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The Meaning of Archaeology for the Exegetical Task

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THE AUTHOR ILLUSTRATES HOW ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE MAY SUPPLEMENT, clarify, contradict, or confirm historical and geographical statements in the Scriptures. Biblical theologians and archaeologists need to work together in the exegetical task.

The very association of the two words *archaeology* and *theology*, or *archaeology* and *exegesis*, may cause tensions to arise among representatives of these disciplines. Such tensions, however, can be allayed as a better rapport between scientists and religionists is established. In order to do this archaeologists need to recognize that their task is to determine the nature of archaeological evidence and then to evaluate and to interpret to the best of their ability the evidence they have uncovered. Theologians and exegetes also need to recognize that if the Old Testament is used, it also has to be interpreted. Like archaeologists, exegetes must both determine the Biblical evidence and then evaluate and interpret it to the best of their ability. Both archaeologists and exegetes must be ready to alter their views in the light of each other's evidence and to recognize the reality of the problems in both areas, and they must be concerned to see whether suggested solutions are acceptable or not.

As Albright has shown, the realm of faith does not need and is not subject to archaeological or geological evidence.¹

¹ William Foxwell Albright, "The Old Testament and Archaeology," *Old Testament Com-*

For that reason archaeology should not be used either to prove or to confirm the "truth" of divine revelation. The true function of archaeology is to enable us to understand the Bible better, insofar as it was produced by men in given times and in given places. Because it pleased God to give us the sacred record in many different forms of literature, with a great diversity of backgrounds in the ancient Near East, it is part of the theologian's task to use all the possible light that can be thrown on the Biblical documents from outside sources. The inspired and revealed character of the Biblical documents is not depreciated by such investigation; rather a more thorough understanding of the human side of the Bible enables us to attain a deeper insight into its divine side. The question is sometimes asked, What position would Martin Luther take toward such disciplines as archaeology and historico-critical exegesis? In the light of Luther's use of the tools that were available in his day, one would have to expect that he would welcome every bit of archaeological and critical evidence that aids in a better understanding of the Scriptural revelation.

mentary, ed. Herbert C. Alleman and Elmer E. Flack (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1948), p. 168.

As theologians and archaeologists must learn to work together, so the scholar in his study and the scholar on an archaeological site must learn to cooperate. De Vaux has shown how the effort is sometimes made to give the internal evidence of a text priority over the external evidence that is brought to bear on the document.² De Vaux rightly argues that one may not give preference to either the literary documents or the artifacts discovered in the field. A competent Biblical scholar must give equal weight to both the literary and the archaeological evidence. It is an easy way out to insist that the Biblical evidence must be infallible and that therefore the archaeological evidence must be adjusted to conform to it. Humanly speaking such evidence as potsherds, walls, and destruction layers are more reliable than Biblical texts that call for interpretation in all of their diversity. As a matter of fact objects as well as texts need to be interpreted if Biblical history is to be understood properly. One type of evidence needs to be brought into relation with other types of evidence and then modified and even corrected accordingly. It is probably correct to say that the archaeologist turns to the literary evidence of the Bible more readily and openly than the student of the Old Testament turns to the evidence of archaeology for a solution. The theologian who works unilaterally with his text faces a host of intangibles: the identity and personality of its author, the additions or omissions that have been made during the course of the transmission of the text, and

² Roland de Vaux, "Review Article 2: Essenes or Zealots?" *New Testament Studies*, 13 (1966), 97—98 (a review of G. R. Driver, *The Judean Scrolls* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1965]).

the often limping character of his own pre-suppositions and biases. In summary the archaeologist should take seriously the evidence and its soberly thought-out interpretation that the theologian offers, and the theologian should take with equal seriousness the evidence and the proposed interpretation of it that the archaeologist presents for consideration. But how is that to be done?

In our investigation of the meaning of archaeology for the task of the interpreter we shall look at four types of evidence and observe how they affect related Biblical texts. The first type of evidence is that which supplements the Biblical picture and thus adds information not contained in the Bible or fills in gaps or lacunae in the Old Testament record. Another type of evidence is that which brings greater clarity to texts that are otherwise obscure in the Bible. Thirdly, there is evidence that does in fact or appears to contradict statements of the Sacred Scripture. Finally archaeological evidence exists that confirms the reliability of historical and geographical statements in the Scripture.

I. EVIDENCE THAT SUPPLEMENTS BIBLICAL INFORMATION

We begin with a text in the early record of Genesis that states that Zillah, the second wife of Lamech, gave birth to a son named Tubal-cain and that he was the one who forged instruments that were made of bronze and iron (Gen. 4:19, 22). This text offers an example of how much ground is covered in the first 11 chapters of Genesis. In one sweep the work of Tubal-cain encompasses the entire Bronze and Iron Ages, 3200—200 B. C. If Gen. 1—11 is regarded as a summary or brief review of

everything that happened in the ancient world prior to the call of Abram around 1700 B.C., then the theologian will do well to ask the archaeologist whether his evidence throws additional light on this early period. The archaeologist will answer that considerable light is thrown on this period by the excavation of ancient settlements in the Near East. At Jericho, for example, evidence has been unearthed of the early Neolithic food gatherers who inhabited the Jordan Valley around 7000 B.C. Miss Kenyon would point to the Proto-Urban settlements in the same area around 4000 B.C.³ The time of the great Early Bronze city states of 3000 B.C. was among other things a period of radical deforestation in Palestine, a malady from which that poor area still suffers considerably.

With the Middle Bronze Age around 2000 B.C. a new people came into Palestine. They not only introduced such novelties as horse-drawn chariotry and beaten earth fortifications, but they also made a new type of pottery on the fast wheel and had burial practices that were unique for their day. Beginning with Gen. 12 during the Middle Bronze Age there are close parallels between the findings of archaeology and the records of the Old Testament. As an example we may cite the ancient text in Gen. 14:13 in which Abram is called "the Hebrew." This word may be related to the Habiru of the Amarna tablets and the Apiru of the Mari texts. The origins of Abram and his clan have traditionally been associated with Ur of the Chaldees. This view is based on Gen. 11:31, according to which Abram begins

³ Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land* (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1960), pp. 41—83.

his trek at the famous site in Babylon. The exegete, however, must take into account that the Septuagint lacks the reference to Ur and that the earliest creed of Israel in Deut. 26:5 associates the patriarch with the Aramaeans.

The above texts are augmented in a number of ways by archaeology. References in the Mari and Nuzi texts to the Apiru and the Hurri help to supplement our Biblical knowledge of the life of the patriarchs. Abram the Hebrew of Gen. 14 is probably an offshoot of the Apiru people who came to Palestine from Northern Syria. The Hyksos rulers of Egypt qualify as the friendly Pharaohs who are associated with the lives of Jacob and Joseph. In 1956 to '57 an Israeli expedition in the Sinai Peninsula investigated the area in the vicinity of Kadesh Barnea.⁴ At one site called Qusaima were found the first remains of a Canaanite settlement in the Patriarchal Age ever to be discovered in the Sinai Peninsula. There was a distinct pattern in these Canaanite occupations: a big circle of stones a few yards in diameter with a number of lesser circles adjoining. Inside the circles there was a large monolith standing upright together with a number of hearths. A primitive olive press with a stone base measuring 7 feet in diameter was found at the same site. An Egyptian relief from about 1900 B.C. depicts the family of Abi-Shar numbering 37 seminomads arriving in Egypt with donkeys, clothing, and weapons like those of Abraham's time.⁵

⁴ Benno Rothenberg, in collaboration with Yohanan Aharoni and Avia Hashimshoni, *God's Wilderness: Discoveries in Sinai*, trans. Joseph Witriol (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962).

⁵ G. Ernest Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957), p. 46.

Important supplementary evidence has been discovered at Tell Ta'annek for the time of Deborah and the Judges. In the Song of Deborah (Judg. 5:19) a battle is described that was fought between the Israelites and the Canaanite kings at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo. While there is no evidence that Taanach was controlled by the Israelites before Solomon's time, the impact of Deborah's battle may well be reflected in destruction layers at various points at Taanach. Surviving such a 12th-century destruction was the so-called Drain Pipe Structure in the south of the city, which is noteworthy because it contains one of the best preserved examples for gathering rainwater in Palestine. Located in the corner of a large courtyard, the drainpipe was used to convey water gathered on the roof to a stone-covered drain and then to a cistern 33 feet deep. The courtyard also revealed a hearth, a beehive-shaped oven, a watering trough, and a plastered basin. There was another partially preserved 12th-century building in the cultic area at Taanach in which a cooking pot filled with pebbles was found. A diverse collection of objects was mixed among the pebbles, including a stamp seal, a scarab, a baboon, a turtle, and a frog. Weights made of metal or hematite in the same collection appeared to be Babylonian, but it has not been possible so far to determine definitely who made or who used these little objects.⁶ On the last day of the 1963 campaign at Taanach a Canaanite cuneiform tablet was found in a 12th-century building in the public building area.

⁶ Paul W. Lapp, "The 1966 Excavations at Tell Ta'annek," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (hereafter *BASOR*), 185 (February 1967), 21—26; 34—35.

As deciphered by Hillers, the tablet reads: "(from) Kokaba. Belonging to P' . . . eight kprt-measures, sifted flour."⁷ The tablet seems to be either an invoice or a receipt for flour that was sent to Taanach from nearby Kokaba. Evidence indicates that this occupation at Taanach was destroyed about 1125 B.C., that is, close to Deborah's time.

A fourth major area in which archaeology provides supplementary evidence to the Biblical texts is in the contrast between Canaanite and Israelite cities. Such Canaanite cities as Bethel, Beth Shemesh, and Debir reveal a high level of culture, with distinctive art, well-built houses, paved floors, drainage, metalwork, and trade. In rather sharp contrast Israelite towns like Shiloh, Ai, and Mizpah suggest a rather inferior culture, including houses without refinement, undrafted stonework, no system in house walls, crude art, undeveloped pottery, thin city walls, and no commerce before 1050 B.C.⁸

If the question is asked why the period of the judges was so unsophisticated in contrast to 13th-century Canaanite culture, several answers may be suggested. There is no denying on the one hand that the Israelite tribesmen were a rather wild, seminomadic horde. It is to be recognized that the patriarchal system was only quasi-democratic, with little difference between the patrician and the serf. Cultural disintegration is even alluded to in the closing verse of the Book of Judges: "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg.

⁷ Delbert R. Hillers, "An Alphanumeric Cuneiform Tablet from Taanach," *BASOR*, 173 (February 1964), 45—50.

⁸ Wright, *Biblical Archaeology*, pp. 88—89.

21:25).⁹ The Canaanite culture of Palestine on the other hand was very highly developed from the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 2000 B.C.). These people who probably came from Syria brought with them a very distinguished way of life that continued without break for some 700 years. But it also needs to be noted that the decreasing quality of the pottery and architecture in Israelite towns in contrast to the more cultured Canaanite cities may well point to the fact that the increasing knowledge of the one God brought about a decreasing emphasis on outward forms and representations. In this connection the New Testament theologian could well cite the words of Luke 16:8, "The sons of this world are wiser in their own generation than the sons of light."

A number of items of supplementary information come to us from the excavations at Tell el-Farah, probably to be identified with Biblical Tirzah. During a tour of this mound de Vaux called attention to an Iron I occupation level of about the time of David. He pointed out a remarkable uniformity in the size of the houses and of the rooms in the area. He concluded from this residential equality that at David's time there were as yet no class distinctions in Israel, since there were no differences in size among the homes of various groups of people. It is certainly true that the house of cedar in which David lived according to 2 Sam. 7:1-2 has not survived for purposes of comparison. On the other hand, it must be noted that Uriah said to David that it was not right for him to go and spend the night in his house when

his commanding officer, Joab, and the rest of the members of the military were camping out in the open field. (2 Sam. 11:11)

The uniform houses of the monarchy, however, bring up another question: When did social and class distinctions arise in ancient Israel? In answer to this question the excavator of Tirzah turned to another area on this ancient mound. He pointed to the wall of an important building with a large slab of stone lying at the base of the wall. He suggested that it was possible that the stone fell off the wall, but that it was more probable that the stone remained lying where it was at the time when the wall was built. The builder of the wall was King Omri (876—869 B.C.), and the stone was left lying in this position because Omri changed his plans. Omri had reigned for six years at Tirzah (1 Kings 16:23-24); he had inherited that capital from Jeroboam I, who no doubt selected it because of its two outstanding springs, which provided a perennial water supply. While the two springs were a legitimate reason for continuing the capital at Tirzah, the lack of accessibility to the west from Tirzah was a legitimate reason for considering a change in location. Therefore Omri instructed his mason to leave the slab of stone lying next to the wall, since the capital was being moved. The king had chosen a site on the opposite (western) side of the hill country of Ephraim, a place called Samaria, because its location would afford him access to the commerce of the Mediterranean Sea, especially to the coastal cities of Phoenicia. It was this introduction of commercial exchange early in the ninth century that led to the accumulation of wealth and the accompanying increase of poverty in Israel.

⁹ W. F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1960; first published in Pelican Books, 1949), pp. 119—20.

This situation in turn was directly related to the rise of the prophetic movement, led by Elijah and his successors. One of the major objectives of that movement was to arouse the conscience of Israel against the injustices and inequities that were introduced along with Israel's participation in the commercial enterprises of its day. Incidentally the two lines of walls with which Omri and Ahab ringed the city of Samaria supplement very significantly the Biblical texts that indicate that it took the Assyrian king 3 to 4 years to reduce the city of Samaria and ultimately to destroy it in 722 B. C.

At Tirzah more light has also been shed on the cultic role which the pig played in the ancient world. In an underground sanctuary that was used around 1800 B. C. de Vaux found two sets of small bones that were identified as pig bones. De Vaux concluded that they could have been used only in connection with some kind of sacrificial ritual. From Gezer comes a striking alabaster statuette with a nude man holding the hind quarters of a young pig against his chest and grasping the animal's genitals with his right hand. The fact that the pig and the man are hollow suggests that the statuette was a libation vessel used for sacrificial purposes. A piece of alabaster from the Early Bronze Age at Ai reproduces a pig's hind quarter, with its feet tucked under the belly and a cord attached, suggesting that the beast was being readied for sacrifice.¹⁰

Additional information on the cultic role of the pig in the ancient world was

¹⁰ Roland de Vaux, "Les Sacrifices de Porcs en Palestine et dans l'Ancien Orient," in the *Festschrift* for Otto Eissfeldt, *Beibest zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* (hereafter *BZAW*), 77 (1958), 251 ff.

obtained in the first campaign at Tell Ta'annek. In a cultic structure from the late 10th century a large flint block was found standing next to a wall. Next to the block of flint three collections of astragali, or ankle bones, of pigs comprised a total of 140 pieces. Their proximity to the flint block suggests the possibility that they were used in a game like chess or checkers, or that they had a connection with some kind of oracle like the Urim and Thummim, or that they functioned as amulets or good-luck charms. It is remarkable that at nearby Megiddo no less than 640 such pig astragali were also found in a cultic context. All this evidence suggests that the pig may well have been used for cultic purposes in ancient Palestine. This could well have been another important reason why the incoming Hebrews had such strict laws regarding the eating of pork. It should be noted in passing that there is a good deal of ambiguity in the Old Testament about the role of the pig. We recognize that the people of Israel did abhor swine, but one may readily ask whether originally they were tempted to regard the pig as sacred in imitation of their Canaanite contemporaries. Biblical texts like Lev. 11:7 and Deut. 14:8 are usually interpreted to mean that the Hebrews were forbidden to eat pork because of its uncleanness. But the new evidence may also suggest that they were forbidden to kill pigs because of a certain sacredness that was associated with them.¹¹ With regard to the Biblical statements on the pig, Ehrlich asserts that there was a prohibition against the eating of

¹¹ Alfred von Rohr Sauer, "The Cultic Role of the Pig in Ancient Times," *In memoriam Paul Kahle*, ed. Matthew Black and George Fohrer (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1968), pp. 204—206 (*BZAW*, 103).

pork before Israelite times. The Hebrews' adaptation of this antipork legislation was motivated by a polemic spirit against the pagan practices of Canaan.¹²

One additional piece of evidence needs to be noted from the time of Jeroboam I, who made Tirzah his capital. It will be recalled that Jeroboam told the people of the North that they had gone up to Jerusalem long enough. To prevent their going to Jerusalem, he made two calves out of gold and told the people that these were their gods who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt. He set one of the calves in Bethel and another in Dan (1 Kings 12:28-29). From the viewpoint of the Deuteronomic historian Jeroboam I was just as much an idolater as the people had been at Sinai when they worshiped Aaron's golden calf. Albright, however, discounting this southern tradition and basing his position on Canaanite analogies, has argued that Jeroboam deliberately represented Yahweh as an invisible God riding in a standing position on a golden bull. He did this to offset the Jerusalem representation of Yahweh as an invisible figure enthroned over two winged sphinxes or cherubim.¹³

During the 1968 season at Tell Ta'annek a new ritual stand was recovered from the bottom of a 10th-century cistern. One part of it helps to supplement our information about a god riding on a beast. The square stand is about half a meter high

¹² Ernst L. Ehrlich, *Die Kultsymbolik im Alten Testament und im nachbiblischen Judentum*, in *Symbolik der Religionen*, III (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1956), p. 126.

¹³ W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process*, 2d ed. with a new introduction (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957), p. 299.

and is adorned with four relief panels on its front side. The topmost panel, which was recovered in fragmentary form as late as the last week of the campaign, presents what appears to be a calf standing with its face to the left. Directly over the back of the calf the sun is pictured with wings, as though it were riding on the calf. The winged sun is not preserved well enough for us to be able to distinguish the god whom it represents. In any case a god of some kind, possibly Baal, is pictured as riding on the calf in precisely the way Albright explained the golden calves of Jeroboam. In the second panel from the bottom the ritual stand presents a pair of sphinxlike figures that have human heads but haunches like animals. Their female characteristics along with the make-up of their hair suggest that they represent the same kind of cherubs that Albright referred to in the Jerusalem temple. The new ritual stand will be taken up again in another connection.¹⁴

The classic boundaries of the land of Canaan are more clearly definable in the light of recent archaeological exploration. In Gen. 15:18 Yahweh is described as promising Abram that He will give his descendants the land extending all the way "from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates." Exegetically the question arises whether this is a bona fide predictive prophecy or whether it reflects the boundaries of the Davidic Empire of the 10th century B.C. read back into the patriarchal period by the ancient JE tradition. The difficulty between the tra-

¹⁴ Paul W. Lapp, "A New Ritual Stand," *Qadmoniot, Quarterly for the Antiquities of Eretz-Israel and Biblical Lands*, II (1969), 16-17, also the plate facing p. 26.

ditional and the critical explanation of this text is not resolved by the findings of the 1956—57 Israeli expedition in Sinai. The expedition, however, did visit El Arish, the modern capital of Sinai, which is named after Wadi El Arish, the famous river of Egypt that forms the southern boundary of Palestine. This city of 10,000 people is in an area that wages an ongoing battle with sandstorms that raise mounds as high as 200 feet and make it very difficult for Arab nomads to eke out a bare existence. It is worth noting that between El Arish and the Philistine city of Gaza the ingenious Nabataeans once contrived to build five significant seaports.¹⁵

The importance of water in the Holy Land is reflected in the Isaac cycle in Gen. 26. The length of the dry season and the scarcity of perennial springs have brought about considerable contention among the inhabitants of Palestine who need water. When the servants of Isaac found a well of running water in the valley of Gerar, the native herdsmen quarreled with the men of Isaac, claiming that the water was theirs (Gen. 26:19-20). On the day that Isaac made a covenant with the Gerarites, his servants came and told him that they had found water. Isaac called the city's name Beer-sheba, meaning "the well of the oath (covenant)" (Gen. 26:32-33). Beer-sheba is the present-day capital of the Negeb.

The reference to a water crisis raises the question whether cisterns were plastered with lime at the time of the patriarchs. It has been argued that the first such plaster-lined cisterns came at the end of the Late Bronze Age just prior to 1200 B.C. According to this view the Israelites could settle down wherever there was rain be-

cause they had plaster-lined cisterns, whereas the earlier Canaanites had been limited to settlements that were adjoining springs and streams.¹⁶ Recently evidence has been discovered that indicates that the technique of lining cisterns with lime plaster was practiced considerably before 1200 B.C. Among the important discoveries in the public building area at Taanach during the 1968 campaign was the large subterranean reservoir that has been referred to as the Great Shaft. This chamber with a beautifully arched ceiling is 3½ meters wide, 3½ meters high, and 10 meters long. The surfaces of this shaft were smoothly plastered, making it possible for water to be stored in it. According to the potsherds the Great Shaft was built at the turning point from the Middle Bronze Age to the Late Bronze Age, that is, around 1500 B.C. The date for the beginning of plaster-lined cisterns thus needs to be moved back some 300 years in the light of such newly discovered evidence. This matter of water conservation is important, since it indicates how archaeologists must be ready to revise their conclusions in the light of newly accumulated evidence—just as theologians must.

II. EVIDENCE THAT CLARIFIES OBSCURITIES IN THE BIBLE

In his book on Biblical interpretation James Wood has called attention to the fact that while the Bible is essentially simple, it must also be granted that the Scriptures are deeply profound and at times even perplexingly obscure.¹⁷ Some archaeological evidence, however, helps to bring

¹⁶ Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine*, p. 113.

¹⁷ James Wood, *The Interpretation of the Bible* (London: Duckworth, 1958), p. 2.

¹⁵ Rothenberg, pp. 21—22.

clarity to texts that are otherwise obscure in the Bible. The exegete asks, for example, whether there were real giants in Palestine in the days just before the Deluge. Gen. 6:4 states that there were Nephilim on the earth at that time and again later when children were born to the sons of God who had come in to the daughters of men. According to Num. 13:28, when the spies returned to Moses, they reported that the inhabitants of Canaan were strong, that their cities were fortified and big, and that they themselves had seen the descendants of Anak in the land. Traditionally both the Nephilim and the sons of Anak have been identified as giants, and their great stature accounted for their being such formidable opponents for the people of Israel. Archaeology has found no evidence of the skeletons of giants. Two of the largest Middle Bronze skeletons that were found during the 1968 campaign at Taanach measured just under two meters, or in the vicinity of six feet in stature. It is surely possible that the giant skeletons of the pre-Deluge period and of the time of the conquest have not survived. When the archaeologist finds no evidence, however, to support a given hypothesis, he turns to another option or alternative. He asks, for example, whether the massive city walls that have been unearthed in Palestine may explain why the seminomadic Israelites thought that the builders of such walls must be giants—only giants could be responsible for those structures. It has also been pointed out that when the Iron Age Israelites entered Canaan, great culture-building giants like Urukagina of Lagash (EB) and Zimri-Lim of Mari (MB) had already gone before them.¹⁸

¹⁸ Wright, *Biblical Archaeology*, pp. 29—37.

There are a number of customs of the patriarchal period that are difficult to explain on the basis of the Biblical text. For example, when Rachel made off with the household gods (*teraphim*) of her father, Laban gave chase with great concern. Obviously Laban had reason to be upset because Jacob had cheated him and had secretly carried away his two daughters. But finally Laban also asked Jacob, "Why did you steal my gods?" Jacob's excuse may sound lame. But information from the tablets discovered at Nuzi near Ashur helps explain why Rachel stole the *teraphim* on her own initiative. The Nuzi records indicate that the *teraphim* were like a document of inheritance: whoever possessed the household gods was guaranteed that he would receive the family inheritance. Small wonder that Laban was so incensed over his daughter's theft. (Gen. 31:19-30)

Similar clarifying information comes from the records of the Hittites. When Abraham asked the Hittites to make property available to him that would serve as a burial place for Sarah, the Hittites answered that they would make the choicest of their sepulchres available to him (Gen. 23:4-6). But then there followed a round of typical Oriental bargaining. Abraham wanted to purchase only the cave of Mach-pelah, which was at the end of Ephron's field. Ephron, however, wanted Abraham to take the whole field along with the cave that was in it. Did Ephron simply want to make more money by selling the entire field instead of only a portion of it? The Hittite laws indicate that more was involved than that. The person who purchased an entire piece of property thereafter owed feudal service to the pre-

vious owner; but the purchase of only a portion of the property imposed no such feudal obligation.¹⁹

One notes, furthermore, that there is no reference in Josh. 6—11 or in Judg. 9 to the fact that the city of Shechem fell to the incoming Israelites. This city was of such importance that the first assembly of the twelve-tribe federation (amphictyony) was held there according to Josh. 24. Why did the Hebrews not sack it, as they did Hazor in the north and Jericho and Bethel in the center? Gen. 48:22 observes significantly that Jacob gave Joseph the mountain slope that he had taken from the Amorites with sword and bow. This statement suggests that central Palestine, which involves largely hill country, was possessed already under the patriarchs. It is therefore quite possible that at the time of the conquest Shechem was occupied by Hebrew clans who had not gone down into Egypt but who were related to the incoming Israelite tribesmen. Instead of storming the city, the newcomers formed an alliance with their indigenous kinsmen. The covenant set up at Shechem under the Ephraimite Joshua would thus signify the first time that the incoming Hebrews ratified their agreement with the older residents of Shechem.

In Josh. 11:13 there is a reference to cities that Israel did not destroy under the leadership of Joshua. In the Authorized Version these cities are described as "cities that stood still in their strength." In the 17th century the meaning of the Hebrew word *tel* was not yet recognized in its fullest dimensions because archaeological work had not provided an explanation. By the time the Revised Version appeared, it was

recognized that the Hebrew word *tel* is the equivalent of the Arabic word *tell* and that it refers to mounds of earth and ruins that have accumulated for centuries on top of ancient cities. The Revised Version therefore translated "the cities that stood on their mounds." Such a mound or tel has been defined as a truncated cone whose sides are held in place by the remains of city walls that are still standing. Whenever a city was sacked, the wind and elements added layers of debris, and later on another city would be built somewhat higher on the mound. At Taanach there were eight such city levels; at Megiddo the number was closer to twenty. The recognition of the strategic importance of such tels or mounds was made possible by the patient work of archaeologists.²⁰

The perennial question that has been asked in connection with the conquest of Canaan is whether it was sudden (Josh. 24:18) or gradual (Judg. 1:28). According to the first account by the Deuteronomist there was a prolonged contest for the land, but it was ushered in by a quick thrust. From the viewpoint of Judges each tribe was constrained to take its own area. The evidence of archaeology supports the first, or two-pronged view: in the 13th century some significant cities did fall, but not such fortresses as Beth-Shan, Taanach, Megiddo, and Gezer. In the 12th and 11th centuries, however, several towns were sacked a number of times. One can reach the conclusion, therefore, that what Israel got at first it took by surprise; later it reduced the other sites through longer campaigns. The tra-

²⁰ G. Ernest Wright, "Cities Standing on Their Tells," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 2 (February 1939), 11—12.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 44 and 51.

dition of the conquest offers a good opportunity to show the distinction between the evidence of archaeology, the conclusions of reason, and the affirmations of faith. As G. Ernest Wright has pointed out, the evidence of archaeology shows that the land of Palestine was severely pillaged during the 13th century B.C. It may be reasonably inferred, he argues, that such a systematic destruction was wrought by the people of Israel. It can only be claimed as an affirmation of faith that the conquest of Palestine by the Israelites was an act of Yahweh.²¹

Clarifying evidence has been produced by archaeology in connection with the two capitals of the monarchy, Gibeah and Jerusalem. Gibeah is called the Hill of God in 1 Sam. 10:5, a text that has long been associated with the beginning of ecstatic prophecy in Israel. It was at Gibeah that Saul met a band of the prophets after which the Spirit of God came upon him mightily and he prophesied with the prophets (1 Sam. 10:10). The tablets from Mari refer to a group of men called Apilu, who were known as answerers or repliers like the Hebrew prophets. They received oral messages from the gods and transmitted them to the king by word of mouth. The Hebrew prophets, however, differed from their Mari counterparts in the important matter of their faith in Yahweh, which characterized their entire movement.²²

In addition to its association with Saul's prophesying, Gibeah was both home and capital for King Saul (1 Sam. 10:26; 15:34). Visitors in Palestine recall that one of the most imposing sights as one

²¹ Wright, *Biblical Archaeology*, pp. 69—70; p. 18.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 96.

drives from old Jerusalem to the former Jordanian airport is the mound called Tell el-Ful, the "hill of beans," which has long been identified as the Hill of God (1 Sam. 10:5). When Albright excavated this mound and came upon a casemate wall and a corner tower, he concluded that this was all the evidence that survived from the oldest dateable Israelite fort.²³ The findings of Albright have been confirmed by the work of Paul Lapp at Gibeah.²⁴ In the meantime another Israelite fortress has been explored that may well be contemporary with Saul's fortress at Gibeah. The Israeli expedition in Sinai confirmed that ancient Kadesh was not a single oasis but an entire series of oases. The center of the settlement was Ain el Qudeirat, 12 miles north of Ain Qadeis. Overlooking Ain Qadeis were the hitherto unnoticed remains of an Israelite fort, with some surviving walls rising to a height of 6 feet. The fort included casemate walls and commanded roads in so many directions that it must have been a very prominent frontier defense. Built in the shape of an oval with its chief gate still visible in the south, the fortress of Ain Qadeis was set up during the monarchy, possibly in the 10th century, as an outpost against invaders from Sinai.²⁵

Another problem that has confronted Biblical exegetes is the location of the city of David. Did it occupy the eastern or the western hill of Jerusalem? This city is called Zion for the first time in the

²³ Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine*, pp. 120—22.

²⁴ Paul W. Lapp, "Tell el-Ful," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 28 (1965), 2—10.

²⁵ Rothenberg, pp. 125 and 137, plate 16, figure 15. The archaeological analysis was made by Aharoni.

account of David's taking of Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:6-10; 1 Chron. 11:4-9). Archaeological investigation has shown that the original Zion was the hill called Mount Ophel, which is a spur at the southeast corner of the old city and is first referred to by the prophet Micah.²⁶ Since the fourth century after Christ, however, Christians have connected the name Zion, or City of David, with the hill on the southwest corner of the old city, because they claimed that the house of the Pentecostal gathering of the apostles was located on that southwest hill. Which is the original city of David, the southeast hill or the southwest hill? Miss Kenyon's work in Jerusalem from 1961 to 1967 has helped resolve this problem. On the southeast hill she dug a 48-m.-long trench from the top of the mount down its eastern slope in an attempt to find evidence of Jebusite occupation. She discovered the ruins of Israelite houses from the seventh century B. C. Directly beneath these houses she found a wall made out of large boulders, which could be dated on the basis of pottery to the Middle Bronze Age. She concluded that this must be the original Jebusite city wall that David confronted and that had been built around 1800 B. C. Between that time, however, and the time of David's conquest of the city one important change in building operations took place. The early houses of 1800 B. C. were erected on a steep slope of 25 to 40 degrees. In Late Bronze times the Jebusites overcame this steepness of the slope by erecting platforms

²⁶ In Micah 4:8 the prophet tells the hill (*ophel*) of the daughter of Zion that the former dominion shall come to her. See G. A. Barrois, "Zion," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (hereafter *IDB*), ed. George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdon, 1962), IV, 959—60.

or terraces, which made possible more substantial houses. It is possible that these platforms are what David called the Millo, which he took over from the Jebusites and then had to repair constantly because the terraces were so vulnerable to rain, invasion, and earthquake. The discovery of the Jebusite city wall indicated that the earliest city had been some 50 meters wider than had been thought earlier, and that the area of David's city must have comprised some 10.87 acres. Incidentally, there is not much hope that additional evidence will be discovered for the Jerusalem of David's time, because the whole top of Ophel has now been dug.²⁷

Thus the city of Zion in David's time, was the city on the southeast hill. But how about the Christian Zion, which is still visited by pilgrims, on the southwest hill? Miss Kenyon's work indicated that at its southern tip the southwest hill was not included within the city walls until the middle of the first century of the Christian era. The northern section, which today includes the citadel or the palace of Herod, was probably the original Akra, which Antiochus Epiphanes built in the 2d century B. C. At the present time it is therefore necessary to distinguish the eastern Zion from the western Zion in the old city of Jerusalem and to note that the two are separated by the largely filled-in Tyropoan Valley, or Valley of the Cheesemakers.²⁸

Every student of the prophets is interested in explaining why Isaiah regarded the wickedness of Israel in his day as great

²⁷ Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Jerusalem—Excavating 3000 Years of History* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), pp. 19—53.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 142—44.

as that of the ancient cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah (Is. 1:10); why Amos warned his people not to go to Bethel or Gilgal or Beersheba (Amos 5: 4-5); why Hosea charged Mother Israel with playing the harlot and with going after her paramours (Hos. 2:5); why Yahweh threatened to judge Mother Israel by exposing her nakedness in the sight of her paramours. (Hos. 2:10)²⁹

Answers to these questions have come not only from the Ras Shamra texts that were discovered on the Syrian coast in 1929 but also from other archaeological sites in Palestine itself. The Ras Shamra texts indicate that the religion that had been practiced in the Canaanite shrines at Bethel, Gilgal, and Beersheba concerned itself largely with fertility rites. Sexual acts were associated both with the death of the Canaanite god Baal and with the feast that marked the dedication of his temple. Before Baal died, he cohabited with the goddess Anat (Astarte) to make sure that fertility would prevail during the dry season. At the feast that marked the dedication of Baal's temple there was slaughtering of animals along with general debauchery. The orgies of the gods were mirrored in the cultic practices of the people, which were intended to assure a fertile year and sufficient offspring.³⁰ Small wonder then that the prophets spoke out as they did! Small wonder that complaints were lodged against the sons of Eli because they lay with the Qedeshas, or sacred harlots, who plied their trade at the entrance to the sanctuary! (1 Sam. 2:22)

²⁹ Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, pp. 312—13.

³⁰ Arvid S. Kapelrud, *The Ras Shamra Discoveries and the Old Testament* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), pp. 45—47.

The first and third campaigns at Taanach provided additional material to clarify the picture of the Canaanite fertility religion. In room one of the cultic structure a complete terra-cotta figurine mold was found from which little statues of the goddess Ashtarot were made. The figurines made from this mold represent a type that includes a female figure pressing a circular object over her left breast. Although none of the 83 registered figurines that were found in 1963 and 1966 at Taanach appeared to be made from this particular mold, it is quite possible that the mold was used to manufacture figurines for export. One figurine that resembles the Taanach mold turned up in a cultic environment at nearby Megiddo. Many of the extant figurine fragments reproduce a nude female with each hand clinging to one of her breasts. Other fragments in which the lower part of the torso is preserved give prominence to the triangular design that is used to represent the female genitals. The widespread prevalence of such Astarte figurines extending into the twelfth century B.C. provides an additional reason why the Hebrew prophets were so critical of the Canaanite cult.³¹

During the last 2 weeks of the 1968 campaign at Taanach a new ritual stand was found.³² At the center of the bottom panel of this stand the nude goddess Ash-tarot is standing with uplifted arms. Flanking her on either side is a lion with ferocious jowls, and the goddess appears to be holding the ears of the two lions. The details of the lions' teeth and claws and

³¹ Paul W. Lapp, "The 1963 Excavation at Ta'annek," *BASOR*, 173 (February 1964), 39—41.

³² See note 14.

the figure of the goddess are beautifully outlined, the latter calling to mind the nudity features of the figurine fragments (see above). The third panel from the bottom has another pair of lions on the right and left. Between the lions a pair of goats are standing on their hind legs, eating from a stylistic tree of life between them. The tree occupies the same central position in the third panel that the goddess occupies at the bottom and the winged sun in the top panel. The rams and the tree of life will be recognized as similar to reliefs that have come from Ras Shamra.

The prophets were also indignant about the social injustices that prevailed within the affluent society of their day. Both the affluence and the injustices are reflected in the evidence that has come to light in the northern capital of Samaria. The famous ivory inlays that were found in the Iron II period at Samaria probably originated in Phoenician workshops. They represent the life of luxury that Amos condemned when he announced that the houses of ivory would perish in Yahweh's judgment (Amos 3:15). In preexilic Israel the city gate was the place where the court of justice was held, where the poor and the widows and the orphans could come to obtain redress for their grievances. In Albright's judgment the eastern gate of Israelite Samaria may well be the earliest Palestinian example of a city gate with indirect access similar to that of the familiar Damascus gate in the old city of Jerusalem. It was probably at such a city gate that Amos pictured the unscrupulous operators who hated the cause of justice and abhorred the truth. (Amos 5:10)³³

³³ Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine*, pp. 136—38.

III. EVIDENCE THAT DOES CONFLICT OR APPEARS TO CONFLICT WITH SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

We shall consider conflicting archaeological evidence before we take up confirming evidence because there is quite a widespread view that all of the evidence of archaeology tends to verify and to validate the statements of Scripture. Two points need to be noted in this connection. First, the evidence simply does not always confirm what the Bible says; in fact, some of the evidence is quite contradictory to Biblical affirmations. Second, when there is a conflict between archaeological evidence and Biblical evidence, one cannot simply say that the Biblical evidence is more reliable and therefore needs to be given priority. Where such conflicts appear, both archaeologists and theologians must be ready to reexamine the evidence and, if need be, to modify or alter a position that has been held previously.

One question to which both archaeology and theology have addressed themselves concerns the age of the earth and of mankind. By simply adding up the figures in the Septuagint the early fathers came to the conclusion that the world came into being around 6000 B.C. Later church fathers, basing their calculations on the Hebrew Masoretic text, came up with a considerably later date, namely, 4000 B.C. Such computation accounts for the fact that Bishop Ussher's date of 4004 B.C. found its place in the Authorized Version next to the first verse of Genesis, thus giving many Bible-readers the impression that according to sound Biblical doctrine the world was created in 4004 B.C.³⁴

³⁴ Wright, *Biblical Archaeology*, p. 18.

Understandably, geologists, paleontologists, and anthropologists have called this date into serious question. Here we cite only one area that has produced conflicting archaeological evidence, the deepest stratum that Miss Kenyon excavated in ancient Jericho. On the north side of the mound she discovered a primitive stone-age sanctuary resting on bedrock that could be dated at 7800 B.C. with the use of carbon 14. Near the center of the mound she found a 13-foot thick stratum, with many floors, going down to bedrock, which represents a Proto-Neolithic or Late Stone Age settlement.³⁵

The first real house builders in Palestine occupied the second stratum above bedrock at Jericho. They built round houses that apparently had dome-shaped roofs. They are called Pre-pottery Neolithic A people because there was no evidence of any kind of pottery in their settlement. They were not pottery makers, but they did devise a very significant system of wall defenses for the 10 acres of their ancient community. Not only was their city wall of stone 6½ feet thick, but within the wall they built a stone tower 30 feet high that is still intact today. The interior of the tower has a stairway consisting of 22 steps by which the defenders of the city could get to the top of the tower. Miss Kenyon has placed the date for this Neolithic defense system at 7000 B.C. That means that Jericho's stone tower was 4000 years older than the Egyptian pyramids and that it pushes back the threshold of human experience to a very early period. It was here that man for the first time shifted from a nomadic way of life to life in a

³⁵ Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, pp. 41—42.

settled community and from food gathering to food production.³⁶

What is the theologian's reaction to this evidence and the date to which it points? He may counter that the test is invalid and that the interpretation is unacceptable. On the other hand, he may be stimulated to take a new look at the Biblical evidence for dating the origin of the world. He may then realize that possibly it was oversimplifying the case to add the ages of the pre- and post-deluvians and the combinations of 30's and 40's and 100's in order to arrive at a date like 4004 B.C. or any other kind of total on the basis of the Hebrew text, the Septuagint, or the Samaritan Pentateuch. He may notice that many of the numbers are schematic and that most of them originate with a tradition that is fond of listing numbers. It is clear that at this point the archaeologist and the theologian must engage in some frank and uninhibited dialog. When the theologian encounters an apparent difference between Biblical statements and historical or geographical facts that can be tested on the basis of good evidence, his first line of reasoning should not be an appeal to some kind of understanding of Biblical inerrancy. The archaeologist should be ready to admit that the manner in which he has interpreted the evidence is also subject to checking and rechecking.

Another problem area involves life expectancy during the Middle Bronze Age, which corresponds to the period of the patriarchs. We are told, for example, in Gen. 12:4 that when Abram left Haran in Mesopotamia he was 75 years old. In Gen. 21:5 it is stated that when Isaac was born Abram was 100 years old. The factu-

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

ality of such figures has been questioned because the skeletons from a Middle Bronze site like Jericho indicate that life expectancy during this period was not very great. The skeletal remains suggest that many people died below the age of 35 years and that not very many made it to their 50th year. The exegete may of course answer that the patriarchs were extraordinary figures and that the longevity of Abraham is almost as remarkable as that of some of the predeluvians. On the other hand the exegete should be prepared to allow the possibility of another explanation. The ages of 75 and 100 years ascribed to Abraham may well indicate the high esteem that later generations had for the founder of their faith. By the same token the ages of an Adam or a Methuselah may not be listed for the purpose of stacking them up in succession in order to arrive at a chronological sequence for dating the world; rather these great ages may have the purpose of showing the unbroken continuity of the divine promise to the human race. From the very beginning there was a chain of men who carried the traditions so that the continuance of the divine promise might be assured.³⁷

Scholars have discovered what appear to be anachronisms in the Scriptural record. For example, Gen. 24:10 says that Abraham's servant took ten of his master's camels along with many outstanding gifts and departed for the city of Nahor in Mesopotamia. No fewer than 16 additional camel references have been pointed out in the rest of this chapter. Some scholars are of the opinion that the earliest historical reference to camels in the Bible occurs when the attack by the

Midianites is mentioned in Judg. 6:5. There were so many Midianites and so many camels that they could not be counted when they engaged in one of their bedouin raids. If Judg. 6:5 is the earliest historical reference, then obviously the Gen. 24 passages would appear to be anachronisms. The earliest authenticated picture of a camel rider dates from the 10th century B.C. from Tell el-Halaf in Mesopotamia.³⁸ But camel bones have been discovered at Mari dating from the 18th century B.C., and for that reason de Vaux and others have argued that the camel was used earlier than the written texts indicate.³⁹ It is probable that the camel was not used extensively before the 12th century B.C., yet nomadic clans like those of the patriarchs could have used camels on a limited scale as far back as Middle Bronze times.

More difficult is the anachronism in Gen. 21:34 where Abraham is described as sojourning a long time in the land of the Philistines. It is a well-documented fact that the Sea Peoples including the Philistines did not appear on the scene of history until the 12th century B.C. How then could it be said of Abraham (1700 B.C.) that he stayed in the Philistine lands for many days? It appears that the author of this Genesis text was writing from the later geographical viewpoint of his own day. If the author was the 8th-century Elohist, or if the verse is an addition from some other later tradition, there would be no problem because the

³⁸ J. A. Thompson, "Camel," *IDB*, I, 490 to 492.

³⁹ De Vaux indicated this position in an address on the patriarchs that he delivered at St. Louis University in 1964.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 194 and 208.

Philistines would have made their impact on history by that time.

A number of difficulties arise in connection with the Exodus events and what is known about them from archaeology. A conflict has long been noted between the figure of 600,000 fighting men who departed from Egypt and the capacity of the Sinai peninsula to support that many people for 40 years. According to contemporary standards Sinai could take care of only 3,000 to 5,000 people.⁴⁰ To resolve this conflict, Petrie suggested that the word for "thousand" (*alaphim*) should probably be rendered "families" or "tents," and Mendenhall has suggested "squads" or "companies." In the two censuses that were taken at Mount Sinai and in the plains of Moab those who were 20 years old and upward were counted, and both figures were slightly over 600,000 men (Num. 1:46; 26:2). Explanation for these large census totals has been sought in the later census of Israel taken at David's time (2 Sam. 24:9; 1 Chron. 21:5). It is suggested that in order to build up the significance of the Exodus and Sinai events, the priestly tradition in Israel transferred the numbers from the Davidic census to the Mosaic census.⁴¹ If the great Pharaoh Ramses II actually used only 20,000 fighting men in the memorable battle of Qadesh in Syria, then it would hardly be plausible for a small people like Israel (Deut. 7:6-8) to field 600,000 fighting men.

The date of the Exodus also poses a problem for the archaeologist and the exegete. The exegete finds himself in a dilemma, because 1 Kings 6:1 says that Solomon began building the temple 480 years

after the Exodus, and Ex. 12:40 states that the people of Israel dwelt in Egypt for 430 years. If one must choose one text or the other, the nod would go to 430 years, because it is less schematic than the 480 years. The 480 years may represent 12 generations of 40 years each and therefore may not be intended to be taken literally. The 430 years in turn may involve either the total time the Hebrews spent in the Delta or their total residence in Canaan and Egypt. Archaeologically speaking, the problem lies in the fact that if the Ex. 12 or the 1 Kings 6 figure is added to the date of Solomon's temple, the Exodus is moved back to a date before 1400 B.C. For the archaeologist that is difficult because his evidence suggests Ramses II (1290—1224) as the Pharaoh of the Exodus, which must have occurred in the 13th century rather than the 14th or 15th century. The archaeologist also notes that the destruction of cities in the Jordan Valley and in the hill country of Palestine took place during the 13th century B.C. The exegete takes into account that the record of the Exodus event has been strongly influenced by the variety of traditions that reported it. He therefore should ask whether it is feasible to set up a chronology of the Exodus and conquest simply by adding up figures that are derived from various Biblical sources. The archaeologist should concede that while a destruction layer definitely marks the taking of a city, he may not be justified in claiming that such a layer gives a completely satisfying account of everything that took place.

The fall of Jericho is another event in which both exegetes and archaeologists have been interested. Working at Jericho in the twenties and thirties Garstang placed

⁴⁰ Wright, *Biblical Archaeology*, p. 66.

⁴¹ J. A. Sanders, "Census," *IDB*, I, 547.

the conquest at about 1400 B.C. on the basis of archaeological evidence that was then available. The publication of his work became quite popular and gave added impetus to the so-called early Exodus. When Miss Kenyon took up work at the mound of Jericho in 1952, she found that the evidence for the date of Jericho's fall was "most inadequate." What Garstang took to be Late Bronze walls (1500—1200 B.C.) must now be recognized on the basis of better pottery studies as Early Bronze walls (3000—2000 B.C.).⁴² Except on the northwest corner and the lower east side of the tell, erosion has penetrated far below the Middle Bronze level and has obliterated all Late Bronze and Iron Age evidence above it. The flourishing Middle Bronze city of Jericho predated Moses by some 300 years, and it is apparent that at the time of Joshua Jericho was a considerably smaller town.⁴³ As a result, there is simply not enough archaeological evidence for a conclusive statement on the fall of Jericho at the time of Joshua.

Two chapters after the fall of Jericho the sacking of Ai is noted with the comment that Joshua burned it and reduced it to a mass of ruins (Josh. 8:28). Excavations at Ai indicate that this city was occupied from 3000 to 1500 B.C. and again from 1200 to 900 B.C. It is striking, however, that there was no occupation at Ai during the Late Bronze Age and specifically during the 13th century. How then could Josh. 8 make so much of the sacking of Ai? This may be an example of the way in which all of the conquests by the Hebrews were ideally telescoped to

fit the time of Joshua. Another solution proposed by Albright links Ai with the neighboring city of Bethel. Archaeological evidence indicates that Bethel was conquered by the Israelites during the 13th century, yet the book of Joshua does not record such a fall. Is it possible, Albright asks, that in the process of the transmission of the text the tradition of the fall of Bethel was somehow connected with the fall of Ai? It is apparent that both Jericho and Ai present problems for which neither the exegete nor the archaeologist can give a final answer at present.

One cannot speak about conflict and contradiction without referring to a significant tension with which ancient Israel grappled, namely the tension between the culture of Israel and the culture of Canaan, between the religion of Yahweh and the religion of Baal. A great collision took place between the two religions, particularly at the time of the Conquest. As a result of that collision the Hebrews rejected some features of the Canaanite religion, while they adopted and adapted other features to their own Yahwist faith. Habel has pointed out that the imagery with which nature and kingship and covenant are described in the Bible often shares many common features with Canaanite imagery. And yet the presuppositions that underlie the Biblical images and the meaning of the sacred texts themselves are radically different from those of Canaan. Consequently, the study of similarities between Canaan and Israel leads to a greater appreciation of the points of divergence between these two religions. Israel's early creeds and many of her ancient poems indicate that in the struggle between Yah-

⁴² Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, pp. 210—11.

⁴³ J. L. Kelso, "Jericho," *IDB*, II, 836.

weh and Baal, Yahweh emerged as ultimate Victor and Lord.⁴⁴

A final item of interest to the New Testament theologian and the archaeologist concerns the place of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. According to the accounts of the New Testament gospels both Joseph's garden and Mount Calvary were situated *outside* the city of Jerusalem. Any visitor in the city of Jerusalem today, however, will observe that the traditional site of Golgotha and of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre are located *inside* the present old city of Jerusalem. To help resolve this difficulty and to find out whether in New Testament times the Church of the Holy Sepulchre's site was located inside or outside the city limits, Miss Kenyon excavated a small area in the yard of the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, no more than a stone's throw from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. At the level of the 7th century B.C. she came upon a stone quarry and the next stratum directly above the quarry was assigned to the 2nd century after Christ. She could justifiably conclude that there was no occupation in this area between the 7th century B.C. and the 2nd century after Christ. Inasmuch as quarries were usually dug outside city walls, it would follow that both the Church of the Redeemer and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre are located in an area that must have been outside the walls of Jerusalem in the first Christian century.⁴⁵

Sufficient evidence has been cited to show how necessary it is for the theologian

⁴⁴ Norman Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal: A Conflict of Religious Cultures* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1964), pp. 7, 115—18; see also Kapelrud, pp. 54—55, 85.

⁴⁵ Kenyon, *Jerusalem*, pp. 151—54.

and the archaeologist to be frank and honest in their discussions of problem areas that involve their two fields. There will have to be a modest resolve on both sides not to be dogmatic if the issues involved between the two disciplines are to be settled.

IV. EVIDENCE THAT CONFIRMS SCRIPTURAL ASSERTIONS

In the previous sections we mentioned the arguments for an early and a late Exodus. In this final section of the essay we begin with some rather positive evidence from Egypt and Sinai that confirms Scriptural assertions. The Land of Goshen in which the family of Jacob settled is not mentioned in Egyptian records, but it is now possible to equate that territory with the land of Ramses (Gen. 47:11) and the fields of Zoan (Ps. 78:12), both of which were located in the fertile area known today as the Wadi Tumilat. When the people of Israel were afflicted by the Egyptian taskmasters, they built the store cities of Pithom and Rameses for Pharaoh (Ex. 1:11). Wright makes a good case for identifying Rameses with a city in the Delta variously called Tanis, Zoan, or Avaris. A stele from the year 1320 B.C. has been found at Avaris that commemorated the 400th anniversary of the city's founding by the Hyksos, presumably the Pharaohs who were friendly to Joseph (Gen. 41:38-41). Between the time of the Hyksos and Ramses II (1290—1224) there is no evidence that the Egyptian capital was in the Delta. Ramses II, however, moved the capital back from Thebes to the Delta, changed the name of Avaris to Rameses, and is therefore the top candidate to qualify as the pharaoh of the oppression

and of the Exodus.⁴⁶ A huge statue of Ramses II stands directly in front of the railroad station in Cairo today and is the terminal of the street named in his honor.

The Sinai Peninsula marks another source of confirming information on early Biblical references. The main objective of the Israeli expedition to Sinai in 1956 to 1957 was to bring the peninsula to life in pictures and to bring back historical and archaeological data. Concentrating their effort on the central area of the peninsula, Rothenberg and Aharoni made a careful study of the great oasis of Kadesh-barnea. Aharoni is convinced that the first objective of the Israelites after they left Egypt was the series of oases on the Canaanite border called Kadesh-barnea. After the king of Arad refused to permit the Israelites to pass through his territory, it was their destiny to roam in the desert of Et-Tih, known in English as the Wilderness of Wanderers. During this time the tribes did not necessarily remain together, for they stood a better chance of survival by dispersing and meeting again at Kadesh only for important occasions. Aharoni found many indications that Kadesh-barnea was the first center of the amphictyony of the Israelites. The mining enterprises in South Sinai are almost as celebrated as the peninsula's historic significance. The famous inscriptions from 1500 B.C. written in Proto-Sinaitic script were found on the walls of quarries and may well be the oldest alphabetic writing known to man. The great granite peaks of South Sinai, including Safsafa, Serbal, Catherine, and Musa, have been likened by Rothenberg to Yahweh's fist clenched in an ominous gesture at His people.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Wright, *Biblical Archaeology*, pp. 58—60.

The ancient rite of *cherem*, or total destruction of the enemy by the decree of Yahweh, has been the subject of much discussion among Old Testament scholars. Both the divine decree that at the seventh march around Jericho the entire city with its inhabitants was to be devoted to Yahweh for destruction (Josh. 6:17), and the announcement of fulfillment—that the people of God destroyed the total population of the city along with the animals with the edge of the sword (Josh. 6:21)—have been considered unbecoming for a God of grace and mercy. In contrast, some scholars have defended this rite of taboo in the name of Yahweh's righteous judgment, which was meted out to the Canaanites because of their iniquity. However the *cherem*-rite may be interpreted, there is evidence on the Moabite Stone dated around 825 B.C. that indicates that a similar rite was practiced by the Moabites. In this inscription King Mesha states that he devoted all of the Israelites in Ataroth to death, in order to placate the lust for blood of the gods Chemosh and Moab.⁴⁸

In the second section of this essay we referred to the question whether the subjugation of the land of Canaan was sudden or gradual. One of the fortified cities that the incoming Hebrews were unable to storm successfully was the fortress of Bethshan, strategically located near the point at which the Valley of Jezreel meets the Jordan Valley. Josh. 17:11-12 states that the tribal territory of Manasseh included such cities as Bethshan, Taanach, and

⁴⁷ Rothenberg, pp. 142, 166, 121, 118.

⁴⁸ James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), p. 210. See also Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, pp. 279—80.

Megiddo. The Manassites, however, were unable to master these cities because the Canaanites held on to them so persistently. This situation is confirmed in statements made by the Egyptian Pharaoh Seti I in two stelae that he set up in Beth-shan. On one of these he said that during the first year of his reign (1320 B. C.) he defeated marauders from the other side of the Jordan who attacked Beth-shan. On the other stele he referred to the Apiru from the Jordan mountains, whom he appears to have defeated.⁴⁹ Excavations also point to the fact that Canaanite Megiddo and Taanach held out until the time of the monarchy.

One important reason why the Philistines were able to keep the Israelites under control around 1180 B. C. is the fact that they were able to impose an iron monopoly on the entire area. The author of 1 Sam. 13:19-20 laments the fact that no smith was available in all the land of Israel because the Philistines did not want the Hebrews to make swords and spears for themselves. Hebrew farmers had no choice but to go to the Philistines to get their sickles and axes and ploughshares sharpened. Albright has demonstrated on the basis of excavations that iron began to come into general use during the 11th century B. C. The Philistine monopoly on iron not only gave them a great advantage over the Hebrews, but was also one of the major factors that prompted the Israelites to demand a king.⁵⁰

Near the confluence of the Jordan and the Jabbok Rivers there is an impressive mound resembling in general lines the

⁴⁹ Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, p. 219.

⁵⁰ Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, p. 290.

Rock of Gibraltar. Today the mound is called Deir Alla, and there is considerable evidence to support the conclusion that it is the site of the Biblical city of Succoth. The theological faculty of the University of Leiden sponsored archaeological work at that site in the years 1960—64.⁵¹ If a visitor today were to stand on the mound on a given day in January, he would probably be buffeted by a powerful north wind or an even more violent east wind that would make it difficult for him to remain standing. Why would any group of people inhabit such a windy site? The probable answer is that people engaged in copper smelting chose this spot because they needed the potent winds to generate sufficient heat for their furnaces.

1 Kings 7:45-46 comments that the temple vessels of bronze were made for King Solomon by Hiram, king of Tyre, and that the vessels were cast "in the foundries of Succoth between Adamah and Zarethan." During the first campaign at this site, beginning in January 1960, the Dutch expedition found remarkable evidence to confirm the information in this text. At every Iron Age stratum fragments of metal slag were found. Additional evidence included the floors and mud brick walls of furnaces, which were fanned by the strong winds of Succoth. The evidence pointed to furnaces, but it did not support the conclusion that the furnaces were used to smelt copper until a certain pottery spout was discovered. The spout had been corroded on the inside in a way that could only have been caused by the flow of

⁵¹ H. J. Franken, "The Excavations at Deir Alla in Jordan," *Vetus Testamentum*, X (October 1960), 386—93.

molten copper. A tiny fragment of copper was actually found inside the spout.

The location of Tell Deir Alla provides some answers to the question why the temple vessels were produced at this site. As stated above, the powerful wind functioned as a bellows to generate sufficient heat for copper smelting. The trees in the nearby forests of Gilead afforded an adequate supply of wood for firing the furnaces. Clay from the adjacent banks of the Jordan River was well suited for making molds. Finally there must have been residents in the area, either natives or immigrants, who were familiar with the technique of smelting copper. It was therefore not surprising that in addition to a single bronze receptacle found at Deir Alla two others turned up at nearby Tell Mazar.⁵²

Archaeological evidence supports the Old Testament record with reference to several Biblical kings. During the anarchy that followed the reign of Jeroboam I, Zimri had made himself ruler of the Northern Kingdom. His rule at Tirzah, however, lasted only 7 days. He could not maintain his authority against the military leadership of Omri. When Zimri saw that it was useless for him to resist the forces of Omri in the besieged capital city, he resorted to the citadel of the royal palace, set fire to the palace, and died in the conflagration (1 Kings 16:15-18). It is remarkable that when de Vaux excavated the royal palace at Tirzah, he found the burn layer that on the basis of the pottery can be associated with the demise of King Zimri. This is one instance in which the

⁵² Ibid., p. 389.

death of a Biblical king may be connected with an observable layer of ashes.⁵³

Some 34 years later in 842 B.C. Jehu became king in Samaria. He is remembered for eliminating the religion of Baal from Israel (2 Kings 10:28). He is also the one king of Israel whose name and tribute are commemorated in the annals of Assyria. On his famous Black Obelisk, Shalmaneser III says that he received tribute from Jehu the son of Omri, which included golden bowls, vases, tumblers, and buckets. On one of the reliefs of this same monument Jehu is shown with his face bowed to the earth, presenting his tribute to King Shalmaneser III.⁵⁴

CONCLUSION

In our discussion of the relationship between archaeology and exegetical studies we began with the observations of Albright and de Vaux. We conclude with a number of comments made by Sellin, a great German pioneer in the field of archaeology. Sellin recalled the many times when he stood on the ruins of Tell Ta'annek at night with the moon over Mount Carmel and only jackals and hyenas howling from the hills overlooking the Valley of Jezreel. As he looked across the plain at the white homes of Nazareth and the sugar loaf of Mount Tabor and the region where the greatest of all the prophets had healed and comforted and preached, he was filled with an overpowering conviction of the influence of God on all this region. He was convinced that neither the country nor the culture nor nature alone could have

⁵³ De Vaux explained the burn layer during a tour of the tell in the autumn of 1960.

⁵⁴ Pritchard, p. 192 and fig. 100A.

produced all this, but that finally it came from the Spirit of God Himself. He recognized that scientific investigation with archaeological equipment and strict historical methodology had limits beyond which it would not be able to penetrate. Therefore he advised archaeologists and exegetes to recognize those limits as soon as they went to work, so that they would not be disappointed. He was confident that with every new dig in the Near East scholars would gain a deeper understanding of the

religion and culture of the Ancient Near East in general and of the people of God in particular. Such expeditions would provide new insights into the mysterious ways in which God has led His people in the past toward the goal of the consummation of His kingdom.⁵⁵

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⁵⁵ Ernst Sellin, *Der Ertrag der Ausgrabungen im Orient für die Erkenntnis der Entwicklung der Religion Israels* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1905), concluding paragraph.