

Smoky Mountain Bible Institute

Archeological Digs 102

Let's jump right in to some archeological locations and brush the dust off of some very interesting finds that shed some light on biblical truth.

The ancient town of Ur, (Ur Kasdim, a place of ancient ruins in southeastern Iraq today) Abram's (who later becomes Abraham) home town, fell to the Elamites around 1940 BC. This town is believed by many archeologists to have been the biggest city in the world from 2300 BC to 1900 BC, with a population of over 65,000 people. This evidence is interesting, when you consider that according to scripture, Abram left the once great and now conquered and declining Ur around 1925 BC, seeking greener pastures in Haran. A coincidence? I think not.

There are interesting paintings in an Egyptian tomb called Beni Hasan dating from around 1900 BC that bear a strange resemblance to the detailed descriptions of Abram and his people. A coincidence? I think not.

The law code of Hammurabi, (carved on an ancient pillar) which pre-dates the Exodus by about 300 years, bears a remarkable witness that there was a common-law code in the ancient Near East. Hammurabi's code is clearly corrupt in many ways when you consider its substance, however it does point to the reality that all Semitic peoples share a common ancestry through Noah's son Shem. This common ancestry is why the biblical codes and other Near Eastern law codes have similarities. A coincidence? Or evidence of a loving and involved creator and redeemer?

The Hittites are mentioned over 20 times in scripture and critics claimed for centuries that they never existed. However, in about 1832, a pesky archeologist by the name of Charles Texier discovered the capital city of Hattusas, in what is now Turkey, some 100 kilometers from the Black Sea and 150 miles from Ankara. Occupied between about 1600 and 1200 BC, Boghazkoy (its modern name) is most famous for the recovery of over 10,000 cuneiform tablets. No coincidence—only evidence of scriptural accuracy and authority.

The Nuzi Tablets, a collection of 20,000 baked clay cuneiform tablets dating between 1500 BC and 1401 BC, bear remarkable similarity to the culture and costumes recorded for the same period in Genesis. Are practices such as marriage, adopting an heir, surrogate mothers and inheritance, a coincidence? Clearly not.

The modern-day village of Haran sits atop its ancient predecessors, which even predate Abram and his arrival. Near Haran are also found the villages of Serug and Nahor, Abram's grandfather and great-grandfather. Besides the relocation reasons mentioned earlier, Joshua 24:2 mentions Terah (the father of Abraham) worshiped other gods, and both Ur and Haran shared the same main deity the moon god. Just coincidence, or further evidence of historical accuracy of the biblical account... you decide.

Let us finish up this month with a visit to Egypt and the eastern Nile delta area. Scripture tells us that the Israelites were slaves in the cities of Pithom and Raamses. Tell el-Daba (a tell is a mound or hill that was once a town or city) is today identified as the ancient city of Raamses, and not far away is Tell El-Retaba, currently believed to be the city of Pithom. Both of these could be considered to be in the region of Goshen. Many scholars believe the location of Raamses and the Israelites either overlap or could be one and the same. In essence, the city of Raamses may have been built over where the Israelites lived in Goshen. This is an unpopular view due to weaknesses in the Egyptian (man-made) timeline which many hold to religiously, and because it fits so nicely with biblical timelines and accounts. Academia as a whole is not interested in things that concur with biblical truth; they see it not as a source of information but something to be critiqued. But you will not find an archeologist in the Middle or Near East who does not have as a reference book some translation of the Holy Bible. Odd, don't you think? For a thorough explanation of the two different timelines I would like to suggest 4 good resources: 1, Patterns of Evidence (Movie); 2, Riddle of the Exodus, by James D. Long (Book & DVD); 3, Centuries of Darkness, by Peter James 1991; 4, A Test of Time by David M. Rohl 1995.

In Christ
Pastor Portier