from the Scripture we have at least three reasons given for the plagues.

Dr. Talbot: It is apparent that the Israelites themselves had to a certain extent lapsed off into the idolatry of the land and needed a new revelation of the true and only God; and evidently the Egyptian people had lost *all* knowledge of the true God. Thus, the Plagues became a visible contest between the Lord and the false gods of Egypt. Is that correct, Dr. Bauman?

Dr. Bauman: Exactly so. Egypt was the most polytheistic nation of antiquity. In the Egyptian pantheon there

were more than 2200 gods and goddesses. The monuments of ancient Egypt reveal an incredible number of religious scenes. Everywhere one may see the figures of some Egyptian deity receiving with an impassive countenance the prayers and offerings of his worshipper. One would think that the country had been inhabited for the most part by gods and that there were only sufficient men and animals to satisfy the requirements of their worship. Thus we are not surprised at the contest between Jehovah and the gods of Egypt. The Bible gives us the reason for the plagues; Archaeology confirms this reason; and both show us how God accomplished His purpose.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE NILE

Dr. Talbot: It is this "how," Dr. Bauman, which I believe is of special interest to our radio audience. For example, in the record of the first plague we are told that the river was turned to blood; that the fish of the river died; and that the waters became foul until the Egyptians were loath to drink of it (Ex. 7:17-19). Just how was this plague used in accomplishing God's purpose?

Dr. Bauman: The Bible tells us that this contest took place in the morning when Pharaoh went out to the river (Ex. 7:15). We can now be quite sure that he went there to worship, for the Egyptians had deified the Nile and had made it an object of worship. Hapi, the gods of the Nile, are often seen in the inscriptions. In a hymn which the people sang to the river are these words, "Thou art the Lord of the poor and needy. If thou wert overthrown in the heavens, the gods would fall upon their faces, and men would perish." Many an Egyptian must have thought of this when the Nile was smitten! Thus in the first plague this deified river upon which the land of Egypt was so

dependent for its life and fertility was "overthrown" by God. Jehovah was greater than the Nile.

Dr. Talbot: Yes, but why did God turn the river into blood? What was the reason for this?

Dr. Bauman: The Nile River was believed by the Egyptians to be the bloodstream of a god by the name of Osiris. He was considered to be one of the greatest gods of the underworld, the source of resurrection and everlasting life. God was saying in substance to Pharaoh and the Egyptians, "I will show my power over your Nile river god. If you want to worship his blood, I will give you blood to worship." We are told that the river became foul. It is not difficult to imagine what this first plague did to the prestige of the god Osiris.

Dr. Talbot: It certainly would have done the work so far as I am concerned, especially with the corruption due to the death of all the fish. Was there any added purpose here?

Dr. Bauman: Yes, it is rather significant that the Egyptians believed the wife of the Nile river god, Osiris, to be a goddess by the name of Isis. In her work she was associated with fish, and the Egyptian people were so greatly dependent upon these for food. Her prestige also suffered in this first plague along with several other Egyptian deities whom we cannot here consider.

THE PLAGUE OF FROGS

Dr. Talbot: The second plague, Dr. Bauman, is in some ways a rather curious one. The record in Exodus 8 suggests that the whole land was filled with swarms of frogs. Men attempting to get away from them, were compelled to literally walk on frogs as they sought the shelter of

their own home; but the frogs were there first. The Egyptians took to their beds only to find them occupied already. The housewife, attempting to bake her daily supply of bread, found frogs tangled up in the dough and hopping out of the oven. A curious picture indeed! But what was the meaning of all this?

Dr. Bauman: I have some sympathy for the Egyptians in this plague through a first-hand experience with a lot of frogs. At a young peoples' camp several years ago a bed full of them was enough for me, and I am thankful that it was not necessary for me to gather their carcasses up into heaps as the Egyptians did! (Ex. 8:13-14). For this strange plague, archaeology has given us a reason. One of the oldest cults in Egypt was that of a goddess by the name of Heqt, whose theophany was frog. She was popularly known as "the frog goddess." Her work was originally related to the creation of the world, and she was greatly revered by the people as an emblem of fertility. She was also supposed to superintend the bearing of children and was the goddess of the midwives. After this plague, no Egyptian could greatly relish the worship of a frog goddess. Jehovah the true God had showed her to be impotent before Him.

THE PLAGUE OF LICE

Dr. Talbot: Well, we can certainly begin to see how God was beginning to break down among the Egyptian people faith in gods who were in reality no gods at all. Now the third plague, we are told in Exodus 8:16, was a plague of lice—a strange occurrence indeed. The very thought of it almost makes me itch! Has archaeology shed any light on the meaning of this?

Dr. Bauman: This plague is not as easy to describe as the rest, largely due to our lack of knowledge as to the exact

meaning of the word in the text translated "lice." The Revised Version footnote renders it "sand flies" or "fleas," and Young's Literal Translation suggests the word "gnats." In searching the Egyptian records, I have not been able yet to identify a "louse god." But things just as strange are to be found in the Egyptian religious texts, I can assure you.

Dr. Talbot: It seems to me that the word "louse" would apply fairly well to all these gods and goddesses! But tell me, can you suggest any possible reason for such a plague?

Dr. Bauman: Yes, I believe I can. You see, a plague of lice, or other insects of the dust, would serve immediately to render *every* Egyptian priest ceremonially unclean. These priests were no wit behind the priests of Israel in ceremonial cleanliness. Heroditus tells us that they had to bathe at least four times in twenty-four hours, and shave the whole body every other day. They were allowed to wear nothing but linen, and in every way attempted to keep themselves ceremonially pure.

Dr. Talbot: Well, I don't envy an Egyptian priest his job! But be that as it may, I can see that this plague served to stop the worship, not of one Egyptian god, but of all of them—at least until these priests could bathe a few more times, or de-louse themselves. But perhaps we'd better leave this and consider the next plague, which according to verse 21 consisted of swarms of flies. What was the meaning of this?

THE PLAGUE OF FLIES

Dr. Bauman: Here again we are on more certain ground. The Egyptian people considered the little ichneumon fly

sacred to the god Uatchit. The Egyptian "Book of the Dead" contains words of praise to the Bird-fly deity whose responsibility it was apparently to convey people to the next world. In the British museum are amulets of a human-headed fly which conferred on the wearer the power to ascend to heaven. Beautiful mottled flies in gold with apparent religious significance have also been found in the Egyptian tombs.

Dr. Talbot: It seems evident all right that this fourth plague was directed against some Egyptian deity. I note that in Young's Translation the word is rendered "Beetle," and in his concordance it is given as "beetle or dog fly." Could this plague have been related to the little stone scarabs or beetles found so often in the Egyptian tombs?

Dr. Bauman: That is altogether possible, Dr. Talbot, and I am inclined to believe that the plague was one of beetle flies rather than the common house variety as we have so often thought. If it was beetles, then this plague became tremendously significant; for Khepera the beetle was worshipped widely as an emblem of the resurrection. I have a picture of a beautiful blue beetle set in a jeweled mounting, which was taken from the mummy of King Tutankhamen. It had been placed there because of the Egyptian belief that the beetle god would some day raise King Tut's body from the dead. Thus the fourth plague served as a master stroke against the resurrection hope of the Egyptians. Another god had fallen before the power of Jehovah!

THE MURRAIN OF CATTLE

Dr. Talbot: This brings us to the plague known as the murrain upon cattle recorded in Exodus 9. Apparently all the domestic animals of the Egyptians were affected

by a fatal disease. From what we have seen in our discussion thus far, I am wondering already if the Israelitish worship of the calf in the wilderness could have been the worship of an Egyptian god. Do you think so?

Dr. Bauman: There is no doubt about it, and that tragic event shows us exactly why, in sending the plagues, God had said to Israel, "Through these ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God" (Ex. 6:1-7). During the four hundred fifty years of her sojourn in the land of Egypt, Israel evidently to a large extent had lapsed off into the idolatry of that land. We are not surprised, therefore, to learn that in the days of Moses one of the favorite deities was the Hathor cow. She was considered the special protectress of Pharaoh, also of the great herds of cattle. It was common at the birth of a calf to say, "Hathor visited us last night." But something happened to the supposed power of the cow goddess in this fifth plague.

Dr. Talbot: Yes, if divine Hathor could not protect her faithful following from Jehovah, then who could?

Dr. Bauman: Exactly, and the plague probably represented also a stroke against Apis, the sacred bull of Egypt, who stood for the sun god. Tombs of mummified Apis bulls have been discovered. Priests of this cult were many, and their power was impressive in extreme. It is not surprising to find that the Apis bull and the Hathor cow were favorite deities at this period.

Dr. Talbot: The Bible tells us that God made "a distinction between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt." It is evident that the greatest gods of Egypt were not able to defend their cattle when the Lord God Jehovah stretched out His hand to smite them. At the very time God displayed His power over these false gods, He demon-

strated His ability to care for the flocks and herds of His own people. How glad we can be that this God still lives today, and that He still delights to care for His own. These plagues remind me of this same contrast as it is set forth in the ninety-first Psalm.

BOILS AND BLAINS

Dr. Bauman: Yes, that is a very good lesson for us Christians as we begin consideration of the sixth plague. We are told that "boils and blains broke out upon the Egyptians, both man and beast" (Ex. 9:8-12). It must have been a pathetic sight indeed. Nor is the reason for this plague difficult to ascertain. The Egyptians had a god by the name of Imhotep. They considered him the god of medicine and guardian of all healing sciences. He was naturally greatly revered by the people, and prayers were made to him for protection as well as for cures.

Dr. Talbot: May I interrupt long enough to make this observation, Dr. Bauman. It seems that people in general are always ready to embrace any religion or cult that offers them healing of the body. Even among Christians nothing will test their faith in God quicker than illness. Satan knows this and he used it in challenging the faith of Job. He has used it in the lives of many of God's dearest children. It seems to me that in this sixth plague God turned one of Satan's methods right back on himself. He used these boils and blains to show the utter helplessness of the Egyptian physician-god to care for his worshippers, and at the same time proved Himself to be the Great Physician in behalf of those who were trusting Him.

Dr. Bauman: Yes, and returning to our consideration of the Egyptian religion, let us not forget that these boils and blains once again rendered every Egyptian priest cere-

monially unclean. Thus, for a second time the worship of all the gods in the temples of Egypt ceased. No wonder God said a little later, "I have mocked the Egyptians" (Ex. 10:2 R. V. Margin).

THE PLAGUE OF HAIL

Dr. Talbot: Now we come to the plague recorded in Exodus 9:18-35, where we are told that the hail smote all that was in the field, including the animals which apparently had been restored to the land. It affected also the trees and the crops, except for the land of Goshen where there was no hail. Tell us briefly something of God's purpose in sending such a plague.

Dr. Bauman: There are two things about this plague which I believe we should note very carefully. In the first place, we should note the source from which the hail came, namely the firmament. This was the supposed abode of a number of Egyptian deities. Next, we should consider those affected by the plague itself. Investigation reveals the fact that among the gods of the firmament there was one whose name was Nut (perhaps more properly pronounced "nut"). She was also considered the protectress of the trees which were believed to be her earthly habitation. The Egyptian inscriptions often show her standing in the midst of the tree of life offering the water and bread of life to some individual who had passed from this world into the next. Thus Jehovah sent the plague of hail from Nut's heavenly habitation to destroy her earthly abode, the trees. Now Nut was also pictured sometimes in the theophany of a cow, and she was believed to share the protection of the cattle. In this plague, she likewise fell beneath the mighty arm of Jehovah. With her also in that fall was the ram god of Mendes who was believed to pro-

tect the flocks. Thus in this plague a number of the Egyptian gods of nature were judged and rendered powerless before the one true God. Pharaoh had asked, "Who is Jehovah" In the plagues God gave the answer to this question. The king of Egypt had said, "I know not Jehovah." God was introducing Himself to Pharaoh.

Dr. Talbot: Yes, and what an introduction it was! We, as Christians, should remember that God, who 3500 years ago revealed Himself through the plagues of Egypt, still makes Himself known to us today through His Word. Let us read that Word, friends, and we through it may know Him better.

PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS AND OF DARKNESS

Dr. Talbot: Dr. Bauman, as we have been considering God's effort to expose the non-existence of the host of Egyptian gods, and at the same time to reveal His own existence and power, I have been reminded, in view of the persistence of Pharaoh's rejection, of the words found in Romans the first chapter beginning with verse 21, "Because that, knowing God, they glorified Him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible men, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." I believe the Apostle Paul must have had in mind, among others, the Egyptian religion with all of its animal worship. Don't you think so?

Dr. Bauman: I surely do, and the truth of the Romans passage become evident again as we begin a consideration of the eighth plague. One would hardly believe that a civilized nation could worship a Locust god; however, in

University College at London, the archaeologists have placed two specimens of an amulet in the form of a locust. These amulets were supposed to protect the wearer from the ravages of this insect. Also, there was a god, Senehem, pictured as a locust, but little is known about his worship. In the instructions one of the pharaohs of the twelfth dynasty gave to his son, he classes the plague of locusts as a calamity along with civil war and a low Nile, both of which meant disastrous famine in the land. This plague therefore, was certainly a direct blow at the Egyptian conception of providence.

Dr. Talbot: In the description of the ninth plague (Ex. 10:21-23), there are several interesting details mentioned in the text. We are told that "Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days; they saw not one another, neither rose any one from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." Several questions here arise in my mind. Darkness is an awful thing. Why was it sent next to last?

Dr. Bauman: Let us remember that God raised the tempo of these plagues toward a definite climax, and with this darkness the last religious hope of the Egyptians was blotted out. What the immediate cause was, we do not know. Some have suggested it was due to a dust storm, but the wording implies something much more awful. The darkness must have struck the Egyptians with tremendous terror for their chief deity was Ra, the great sun god. He was considered the father of all the other gods and goddesses. This sun god was believed to live in a celestial boat in which he made his daily journey across the sky. Once a day the Egyptians believed him to do battle with the god of darkness, and they were always assured of his

victory by the appearance of the sun at the beginning of each new day. However, on this day, the greatest of the gods of the Egyptians fell, not before the power of an Egyptian god of the Nether world, but before Jehovah the mighty God of Israel. When the sun failed to pierce that darkness there went down not only the mighty Ra but also Osiris, the god of the morning sun, Horus the god of the mid-day sun, and Isis the goddess of the evening sunset.

Dr. Talbot: In the record we are told that "There was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days" (Ex. 10:22). Apparently the light of the stars was not even visible. Was this also significant?

Dr. Bauman: Yes, it was, for there was the Egyptian god Thoth, who was believed to have worked out a system of placing all the stars in the heavens, along with the sun and the moon. He was believed to give light by night and on all days when the sun was not visible. To offend him was to suffer eternal loss; and he certainly was offended in this plague, but the loss was his!

Dr. Talbot: Dr. Bauman, there is one more detail which interests me. The Scripture indicates the darkness to have been so dense that the Egyptians "saw not one another for three days," and that the only dwellings in which there was any light during this period were the houses of the children of Israel. Apparently this darkness could not even be penetrated by artificial light. Was there anything significant about this?

Dr. Bauman: Yes, there was for the Egyptians had a fire goddess by the name of Sekhmet, who was also the goddess of artificial light. She was often pictured as a lioness or cat. Temples were dedicated to her, and in recent years

the archaeologists have discovered whole cemeteries filled with barrels of mummified cats. What a miserable failure she proved to be in the presence of Jehovah who, centuries later, in the days of His flesh, said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). The true "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:7). What a stroke this plague was at the very apex of all the great company of Egyptian pantheon!

Dr. Talbot: Dr. Bauman, before we consider the last plague, may I inject a question concerning a moral problem sometimes raised by unbelievers?

Dr. Bauman: I will be glad to answer it if I can.

Dr. Talbot: Well, in Exodus 3:21-22, Exodus 11:2-3, and in chapter 12, verses 35 and 36, the Bible says that God gave the Israelites instructions to "borrow jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment." Now, some have accused God of actually giving the Israelites instructions to deceive the Egyptians inasmuch as there was no intention of returning these things to them. What is the solution of this problem?

Dr. Bauman: The word "borrow" represents a very unfortunate translation in the Authorized Version. The Revised Version corrects this error, rendering the Hebrew by our English word "ask." A careful study of this passage in the light of its background shows that the jittery Egyptians actually pressed upon the Israelites jewels and raiment—anything in fact, to get them out of the country.

DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN

Dr. Talbot: Now we come to the last plague, the death of the firstborn, a calamity which finally broke the stubborn resistance of Pharaoh. Naturally, the first question

that arises is this: Why a discrimination against the first-born of the land? Why were they singled out?

Dr. Bauman: The tenth plague served to shatter the last hope of Pharaoh himself because the Egyptian kings were sometimes represented as the firstborn of the gods. One interesting Egyptian text refers to dead king Unas as making his way into heaven. The gods are terrified as they see him arriving for they soon discover that he is mightier than they. One of the lines describing the king says, "*He is god, the firstborn of the firstborn.*" An ancient piece of statuary found a few years ago at Pithom shows Remeses II seated between the gods Ra and Tum. Apparently the king desired to impress his subjects with the thought of his equality with the gods of the sun.

Dr. Talbot: I see! Pharaoh had said, "I am the firstborn of the gods." But Jehovah had also said, "Israel is my son, my firstborn" (Ex. 4:22). Thus the issue was clearly defined. But, why not, the first born of Pharaoh only, rather than all the firstborn of the Egyptians?

Dr. Bauman: Had it been the firstborn of Pharaoh's household alone, the catastrophe would have contained little significance, and the event would have been explained away, for even the firstborn children of kings sometimes die. But no one could fail to grasp the meaning of the tragedy when all the firstborn of Egypt died in a single night.

Dr. Talbot: The text suggests that the firstborn of the animals died also. What was the purpose of this?

Dr. Bauman: There is reason to believe that the Apis bull calf so widely worshipped in Egypt was the firstborn of its mother. When it died it was interred with great ceremony in huge vaults at a cost of \$50,000 or even

\$100,000. Such was the grip that calf worship held on the Egyptians. But, Jehovah had said, "Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments" (Ex. 12:12).

Dr. Talbot: Well, this is certainly most enlightening so far as God's purpose is concerned. It seems to me, however, that this tenth plague is one which ought to be capable of definite verification, for a king and his son are involved and kings are usually mentioned in the inscriptions. You have identified Amenhetep II as the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Is there any record on the monuments suggesting that his eldest son came to an untimely end?

Dr. Bauman: Permit me to answer your question with a quotation from Stephen Caiger's book, *Bible and Spade*. Speaking of the death of Amenhetep's son, he says, "That he did so (i.e. come to an untimely end) certainly seems to be implied by the curious Dream Inscription of Thothmes IV, Amenhetep's immediate successor, showing that Thothmes was not that sovereign's eldest son.

"On an immense slab of red granite near the Sphinx at the Gizeh it is recorded that Thothmes IV, while yet a youth, had fallen asleep under the famous monument, and dreamed a dream. In this the Sphinx appeared to him, startling him with a prophecy that some day he would live to be King of Egypt, and bidding him clear the sand away from her feet in token of his gratitude: which, on his accession, he did.

"It is clear from this inscription that Thothmes' hopes of succession had been remote, which proves— since the law of primogeniture obtained in Egypt at the time, that he could not have been Amenhetep's eldest son. In other words, there is room for the explanation that the heir apparent died in the manner related in the Bible."

Dr. Talbot: May I say, Dr. Bauman, that to me these facts represent some of the most fascinating pieces of evidence we have thus far endeavored to fit into our archaeological jig-saw puzzle. At the conclusion of these plagues, Jehovah the God of Israel stood supreme and alone above all that were called gods in Egypt.

Dr. Bauman: Yes, Dr. Talbot, we should not forget that there was only one reason why the Israelites themselves did not come under the judgment of this plague. God had ordered them to take a male lamb without blemish, kill it, then place its blood over the door and on the side posts. He had said, "I will go through the land of Egypt . . . and will smite all the firstborn . . . and when I see the blood I will pass over you" (Ex. 12:12-13). The Egyptians mocked, but God's judgment fell upon all who refused to come under the blood. So it is today. Men may scoff at the provision of God, but it is written, "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). As the Egyptians were finally compelled to bow before the power of the mighty God of Israel, so also will sinners under judgment bend the knee to Jesus Christ. For it is written "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11). How much better to confess Him here and now by coming beneath the shed blood of "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29).

Dr. Talbot: Yes, and of all the lessons we can learn from the Plagues of Egypt, the most precious is this: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." It is my prayer that all who are making these studies with us may have come underneath the blood of God's Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the Passover lamb in Egypt spoke so many centuries ago.

MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP OF PENTATEUCH

Dr. Talbot: For a number of years in liberal circles, the theory has been advanced which claims that the Pentateuch, or Five Books of Moses, did not assume their present form until the days of the Babylonian exile, some eight centuries after Moses lived. This theory is in direct contradiction to the claims of the Pentateuch itself. We are told many times that Moses wrote at God's command (e.g. Ex. 24:4; Num. 33:2; Deut. 31.9). Other Biblical writers say that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, and to these our Lord added His testimony as to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. For example, Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Did not Moses give you the law?" (John 7:19). It seems to me that the veracity of Christ Himself would therefore depend in part upon the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

Dr. Bauman: You are exactly right, Dr. Talbot. In fact, on one occasion Jesus based His claim for the acceptance of His teaching squarely upon the Mosaic authorship of these five books. We read in John 5:45-47 that Jesus said to the Pharisees, "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, on whom ye have set your hope. For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" I have found that when a man rejects the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, it is not very long until he claims his right to choose from the teachings of Christ those which he desires to accept or reject.

Dr. Talbot: This subject is tremendously important to us as Christians. What was the basis for such a claim on the part of the critics? It has been my impression that writing was in existence long before the days of Moses?

Dr. Bauman: Yes, writing is now known to have been in existence more than 1500 years before Moses was born. However, several objections were raised by the critics on the basis of the Biblical records. Among these reference was made to such passages as Exodus 24:4 where we read that, "Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah." While the critics admitted that writing had been in existence before the days of Moses, they said that in order to write "the words of the Lord" it would have been necessary for Moses to use an alphabetical form of writing, for words are composed of letters. The Babylonian cuneiform and the Egyptian hieroglyphic were in existence in the days of Moses, but the critics called attention to the fact that their writing was idiographic, or a sort of picture writing, and not in any sense word writing. Therefore, they said, inasmuch as the Pentateuch continually states that Moses wrote "words," and since "word" or alphabetic writing was not invented until centuries after Moses lived, the Pentateuch must have been of later origin, by several hundred years.

Dr. Talbot: Well, have the archaeologists discovered any evidence for the existence of alphabetical writing in the days of Moses?

SINAI INSCRIPTIONS

Dr. Bauman: Yes, indeed. Back in 1904-1905 Sir Flinders Petri examined and explored a very ancient temple and shrine near Mt. Sinai, called the temple of Serabit. In the days of Moses this temple was associated with turquoise mines, and was dedicated to Hathor, "mistress of turquoise." Further evidence showed that the men who worked these mines were Midianites, or at least they belonged to the Semitic race of which the Israelites were an important part. The type of worship carried on in this

temple was typically Semitic, with its burnt sacrifices, stone incense altars, great lavers, etc.

Dr. Talbot: That is very interesting, and I note that this temple was located near Mt. Sinai, but what does all this have to do with the possibility of Moses having written "the words of the Lord?"

Dr. Bauman: The discovery of greatest interest proved to be the accounts of their own activities which the Midianite miners had chiseled into the rock. Upon examination, these accounts were discovered to have been written in a system of alphabetical writing. Petri dated the inscriptions at around 2400 B. C. Others have dated them as late as 1800 B. C. This means that a form of alphabetical writing was certainly in existence from three to nine hundred years before Moses was born. More than that, it was in use at Mt. Sinai, and that by a Semitic race to which Moses was related.

Dr. Talbot: Well, it is certainly evident, at least on this basis, that Moses could have written "the words of the Lord." You said a few minutes ago that the temple at Mt. Sinai contained a shrine dedicated to Hathor. She was an Egyptian goddess, wasn't she?

Dr. Bauman: Yes. That leads me to suggest something else of tremendous interest to me. Petri found that the greatest builder and patron of this temple had been Princess Hatshepsut, whom we identified as the 'Pharaoh's daughter' who adopted Moses.

Dr. Talbot: I think I see what you are leading up to. If this Egyptian princess was the builder of this temple, Moses as a young man must have been acquainted with it, probably having visited the place more than once during his early life. He would also be familiar with the form of

writing employed by these Midianites at Sinai. It would not have been at all impossible for him to have known and used alphabetical writing.

Dr. Bauman: Yes, certainly if Midianite miners, not highly educated, could keep their accounts in alphabetical writing, Moses, who for forty years was trained "in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and who spent another forty years in Midian—surely Moses could have written "the words of the Lord."

Dr. Talbot: Is there any evidence that this ancient form of the Hebrew script was used elsewhere? For example, was it used in countries nearer to Palestine?

WRITING IN SYRIA AND PALESTINE

Dr. Bauman: Yes. Just a few years ago the archaeologists excavated the ruins of Ras Shamra on the coast of Asia Minor, just north of Palestine. There they uncovered a whole library filled with tablets which proved to have been written in a cuneiform alphabetical script, very much like that used at Mt. Sinai. These tablets are dated at about 1300 B. C. and proved to be a tremendous blow to the critics who had contended that the Pentateuch was brought to its present form in the days of the Exile.

Dr. Talbot: Have there been any such discoveries in the land of Palestine itself indicating a literature, since it was there that Joshua led the children of Israel?

Dr. Bauman: Over three hundred tablets were found at Tell el-Amarna, letters from chieftains in Palestine, imploring help from Pharaoh against Habiri invaders, probably the Hebrews. These tablets date from the days of Joshua, and while they were not written in alphabetical script, they do prove that writing was common in Palestine at this time.

Dr. Talbot: Have there been any discoveries in alphabetical writing in the Holy Land which would correspond to the inscriptions at Sinai or the tablets from Ras Shamra?

Dr. Bauman: Yes, within the past decade, Mr. J. L. Starkey, of the Welcome Expedition, found among the ruins of an ancient temple at Lachish, the chief fenced city of Judah mentioned in the Bible, a large Ewer or jar of oil, which was apparently used in the temple service. Writing in alphabetical script, similar to that found in the peninsula of Sinai, was found on the neck of the jar. Mr. Starkey also found a bronze dagger blade which revealed, upon cleaning, four alphabetical signs in the same script. Most interesting of all was the discovery of a red bowl which came from a tomb underneath the city. The bowl had an inscription in white letters painted on it in the same ancient Hebrew script. Whereas, it was believed a few years ago that the Phoenecians gave us our alphabet, it is now generally agreed that the Phoenecians derived their alphabet from Palestine, which in turn had received its method of writing from these who wrote at Sinai. Thus, the Hebrews or their ancestors, rather than the Phoenecians are probably responsible for giving us alphabetical writing.

Dr. Talbot: I have heard it said by those who have been trying with difficulty to retain their critical views, that in the days of Moses only a few very educated people were able to write. Were these inscriptions written only by men who were specially trained?

Dr. Bauman: It seems to me that the Sinai inscriptions offer a good answer to that question. These were written by Semitic miners. They were workmen, not educators. But, another answer has come to us from Palestine itself. Tablets belonging to the period immediately following the conquest of the land were dug up at Taanach, on the Plain

of Esdraelon, in Palestine. These proved to be letters of correspondence between local shieks of that period, and yet in the learned cuneiform script. In fact, it is now known that even the age of Abraham was almost as literary an age as our own.

Dr. Talbot: It is strange how an unbelieving world has always been so prone to look down on God's people, isn't it? Why, it has been very few years since the destructive critics contended against the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch on the ground that the laws contained therein were too wise for the Mosaic age!

Dr. Bauman: Unfortunately for that theory, however, when the law Code of Hammurabi (i. e., the Amraphel of Genesis 14) was discovered, the archaeologists found laws similar and some even identical, to the laws of Moses. This law code antedated Moses by at least 500 years and went clear back to the days of Abraham. We may well ask in words similar to those of Professor Sayce, the renowned archaeologist: "What becomes of the higher critics' theory, that the law is later than the prophet's?" I am reminded again of the white inscription, found on the side of the red bowl, dug up at Lachish and written in the ancient Sinai Hebrew script. It has been translated by Professor Langdon, "His righteousness is my hand" (or support). Verily, in a day when God's Word has been so viciously attacked, God is proving Himself true to His promise, and He is causing the very earth to speak in support of that precious Word!

KING TUTANKHAMEN

Dr. Talbot: Dr. Bauman, before leaving Egypt completely in our discussions, there is yet one question I would like to ask you. A few years ago the world was amazed at the beauties of ancient Egyptian art revealed through the

discovery of the tomb of King Tutankhamen. I have been wondering just where King "Tut" fits into Biblical history.

Dr. Bauman: There was probably no direct connection between Tutankhamen and the Israelites in Egypt, Dr. Talbot, (especially if the Exodus took place during the reign of Amenhetep II, as we have suggested). But, I believe the discovery does help us in both our interpretation and appreciation of the Bible. Tutankhamen ascended the throne of Egypt nearly one hundred years after the Exodus. Contrary to popular belief, he was not an outstanding Pharaoh. He was a lesser ruler, but he leaped into prominence a few years ago because his tomb was the only one that through the centuries escaped detection and plunder by tomb robbers. When he was interred, articles of the most expensive kind were placed in the tomb with him. There were jewels, ornaments, alabaster vases and other art treasures, chariot wheels, beautifully inlaid furniture, pieces of statuary inlaid with gold and lapis lazuli, besides the very costly gold-coffin itself. He was buried with a splendor that is almost inconceivable.

Dr. Talbot: Well, tell me, how do all these beautiful things enhance our understanding and appreciation of the Bible?

Dr. Bauman: We are told in Hebrews 11:22-23 that "Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter" because he esteemed "the reproach of Christ *greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.*" I believe few of us appreciate what it cost Moses to make this choice, but the discovery of King Tutankhamen's tomb with all its treasures has helped us considerably. It is now known that Moses lived in the most glorious period of all Egyptian history, when that civilization had reached the very zenith of its culture and wealth. If Tutankhamen was one of the *lesser* kings of Egypt and yet was buried with such

cost and splendor, what then must have been the luxury of the *great* Pharaohs! Now we are told that Moses, the heir to these "treasures in Egypt, chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God!" In view of our present knowledge, what a price he paid!

Dr. Talbot: Yes, we Christians say sometimes that it costs to follow Christ. I wonder how many of us have paid one ten-thousandth the part that Moses paid to do so. We Christians need to remember that true discipleship has always carried a definite cost, and that those today who would live close to the Lord must be willing to pay the price of discipleship. Jesus certainly emphasized the necessity of undivided allegiance (see Mark 10 and Luke 14). But tell me, Dr. Bauman, does the discovery of King Tutankhamen's tomb suggest anything else of value to the student of the Bible?

Dr. Bauman: I believe so. We are told back in Acts 7:22 that "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." He therefore must have had some knowledge of the skill that created their marvelous treasures of artistic beauty. It is reasonable to believe that much of the knowledge Moses had gained during his first forty years in Egypt as the son of Pharaoh's daughter God used in the preparation of the tabernacle, with all its beautiful inlaid furniture and beautifully colored tapestries. Through the luxury of King Tutankhamen's tomb we can appreciate better the loveliness of the tabernacle. How exquisitely beautiful it must have been, even as a temporary structure.

THE "HORNET"

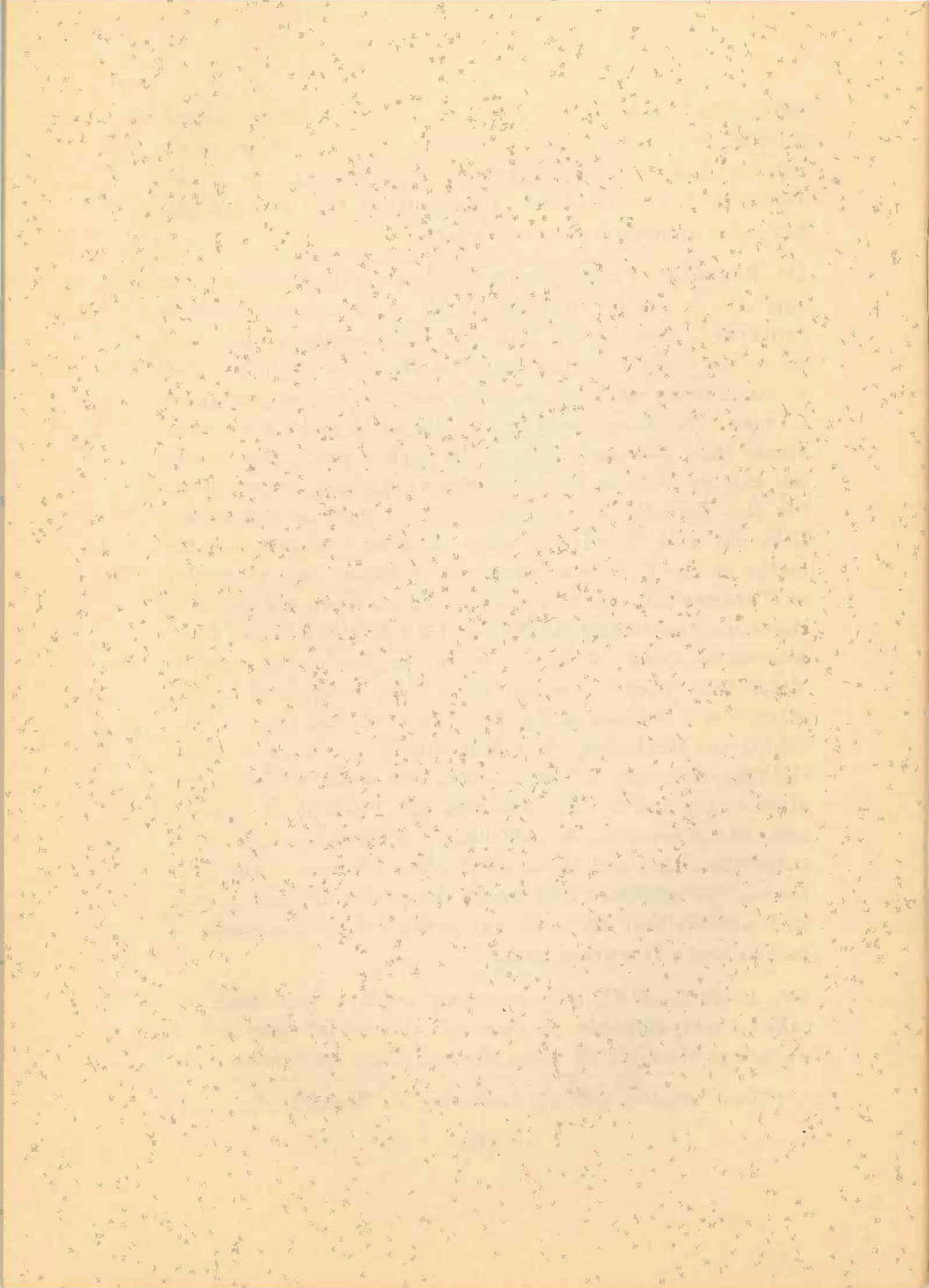
Dr. Talbot: Dr. Bauman, before the Children of Israel entered Canaan, God gave them a promise which has seemed a bit strange to many people. We read in Exodus 23:28 that God said, "I will send hornets before thee,

which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee." Infidels have long made much merchandise of this statement in ridiculing the Bible. What do you make of it? I understand that archaeology has given an answer in recent years.

Dr. Bauman: Permit me to say first of all that the passage affords me no problem at all so far as my faith is concerned. Surely, the God who had enough wisdom and power to make a hornet could, if He chose to do so, send a whole army of them to drive out the various tribes of Canaan. Nothing could be calculated to make men move faster than hornets! But, while such a procedure would not tax my faith in an omnipotent God, the question arises, "Is this actually what God did?" I am inclined to believe not, and I'll tell you why. It is now known that the badge of the Egyptian monarchs of Moses' day, especially of Thotmes III, was a hornet. Today, when we speak of the American Eagle, the British Lion or the Russian Bear, everybody knows what we mean; so also in the days of Moses the "hornet" would have been recognized immediately as a symbol of Egypt. Now, archaeology has revealed the interesting fact that during the days of Moses the Egyptians carried on a systematic series of campaigns in Palestine and Syria. Thotmes III (Pharaoh of Oppression) made seventeen expeditions into these countries, captured the cities, and broke down their defenses. Thus, "the hornet" so enfeebled and broke the power of the Canaanitish nations that the way was paved for the conquests of Joshua just a few years later.

Dr. Talbot: Well, it is certainly evident that these so-called "unreasonable portions of the Bible" are not so unreasonable after all when the real facts are known.

(These studies will be continued in Booklet No. 6.)



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