

Bible Study from an Archaeological Perspective

Lesson Two

The **Middle Bronze period** through the **Late Bronze period** – From the Flood unto the Judges.

Review

Genesis 1:26 – *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

Man is made up of body, soul, and spirit (I Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 4:12). It is spirit – “God-awareness” that sets us apart from the beast of the earth and cattle.

Archaeology is the study of the material remains of past **human life and activities**.

Pottery Neolithic Period (ca. 6000 B.C. – ca. 4500 B.C.) Archaeologists claim that they have found evidence of “cultivation of plants and the domestication of animals, followed by the growth of settlements” from this period (Gen. 4:2).

According to Scripture (figuring backwards from the time of the Exodus), Adam “hit the ground running” about **3899 B.C.**, being able to understand, speak, and write words (Gen, 5:1 – 2nd toledot). This would have occurred during what archaeologists call the **Chalcolithic period** (ca. 4500 – ca. 3150 B.C.).

Using the chronological data in Genesis 5 and 11, which gives an unbroken male lineage, with numbers of years, from the creation to Abraham, we were able to place Noah and his children into the **Early Bronze period** (ca. 3150 – ca. 2200 B.C.).

Gen. 5:32 – Noah was 500 yrs. old and begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth – 2343 B.C.

Genesis 6:5-9a – *...every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually* (3rd toledot).

Archaeological evidence:

Author Barbara Bell wrote, “**texts from the period indicate that hardly any form of civil order was absent, ranging from strife between districts to looting and killing by infiltrating Asiatics in the Delta, to individual crime run riot, to revolution and social anarchy.** Reference to famine occurs in several texts” (Barbara Bell, *The First Dark Age in Egypt*, American Journal of Archaeology, Vol. 75, No. 1 (Jan. 1971), p.7).

“...As supporting evidence for a dust storm interpretation, we note Butzer’s (1959b:66) finding that at Hierakonopolis, nearby, **a predynastic cemetery was denuded by wind action, which removed up to 2 M. (6.56168 feet) of fairly resistant silt and exposed the burials, probably**

sometime after the end of Dynasty VI" (Barbara Bell, *The First Dark Age in Egypt*, American Journal of Archaeology, Vol. 75, No. 1 (Jan. 1971), 1-26).

At the completion of lesson one, we concluded that it was more likely that the predynastic cemetery at Hierakonopolis was denuded by the action of water, not wind.

Lesson Two

Gen. 9:28-29 – The Flood – **2243 B.C.** (Noah lived 950 yrs. – 350 yrs. after the flood). Noah was born in 2843 B.C. - 950 = 1893 when he died. 350 years before his death would have been 2243, when Noah was 600 yrs. old. Genesis 8:13 says, *And it came to pass in the **six hundredth and first year**, in the first month, in the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.*

Scripture reading:

Genesis 9:1 – *And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and **replenish the earth.***

Genesis 9:7 – *And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly **in the earth, and multiply therein.***

Genesis 10:1 – *Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth...* (4th toledot). The first three tablets may have been carried on the ark.

Genesis 11:1-9 – *...lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth* (man's way).

Gen. 11:10 – Shem was 100 yrs. old, and begat Arphaxad 2 years after the flood. 2241

The Middle Bronze period (2200 – 1550 B.C)

Gen. 11:12 – Arphaxad lived 35 yrs. and begat Salah. 2206

Gen. 11:14 – Salah lived 30 yrs. and begat Eber. 2176

Gen. 11:16 – Eber lived 34 yrs. and begat Peleg. 2142

Gen. 11:18 – Peleg lived 30 yrs. and begat Reu. 2112

Gen. 11:20 – Reu lived 32 yrs. and begat Serug. 2080

Gen. 11:22 – Serug lived 30 yrs. and begat Nahor 2050

Archaeological evidence:

Miriam Tadmor, Senior curator of Chalcolithic and Canaanite Periods, Israel Museum, wrote, "The principal sources for the study of this short period were traditionally tomb offerings – pottery, weapons, and some jewelry – unearthed in excavations of extensive cemeteries. Traces

of contemporaneous settlements were encountered in the excavation of only a few mounds. Without exception these settlements were poor, limited in size, and of short duration. The absence of towns is in sharp contrast to the rich remains of the preceding and succeeding urban civilizations. To date, no true urban centers of that period have been uncovered.”

“In Egypt this time corresponds to the turbulent First Intermediate period, ending with the Eleventh Dynasty (2134 B.C.-1991 B.C.), and no Egyptian activity or influence can be detected, not even in the southern regions bordering Egypt” (Miriam Tadmor, *Treasures of the Holy Land, Canaanite Period, Bronze Age*, 1986, p. 90).



Middle Bronze Four-spouted lamp with traces of burning, flat base - Amiran – plate 22, #11; plate 59, #1. Found in Jerusalem. Purchased in 1984 from Mount Ophel Antiquities (Prop. Mohammad Abdolah), Silwan: Near Gihon Spring, Jerusalem, Israel.

“The beginning of the second millennium B.C. was marked by the gradual return of urban institutions, which ultimately led to the creation of city-states. These remained the paramount political divisions in Canaan throughout this and the following Late Canaanite period until ca. 1200 B.C. In Egyptian New Kingdom sources, cuneiform inscriptions, and numerous verses in the Bible, the country is known as Canaan and its inhabitants as Canaanites. Cultural continuity corroborated by excavations indicates that both terms can be safely applied to the entire second millennium.”

“At the beginning of this era, under the vigorous Twelfth Dynasty, Egypt recovered its stability. In the course of this period Canaan came under its cultural influence, though it was never actually incorporated into Egypt.”

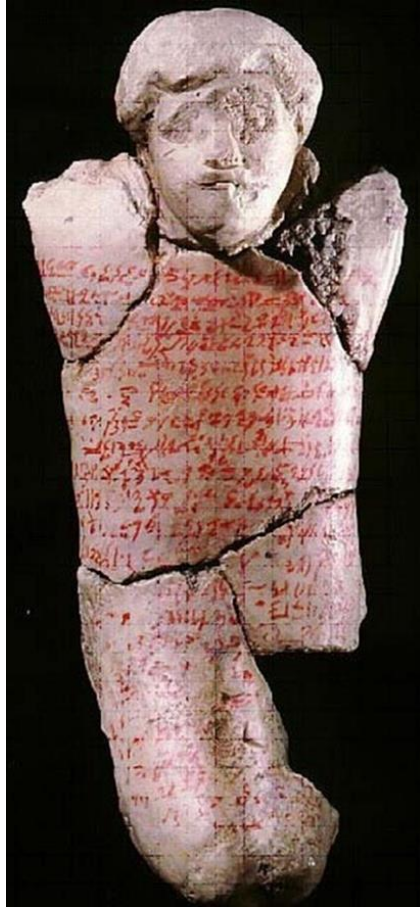
“In Mesopotamia and in northern Syria, Amorite dynasties established themselves in numerous kingdoms. In Mesopotamia the foremost were Assyria under Shamshi Adad I and Babylonia in the age of Hammurabi” (Miriam Tadmor, *Treasures of the Holy Land*, Canaanite Period, Bronze Age, 1986, p. 91-92).



Sumerian Cuneiform Tablet in Clay Envelope. This is an administrative document from the period of the Third Dynasty of Ur (c. 2094–c. 2047 B.C.). Purchased in 2021 from the Estate of F. Richards Ford III, Greenwich, Connecticut.



Egyptian carved wooden lotus flower from the Middle Kingdom (ca. 2030 to 1650 B.C. – Dynasty 11 through Dynasty 13). This would have been attached to furniture such as a chair or a bed. Purchased in 2022 from *Siwa Gallery* Nashville Tennessee.



EGYPTIAN CLAY FIGURINE DATING FROM C. 19TH. CENTURY B.C. THE INSCRIPTION ON HIERATIC SCRIPT LISTS EGYPT'S ENEMIES AMONGST THEM JERUSALEM. THE FIGURINE IN THE SHAPE OF A KNEELING PRISONER WAS SMASHED IN A RITUAL CURSING CEREMONY. © Royal Museums of Art and History, Bruxelles.

Scripture reading:

Gen. 11:24 – Nahor lived 29 yrs. and begat Terah 2021

Gen. 11:26 – Terah lived 70 yrs. and begat Abram 1951

- Gen. 9:28 – 1893 B.C. – Noah lived after the flood 350 yrs.

Gen. 12:1-5 – Abram was 75 when he departed out of Haran into the land of Canaan. 1876

- Gen. 12:10 – 1876 B.C. – *And there was a famine in the land: and **Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there;** for the famine was grievous in the land.*
- Genesis 15:1-6 ...*And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.* This occurred before the Law.
- Romans 4:20-25

Gen. 21:5 – Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born unto him. 1851

Gen. 25:26 – Isaac was 60 yrs. old when Jacob was born. 1791

- Gen. 25:7 – Abraham lived 175 years – 1776 B.C. (1951 – 175 = 1776).
- Gen. 35:28 – Days of Isaac 180 yrs. – 1671 B.C. (1851 – 180 = 1671).

Gen. 47:9 – Jacob 130 yrs. old. when arriving in Egypt. 1661

The Late Bronze Period (1550 – 1200 B.C.)

Exodus 12:40-41 – Now ***the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.*** And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt (**According to Genesis 12:10, the sojourning began with Abraham in Egypt**).

Genesis 12:10 – Abram went into Egypt to sojourn there. 1876 – 430 = 1446

Galatians 3:17 – *And this I say, that the covenant (Gen. 12:1-3), that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.* 1876 – 430 = 1446

Gen. 47:9 – Jacob (along with his children) arrived in Egypt exactly 215 years after Abram did.
1876-1661 = 215 years

The Children of Israel's 215 years in Egypt would end with **the Exodus**. 1446

Deuteronomy 10:1-5 – two tables of stone...

I Kings 8:9 – two tables of stone...

Deuteronomy 34:1-5 – Moses died

Joshua 1:1-2 – ...go over this Jordan...

Joshua 5:13-6:2

Archaeological evidence:

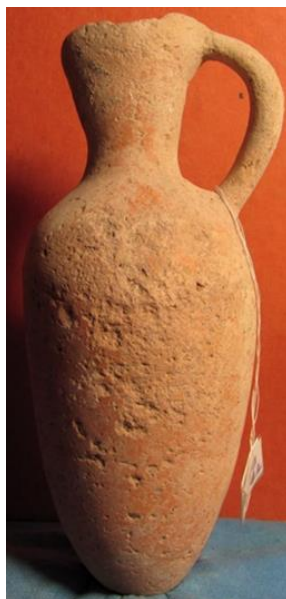
In addition to the biblical references, archeology also affirms the 1446 BC date. John Garstang, who excavated Jericho in the 1930s, dated the destruction of Jericho around 1400 B.C. Jericho was the first city that the Israelites conquered under the leadership of Joshua when they entered the land of Canaan. Adding forty years to Garstang's date (to account for Israel's wandering before entering Canaan) puts the exodus shortly before 1440 B.C. Garstang also concluded that the walls of the city toppled outward, which would compare favorably with Josh. 6:20 (The fallen walls became as a ramp for the Israelites to go up into the city).



Archaeologist John Garstang discovered several scarabs and a seal in a cemetery near Jericho. Pictured (from left to right): a scarab of Hatshepsut (c. 1473–1458 B.C.), a scarab of Thutmose III (reigned c. 1479–1426 B.C.), reverse side of a seal of Thutmose III, and scarab of Amenhotep III (c. 1390–1353 B.C.). Collectively they demonstrate that the city's cemetery was in active use during the time that Kathleen Kenyon believed that Jericho was abandoned. Photo Credit, Israel Antiquities Authority, Jerusalem.



Steatite Scarab Thutmose III c. 1479–1426 B.C. – His Cartouche, Men Kheper Ra



Dipper juglet – Although this type had its beginnings at the end of the Middle Bronze period, it is transitional between the long dipper juglet of the Middle Bronze and the Late Bronze II short dipper juglet and is the common form for Late Bronze I. Amiran – Plate 46, #7; **Kenyon – Jericho V, Fig. 196, #5.**
Purchased in 2016 from Licensed Dealer in Israel – Uri Shovanov.

The Amarna tablets (ca. 1400 B.C.) are a collection of over three hundred diplomatic letters that record correspondence between the Pharaohs of Egypt and Egyptian representatives in the land of Canaan. These letters speak of a period of chaos caused by the Habiru—very likely the Hebrews—during the late 1400s B.C. This also matches up with Joshua leading the Israelites in a conquest of the land during the late 1400s B.C., based on a 1446 B.C. date of the exodus.



A letter from Abdi-Heba of Jerusalem to the Egyptian Pharaoh. 1st half of the 14th century B.C. Akkadian cuneiform text. From Tell el-Amarna, Egypt. Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin.

“Letters from Abdi-Hiba of Jerusalem to Akhenaton of Egypt complain that the habiru were posing a threat to the status quo in Canaan. Some scholars see in these references the Canaanite version of the conquest of Canaan under Joshua” (ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE BIBLE – HABIRU, HAPIRU).

“The present interest in the Habiru is primarily caused by three factors: (1)

the resemblance between the names Habiru and Hebrew, (2) the chronological

relationship between the Amarna Habiru and the Israelites, and (3) the proximity

of their location within the land of Canaan to that of the Hebrews in Joshua’s

time” (S. Douglas Waterhouse, Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, *Who are the Habiru of the Amarna Letters?* 12/1 (2001): 31–42. Andrews University).

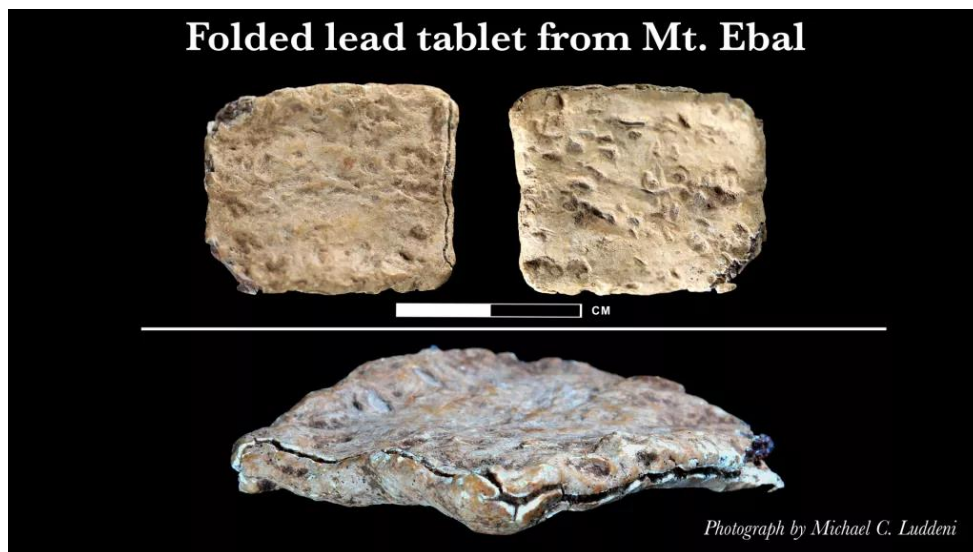
“The Amarna Letters from Jerusalem are of interest for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that they come from Jerusalem a few centuries before King David would ostensibly

vanquish the Canaanite (Jebusite) population of Jerusalem and make it his own capital (II Samuel 5). Also, the correspondence with a Jerusalem ruler in the 14th century provides evidence for occupation in the city in a period (Late Bronze Age II) for which there is little archaeological evidence. Recently a fragment of an Akkadian tablet (now called 'Jerusalem Tablet 1') was found in excavations at Jerusalem, and some scholars have claimed that this tablet contained some correspondence between a king of Jerusalem and a king of Egypt. But this tablet is ultimately too fragmentary to determine if it was a letter. Among the most important things that these tablets demonstrate is that there was a vibrant and sophisticated scribal apparatus in Jerusalem during the Late Bronze Age. This Canaanite city was certainly not a backwater, but precisely the reverse" (Christopher Rollston, *Jerusalem in the Amarna Letters*).



Fragment of Cuneiform tablet ('Jerusalem Tablet 1') found in Jerusalem. Hebrew University excavations unearthed a clay fragment dating back to the 14th century B.C.

Deuteronomy 27:12-13



Archaeologists estimate the "curse tablet," made from a folded lead sheet and inscribed with proto-alphabetic characters, may be at least 3,200 years old. (credit: ABR/Michael C. Luddeni)

Associates for Biblical Research archaeologist Dr. Scott Stripling said that his team found the curse tablet high on Mount Ebal, just north of the city of Nablus, in December 2019.

The ancient Hebrew inscription in proto-alphabetic script consists of 40 letters and is centuries older than any known Hebrew inscription (Khirbet Qeiyafa, ca. 1000 B.C.) from ancient Israel.

It reads: | *Cursed, cursed, cursed - cursed by the God YHW.*

| *You will die cursed.*

Cursed you will surely die.

Cursed by YHW – cursed, cursed, cursed.

The curse tablet came to light when Scott Stripling led an ABR team to wet sift the discarded material from Adam Zertal’s excavations (1982–1989) on Mt. Ebal. The stratigraphy of the site — in other words, the dates of different layers of earth determined by archaeological excavations — suggest that the tablet dates to around 1200 B.C. at the very latest, and perhaps as early as 1400 B.C., Stripling said.

During that time, the Children of Israel had a “conditional” relationship with the Lord. Today we enjoy an “unconditional” relationship! Ephesians 2:8-9 – *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*



Single-spouted lamp with traces of burning. Found in Hebron – Amiran – Plate 59, #19. Purchased in 1984 from Omar Kahyam Museum – Old City, Jerusalem.



Heavy (132.5g) bronze spearhead. Raised central midrib and long, thick tang with hook for mounting in a shaft. L: 6 ½". Purchased in 1984 from the City of David Museum (Prop. Abed Abu Sbeih), Silwan: Near Gihon Spring, Jerusalem, Israel.

NEXT – Lesson 3 – The Iron Period (1200 – 586 B.C.) – From the Judges unto the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

Bud Chrysler, June 2022 – www.biblicalarchaeologytruth.com

