

Israel's Neighbors

By

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Now this subject is "Israel's Neighbors." The first installment of a series that's running in the Era now, and a map; and it shows where certain finds were, twenty finds, these are countries around Israel. Now, if you place these discoveries not geographically, but chronologically in order, you will get a pretty good idea of the steadily expanding knowledge of Israel's relationship to her neighbors, for these great libraries are the records of Israel's neighbors in their dealings with Israel. So, we're going to talk about that. Let's go quickly over the major discoveries, arranging them in chronological order. That's what we have here—a review of the problem, you see.

Well, it begins in 1851, over one hundred years ago. And it begins here. Up here is Nineveh. In 1851 Lyard discovered the great library of Assurbanipal. That was sensational. Well, they have found, among other things, the flood story. It was impossible to question the fact that the primal version of the Biblical legend of the deluge had been found. Well, see if you think it's the primal version or not. People quickly reached the conclusion which a popular writer on archaeology recently expressed. The point is, Aha! Here's where the Bible comes from. They leap to that conclusion right away. Here's the first edition of that. Here's what the text looks like. You see, they reproduce it back here. This is a later fragment, but I have this text of the flood story here. Here's the sort of thing I ran into. Now this is a publication of 1910, when they found much later fragments. In Genesis 6, reading from Genesis 6 and 7, the Lord

says, "I will loosen..." the Bible says, "All the fountains of the great deep were broken up and the windows of heaven were opened." The Nippur version says, "I will loosen, behold I will destroy them with the earth," says the eleventh verse of the sixth chapter, "and we shall sweep away all men together," says the Babylonian record. "With thee I will establish my covenant," he says to Noah. "Life shall come forth before the deluge cometh forth." Whatever connection that is, I don't know. And he says, "And behold, I did bring deluge upon the earth to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life from under the heavens. Everything that is on the earth shall perish." The Babylonians said, "As many as there are, I will bring overthrow, destruction, annihilation." Then he says in the Bible, "Make thee an ark." He says in this one, "Build a great ship." Thou shalt make its dimensions thus, build the ship so-and-so. The roof shalt thou make to the ark its entire length, thou shalt cover it, the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof. It shall be a houseboat carrying what has been saved of life, with a strong roof covering it. That is the Babylonian version. It was Assyrian; it was from the seventh century. They thought it was the original of the Biblical flood story. Well, it was much later than the Biblical flood story, because they started finding others, much older, after that, always getting closer and closer to the Bible story, which turns out to be the oldest one, after all.

But this started raising a question: Now, wait a minute! The Bible isn't the only account of the flood we have. Other people knew about it. And they gave an account very much like the Biblical account. They're living over here, and they have their own libraries, and they're not beholden. They didn't get it from the Bible. Well, we know today that this was anything but the primal version of the story. Much earlier versions have been discovered than the primal

version. Then, in 1977, at Tello, or Lagash, de Sarazek discovered a great Sumerian library. Lagash at that time was not a kingdom. It was a paddy, it was under another capital. But it left us very rich cultural remains, and some very interesting records and histories. We have them here, from an old text. This is Father Diamond's reproduction, and this is the sort of thing they talk about. This is a Sumerian text. This was written about 2,500 B.C., and it says: "The kingship descended from Heaven, to Eridu; there was the kingship. From Eridu, the king ruled, 28,800 years. The kingdom passed over to Bap-ti-Erin, and so forth. Then, Dumuzi, the shepherd, he ruled for 36,000 years. Well, Dumuzi is the Tammuz of the Bible, who was a shepherd, too. So, the many years it lists for this dynasty make up 108,000 years. And then, the kingship went over to the city of Larach. And then it traces down some more long, fabulous reigns, you see; and then, after 241,200 years, came the great deluge, which restored from heaven again. Now we have to skip over here. And the kingship descended in Kish. Notice so many cities are called "Kish," as they are among the Jaredites. And in Kish, Gar was the king. And then the kingship was kicked around some more, and Kalendooz, Kuben Mardo was the shepherd. As you get down, the rules get shorter and shorter—twelve kings reigned for 2,300 years. And then Ur of the Chaldees received the kingship, and that becomes the headquarters of everything. That was Abraham's city.

Well, this king list goes back and gives fabulous reigns, and so forth, but these were real names of real men, and the cities are genuine, and as they are described, sure enough, they are discovered—so that's something. Moreover, they knew about the flood again; and they had the idea that kingship was divine, and it came from heaven, and it was only held by one person at a time.

And among the names was Tammuz, and among the cities was that of Uruch, which was the Erech of the Bible. Again, these people know a good deal about it. And this didn't disturb people at all, because they immediately made up their minds the Bible was a fraud. The Bible people had just taken it from these ancient people.

So for a long time it was believed that Mesopotamia was where the Bible stories come from originally. The legends, the stories of the creation, they're in these records, the stories of the flood, the stories of the fall, of the pre-existence, the council in heaven, these all turn up in considerable abundance, especially in the great Enuma Elish text, which was first published in 1876. It was taken for granted that the Bible stories were legendary. Not only were the patriarchs, but even the kings of Israel were solar myths. Jesus was only a dying and risen year-god of the Babylonians and their neighbors. Well, while Lyard was busy in Babylonia, von Tischendorf was prowling around the Sinai Peninsula, you can find it on there. The map, I say, is rather small, it could be larger. And yet, we go rather far afield, so we'll need all that area, strangely enough. Israel's neighbors finally end up here. That's where we're finding them today, they're neighbors. But they're related. This is the surprising thing we're coming around to now. We're slowly working up to it, you see.

Well, there he emerged in 12859 with the Codex Sinaiticus; we have photographs of the whole thing, every page of it, and we have the Alexandrine (Codex), we have them all here, and the photographs are just as good as the original, in fact, they're better than the original, and much easier to read. And from that they reproduced what they (oh, I didn't bother to bring it along; I had a first edition of the New testament in the original Greek, now we know it wasn't in the original Greek at all) but we're talking about the neighbors. Today, Egypt is being credited with being a far more important

neighbor than Mesopotamia. The ideas did not come from—the closest association is not with Mesopotamia, it is with Egypt. This began with the discovery of the Amarna tablets in 1887. Here I have them both, the whole shebang, the text with the transliteration, and fortunately, a translation. They are written in the Standard Aramaic and Babylonian languages, a library from the middle of the second millennium B.C., in 1500, 1400 B.C., found up the Nile in Egypt, written in Babylonian, but it had nothing to do with the Babylonians. It was strictly a correspondence between the kings of Egypt and the princes up here. They discovered the world language, and even the Egyptians used that instead of Egyptian, writing to people who weren't Babylonians, either. But these records are very interesting, because these records are written at the very time the Children of Israel were supposed to have entered Palestine. This is supposed to have been written at the time of the Exodus. And it shows us conditions that are going on there, these records do. And this is typical from that time: Here's a person, Buraburiash, one of the Canaanite kings, writing to Pharaoh Amonopus the fourth, and he says, our fathers always agreed on these things; and now, some of my business people in a caravan have been raided going through some lands for which you are responsible, he says. And some of my merchants have been killed and robbed while passing through the southern part of Palestine, which was your protectorate, and he demands a restitution. Kenachi is a land under thy dominion, and in thy land my property has been stolen, and I have been the victim of roughhouse, he says. And he asks for a settlement here, and they take it up, and it becomes a long political argument. This is typical of what's going on—long stories of the bickerings between these princes, exactly as the situation is today. The same sordid things happening at Damascus that happen there today. Everybody's

everlastingly complaining that the other isn't paying in as much as he agreed, or that he paid the other person more than he got a receipt for. This jealousy goes on.

And then, here's a letter in Mettoni, of all things, a language nobody knew existed. This is strange. These people are up here, and they're very close neighbors to Israel. Mettoni—these are the people of Midian. These are the people so close to Moses—Moses was married into these people. But their language is a Celtic language. It's related to Welsh and highland Scotch. What are they doing here in the time of Abraham? They had a huge empire there at that time, and they were very much at home, and they had chiefs with nice Indo-European names. We have one of them here, a lot of letters, by a man called Tushruta Rinish Ramonopus the Third, one of the earlier kings. Now Tushruta, as his name shows, means the rushing wheels, the lord of the chariots. You know what the word "rod" is, rota, in Latin, rad, a wheel, in German, anything like that, rod, or rude, and dash, dashing wheels is his name. He's a great king up there, and his daughter marries Pharaoh. In fact, some think his daughter was this famous beautiful queen, Nefertiti. This famous head from Berlin that has been reproduced so often, that has now gone back to Cairo. She was a beauty; she had no Egyptian blood at all. I mean, she was European; she was Celtic. If any of you are Scotch here, she's related to you. If you get into your genealogy, you'll probably run into here some day.

This comes as a great surprise. At the time this volume was got out, nobody could read this language. Nobody knew what it was.

Today we know it's related to Hittite, and Hatti, and some of the other Celtic languages there.

Here's a king, the king of Alasia. As you know, when you fly over Cyprus, you can see all of the island at once, I've got a picture of

it, in fact, a rather bad one, but the whole island, in there at once. You not only see the whole island, you see right over into the Syrian desert, halfway to the Euphrates. All at once, the king of this island is writing and says that his kingdom has been completely depopulated by the plagues. AS the name shows, it's Cyprus, copper island, and the king of Egypt has written for a shipment of copper. He says, I can't give you any more copper, because we've had an epidemic and all the copper miners died off, and we have nobody here. The hand of Nergel, my lord, had brought a plague on my land, and everybody has been killed, especially all the copper workers, he says. So if you would please sell me silver in exchange, and he wants some herds of oxen from Egypt, from the king, his brother here, and he also wants him to send a very interesting thing: one of the Haruspices, one of the Roman lookers of birds, a priest who can "Alneropolosoherispon," as Homer would say, they had them around there then; one of the best alneropolosts, that means a man who can read omens by watching the flight of birds. Birds can tell you lots of things if you watch them carefully. He wanted that. You thought those things came from the Romans, didn't you? Well, here the Egyptian king is being asked for an expert in that art, which the Navajos are especially good at, way back 1500 years before Christ.

He said, the people of my land are beginning to complain very much because we're beginning to send too much wood to you. You know today that it's as bare as the palm of your hand, and it used to bear heavy forests. It was deforested at that early time back there. Well, this is the sort of thing that goes on.

Here's another interesting thing. Adad Nerari, one of the kings up here in Syria, writes to the king of Egypt and reminds him that they should be friends, because his grandfather was installed as king up there by the Egyptian king. And he says, Asmaharib, the king of

Egypt, your grandfather, made my grandfather king of Nukase, and you notice that the name shows "bronze country," king of Nukase, and poured oil upon his head and then he spoke at that time: The one whom the king makes king, and whose head he anoints with oil, whom the king of Egypt, (it comes in here) makes king, and whose head he anoints with oil, let him remain king of forever. So, he said, we should be friends. But notice, back there the king of Egypt was anointing a Syrian king, making him king by anointing him with oil. And this was before the children of Israel ever came to Jerusalem. This is while they were still in bondage in Egypt. They are just coming out now; and the interesting thing is, the last part of the letters, we find them, as soon as Jerusalem is mentioned, we find about the Hebrew trying to take it, capture it.

Here's king Abdijibah. He was the Ammorite king of Jerusalem at this time. They had been ruling Jerusalem for a long time, you see. And, he says, they have been slandering me. They're telling the king of Egypt all sorts of bad things about me. Then he says, everybody is reporting to the king's representatives here in Jerusalem that I have been playing an underhanded game with the Hebrews, who are trying to take the country. See, this sort of thing goes on all the time. It still is going on today. It's so thoroughly typical. Everything is intrigue and distrust, and murder, and propaganda, and lies, and charges, and countercharges, all through this thick volume of hundreds of letters. This is 286 here; there are over 300 of them. And he said, don't believe a word about it, that your representatives, that your ambassadors might report to you. They say to me, why do you love the Habiru? And why do you despise the king's regents here? He says, I don't despise the king's agents, and I'm not in cahoots with the Hebrew. Now at first this was too good

to be true. This is a little too early. The Hebrews, moving in here, what are they doing here? Well, these are their cousins preparing the way for them, this is just before they came and took over; and today it is acknowledged by everybody that these were the Hebrews. For many years, up until five years ago, they said, well, anything that sounded like that was too good to be true, so nobody believed it. These can't be the Hebrew, it just says "Hebrews," is all, it must be somebody else. You had to be scholarly about it. You couldn't be so naïve as to say that when it says "Hebrews" it must be the Hebrews. The only city they are mentioned in connection with is Jerusalem, a pure coincidence, you see. But today, they don't dispute it any more. He says, the entire land, this is the land of Jerusalem, is falling. My enemies have become mighty, because the king of Egypt has become indolent and hasn't raised his hand to help him, he says. But you pay no attention to me. All your regents, all your representatives here, he says, are without authority. The Hebrews are plundering the lands of the king all around with impunity. They're taking over, they're moving in. In another letter here, he says, I throw myself seven times seven at the foot of the king. All the countries around here, you see, are falling. All the villages are in flames. The land of Gazby, the land of Askelon, have already turned over and surrendered to the Hebrews. They've given them food, they've given them oil, they've given them supplies. And this land of Jerusalem, he calls it Jerusalem, her the mighty hand of the king must come to my support. For, this is a very interesting thing, for the sons of Laban have betrayed the land of the king into the hands of the Hebrews. The sons of Laban. Now, you wonder why this Laban, in the Book of Mormon, such a rat, was in charge of the garrison. It might have been, you see, a hereditary office, handed down, an honorary title, remember he swaggered around in all his

armor, his ceremonial armor and this sort of stuff, with his gold-handled sword, and it might have been that their family had that charge, because at the same time, remember, when the Hebrews entered Jerusalem, when they took over the temple there, they didn't take over, they built another one, but before David built the temple he gave the priesthood to the Zadokites, to Zadok, who was a Jebusite. He wasn't a descendant of Israel at all. And who was Zadok? He was a direct descendant of Melchizedek. What was Melchizedek doing in Jerusalem? He had always been there. He was there in the days of Abraham. You see, he wasn't related to Abraham, but he was a righteous king, and he had become king in Jerusalem. There was a priestly line, and it's an interesting thing we know now, from the Dead Sea Scrolls, that when David came in and occupied Jerusalem, he gave the priesthood to one of the priests, to the high priest Zadok, who was already there, who wasn't one of the children of Israel, but who was a descendant of Melchizedek. He had a right to it. And ever since then the title remained in the Zadokite line until it was disputed, a big fight about that later on. But it's interesting here that somebody betrayed Jerusalem into the hands of the Hebrews, and his name here is given as "the sons of Labia." Elsewhere in these letters they are called the sons of Labion. The sons of Labion, the sons of Laban, it's just a guess, but it shows you the type of things that are going on here. Here he says that the king has sent an inspector to come up and report on the deteriorating situation around Jerusalem, it reminds you of Vietnam. He says, a man by the name of Pau Ru has come to the land of Jerusalem to inspect and report that the caravans of the king have been stopped now, the king has established his name in the land of Jerusalem forever and ever, he can't let it down now. He says, send troops, whatever you do. Then he talks about the whole land the king is

going to lose. Here he mentions them again: Naharima and the Caspians moved in, but now the Habirum have taken all the cities of the king. No regent, this is a later letter, see, no representative of the king of Egypt is left here; they have all fled. They have all cleared out, and the Hebrews have taken over. They have gone to seek refuge in Lachish. You have sacrificed you servants—they have all gone over and joined the Habiru, he says, and joined the Hebrews. There's a revolution in the land; all the people that were supporting Egypt are now on the side of the Hebrews. They only went over. So, here the Hebrews come from Egypt. Well, this is a most remarkable discovery, of course, because it brings the Jews into the picture. The discovery of inscriptions, shortly after this, from a slightly earlier period, in the Sinaitic inscription, the Sinai Peninsula, in the salt mines, in the mines here, they discovered a lot of inscriptions written with Egyptian hieroglyphics, but they weren't Egyptian. They used the sound values of the Egyptian symbols to write their own language; and it turns out that their own language was Canaanitish, was a north Semitic, and very close to Hebrew—it practically was Hebrew. So, as a result, today, first of all, there was a big dispute. They said, all right, look: The Jews got their alphabet from the Egyptians. And they got it when they came down as seasonal workers in the mines, down in Sinai. But now we've found out that this Hebrew alphabet goes clear back to the 18th century B.C.

They had it first in Canaan before that. But the Sinaitic version was adopted by all the Semitic-speaking people in the west around 1200 B.C. It's a new picture of Egypt, you see—very close, Egyptians and Canaanites and Hebrews working together continually for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years. All the time Egypt was very close to Canaan and Israel. These contacts were clarified by excavations at Byblos, up on the Syrian coast, which have

been continued to the present time. While I was there recently, they had just found a temple just jammed full of Egyptian vessels, beautiful alabaster vessels from the old kingdom, to celebrate the jubilee of King Pepi the First of the sixth dynasty. They didn't realize that he was going to go on for fifty-two more years after his jubilee, no, for longer than that, for fifty-eight more years—and the jubilee was when he had reigned for thirty years already. It was the longest reign in history. But here they celebrated his reign in a temple in Byblos up here, about thirty miles north of Byblos, there it is.

This, on the coast; and Byblos, not only there, but we have lots of stuff: inscriptions in Egyptian, from predynastic times, from the times before there were kings in Egypt—before the first dynasty, that is, there were kings. Before the first dynasty, we find very active trade with Beirut, and with Byblos. The oldest ships in the world were sailing there, and they were big ships. They would carry mostly this timber; they were for bringing timber to Egypt from Lebanon, bringing these huge cedar logs, which were so valuable, way back then.

And then, in the next year after this was discovered Byblos, way up the Nile, at the first cataract, the library of a colony of Jews that lived up there in the century after Lehi. These are the Elephantine letters; well, Elephantine is way up the Nile, here. But here were Jews living in the fifth century and sixth century B.C. And they write letters back to Jerusalem asking for permission to rebuild the temple. Well, what were they building a temple there for? Well, they said, we build a temple... how did they get down there? Well, Professor Albright discovered when Jerusalem fell at the time of Lehi, they all fled, you see, in all directions, and these people went up the river, and the first thing they did was build a temple there. Well, they said, the only temple would have to be in Jerusalem. They couldn't have any other temple like that. Remember the first thing

Lehi did when he settled was build a replica of Solomon's temple. It's exactly what these people did. And we have the letters here, they're all here, we'll read you from one about the temple. It gives the text here—they're in Aramaic. Then it says: A certain rascally official has ordered the temple to be destroyed. Remember, this is during the Persian occupation. Well, this brings the Persians into the picture. And then he said, they can't do this. Then the temple which is in Yeb, (that's Elephantine, the Egyptians called it Yeb, and our word "ivory" comes from there: Yeb, you see, Yeberi) and that was the cataract, and they would bring the stuff from central Africa, and then they would have to trans-ship it, because they couldn't get boats over there, and then it would go down the Nile, and this was the big ivory center. So our word "ivory" comes from there, and here they are in those old letters, but much older. We have writings about Yeb from 2700, 2800 B.C., way back there. But it's still called Yeb, and he tells how they destroyed it. He says, already in the days of the kings of Egypt, before Persian occupation, our fathers had built that. (This was back in Lehi's day.) Our fathers had built that temple at the fortress of Yeb. And when Cambises came into Egypt, he found that temple built; and he ordered the other temples of the Egyptian gods to be shut up, but he allowed this temple to continue operation. The Persians were usually good friends with the Hebrews, as you know. Cambises was the son of that Cyrus who restored the Jews to the temple, rather, the other side, in fact the first. And so he said, you don't want to destroy the temple now. And he says, when this was done, we with our wives and our children put on sackcloth and fasted and prayed to Jehovah the Lord of Heaven, who let us seek our desire upon that Wandrang, he was the man who destroyed the temple, and they had their vengeance on him, but they prayed to Jehovah to avenge themselves. Well, here are the Jews, having a

temple way up the Nile back in the sixth and seventh centuries B.C.—a surprising thing. The Egyptians becoming closer and closer, more and more intimate as friends of the Jews, as neighbors to Israel.

Well, in the same year as this discovery, in 1906, there was unearthed at Bokazkoi, in the heart of Asia Minor, a huge library written in cuneiform on clay tablets. Assyria and Babylonia are up here. But up there, in the same year this was discovered here, they discovered another library, which is Hittite; but Hittite wasn't deciphered for 20 years after that. People always held, up until 1926, they believed the Hittites were a myth; there never had been such a people. Now we realize they ruled one of the largest empires in the world, and one of the most important at the time of Abraham.

These non-Semitic languages, well, the Amarna letters were also in cuneiform, though they were written between the Egyptians and the Canaanites, neither of whom used it as their own language. The Amarna tablets also contain a number of tablets in unknown languages. Well, these finds up there in Asia Minor explained this. These non-Semitic languages spoken in and around Palestine during the middle of the second millennium were the languages of the ruling caste of a mixture of peoples that invaded Egypt and Babylonia, India, and the west, all at once in the 18th century B.C. A big invasion, the people of the mountains, Aloronians and various names, the Cassites invaded here, at the same time the Amorites came in here, the same time the Hyksos went into Egypt, later on the people of the sea followed them, and these people who'd invade all the classic lands way back in the 18th century B.C. were our relatives and ancestors. The leaders had good Indo-European names, and from then on, they're there to stay. And they're very close to the Israelites. They intermarried very much with them, especially Abraham holds the key here, because Abraham moved them.

Remember he bought all his land from them; he made all his deals with the Hittites. The Bokazkoi finds, then these people founded great kingdoms and even empires. Those are the Hyksos, the Mettani, Luristan, these are new kingdoms just discovered the last few years, the last ten years. Here—there are kingdoms like Luristan down here, like Mani, like Urartu, the kingdom of Van, the Nuhasi, dozens of kingdoms down there, these mountain kingdoms, but their rulers were this ruling caste, this ruling class. Sometimes the people themselves, Mettoni was the main center, later it was taken over by the Hittites, they were all cousins to each other, all related. Up until the decipherment of Hittite after 1926 scholars actually considered the Hittites, who figure in the Biblical history of Abraham as either a scribal error or a myth. In 1925 and 1926 the archives of the Hurians, a hitherto unknown people, were discovered at Nuzzi. In the same year that this was finally deciphered, here at Nuzzi, way up here, they discovered the archives of the Hurians. Well, they are the eastern cousins of the Hittites, and they took over Palestine, so that later on the Egyptians always called a Palestinian a Hurian, Pahor, and so we have Pahoran in the Book of Mormon. It simply means the man of Palestine—it's a good Egyptian name. The name occurs, actually it occurs already in the Amarna tablets.

Well, these Nuzzi tablets give a full and vivid picture of private and public business in a world that began to look more and more like Abraham's world. Then, in 1929, in Ugarit, way up here on the northern coast, they discovered the library at Ras Shamrah. These were Phoenician people, these ere Canaanitish people. The language is Canaanite; there are three different peoples there, but mostly Canaanites, and very closely related to the Hebrews. The language is almost Hebrew. These baffled translation for a while because they were in cuneiform, and then it suddenly occurred to someone that

they were in a simple alphabet. They only used 25 or 26 characters, they used a regular alphabet; but because they were in cuneiform, everybody thought it must be something terribly hard. It turned out to be in an alphabet—the Hebrew alphabet, the same order of letters as in the Hebrew alphabet—showing you how extremely old the Hebrew alphabet really is. And how old Hebrew is, and how old this culture is. Moreover, the archives from Ugarit here were a temple archives. Along with business records, we have the archives of their temple, with their ordinances and rites—and these cast an enormous lot of light on the passages we never understood in the Bible.

A few years ago, just in 1960, they discovered 30 more big crates (I saw what they were like), 30 more crates of tablets were discovered here in 1960. So they haven't come out yet; nobody knows what's in them. At the time this was edited, these were all the texts available, this is as of 1949. But this is what they are talking about. They are ritual texts and things like that. This is what's going on. Toward the convocation of the assembly in the midst of the mountain of the Lord at the feet of Ale, "do not fall." Ale is the word they use for God here, just as they do in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The very same word is used 1600, 1700 years later in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The word for God is "Ale." "Do not prostrate yourself before the convocation of the assembly." What we have is an assembly describing a council in heaven, and somebody, it turns out to be Satan, is arguing against a plan that has been given here. Toward the mountain of Ale, toward the convocation of the assembly, the Gods had come and they sat down. They hailed Baal as the principal God, but there was someone who refused to humiliate himself. They said, why do you fall down and worship Baal? Why, oh Gods, have ye lowered your heads on the top of your knees, yea, upon the thrones of your Lordship? Then there is a rebellion about the succession, and

these old temple texts go on here. It talks about the drought, then it describes some of the rituals, and then he says: I have a word that I shall tell thee, a matter that I will declare to thee, the word of the tree, the tree of wisdom, here. Yea, the whispering of the stone, the counsel of heavens to the earth, of the deeps to the stars. I understand the lightning which the heavens do not know, a matter that men do not understand, nor the multitudes of the earth understand. Notice, this is the language of Job; this is the language of Apocryphal writing, isn't it? It sounds very Gnostic, also. And this is actually the source of a lot of that stuff; you trace it down in unbroken succession. But when it talks about the murmur of the heavens to the earth, remember the psalm, "the heaven and the earth speak to each other, and the murmur of heaven to the earth, the deeps to the stars, I understand the lightning which the heavens do not know, a matter that men do know, nor the multitudes of the earth understand." And then there is practically a quotation from Revelations 13 here: I crushed the writhing serpent, the accursed one of the seven heads. I crushed the darling of the devil, the serpent, the evil serpent, the one who drove Baal from the heights of Sappan. He was driven and descended. Well, that long mountain, snow-covered ridge, looking very much like Timpanogos, is the mountain Sappan. It's quite high. I was up on Moran, didn't get to the top, but quite recently up there they have discovered signs of great conflagrations. This is where they used to burn the fires to Baal, up on the top of that mountain. It's mentioned repeatedly here, and here's a surprising thing. The two oldest peoples in the East are the Egyptians and the Sumerians, and the original home of the gods of the Sumerians was this very same mountain, as the gods of the Canaanites, this mountain of Sappan. Noshapponnos is the mountain of the north, the mountain where the devil set himself up.

Well, you run into all sorts of traditions and familiar tags, Old testament lore, and things you run into in the Jewish scriptures.

This library at RAs Shamrah revolutionized everything, because this was right at the center. What you find here is very close to the Greek drama, and very close to the Old testament at the same time. Well, here's a Greek drama a good thousand years before Thespus is supposed to have written the first Greek drama, what he'd learned to do there, you see. Everything is being tied together now. (What I should do here is stick to the text, it might make clearer what we're getting to here.)

Now, let me see. Oh, we forgot to bring this one along. Well, you can be glad of that. In 1930 they discovered the Chester Beatty papyri. We have beautiful reproductions of them, colored and everything, just as they were. I would read you some of the newly found Book of Noah from that, that would be very nice.

A new flood of light on the discovery of the patriarchal age came with the discovery of the Mari library in 1935, a great library discovered in 1935 on the upper Euphrates. Nobody ever thought the Sumerians ever were that far, but there they are, way up there; and here we are taken right into the world of Abraham, the same sort of deals are being made, the same laws are being observed. The same great men arte traveling with their families, making bargains to settle, fighting as they go, joining up with kings and leading expeditions against coalitions of kings, it's exactly as Abraham operates, in the same area. Well, almost at the same time, and under the same conditions, the oldest Jewish library in the world and the oldest Christian library were discovered in 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Nag Hammadi library discovered at the same time.

Well, here, for example, we have the, among the Dead Sea scrolls from the cave, the Genesis Apocryphon, it is the story of

Abraham in Egypt. It is a much fuller story than we have in the Bible, much fuller, and of course it is very interesting if you look at the Pearl of Great Price. We can't talk about it now, but it tells how Abraham went into Egypt with Sarah, and how Pharaoh got sick, and how Abraham laid his hands on his head and administered to him. Pharaoh then wanted to make a covenant with Abraham and give him his authority, just as it says in the Pearl of great Price, remember, he had him sit on his throne, and hold the insignia of his authority. Abraham could not exchange the compliment; he therefore fell into disfavor with Pharaoh and had to leave. But he left a rich man—it all had to do with his holding the priesthood. All sorts of things in here about Abraham. This was discovered in 1947.

And a very old text—we have pictures reproduced and transliterated. The reproductions, I assure you, are much better than the originals. They are taken with infrared, they are much easier to read.

So, this shows a different type of neighbor, incidentally. These neighbors are the people of the desert around there, and, we should mention, deal with various sectarians. Well, from this brief and superficial sampling of the sort of thing that has been going on, it will appear that the emerging picture of the Bible world has been drawn largely in terms of Israel's relationship to their neighbors. Notice, very little new information of the Bible comes out of Israel itself. It is her neighbors that are supplying it all. Well, some does, but we don't bring that in; we have enough, we have our hands full with the neighbors, with the time we have her.

But actually, these are the most important finds. First, Babylonia commanded attention as the very source of basic biblical teachings of creation, the early days of mankind. Then the center of gravity shifted to Egypt. Then a number of unknown peoples

intruded on the scene with finally the Romans. This is the new development now, with Cyrus Gordon and others at its head—he isn't the only one—bringing the Greeks into the picture very closely, that they are very close cousins of the Jews. All along, the more intimate neighbors of Israel are not neglected. What about the close people, the people in the desert right around them? In 1886, Wellhausen's famous *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* trace the Old Testament practices and beliefs back to the primitive tribes of the desert. So they jump to this conclusion. I happen to have a, oh, I left it in the office, I have a first edition of that, so it's just as well, I left it here, too. But here they said, look—all the ancient customs of Israel are found among the tribes of the desert, among the primitive Arabic tribes. In the following years, folklore and higher criticism forced the whole Bible picture into conformity with an evolutionary pattern beginning with these primitive desert peoples, living right on the spot, you see, and culminating with Fraser's world picture of all religions passing through the same inevitable stages of development, independently and in total isolation from each other.

However, Fraser's successors at Cambridge continued to accumulate and compare information, until by 1930 they had changed the picture completely. They had arrived at a totally different picture of things. The pattern of the ancient coronation rites throughout the world, for example, they found to be at once far too elaborate and far too uniform to have been the product of spontaneous generation by primitive people, and the years between their two studies, 1930 and 1958, saw the filling in of the gaps everywhere. This is the salient characteristic of our own times, the filling in of the gaps, so that all these people are actually related to each other, closer and closer and closer.

Let's see what's been going on, what do they signify. Consider the situation of Mesopotamia today. Ah, Babylonia, we're coming to two. Abraham, we are told, is a typical Apiru, an outsider, a traitor, and official, and a warrior. These were called in Babylonian lore the Tunkaru, and sure enough, Abraham comes from Ur of the Chaldees. He began there, you see. But today they say that it might have been one of the other Urs, because this is a new development that is extremely important—namely, the duplication of names everywhere. I just read an article that said, when you come upon a name like Judah or Meser-Egypt, it doesn't mean Judah or Meser-Egypt. It might, but it might not. Because of colonization from the earliest times they colonize and they always name the colony after the place they come from, and the same people, and so on, so it could be Judah, it could be many places. And the same thing with Ur—a lot of Urs have now been found. Ur of the Chaldees may be up there in Haran, way up there in the north, in the mountains, in Syria. Or, it may still have been the old Ur, but this is the complication. We could have been warned by the Book of Mormon to look out for that, because they came over and started duplicating all the names, they were spread around here. Well, just like our own ancestors when they came over here, they started giving Old World names to places here. Also, the duplication of names raises new issues. There were at least five kings by the name of Hammurabi, which was the one which Abraham had his dealings with.

It didn't have to be the great Hammurabi, it could have been one of the others. And Hammurabi's date has been changed recently, as you know, received a serious jar, they have had to knock 200 years off the whole chronology of the ancient world, it has been brought down because of Hammurabi, for a couple of hundred years. When I went to school, the greatest authority of Hebrew myths was Ignatius

Goldsealer, who was convinced that the patriarchal history of the Old Testament was pure mythology, based on, this is quoting him, the impression made on man by various phenomena of nature, and that these myths, he said, developed into either religion or history. Today that sounds like something out of the speculations of ancient Alexandria or Bassura, simply fantastic; and yet when I went to school, we were given that as scientific fact. That's the way it is. They couldn't have been further wrong. Today, all the patriarchs are flesh and blood people. Abraham, as Nelson Gluck has shown, really did fight with Chederlaomer in the Negev. He really was at home in the cosmopolitan capitols of Mesopotamia, Syria, and Egypt, as Wooley shows. He really did bargain with Babylonian, Syrian, and Hittite lords and officials, as Albright and Gordon have shown. There was nothing primitive about him. The old law of an eye for an eye is, as W. Lambert, the new man at John's Hopkins, has recently demonstrated, contrary to what might be expected from an oversimplified evolutionary approach, a late comer in Mesopotamian law. You only find the old law of an eye for an eye coming at a very late time; it's not primitive at all. Likewise, the gods of Babylonia are not ancient. They are a holdover from primitive times, and a later elaboration of the theologians. So, when you find the ancient gods, they come late. They are an invention of the poets later on, and the theologians. But when you go back to these early records that have so much in common with Egypt, you don't have a lot of gods running around.

Around 2000 B.C. the Amorites started moving into Mesopotamia, bringing with them a language closely akin to Canaanite, but according to Lambert, by the time they reached the south, they spoke the old Babylonian dialect. Well, the point is that we have a constant moving about and fusing of language and ideas

and culture, all over this area. Samuel Cramer has shown that the earliest records of Mesopotamia, the earliest, those of the Sumerians, describe an epic milieu. That is, a time a world migrations and heroic traditions, a state of things closely resembling that obtained in other epic literatures, whether it is from Germany or England or wherever it is, and very much, of course, like the story of Ether, like the Jaredite story.

From the first it was noted that there are remarkable similarities between the Gilgamesh Epic, the earliest epic we know about, and Genesis, yes, but also the Greek epics of Homer and Hesiod.

The Gilgamesh story is very old. Not only is it found in the first written records, it is represented on seals a thousand years older than those records: the earliest story we know about. Not only its version of the flood story, this is where you get your flood story, from there, it is substantially the same as that of the Old Testament, but now we find out that it contains the gist of the entire first ten chapters of Genesis. The more recently discovered Acrahasis version, it is called the Acrahasis text, this is the oldest version we have of this, the story of the flood as told to Gilgamesh by Noah, and he tells him the whole first ten chapters of Genesis, way back here in the oldest record we have. The importance of this epic, writes Lambert, is that it has the same outline as the early chapters of Genesis and the Greek and Roman myths of origin best known from Ovid's Metamorphosis. The Greeks and Romans told the same stories? Yes, they had the same stories and told the same things. Well, how does that happen? I'm about to consider that.

These are not merely stories—they have eschatological importance. These people are trying to answer the great questions of life, and so on and so on. During the 1920's and 30's a controversy raged as to who had priority in these things. Mesopotamia or Egypt,

which is the older? Well, that was settled before long, it is settled now—neither. It didn't begin in Egypt, and it didn't begin in Babylonia. We don't know where this story began, the story of the creation and the flood, and all this sort of thing. They don't tell identical stories, but obviously they are using the same sources, and we don't know what the sources are. It does not originate in Mesopotamia or Egypt. We do not dwell on the intimacy of Israel and Egypt throughout history, that is well enough known. Egypt is full of Israel, and Israel is full of Egypt. Literary ties between the two cultures are becoming more obvious every day. Drioton showed, just before his death, that one of the classic works of Egyptian wisdom literature is just like Hebrew wisdom literature. We might as well stop kidding ourselves, they belong to the same tradition. But Drioton shows that one of the most important wisdom texts was the same among the Egyptians and the Hebrews, because the Egyptians had got it from the Hebrews, not because the Hebrews had got it from the Egyptians. The Hebrews had the oldest version of the wisdom literature. And the same thing goes for the Babylonian wisdom literature. Recently a big collection of it has been made by Lambert. We may have a chance to refer to it later.

Well, we have a lot of examples here. The lives of Moses, and Joseph, and Abraham are closely bound not only with Egypt, but specifically with Egyptian religion. Joseph married the daughter of the high priest of Heliopolis of On. He was the great seer, the highest Egyptian religious official, next to Pharaoh. Moses himself was, according to Josephus, a priest of On. (This is the On of the Bible). On was the prehistoric center of what is now designated as the Memphite theology, and it is only in the last few years that scholars have brought themselves to admit that the intimate resemblance of the Memphite theology not only to the stories of Genesis, but also to

the Gospels, especially that of John, is not just a coincidence. This is being traced back now. See, the thing is, Joseph married into the high priestly family of On, Moses was a high priest of On, according to Josephus, the Jews are very closely connected now. The oldest document in the world, older even than that which is being found in Babylonia, supposedly, is the Shabako stone. Well now, this Shabako stone is the old ritual of On, for the dedication. And it's a very familiar document. It would be very familiar to you if we started reading it. I have a copy of this here, a reproduction of it. It has come in for a lot of study lately. This is known as the Memphite theology, the remainder of the stone. The Memphite theology, and this Memphite theology carries right on down through the Old Testament, right into the Gospel of John, and into the Gospels, into unbroken succession. This is what a lot of people are pointing out today. We could read to you from that, but we're not going to have time to read from these various records.

H. H. Rowley says the view that the Hebrew prophets were an entirely unique phenomenon in the religious history of the world is one that cannot be maintained. There were prophets in other countries. The Egyptians had genuine prophets that taught just like the Hebrew prophets. The Greeks had prophets, genuine or not, that taught just like the Hebrew prophets. The Babylonians had prophets that taught just like the Hebrew prophets, up to a point. It has become quite impossible because of the finding at Maury. There, for example, we find a large prophetic literature. Well, here's where Abraham was, too. It has become quite impossible, he says, to treat Hebrew prophecy as an isolated phenomenon. Well, it is clear enough from the Bible that Israel's closest neighbor, geographically and culturally, was Canaan. But here we go into Ras Shamrah. Well, let's just read a quotation in 1960 from Gordon. He says, "The

location of Ugarit (that's where this library was, up on the north Syrian coast) is such that in it the currents of the Semitic and Indo-European worlds cross." The Semitic cultural elements, basically those of Canaan, included a strong mixture from Mesopotamia. Notice, they were all mixing in. The Indo-European here, we find a library with books by people from here, they're Egyptian, a lot of Egyptian there, a lot of Babylonian and Sumerian. There's a lot of Hittite, a lot of Hurian, a very close connection with the Minoans and the Myceneans. Since 1955 we have discovered that these people were actually Greeks all along. So, very closely connected with the Greeks, all mingling together there, this is going on for hundreds and hundreds of years, these people are the closest cousins to the Jews. And the Greeks are our own cousins, too, so everybody's turning out to be related to everybody else. Gordon says, the Semitic cultural elements, though basically those of Canaan, included a strong mixture from Mesopotamia. The Indo-European elements, that's ours, embraced the Hittite and especially the Minoan, two different of Indo-European. Since that was written, it has been shown that the Minoan, and more probably the Mycenaean civilization was actually Greek 600 years before Homer. In the records we are made aware of the actual presence here in this city, in Ugarit, all at once, rubbing elbows, were people from Iran, from Beirut, from Byblos, from Tyre, Sarebja, Akka, Joppa, Yodna, Amareya, Nujasi, Sibbariya, they were Assyrians, Alasians, people from Cyprus, people from Greece, people from Egypt, Lysia, people from Spain, people from Aramea, everywhere, they were all together there all the time. We find there the rites and ordinances of the later temples and festivals at Jerusalem explained, we find the prototype of the Hebrew kingly cult as represented in the psalms of David. We find our own ancestral alphabet from the 17th century

B.C., our own alphabet, mind you. We find an eschatology that is cosmic and not local, with a God who is the Lord of the entire earth, not Baal of Ugarit or Byblos or Tyre or Sidon, but king over all the grand earth. We find the origin of the Greek theatre. We find the bridge between the great epic literature of Mesopotamia, of Greece, and of India. Because, this is an interesting thing, so many of the proper names of the great chiefs and merchants that did business here were Indians, were the eastern Iranian, the eastern branch that went down into India at this very same time. They are the very same people. So there is not a country here that is not included in this city. We have met people from everywhere. And they have their records there. These people were very close to the Jews—this is the interesting thing, closer to the Jews than anybody else.

We find from the first, all along, with our own alphabet, people speaking languages demonstrably related to our own, and we find proof of the historicity of the patriarchal narratives of the Old Testament, while explaining the peculiarities of the latter, which long led higher critics to suppose the Old Testament was a patchwork of editing and composition. It's not a patchwork or anything of the sort.

Well, how is Israel connected with these people? Here we have Indo-European rulers, rulers at Ugarit, rulers from the mountains, from the steppes, and from the islands. There were people here from all the mountain ranges along here, going clear down here, people from the steppes, they had come in here, and especially from the Turanian steppes, and peoples from the islands of the sea probably as far west as the Atlantic. They are turning up here. Well, what have they got to do with Israel? This is the fundamental institution as the Levirate woman marrying here late husband's brother in order to have children through him, that's a Hittite institution, it's not a

Semitic institution. Abraham in Hebron lives by Hittite law. Ezekiel 16:3 actually tells the people of Jerusalem they are a mixture of Amorites and Hittites. And the Hittites, remember, as their name shows, they had come in from this side. Their other cousins were off in here, the Hurians. They had come in in several ways, but they were also related to the Hotarian down here, and way off here they have the Incoton, nearly to the Pacific, way up here, they were speaking the early form of our language, it was being spoken up here, before these people ever went in there. They were spread from here clear over to here. They are related, you see, to the Welsh, and the Scots, and those people, spread all over the place, and especially they are close to Abraham. Abraham marries sons and daughters into the Hittites, some of them he tells not to marry, remember, but others do marry into the families of the Hittites. His best friends are Hittites; remember, he buys his father's grave, he buys his own farm from the Hittites and lives there by the Hittite law. The dealings he makes are according to the Hittite law, we know now.

One of the unique glories of early Hebrew literature, as of the Greek literature, was their willingness to write history. This was a thing the Hittites gave them, too, writing honest history, instead of polemic or myths. The strict patriarchal order of the family is characteristically Hittite, as is the royal progress, the ideal of chivalry.

When one considers that their language was a Celtic tongue related to highland Scots and Welsh, one realized that because of their discovery, writes J. Patterson, an authority on the Hurians, he says the Old Testament horizon must now be expanded and its history interpreted against this larger background. Indeed, he says, we must learn to hold converse with the whole universe. To understand the Old testament, especially in patriarchal times, you've got to take all these people into consideration. They belong right in the picture.

And yet, as late as 1926, scholars seriously maintained that the mention of the Hittites in the Old Testament was simply a scribal misunderstanding. The Hebrews designated as Hittite whatever was non-Semitic, and the Assyrians seemed to use the word "Hittite" in the same loose fashion. Actually, as Albright notes, it is better to think of the Hittite culture as highly syncretistic, that is, a mixture of lots of things, and not as a homogeneous civilization. Often they are equated with the Hurians, that being their eastern, or possibly the original Asiatic branch of the family, as against the later Hittite occupation of the west. According to Peter Bulk, the Hittite writings, while containing Babylonian material, demonstrate the Hurian background of the heseipseogeny of the earliest Greek religious writings. Right through the northern belt of the highlands we find the great mixing of peoples under Indo-European lords, who represent a common face everywhere. The Jafadji vase from way over here, Jafadji, looks exactly like the earliest Greek vases we find, and these steppe people, as Getze calls them, actually ruled the world between 1800 and 1750 B.C., even Egypt being but a province of their empire, whose center was to be sought somewhere in Asia. They invaded, ruled, and occupied all these countries, and their blood is still in all of them. They are intimately intermarried into Abraham's family, too. They are the cousins of the Mettani, whose great empire immediately succeeded theirs. Were the Mettani the Biblical people of Midian so closely associated with Moses? Some scholars think so. Their name has also been equated with Midan, with Manda, the people of the hordes, which describes them very well, as well as with Mada, from which come the later Medes, the people of the many. These run into the Urar, too, the Sumerians, the Scivians, the Armenians, and all our ancestors were right there. They can be traced right back to these people here. And very close

to Palestine at this time. The point is that no matter how we designate these people, they spoke a language akin to ours, and were probably in our line of genealogy, and at the same time they enter into the Bible picture. Not in some late or exotic form, but fundamentally and from the very beginning. The aforementioned Nuzi tablets, the most eloquent testimonial to the real world of Abraham, are actually Hurian, Nuzi being a Hurian community; while the Haran area, remember, Abraham's ancestors came from Haran, that's where his father Terah was from, you see—he went back there and settled, from which Abraham's family originally came, lay within the confines of the Hurian kingdom of Mettani. The Egyptians even called Canaan the Huriland, so that the familiar late Egyptian name Pahoran, in the Book of Mormon, actually means “the man from Palestine.” Late in life we find Sopahoran, and also because of his family name he probably had Hurian blood, was one of our relatives, so the great judge Pahoran, in the Book of Mormon. He was the son of Nephihah.

Late in life we find Abraham settling on Hittite land, which he buys from honorable Hittite hosts while his children intermarry into Hittite families. There are some striking affinities between the social and customary systems of the Hurians and the Hebrews, Patterson notes. But the connection may be even closer. Gordon notes the striking fact that the old system of the milieu, the old ethnic system, we can't go into that here, is preserved today only by the Greeks and the Hebrews. The Greeks and the Hebrews are the only people that survive from the ancient world. And the Greek and the Hebrew languages are the only languages that survive from that time. And they are actually very close. Greek and Hebrew civilizations, he concludes, are parallel civilizations built upon the same eastern Mediterranean foundations. They are the only survivors of the

ancient order. It was the records of Ugarit that provided the clues showing how Achaeans, Trojans, Philistines, the Philistines, remember, were Greeks, and Hebrews, from whom Palestine was named, during the second millennium belonged to the same international complex of people. What Gordon tries to show in his new book is not blood relationship, but common cultural and religious heritage. What the Hebrews found and took over when they came to Canaan was essentially the same Mesopotamian law that the Greeks got through Crete. The Greek epics of Homer, Hesiod, and the Heraklean cycle are prehistoric, Babylonian, the Gilgamesh Epic, very closely connected, which, in turn, has so much in common with Genesis. Old Testament sacrifice has close technical analogies with Homeric sacrifice. We are given many instances here. Minos has rightly been compared with Moses, who received the law on the mountain. These themes of the Pentateuch are shown on the shield of Achilles, some people think. Homer's depicting of kingship is the best possible information for understanding of the early Hebrew kingship. The traditions about Greek prophets, especially Teratius, are of prime interest for their Biblical parallels. He was a real prophet. The world of Homer is the world of David and Samson. After all, the Philistines, Israel's closest neighbors in the beginning, were Greeks, and never left the scene; they stayed there. It was with the help of Philistine mercenaries, as Pigot notes, that King David was able to establish himself on the throne of Judah. He didn't get the support, remember, from the tribes—his army was Philistine.

Heikelhein has shown that Ezra's Palestine had a surprisingly close tie with Periclean Athens. Dor, on the Palestinian coast, near Haifa, this is the airport of Jerusalem, right up there in the time of Nehemiah was an Athenian colony, right in the midst of the Israelis, and that was the city of Dor. The Greek carpenters, Greek

shipbuilders, sailors and mercenaries, built the greater Phoenician and Egyptian fleets in the time of Lehi, and almost a thousand years before Myceneans were entrenched on Cyprus and had intensive trade relationships with Syria and Palestine. The recent excavation of Hazor, it's the biggest ancient city in Palestine, in Israel, and the Israelis have been excavating it, and what do they find? It's practically a Greek city, from way back, from before the time that the Hebrews moved in there. It was Mycenaean, it was Minoan there, and it's just full of this stuff, cypriotware, Mycenaeanware, of the late bronze age, in the city of Hazor, the Jews moved in there, and lived on there with the Greeks. The Phoenician, early Egyptian, Sumerian, and Akkadian traditions fuse from the beginning; and from the beginning David and Solomon went to the Phoenicians to be fitted culturally. But in the 8th century, it was the Greeks who took over the Phoenician cities, and these ties are enduring. Philo, the greatest Jewish philosopher, was a Phoenician from Byblos, while Xenon and Boethius, the two greatest Christian philosophers, were both Phoenicians. The New Testament, Bunkel notes, is actually a Greek book. And yet at the same time it's a peculiarly and intimately Jewish one—how could it be both? The two traditions were really quite close. The study of the earliest Jewish archaeology had produced things which quite amaze one familiar with the accepted traditions of Judaism they're quoting, since they show the early Jews are completely Greek in their expressions. The old Jewish Testament of Job doesn't hesitate to depict Job's three daughters as the equivalent of the graces and give them Greek names. More striking is the appearance recently of a number of studies dealing with the common ancestry of the Jews and Spartans. This is an interesting thing. It is perhaps not without significance that the Greeks of the Pindus mountains, that is, all of central Greece, north central Greece,

all through the Middle Ages were not members of the Greek Orthodox Church, but observed the traditions and practices of the Jewish sectaries of the desert, and called themselves Josephites. But they weren't orthodox—they were Josephites all through the Middle Ages.

After all, the closest neighbors of the Jews in modern times have always been the Arabs. Ever since Sir Robert Wood's study in the 18th century it has been fashionable to describe Abraham and other patriarchs as "noble and rather primitive sheiks of the desert." They did move around a good deal in the desert, but what is desert now was largely cultivated and even forested land in those days. While their mobility brought these men into constant contact with all the civilization and sophistication of their time, it also preserved them from being absorbed by these. Actually, we don't find real Bedouin Arabs in the Old Testament at all. They are first mentioned in 853, and by Nehemiah—they are mentioned in the time of Nehemiah. What meets us in patriarchal times is, as Edward Meyer observed, rather the dwellers of the transitional areas between the desert and the towns. The Patriarchs he describes as being "half-nomadic." See, we're just warming up. This is just section 1, so don't be discouraged. We'll get to our subject.

We turn to section 2 here. Well, this goes on about the primitive people, about the Amorites, and so forth, and how they are related. Anyway, the Arabs were not the original ones, they have been there all the time. They have much in common, but there has always been a very fundamental difference between them. ON the other hand, Hebrew relationships with Persia are quite close, and we go into this here somewhat, as in Gnostic connections. The Persians seem to have had an inside track on the gospel. They have all sorts of things, which don't turn up in other ancient religions, whose records are older, but this is the point. It doesn't originate with the

Persians, but they just assimilated this stuff. There is hardly also a thing which doesn't meet us again in the apocryphal literature of the Jews and Christians, in a form indicating more or less close association with Iran. The demonology, the doctrine of angels, the resurrection, the asceticism, the war between light and darkness, the incarnate Word, the preexistence and return to the heavenly home, the heavenly glory with God the King of Kings, baptism, the pessimistic view of this life, the miracles, the martyrs, the prophecies, the apocalyptic visions, the secrets, the signs, the mysteries, each of these elements is at home in the Iranian religion. They had all that stuff, you see. But you find it older among their neighbors. We don't know where they got it from, or how long they had it. The prehistoric Persian year rite was equated by Gressman to the Christian Easter. The influence of Zoroaster is found to impregnate the philosophy of the Greeks, and Neoplatonism, and the Christians. Massive Iranian influence has been discovered in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and hence in all the closely related writings of the pseudo-Clementines. Molen notes how the movement represented by Qumran community branches out to embrace Judaism, the swarming Baptist sects of the time, the Ebionites, Islam, and finally conventional Christianity. So it goes down the line. Tracing it, we trace clear back to Elam now, and the Mandeans. They are another group.

Well, the best thing to do, I suppose, would be to just talk about these things, the Mandeans. There's a straight line. Well, here's a quotation from somebody who ought to know. George Wittengren, in fact. He is the best authority on this today. He concludes that there is a straight line that leads from the old royal rites of Mesopotamia going back to seals 5,000, 6,000 years old, right down to Mandaean baptism. The Mandeans were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in the running water. They

were a very interesting sect, the Mandeans. This shows you what goes on. A few of them survived down there, about 2,000. But they say they came from Palestine, and they say they came from the very same place where the Dead Sea Scrolls people came, when Jerusalem fell. First of all, they had been driven out into the desert because of the wicked Jews at Jerusalem, to preserve the gospel in its purity. They are connected with Jonadab and Rekhav, who fled from Jerusalem just before Lehi did, for the same reason Lehi did. And he preserved his people pure and intact in the desert, as Lehi had intended to. And he settled out there, and his descendants are still living there. But no one would believe that they were Jews because all their doctrines and their practices were so Christian. But now we know they are genuine old Jewish practices. And this is the sort of Judaism that Lehi took out of Jerusalem with him, the kind you find in the Book of Mormon, not the kind you find in the Old Testament, which was very carefully edited and expurgated by the rabbis later on. They took all these elements out. Now, we are finding this out today because of these older documents being discovered. And another interesting thing, of course, is the way Islam is coming into the picture.

Well, it's hard for us to believe today that not many years ago the bible was regarded by higher critics and fundamentalists as a singularly isolated book. The Mormon scriptures presented what purported to be a type of early Judaism, which resembled not only Christianity, but betrayed elements of other ancient religious traditions as well. There is so much Iranian, so much Persian stuff in the Book of Mormon, for example. And it depicted a singular universality of outlook and mixture of cultures and blood in the Judah

of 600 B.C. Remember, only half the names in the Book of Mormon are Hebrew names. The other half are Egyptian with a scattering of a couple of Greek names and a few Hittite names, and a lot of Arabic names, good Arabic names, all in this mixture. But nobody knew anything about that then. They thought the Bible was one book. Now, this is the picture we get. All this shocked and scandalized intelligent Christians of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Egyptologist J. Peters protested that the Pearl of Great Price, for example, displays an amusing ignorance, by which Chaldeans and Egyptians are hopelessly mixed together, he says, although they are as dissimilar and remote in language, religion, locality, as today are the Americans and the Chinese. As late as 1916 they could say that the Egyptians and the Babylonians, the Chaldeans, that's southern Babylonia, later, or northern, either one, it's used by deMorgan for all of prehistoric Mesopotamia, he always calls it Chaldea. You could actually say that—the Pearl of Great Price is crazy, because it has Egyptian s and Chaldeans together, I mean you had the same cults, the same religions. The priests of Ur have their ideas presented in Egyptian cryptograms explained by Abraham. Now, this is crazy. As late as 1916 they had no more connection, culture, language, background, than the modern Americans and the Chinese. It wasn't long before Moray came along, and he actually argued, and so did Albright, that Naram Sin was actually Menes; that the king of the first dynasty in Egypt was actually a great king of Mesopotamia, the same king; and that Egypt was often, we know now, definitely, it is not disputed at all, that the first two dynasties, the so-called finite period, Egypt was under Chaldean rule. But nobody ever knew that, as late as 1916. You see how everything's fusing together now. Everything's running into everything else. AS late as the 1920's so eminent a scholar as T. E. Peak could insist that the accumulating

points of resemblance between the literatures of Egypt Babylonia, Greece, and Palestine, was a pure coincidence, they had nothing whatever to do with each other. There was no contact whatever between those civilizations. Well, how silly, when today we can walk from one to the other without any trouble, you can fly over them, well, of course, it's embarrassing, because they are so close together. They are stepping on each other's toes today. I mean, militarily. It's a very dangerous situation. Today, however, we are being told, there's a quotation from Albright in which he says, "The Bible strikes root into every ancient Near-Eastern culture. It cannot be historically understood until we see it in its relationship to its source in true perspective. The Hurian, Hittite, Sumerian, Ugaritic, Akkadian, must all be taken into consideration. While on the one hand, we now see the Old Testament, instead of a uniform surface, a variegated world of widely differing literary documents and authors."

See, the Old Testament itself has broken up, and yet it has become unified as never before. This is a strange thing; it is a double play. The process is both centrifugal and centripetal. The Bible reaches out to all these cultures and draw them together in a single complex here; while a short time ago, for along with increasing awareness of its own variety and complexity, which a short time ago ended up in almost complete fragmentation of the Bible in the hands of the higher critics, comes the growing awareness of the essential unity and wonderful consistency of the scriptures. It is now realized that Israel was no more isolated in her language than she was in her religion and culture, that Hebrew is heir to a large common stock of Semitic words, and borrows freely from other languages. That's a quotation.

The net result is not to undermine the unity and originality of Hebrew, but rather to explain it. The tremendous new world recovered by archaeology and philology, philological research, writes

Albright, underlies and under girds the Bible. To understand it, flexibility and willingness to change one's own ideas are both absolutely essential. One of the things most powerfully brought home by post-war archaeology is "the essential uniformity of the earliest civilizations," just as one of the first results of prehistoric studies was an awareness of a strong impression of the essential uniformity of later civilizations, that's the last step today, was first indicated by the studies was awareness of strong impression of the essential uniformity of later civilizations, that's the last step today, was first indicated by the studies of comparative literature and folklore. The scholars who pointed out numerous and striking parallels in medieval European, Greek, Indian, Arabic, and Chinese literature were at a loss to explain why they should all be telling the same story. "Until the missing texts are found," quoting one here, "any explanation can only be the purest speculation." But the missing texts were forthcoming; they were found. For example, we can now fill in the once gaping emptiness between the remarkable parallel wisdom literatures of the Jews, the Egyptians, and the Babylonians, showing (I think this is Lambert), "that all three collections form part of a cosmopolitan whole." The mantic sciences of the Babylonians, the Chinese, and the ancient Etruscans, how widely scattered they are. The Etruscans, way over there in Italy, the Chinese, way over there, and the Babylonians have the same peculiar mantic practices, that is, divination by liver, and all that sort of thing. How do you explain that/ Well, they are now being connected up. The gaps are being closed. The recent discovery of a Megarian type of Greek vase, a very early and religiously significant object, in Vietnam, is now explained as reflecting a common prehistory. Finding prehistoric Greek pottery in Vietnam. What next? They didn't bring it there, you understand. "I have slowly been forced to suspect, " Professor

Goodenough confesses, "that the spiritual history of the development of western man cannot be written as a series of disjuncted essays." An essay on the religion of Babylon, on the religion of Egypt, on the religion of so fourth and so on, up to the present, because that won't work any more. He says he has slowly been forced to come to this conclusion. Rather, it must be seen to be a continuous adaptation of certain basic symbols. The dominant motif today in the world picture is that of continuity. "There is a general Zusammenhang," as Kertz says. "Everything hangs together, in which the historical element comes to life in the web of lively interchanges. This universal historic outlook is in direct opposition to our formal, classical concept of history of only a few years ago." Hebrew prophecy, we are now told, grew out of a background of ancient near-eastern prophecy going back very far and spreading widely. "Everything in the Old testament," as Schofield observed, "has substantial analogies among other peoples." Everything in the Old Testament has analogies among other people. But when we go to those other people, we find that all their stuff has substantial analogies to their neighbors, too. A good example is Egypt. Years ago the orientalist Ellis noted that the custom of naming people and things and peculiar practices of heraldry were the same in England as in Egypt. And yet, from that very same period, what do we find? Is that an accident? He explains it as a striking example of the unity of man. Man is the same everywhere, therefore he will develop these cultures spontaneously. Today we know that isn't so at all. Man does nothing like that spontaneously. But when Stonehenge could be dated at 1450 to 1250 B.C. by Egyptian beads, they have now dated Stonehenge by the Egyptian beads found there, not made at Stonehenge, but made in Egypt. So now we know the age of the rites there, the 14th and 15th centuries B.C.

We begin to suspect the connection may be something more than a common biological and psychological background. It seems strange today that the really close ties between prehistoric Egypt and early Sumer, which are now taken for granted by everyone, they were practically the same people, should have been doubted and discredited for so many years. Nothing appears more obvious today.

One is reminded of the long controversy that was raised, and we have it here, in the library, among the philologists in the Pages of Antiquity, that's the name of the journal, as to whether English and German were related languages. Now, anyone here would think that's absurd. Of course they're related. The word "man," "house," and anything else you're going to talk about, they're practically the same thing. Oh no, no sir, they wouldn't accept that. The scholars said, that's too easy, that's too obvious, as to whether English and German were related languages. With typically conservative British scholars stoutly denying anything but the purely fortuitous resemblance between the two languages. That was purely accidental, just as today they can still deny the connection between Green and Minoan Script B. Today the prehistoric story of the contest between Horus and Seth, in Egypt, is recognized in the rites of the Sumerians, the Hittites, the pre-Hellenic Greeks by Montay, the greatest archaeologist in that field, who actually hyphenates "Sumero-Hittites." He like to hyphenate "Sumero-Hittites" here. So this makes our relatives, the Hittites, connected with the first people to use writing, along with Egypt, the oldest civilization in the world. Nobody knows where they came from.

We might mention that for years conservative scholars denied that there ever were any Sumerians, or that there was a distinctive Sumerian language. It took years to prove to them that that was so.

In fact, it would seem that conservative scholarship is equally

enthusiastic in denying relationships between ancient peoples, and denying their individuality. First, they deny that there are distinctive Sumerians, Hittites, or pre-Hellenic Greeks, they have done that all in our generation, and then they deny that they were closely tied to any other people. The longest and most stubborn denial was the connection between Babylonia and Egypt, which, as we have seen, scandalized critics of the Pearl of Great Price as late as 1960. But Egypt was not only aware of the existence of Babylonian, Minoan, and Phoenician civilizations in the beginning, but her merchants and priests were quite at home in those lands. The early Sumerian epics, written in the Aramean cuneiform, not in Egyptian, were first found in the great library in Upper Egypt, and in pure Akkadian, a northern Mesopotamian dialect, in another library in central Asia Minor, along with a Hittite translation.

If the prehistoric Act of Thomas speaks exactly like the Book of the Dead and the prehistoric Egyptian pyramid texts, that's no accident, for the Memphite theology can be traced in an unbroken line, we mentioned before, right down. The Greek theatre is now held to be of Egyptian origin, and the depth and great age of Greek dependence on Egypt for spiritual, scientific help, becomes more apparent every day. When we read in the *Denigma* of Aristotle of the four souls, writes Cyrus Gordon, we are dealing with the Aristotelean development of the basic, eastern Mediterranean concept, whose intimacy is already attested in the pyramid texts of the 3rd millennium B.C.

Long ago, Sir Flinders Petrie made the surprising statement, "We are the heirs of Egypt rather than Hebraism in our Christian ideas." He based this conclusion on the fact that conventional Christianity has come through the minds of the doctors in the University of Alexandria, a strongly Egyptianized institution. Greek

thinkers classified with wise men of Egypt, and wise men of India, and visited them both. The discovery of the old Sumerian Era-Epic has shown that the institution of the traveling wise man and teacher, as well as holy man, the traveling bard and scholar goes right back to the dawn of history. Now this is the thing: From the earliest times in all these civilizations, people traveled—prophet and bard and merchant all the time, and teachers and scholars, and they would travel from one great university to another. When? As early as we can go back. The nine earliest records we get from Mesopotamia, the earliest production we have, the earliest writing we get from Egypt, were produced in schools—and these schools were visited by traveling scholars from distant lands. So, they were exchanging these ideas, these concepts all the time. They would give sermons in each other's temples, and they preached a single gospel everywhere you went. It was always that way, as far as we can see.

From prehistoric times the great cult centers were also schools of international fame. They played no small part in producing that surprising state of uniformity that characterized all the old religious writing and cult practice, no matter where they come from. The mobility of religious personnel, such as prophets, explains the spread of religious teaching and institutions. The original impulse to see the origin of a Biblical element in whatever ancient non-Biblical writing the same elements occur has long since been discredited. Today nobody sees detailed parallelism. When a thing occurs in the Bible and you find it somewhere else, it doesn't mean that the Bible got it from there. The Bible is just as old, the Bible has just as much priority as anybody here. But how do we account for this, then? Nobody today sees parallels between the religion of Christ and the cult of Mardu, Anton Mortgat points out. No one today would derive the eastern story from numerous statements of Biblical and patristic

writing, which also do appear in Gnostic works, largely pirated. On the other hand, it is a rare scholar today who would deny the reality of those resemblances. The resemblances are real, they are not accidental; they are all preaching the same sort of thing, and they are no longer attributed to mere coincidence. To explain their significance is at present the major prospect of Biblical studies, the major program or project.

When H. J. Schepps affirmed that primitive Christianity, the Ebionites, the Moslems, and the Catholics, are equally legitimate witnesses and proponents of the message of Jesus, he is offering an interpretation of the phenomenon, the overlapping of all these with each other, the sharing of common basic teaching. But how did they all come to share the same ideas? One mechanism we have just mentioned—the traveling prophets, teachers, and so forth. Another is the migration of the sectarians. When Jerusalem fell, the sectaries of the Dead Sea, along with others, scattered all over the Near East, just like the Jews. The Jews aren't the only people who have undergone the diaspora. You see, the Jews, "In they seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," because of Abraham. They were scattered. Again and again they were scattered throughout the whole world. You find that in the most unlikely places, there they are. Well, this has continued, and other people have had the same thing happen. Other nations have been scattered, too. So that means everybody is mingled with everybody else. It's this constant stirring. If you stir the colors, or the soup or whatever it is, you are going to get a uniform substance, and this is exactly what happened. So, we get the migrations of the sectarians. The sectaries of the Dead Sea—there's a good example—moving individually and in group to Egypt, to Persia, anywhere they can find safety, and then on as businessmen, as travelers, visiting their relative, coming back and

forth, moving just as much then as they do today. It has been recently found from the study of name lists that the Jews living in Egypt in Roman times were exclusively from northern Mesopotamia and Syria. The excavations at Dura have shown in a single street, this is from the early centuries of our era, half a dozen different churches.

This street is very interesting. This is Dura from the second and first centuries, it's from around 250. Along this street, six different churches of different religions, including Christians, a Jewish synagogue, Zoroastrians, there are all sorts of churches together there, side by side there. They knew each other's ideas—the members lived side by side in the little city, and inevitably exchanged ideas. Altheim shows that Mohammed is the conscious successor of Mani as the bringer of the world religion. The world religion idea has always been at home; that's not a new thing, when the Bahai come and say "we have now grown to the idea of a world consciousness." There has always been the world religion in the Near East. That's not a new idea at all, any more than the "moral law" is a new discovery or was discovered by Amos of the prophets. That has been there all the time. The basic idea of these religions, as the man says, you don't read in the Ras Shamrah fragments about the god of Ugarit of the god of Tyre—it's the god of the whole world. And it's so in Egypt—Ammon rules all men, all animals, all flesh. And it's the same in Babylonia. Mardu rules all men, he is the father and the shepherd of all men, and this is so in the earliest religious records we find everywhere we go. It is not that man's religious ideas evolved to a higher plane until they drew in the wider concept of things. That is the old evolutionary concept, and it's no good.

Blending with those ideas, Zoroaster, well, universalism is no late invention or astounding insight. It runs through the Egyptian

and Babylonian texts from the beginning, as Gordon noted, it's characteristic of the early Canaanitic literature as well. From the beginning, Zeus is the father of gods and men, and not just of the Greeks. What, then, remains unique to the Jews and Christians? What, the, is theirs, if everything belongs to everybody? Their nearness to the source—they are nearer to the source than anybody else. That is what they always insist on, in arguing with their neighbors, and surprisingly enough, their neighbors had no answer. Every people puts its own stamp on the common heritage, and where the gospel is concerned, the stamp is just as important as the heritage. The Jews and the early Christians were loud in their insistence that the rest of the world was in outer darkness by its own will and choice—that it had the traditions and it knew about them, and it had the opportunity to accept them, and it had rejected them.

So it's not surprising we find them there. Having deliberately chosen to follow the ways of darkness that would exclude them from a knowledge of the light, that the light had been brought to them, and all but thrust upon them time and again, not only brought to them, but thrust on them, only to receive their emphatic rejection. The strange thing is that Israel's neighbors actually bear this out. You read, we have these same ideas, among all these people we've been mentioning, but when we ask them, where did you get your religion from, is it the true religion, what do you know about it, they always give you the same answer: We don't know. We don't know where it came from, and we're not very sure that it is the straight thing. But it's different, you see, with the Jews and the Christians. (Conventional Christianity has always rested its case on certain basic assumptions. First, that Christianity is an absolutely unique and original religion; that there are no inspired writings outside the Bible, all else being the work of mere men or depraved imposters; that one

possesses the complete gospel, in the Bible, or else nothing at all of the gospel; that, since all that is not Christian is pagan, and all that is pagan is abominable, any further information that is to be obtained, another point, is to be got only through official interpretation of given material, and not by revelation or by new discoveries, either one). This is basic to Christianity. Of course, against this concept the Later-Day Saints place the constantly reiterated statement of the Book of Mormon that God speaks to more than one people, nay, that he speaks to all people as well as they are able to hear him, that there are prophets we dream not of, that the Lord has visited nations completely beyond our ken. "No people is completely without the gospel," Brigham Young used to say, "and no people has the complete gospel." We have the Pearl of Great Price conveying God's mysteries in the idiom of Egyptian cryptograms. We have the first leaders of the Church acknowledging the divine inspiration of a Mohammed. We have venerable chiefs and wise men of the societies, of Indians, the islanders of the sea, and so forth, called primitive, leading their people toward the Gospel by dreams and prophecies, many stories of that. If the Old and New Testament stories, teachings, concepts, and idioms turn up in the religious literature of various ancient societies more and more, that simply confirms the Mormon position. (Students everywhere have leapt to the conclusion that the flood story and the Garden of Eden motifs in ancient records of many people discredits the Bible by showing it to be just another primitive presentation of old myths. What it discredits, however, is their concept of what the Bible should be—a unique, perfect, absolutely complete, flawless source of all knowledge, a thing which the Bible itself never claims for a moment). There is more than one possible explanation of the common elements of religion of Israel and her neighbors, extending ever on to distant places. If it is possible that the Jews drink in with

the traditions and follies of their neighbors, to quote the Book of Mormon, as their own prophets often accuse them of doing, we do have them being corrupted by their neighbors, often, it is also possible that other people besides the Jews possessed some of the truth. True, their versions are never just like the Biblical ones, and are sometimes patently fantastic, but why not? Since everyone agrees that all ancient traditions have been to some degree altered and contaminated, or as the Doctrine and Covenants says, Section 91, "there are many things therein which are interpolations by the hands of men." You wouldn't expect to find the same uniform story everywhere, but the traditions of the creation and the fall that the Egyptians and the Babylonians and the Greeks are most frank to confess their uncertainty. They have some knowledge of the same traditions we read in the Bible, but they disqualify themselves as competitors with Israel. They do not compete with Israel, they disqualify themselves. Take the pyramid texts, for example. This morning I went through some of these, and I opened at random, and it was at the 17th chapter—and how many times does this occur? I made a quick translation here. It is this 17th chapter here. After man has died and is buried, his spirit goes to the underworld and rests in a pleasant place, and that's what he is doing here for a period of time. And this discusses that, and it shows a good knowledge, you see, of things, but what do the Egyptians know about it? It is good to recite, it starts out here, it is good to recite while you're still upon the earth, for then all the words of Adam come to pass. There the word they use is Adam here, which the great French scholar Alexandre Maure showed to be the word Adam, our friend Adam, our parent, the same one, the first ancestor, he's talked about here, come to pass. I am the god Adam rising. I am the only one. I came into existence in the other world. It am Re who rose in the

beginning, the ruler of this creation, he uses the word expressively, the ruler of this creation. This is Re, when at the beginning he rose at the city of Hericleopolis as a king for his coronation. You see, they celebrate it there. The pillars and support of the world had not yet been created. It was in the preexistence. I am the great god who created himself in the other world, who made his name to come forth in the company of the gods, in the beginning. Then there comes a questionnaire. Who is this? This is Adam, in his atom disc. But others say it is Re when he rises on the eastern horizon. I am yesterday, and I know today. Who is this? Yesterday is Osiris, and today is Re. When he overthrows the enemy of the Lord of all space, when they fought in the heavens in the beginning, when he established his son Horus to be the prince and the ruler. But others say that today is Re during the festival which we celebrate here, of the meeting of the dead Osiris with his father Re. And when the battle of the gods was fought in which Osiris, the lord of Amenti was the leader—Osiris represents Christ, they call him. What is this? the question is asked. Those of Amenti, the creation of the spirit world, of the gods when Osiris was leader in Setamentit, but others say that it is the Amenti which Re has given to me. I know the god who dwells in it. Who is this? It is Osiris. But others, however, say that his name is Re. I am the Benu bird, who is in On. I am the keeper of the volume of the books of the things which have been, and the things which will be made. Who is this? Others say it is Osiris. Others say it is the dead person himself. Others say it is the dead body of Osiris. And yet others say it is the exponent of Osiris, the physical world. Others say that these things that have been made are eternity, and the things which shall be made are everlastingness, and eternity is today, and everlastingness is the night. Well, you see the point. Here is a very early text. This text was actually penned,

well, not very early, around 1700 B.C., but of a much older text. We have versions of this text well over a thousand years older than that. But you notice, they don't know what it's about. Some say it might be this, it might be that, you notice the two things that appear here. All these show remarkable knowledge of a single tradition, but they are at a loss to explain that tradition. Well, what does the Pearl of Great Price say? Pharaoh was blessed, remember, as to the kingship, he was a good man, but cursed as to the priesthood. He didn't have the authority or the knowledge. But they have these traditions, and they are genuine, they go back, obviously, they are not made up independently by a hundred different races and peoples. They are much too complex, and much too uniform. But they are always the same. You are always going to get this same picture.

Now we turn to Babylonian religion. Take the collection of Lambert here. We mentioned this before. Lambert has recently collected, this is called the Babylonian wisdom literature. These are the statements by the most holy and righteous of the Babylonians, and these were good men who sought righteousness, and yet, did they have any hope? Did they understand their doctrine? They have a wonderful description of the creation and the fall, and the Garden, and the Ark, and all that. They know all these stories, but as he says about them here, the universal incidence of death seemed another injustice, since the ancient Mesopotamians looked for no rewards or bliss in the afterlife. The gods lived forever, why not man? The old Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh is written about this topic. Several Sumerian Gilgamesh stories were taken, one of which, the Gilgamesh in the land of the living, describes how he was tormented by the thought of death, and conceived a desire to achieve immortal fame by some outstanding deed, but there is never any hope in this. Here is what he is told when he goes to find out about it the resurrection,

and about life hereafter. Gilgamesh, where are you rushing? The life which you seek you will not find, for when the gods created mankind, they assigned death to men. They kept life in their keeping. As for you yourself, Gilgamesh, fill your belly day and night, be happy, every day at pleasure, you see, nothing to live for, day and night, dance and rejoice, put on clean clothes, wash your head and bathe in water, gaze on the little one who holds your hand, let your spouse be happy in your bosom. This philosophy has not one word about religion, writes Lambert. They don't understand. You see, they have these traditions, they know these things, but they don't know the gospel, they don't see where the reality of it comes in. He says no one word about religion. And it's a moderate Hedonism. Here is an illustration. Mankind is deaf and know nothing. What knowledge has anyone at all? He knows not whether he has done any good or an evil deed. Where is the wise man who has not transgressed and committed an abomination? Who is there who has checked himself and has not done an abomination? People do not know what is to be done. God reveals what is fair and what is foul. He who had his god, his sins are warded off. He who has no god, his iniquities are man. Then he goes, this is the writer of the Ludlue, the most famous Babylonian theological hymn. He goes beyond the view that a man can only learn right and wrong by divine revelation. He can never distinguish good and bad because the gods are so remote. All this they have lost connection with. Revelation is out. That is the only way we could know, but he says, no, it's all too far away, and this theme runs through all of these. The writer of the Ludlue, he says, advance this theory without enthusiasm, and turns away in despair. No solution seemed adequate. This is so with every single Babylonian writing. They had a wealth of information, but they

were completely and wholly pessimists. They had nothing to look forward to at all.

Then we come to, let's say, take the most pious of Greek writers. I think I brought Pindar along. Pindar is the most holy of all the Greek writers, and he starts out saying in the beginning of his first ode, now he says some marvelous things here, he has this vision, but he doesn't know where it comes from. Listen to what he says in his introduction here: The world is full of marvelous things, he says (GREEK), and men start talking about those things and change traditions to the strangest ways (GREEK). And he says, as soon as men start using mortal discussion and talking about the true gospel, he uses the word *ton alephe logum*, the true logos. When men start talking about the true logos, he says, before you know it, they have decked it out and so changed it with their own mistakes, with their own corruptions, with their own *psedesipoichilois*, with devious and various devices and invention, that (GREEK), that they end up as deceptive myths. You notice these things aren't myths. A myth is something somebody invents to explain something that has happened.

It should be ritual, it's mostly ritual, or a historical even, you invent a myth, but these are never invented. Nobody invents them. We've never discovered anyone inventing them. They borrow them from other people. You don't borrow myths, you invent myths. These are not myths, but, he says, men start working on these themes, and they change them around, and they make them myths, he says, deceptive myths. And then he says an interesting thing. The gift of poetry and speech, he says, has such a peculiar and charming effect, that he says, it actually possesses the power to make true things seem false, Plato used the same expression, and false things seem true. And this is often the case, he says. How do we know which of these traditions he's going to talk about is true and which isn't? He

doesn't know, you see, he just doesn't know. They have been so larded over and changed by human tradition, so many interpolations by the hands of men, along with many things therein which are true and mostly translated correctly, as the 91st section says, there are these interpolations, and so he doesn't know. And this is exactly why Plato says that we cannot allow Homer to be taught in our schools. Not because Homer isn't inspired—he is inspired—but he's not consistent. He says, we can't tell when he is inspired and when he isn't. We have nothing to go by. We have no revelation today. We don't know; so Plato's best advice was leave it alone. We can't use it because we don't know.

Well, this is the difference between these people and Israel. They do have the same legends; they do tell the same stories, you see. But Israel stays right on the track, and these other people are not only off the track, but they admit it, they admit that these are divine, that this is the old tradition. They don't know how to evaluate it, they don't know what to make of it. Another good example would be Ovid, now, Ovid's metamorphosis, you would swear, here is the Latin poet, the Latin pagan poet, you see, writing for the emperor, and you would swear he got the whole thing right out of the Bible. But he doesn't. he talks about the earth being organized, and so forth, but when he talks about the authority of what he's saying here, this right here in the Garden of Eden and then the fall of man, but when he talks about his authority, (LATIN), whoever it was of the gods that did this, if there was a god at the creation, he says, and then he says, he's talking about Noah after the flood, now, repopulating the earth, receiving the covenant again, and here's an interesting thing. Do you know who it was who was sent to give the covenant and the sign to Noah? According to him, it was called Deukalion—it is Iris. Well, what is Iris? That's the rainbow. Well,

in the Old Testament Noah sees the rainbow. There's Iris, as if he was taking it right out of there. But where he talks about him receiving the covenant here, then he tells a peculiar story, a fantastic tale of how Noah and his wife, in order to repopulate the earth in the shortest possible time, threw stones over their shoulders, and some of these stones became people. That was the way they planted the earth. Now, he puts in parentheses after that, *quis ho credit*, who would ever believe this if we didn't have the testimony of great antiquity to support it? I never would believe it, he said, if it wasn't a very ancient tradition. He doesn't know what to go by. But you see these things do become corrupted, and yet you could see the same story there.

Well, I see the time is up, and I wanted to take up the very interesting Mandaean document down here, the Chase brethren of Basra. That has so much, this is a remarkable document. In the ninth century they got out an encyclopedia. They show astounding knowledge of things. They knew so much more than people did later on, there's just no comparison. There is one long essay on the germ theory, it just explains the germs, various diseases, and so forth, beautifully, and all about it. But when this starts out, it is the same sort of thing. And again, they are very much perplexed about their sources. This whole first part is about the war in heaven, and so forth, and what we're supposed to do about it, and how the rites and the ordinances have been lost.