

Welcome to the Archeological wing of the institute. These lessons #7 through #17 will give you an amazing tour through much of what archeological evidence has to say about the validity of Scripture.

Smoky Mountain Bible Institute

Archeology Introduction 101

We have examined the truth of God's word from numerous angles, and we will now start an in-depth look into the relationship between archeology and God's word. To begin this walk we must first define archeology and its origins. Middle Eastern and Oriental cultures as early as 1000 years ago can claim the earliest interest in the collecting of artifacts. But it was not until the 18th century that we find a German, Johann Wickelmann, who is considered the father of modern-day archeology, whose focus was primarily art history and architecture. Britain was the first country to develop a systematic approach to archaeology and to recognize it as a discipline in its own right. The first individuals to take a serious interest in the subject were clergymen. Many were motivated by the benefits of collecting artifacts as physical evidence for Biblical historic narratives.

In the discipline of Archeology, there has been no discovery to date that in any way has contradicted or disproven scriptural truth. There have been archeologists who make such claims, but these are clearly speculations based on their bias, and not indisputable facts based upon observable evidence. There are, however, many thousands of archeological finds, many of which reflect favorably on biblical accounts, and in numerous cases, affirm in various ways the accuracy of Holy Scripture in its detailed historic narratives.

First let's look at some archeological finds that have some bearing on the flood account found in Genesis. There is a Sumerian king list from circa 2100 BC that is in two parts: kings before, and kings after the great flood. This list is of special interest to biblical archaeology because of its antediluvian or pre-flood portion for two reasons. First, it mentions a pre-flood civilization, a great flood, and second, the pre-flood kings have very long life-spans (seen by their long reigns), and after the flood, the life-spans drop dramatically. The length of reigns gradually decreases until they reflect ordinary life-spans. There are problems with the time spans, but these two similarities are of great significance, allowing us to consider that both accounts refer to the same historical event, and only one account is divinely inspired.

There are examples of world-wide flood accounts in many cultures, found on all continents, with a select group on a boat being rescued by God. Let's examine one artifact this month. Tablet 11 of the epic of Gilgamesh from the 7th century BC is similar to the Genesis account in many details. Here is a quick list of the similarities: man's transgression, divine destruction, favored family, Ark provided, destruction by water & universal, man saved, animals saved, landing on a mountain, birds sent out, survivors' worship, and survivors favored by God. While there are many differences as well, the similarities between this and many other accounts and God's inspired word argue for the historicity of the Biblical account.

We have just entered a vast store house of archeological artifacts that will take some time to go through. See you in the next lesson.

In Christ
Pastor Portier