

scholarship once appeared to win its greatest triumphs, it has now suffered its most serious reversal!

(4) The Ras Shamra Tablets

Excavations at this ancient site in northern Syria, opposite Cyprus, commenced in 1929, and have yielded a large number of inscribed clay tablets, dating from the 14th and 15th centuries B.C. These documents include dictionaries, price lists, and especially religious texts. The latter shed remarkable light upon the scandalous religious ideas and practices which prevailed in Canaan near the time of the Exodus.

When the discoveries of the Ras Shamra texts were first announced, there were those who eagerly claimed that here was the original of the Hebrew religion, but their claim is open to serious objection. Rather do we have here an authentic picture of the unspeakably sordid religion of the Canaanites, drawn by themselves, of which the worship of Jehovah was the irreconcilable enemy.

These tablets highlight the enormous gulf between the disgusting depravity of the Canaanitish religion and the lofty monotheism of the Hebrews, thus effectively countering the claim that the religion of Israel was borrowed from neighbouring cultures.

(5) The Hittites Rescued from Oblivion

The Bible mentions "the Hittites" over forty times and ranks their power with that of Egypt. But up to about 1860, the Bible record stood as the solitary witness to Hittite greatness. They are never mentioned in classical historical sources. They disappeared so completely from history that 100 years ago some critics of the Bible declared boldly that the Hittites never existed. Then, by means of Egyptian and Babylonian inscriptions, and more recently by painstaking research among the ruined Hittite cities of Asia Minor, this long-forgotten empire has been dramatically rescued from oblivion.

Fully a score of Hittite cities have been excavated since 1892, when Dr. A. H. Sayce published his revolutionary book: "The Hittites—The Story of a Forgotten Empire". Dr. O. R. Gurney's more recent book: "The Hittites", first published in 1952, provides a graphic and detailed account of the virtual resurrection of this ancient nation. So great has been the volume of Hittite inscriptions unearthed, that there are now 20,000 tablets in the Berlin Museum alone!

From this exciting epic of discovery, the Hittites have emerged as one of the most powerful empires of antiquity, ruling over large parts of Asia Minor and Syria, and rivalling the might of Assyria and Egypt, just as the Bible says!

(6) Striking illuminations and Confirmations of the Book of Daniel

Many of the bricks taken from the ruins of ancient Babylon are stamped with the initials of Nebuchadnezzar, echoing the proud boast of this powerful warrior-builder: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?" (Dan. 4:30)

Assyrian inscriptions from the era immediately preceding the book of Daniel, prove that "The Fiery Furnace" and "The Lions' Den" were common forms of punishment meted out to rebels in those days. (Dan. 3 and 6)

The finding of the famous "Cylinder of Nabonidus" at Ur or the Chaldees, in 1854, and subsequent discoveries of a similar nature, have established the identity of Belshazzar, son of Nabonidus, as crown-prince of Babylon at the time of its downfall. Finally, in 1924, the co-regency of Nabonidus and Belshazzar, so long questioned by scholars, was confirmed by the publication of the "Persian Verse Account" which clearly states that Nabonidus "entrusted the kingship" to his eldest son. (Dan. 5)

Cuneiform tablets, found among the ruins of Babylon, dated between 595 and 570 B.C., contain ration lists of foods distributed to Jewish captives. One tablet even mentions "Jehoiachin, King of Judah", thus confirming Daniel's testimony that the Jews were indeed captives in Babylon!