***Archaeology - CA-008***

Only God knows the future. We have been considering the subject of fulfilled prophecy. We're going to look at a few more.

**Moses**

Turn with me to Exodus 3:12. We see that Moses witnessed prophecy being fulfilled right in front of his eyes. When Moses had communed with God at the burning bush, God said in verse 12, after He had commissioned him to go to Egypt to free the Jewish people, "Certainly, I will be with you, and this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you. When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain – right here in this very mountain." And sure enough, you can find this fulfilled in the last chapters of Exodus – from Exodus 19 on through the end, when God met Moses at that very mountain after he had led the Jewish people there. So there is a fulfillment for Moses that he had to wait a number of years to see.

This is not to mention the snake. God told him to throw his rod on the ground, and it would become a snake; and, then pick the snake up and throw it on the ground, and it would become a rod. That was prophecy. No one knew that was going to happen but God. This is not to mention the leprous hand in the same context when Moses' hand became leprous, and God said, "Put it in your bosom and then take it out," and so on. That was fulfilled prophecy. Only God knew that was going to happen.

**King Zedekiah**

Another fulfilled prophecy we can see in King Zedekiah. He was the last of the Kings of Judah before the captivity. In Ezekiel 12:12, we found a prophecy that Ezekiel made about Zedekiah. Zedekiah was a guy who was, all of his life, on negative volition to the Word of God. Jeremiah had visited him and given him prophecies, and tried to get him into the Word, but Zedekiah was very negative to the Word of God. So in Ezekiel 12:12, Ezekiel prophesied, "The Prince who is among them will load his baggage on his shoulder in the dark and go out." That was Zedekiah. "They will dig a hole through the wall to bring it out. He will cover his face so that he cannot see the land with his eyes." So Ezekiel prophesied that Zedekiah the king would be captured by the Babylonians and taken to Babylon, but he would never see Babylon.

In 2 Kings 25:1, we find the fulfillment of this. And it wasn't that he didn't see Babylon because his face was covered. Whether his face had been covered or not, he would not have seen Babylon, because we read in 2 Kings 25:1, "Now, it came about in the ninth year of his reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, that Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon came. He and all his army against Jerusalem camped against it, and built a siege wall around it. So the city was under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. On the ninth day of the fourth month, the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. Then the city was broken into and all the men of war fled by night by way of the gate between the two walls beside the king's guard, though the Chaldeans were all around the city. And they went the way of Arabah. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho, and all his army was scattered with him. Then they captured the king and brought him to the king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon at Riblah, and Nebuchadnezzar passed sentence on him, and they slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, then put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with bronze feathers, and brought him to Babylon."

How did Ezekiel know that Zedekiah would be captured; he would escape from the city at night and try to hide; but the Babylonians would capture him; they would take him to Babylon; and, though he would live the rest of his days in Babylon, he would never see Babylon? By divine revelation – fulfilled prophecy.

**Babylon**

Then there is the prophecy about what was ultimately to become of Babylon. In 732 B.C., Isaiah the Prophet wrote the following prophecy about Babylon in Isaiah 13:19-22: "And Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans' pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." That means that it will be absolutely nothing. "It will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation. Nor will the Arab pitch his tent there. Nor will shepherds make their flocks lie down there. But desert creatures will lie down there, and their houses will be full of owls. Ostriches also will live there, and shaggy goats will frolic there. And hyenas will howl in their fortified towers, and jackals in their luxurious palaces. Her fateful time also will soon come, and her days will not be prolonged." So this was the most magnificent city of the time when Isaiah wrote this. It was one of the biggest cites, and certainly the most powerful city in the world. This was really considered a far-out prophecy.

But then we read in Daniel 5 about a time, which was about 539 B.C.: "Belshazzar the king held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine in the presence of the thousand." Then we could read on about how he had brought the sacred vessels that had been brought to Babylon from the temple at Jerusalem. They were drinking wine out of these, and really having a good time. Verse 4 says, "They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold, and silver, and bronze, iron, wood, and stone."

Then verse 5: "Suddenly the fingers of a man's hand emerged and began writing opposite the lamp stand on the plaster of the wall of the King's Palace. And the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing. Then the king's face grew pale, and his thoughts alarmed him, and his hip joints went slack, and his knees began knocking together." That would've been quite a sight to see, wouldn't it? "The king called aloud to bring in the conjurers, the Chaldeans, and the diviners. The king spoke and said to the wise man of Babylon, 'Any man who can read this inscription and explain its interpretation to me will be clothed with purple and have a necklace of gold around his neck, and have authority as the third ruler of the kingdom.'"

Remember this. We're going to come back to it later. If Belshazzar was the king, then it looks like if he wanted to reward someone, he would make them the assistant king, or the second ruler of the kingdom. But he said, "Third ruler of the kingdom." We're going to get back to that later.

"Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the inscription or make known its interpretation to the king. Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, his face grew even paler, and his nobles were perplexed." Then someone said, "There's a man named Daniel who can interpret this for you." So he sent for Daniel, and he said, "Daniel, if you can interpret this, I will make you the third ruler of the kingdom." In verse 17, Daniel answered and said before the king, "Keep your gifts for yourself, or give your rewards to someone else. However, I will read the inscription to the king, and make the interpretation known to him. O King, the Most High God granted sovereignty, grandeur, glory, and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar, your father."

Then it goes on to give a short biography of Nebuchadnezzar. Remember how, because of his pride, God struck him with a mental illness where he thought he was an animal, and he lived out in the woods. Then when he humbled himself, his reason came back to him, and he was restored as king. So verse 25 says, "Here's what the writing means." He interpreted it. "Your kingdom has been divided over to the Medes and the Persians." So Belshazzar kept his word and made Daniel the third ruler in the kingdom. But in verse 30, that same night, Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. So Darius, the Mede, received the kingdom at about the age of 62."

So Babylon was taken over by Darius. A few years later, it was taken over by Cyrus. And in 539 B.C., Babylon was destroyed. So the city of Babylon has been absolutely nothing since then. I understand that a few years ago, in the early nineties, Saddam Hussein had great ambitions to make old Babylon a tourist attraction, and he was trying to develop that. But to this day, it has never been inhabited or restored. Babylon, that great city, just like the prophet Isaiah had predicted, is a desert place inhabited by desert animals.

**Samaria**

Then we have the prophecy about Samaria. As you know, Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom after the divided kingdom, and it was a seat of wickedness. They didn't have any good kings. All of their kings were bad. One of their kings set up a golden calf, and said, "Don't bother going to Jerusalem to the temple. Just fulfill your religious duties here. We've got an idol of a calf, and that's just as good as the God that people worship in Jerusalem." So this was a seat of idolatry. In Micah 1:6, God says, "I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the open country – planting places for a vineyard. I will pour her stones down into the valley and will lay bare her foundations. All of her idols will be smashed. All of her earnings will be burned with fire and all of her images I will make desolate, for she collected them from a harlot's earnings, and to the earnings of a harlot they will return."

Sargon, the King of Assyria, destroyed Samaria in 722 B.C. Then Alexander the Great took a shot at it in 331 B.C. And what was left of it was totally and completely destroyed by John Hyrcanus in 120 B.C.

So these are prophecies that were fulfilled literally. Anyone who doubts the truth and the accuracy of the Bible can check these and see that they are confirmed by archeology and by history.

**Geography**

Now, let's consider just a word or two on the geographical accuracy of the Bible. The Bible talks about real places. For example, just name a few of the rivers that you find in the Bible: the Jordan; the Nile; the Tigris; and, the Euphrates. The Bible talks about cities that we can even read about in today's newspapers, such as Jerusalem and Damascus. We wouldn't know that the original name for Jerusalem was Jebus if it were not recorded in the Bible. The Bible is very specific about naming plains and nations. Some of the nations exist until today, notably Israel. So the Bible is the only book that deals with spiritual things that gives accurate information about history and geography and fulfilled prophecy right down to the most minute detail.

**Archeology**

We're going to talk a little bit about archeology. There is a prominent archaeologist named Nelson Glueck, who was also a Jewish theologian. For a number of years, he was president of the Jewish Theological Seminary in Cincinnati. Nelson Glueck was in Dallas a few years ago, and he spoke at one of the synagogues, the Temple Emanu-El. He began by saying that he was somewhat indignant because every once in a while he was accused of being a fundamentalist Christian. He said he certainly was not a Christian, let alone a fundamentalist. He was accused of even believing in the verbal plenary inspiration of Scripture. That's what we believe in. We believe God inspired every word totally of Scripture. Nelson Glueck, the Jewish archaeologist, said that he had been accused of believing that. He denied it.

He said, "I don't believe that. But the reason that people accuse me of that, and sometimes even put me in the Christian fundamentalist camp, is that I have studied the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament) all of my life, and I have studied archeology. And everything I learned from archeology confirms the biblical record. I know of no archaeological discovery that contradicts the Bible. But everything that I know about archeology confirms the Bible."

Let's just look at a few of these. These are some things that we read in the Bible, and go over them, and don't think much about them. But, for example, when archaeologists read Genesis 11:3 and Genesis 14:10, they read about something called bitumen. The King James calls it "pitch," or sometimes "slime." In Genesis 11:3, they said to one another, "Come on, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly. They used brick for stone and they used tar for mortar." What they're referring to here is "bitumen." That's another word for a type of asphalt. Guess what? The presence of it is very predominant in this area. For example, in Genesis 14:10: "Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits, and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell in them. There is bitumen all over the place in bitumen pits. Even to this day, it's plentiful.

Consider Genesis 31:33. The more we learn about archeology, the more we understand the Bible. When Jacob left with his two wives and his children from Laban's country, Laban noticed that a mysterious plural noun called the "teraphim" were missing from his home. So he chased them down: "He went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the tent of the two maids, and did not find them." The NASB translate "teraphim" as "household idols." "Rachel had taken them and put them in the camel saddle, and she sat on them." Now, about all they knew about these were that it was some kind of idol. Recent discoveries have confirmed the fact that these were idols that families worshiped, but they also were deeds – titles to property. So if you owned the family "teraphim," you owned the family property. So that's why Rachel wanted to take these with her, and why Laban was so upset about it. If it just been a couple of statues, they could have been replaced. But we know from records that archaeologists have found that this was the way you held title on your land and your property through the family "teraphim."

Then we're just going to take a few in Genesis. In Genesis 45:8, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, and then he says, "Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and Lord of all his household, and ruler over the land of Egypt." They have discovered the Egyptian hieroglyphics that describe the duties of a prime minister – a job description of a prime minister. Guess what the prime minister was supposed to do? He was to be a father, a lord of the household, and ruler over the land of Egypt. So Joseph was using very official language. He was saying, "This is my job description." We just read over it and don't think anything about it. An Egyptologist reads over it and says, "Hey, I've heard that before in my studies of Egyptian culture."

**Hebrew Architecture**

When the Hebrews were slaves of the Egyptians, they were (for the most part) unskilled laborers. So they left Egypt and, after 40 years, went into their own country and began to build buildings. Guess what? The buildings from that time are not very good. Not much is left of them. There was not a lot of craftsmanship there, which is to be expected from a group of ex-slaves who didn't really have any building skills. But then, when they discovered the palace that Saul used, it's pretty good. They had come a long way in a few hundred years. And then for the temple, that was first built under Solomon, they imported workmen from Tyre and Sidon, and from Phoenicia. King Hiram and King Solomon were friends. They struck an agreement with these highly skilled craftsmen. Guess what? Jewish architecture just takes off. The ruins of the buildings that they discover in Israel follow this pattern. The oldest ones are not very good. Then they get a little bit better. Then after the temple, they're fantastic, because the Jewish people have learned how to build. It follows the same pattern that the Bible tells us.

Another interesting thing is that they have discovered idols all over the place – statues of Baal all over the Middle East. They include all of the gods, the idols that are mentioned in the Bible: the Asherah; and, so on. They have been found. They used to say, "Well, Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, was just their tribal God. After a while, they begin to say that He was the chief God; then finally, the one God." But guess what they haven't found? They haven't found any statues of Jehovah, no matter how old they go back, or how deep they dig. They find statues of all of the idols of the Canaanites, but not one representation of Jehovah. That's interesting, isn't it? It's just like the Bible says. The Hebrew people were not to make a representation of their God, and they didn't.

In 1929, an archaeologist named Schaeffer made a very important discovery: the Ros Shamra tablets in northern Syria. They give some insight into the behavior and some of the customs of the people then. It all confirms everything that the Bible says.

There is an enigmatic command in the Law in Exodus 23:19, and then it's repeated again in Exodus 34:26. That is that, "You are not to boil a kid in the milk of its mother." Now, Bible scholars have written many theories over why the Jewish people were forbidden to do that. When Dr. Schaeffer made this discovery, and they began to translate the Ros Shamra tablets, they found that something that the Canaanite people did that they thought would make it rain was to boil a kid in the milk of its mother. Somehow, they believed that this was to appease their gods, and they would get rain. The sad thing about it was that this was accompanied by sacrifices of living children.

So this form of idolatry and violent human sacrifice was not to be practiced in any way by the Jewish people. They were not even to boil a kid in its mother's milk, even if they just did it for culinary reasons. They were not to do that because it identified them with this heathen idol worshiping human sacrifice system.

Then we read a lot in the Bible about the Philistines. We read in Joshua 17:16-18 that at the very beginning, the Philistines had iron. And the Jewish people were afraid of them because they had iron weapons and iron chariots. Then when the Philistines took over the Jews, in Judges it says, "There was no smith to be found among the Israelites." They wouldn't allow an Israelite to learn the craft of working with metal because he could make weapons. As long as the Philistines were the only ones who had iron weapons, then they felt that it gave them an advantage over them. So in the excavation of the land where the Philistines lived, they find iron tools and iron weapons. All the people around them had no metal, but the Philistines did.

Also, you read about Dagon, the god they worshiped. In 1 Chronicles 10:1: "Now the Philistines fought against Israel, and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa." Then it goes on to tell in verse 10 that they took Saul's armor to the temple of Dagon. Guess what? They've discovered at Gilboa a temple to the fish god Dagon, and many more temples to Dagon among the Philistines.

And the philistine people, when you read in Judges with Samuel's experience with them and so on, you can imagine the Philistines as being hard-drinking people. Guess what they're finding there where the Philistines lived? They found evidences that they were heavy beer drinkers. They have found special mugs designed for drinking beer that sifted the hard part that was fermented but not liquefied. They would strain it as they were drinking it. They have found thousands of these. So all that the Old Testament tells about the Philistines is being confirmed by archaeologists.

So let's go to the New Testament and see what kind of discoveries that archaeologists are surprised about that have been in the Bible all along. When Paul wrote the Corinthians, he called the Corinthians down for some really bad things. When you just read the epistles to the Corinthians, you can't help but think, "Boy, these people had some big time problems – sexual immorality, for example. We know from archaeological discoveries that in the Roman Empire, in the Koine Greek language, the slang word for being sexually promiscuous was "to Corinthianize," because Corinth was a city in which sexual sin was very prominent. Then in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, the apostle Paul called the Corinthians down for some of these sins: "Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" They're saved. They're going to heaven. But they need to separate from the customs of their city or they will not share in ruling with Christ. They will lose their inheritance. "Neither be deceived (do not be deceived). Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you."

Archeological discoveries today tell us that this is, by and large, the kind of people who lived in Corinth. 2 Corinthians 10:21 says that, "You can't take part in the Lord's table and the table of devils (or demons)." They have discovered a papyrus in Corinth that describes a cult called the Table of Serapis, an idol that they worshiped. They celebrated their worship of Serapis by having a meal together, and it was called the Table of Serapis. So the apostle Paul was using terms that these people could identify with. They knew what he was talking about. Sometimes we have to accept some things on faith because it's not as real to us. But the more archaeologists discover, the more insight it gives us. And it lets us know that the Bible was written by people who were meeting people right where they were.

Some unbelievers said, "Well, people got together and wrote the Bible all at one time. That's the only way they could have known what was going to happen and what did happen." But the truth is that it had to have been written little-by-little like it was over this period of thousands of years, because each time something was written, you find the terms; the geographical expressions; and, the names of people that history and archaeology say were there. They've been there all the time in the Bible.

In 2 Corinthians 11:32, Paul, just in passing, mentions that, "Once in Damascus, the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city." People used to say, "Well, who in the world was this King Aretas?" Well, recent archeological discoveries have found a King Aretas who was the ruler of Damascus between 35 and 40 A.D., the very time that the apostle Paul is writing about.

In Ephesians 2:14, Paul makes an interesting statement that, "We're now the church. There is no difference between Jews and gentiles. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall." We read that and we think of a spiritual wall between Jews and gentiles. Guess what has been discovered by Jewish archaeologists in Jerusalem? A sign that was displayed at the temple that says, "Gentiles, do not enter this room (the inner part of the sanctuary), because you have to be Jewish to enter here. It's an offense punishable by death." There was a partition. Gentiles who were God-fearers or believers were welcome to come and worship in the court of the gentiles, but they could not go beyond the partition. So the apostle Paul was using the literal physical partition of the temple that separated the Jews and the gentiles as a symbol of the spiritual separation that Jesus tore down.

Then there's a lot in Revelation. When Dr. Danish was teaching us the book of Revelation, he gave us all this background material. It was good to know, but we just thought that people had always known this. But these things have been discovered. For example, in the church at Pergamus, Jesus says, "I know where you dwell (where Satan's throne is)." And it has been discovered in Pergamus that it was the capital of idolatry. They had a temple dedicated to the Emperor of Rome – emperor worship. Then any other idol (any other imaginary God in Roman or Greek mythology) had temples for them in Pergamus. So it is very appropriate to call Pergamus the place of the throne of Satan.

In Revelation 3:15, to the church at Laodicea, Jesus says, "I know your deeds. You're neither hot nor cold." They've discovered that Laodicea was the site of hot springs, supposedly healing springs. People would come to bathe in the hot springs of Laodicea. So this had a special meaning for the people of Laodicea. "You're neither hot nor cold. I would that you were hot or cold. So because you are lukewarm (neither hot or cold), I will spit you out of My mouth, because you say, 'I am rich' and you have become wealthy and have need of nothing." It has been discovered that Laodicea was a great banking city – a city of great commerce. There were riches there. A lot of the citizens of Laodicea were very wealthy.

Then if you were really poor, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked, Laodicea was famous for their eye salves – supposedly healing eye salves. So by being told that they were blind, that had a special meaning to the people at Laodicea.

In Revelation 17:9, John talks about a beast: "The beast that you saw was and is, and he is to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth will wonder whose name has not been written in life from the foundation of the world when they see the beast that he was and he is and will come." Verse 9: "Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits." A coin has been discovered with the picture of the emperor Vespian on one side, and on the other side is a symbolic representation of Rome, which is a woman sitting on seven hills.

Also in the book of Revelation, John tells us that, "The number of the beast will be 666, and anyone with intelligence can figure it out." People back then used letters for numbers: like "A" would be number "1;" "B" would be number "2;" and, so on. So your name would have a numerical value. When you added up all the letters of your name, that would give you your number. This was a common practice. In fact, in Pompeii (the city that was covered by the eruption of Vesuvius), they have discovered some graffiti on a wall that says something like, "I love a girl whose number is 545. So everybody had a number. So this was very meaningful. We speculate on what 666 can mean, but the people who read it in the first century, that was very common for every number to have a name.

**Luke**

I want to spend most of the remaining time that we have just talking about one Bible writer, and that is Dr. Luke. This man was a meticulous historian. Turn to Luke 3, and just take a look at just some of the names that he mentioned there. I mean, he didn't have to do all this. He could have just left out the dates and the names, but he didn't. He was very painstaking for detail. If you're going to write something, and you're going to use all these names and places and details, you'd better be right, because somebody is going to prove you to be wrong in some detail. How many times has Luke been wrong? Never.

"Now, in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas." Well, isn't that interesting? Two guys were high priest. According to the Old Testament, there's only supposed to be one high priest, and he's high priest for life. Well, Annas and Caiaphas took turns. Now, one was father-in-law to the other. They had a good thing going. They had the power, and they had the money. They had an agreement with the money-changers in the temple – some of the people who sold animals, and some of the priests. Somebody would take an animal to the priest and say, "I'd like to sacrifice this." The priest would say, "Oh, I'm sorry, we can't accept that. There's a blemish. I'll tell you what. Go down to the stall here and buy an animal." So he would just have Roman money with him, and you couldn't spend Roman money in the temple. That would be a sin. All you could spend was Jewish money. The Romans let him do this. So they would go to the money changer first, and change their Roman money to Hebrew money (Israel money). Then they would go back and buy the animal. And everybody would get a cut. Everybody would make a profit, especially the high priest. He would get a profit out of all of it. So Caiaphas and Annas took turns. One would be a priest one year, and then the other would take his place.

And the apostle Paul, at some point in Acts, when he was brought before the Jewish rulers, made an insulting remark to a man, and someone said, "How dare you talk to the high priest like that." And Paul said, "Oh, I didn't know you were the high priest. So apparently they had switched. Paul, being the ex-Pharisee that he was, knew all the priests and everybody at the temple. So apparently they had traded, and Paul hadn't been aware of it.

But notice Luke. He knew all about it. He said it was during the priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas. So he knows the details. He took the time and the trouble to learn the details, and he was right about them.

The next time you read the gospel of Luke and Acts, just notice the names, the places, and the details that Luke gives us. And he didn't really have to give all these details. Let's look at a few of them before we close.

In Acts 13:7, he was talking about Bar-Jesus, a guy who claimed to be a prophet, and he said, "He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence." Now they're on the island of Cyprus, and usually the leader of the city is called the procurator. But it just happened that in Cyprus, they were known as the proconsul. Luke used the correct word. This is just like in the United States where the top government official in the city is the mayor. But if you step across the border to Mexico, the mayor's office is called the office of the "Presidente." Every city has a president. Cyprus didn't call their mayor the procurator. They called him the proconsul. Luke picked up on that. Guess what? Records show us that the proconsul of the city was a man named Sergius Paulus.

Acts 14:8-14 is really an interesting story: "And at Lystra there was sitting a certain man without strength in his feet, lame from his mother's womb, who had never walked." This man was listening to Paul as he spoke. "Who, when he had fixed his gaze upon him, and had seen that he had faith to be made well, said with a loud voice, 'Stand upright on your feet.' He leaped up and began to walk. When the multitudes saw what Paul had done, they raised their voice, saying in the Lycaonian language, 'The gods have become like men and have come down to us.'" Then it goes on to say that they thought that Barnabas was Zeus and Paul was Hermes. Or, if you have a translation that gives the Roman names, they are Mercury and Jupiter.

First of all, Luke makes a note that they were speaking in the Lycaonian language. Everybody back then spoke Koine Greek. So what did this mean? Well, archeology has confirmed something here. They have found papyri writings that confirm that the people of Lycaonia kept their language. As a rule, they were bilingual people. They spoke Koine Greek, and then sometimes (talking to each other) they would lapse into their own language. This is what happened here.

Then an interesting legend has been discovered that the people there believed about their city. That is that at one time in history, these two gods that they worshipped, Hermes and Zeus, had actually come to that city for a visit. Only two people treated them well. So they punished the city severely. That was a part of their heritage. They believed that. So when they saw these two men, and one of them was performing miracles, they said, "Oh, watch it. We better be nice to these people. They're not people. They're gods." So they tried to worship Paul and his companion, Barnabas. Of course, they refused to be worshiped. But again, there are some interesting things that modern archaeology has dug up about the Lycaonian language, and about their legend about the gods visiting.

Acts 19:31: "Also some of the Asiarchs who were friends of his sent to him and repeatedly urged him not to venture into the theater." Well, they found that they called their government officials "Asiarchs." Luke didn't give them some other name. He didn't say, "The leading people of the city," or anything like that. He recorded accurately what the people in Ephesus called their leaders – Asiarchs. This was their office.

Then in verse 35, after quieting the multitude, the town clerk said, "Men of Ephesus, what man is there, after all, who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis? And guess what? They have found that the city of Ephesus wanted to be known as the Guardian of Artemis. That was their official title. That was their claim to fame. Fort Worth is where the West begins; Ephesus was the Guardian of Artemis, because that's where the temple of Dianne or Artemis was. They didn't know that till a few years ago. So we're just amazed at Luke's accuracy.

Another one is in Acts 28:7: "Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island named Publius." Now, he could have said, "The mayor," or "the governor." He could have used a lot of words. But the NASB translates it, "The leading man." Actually, it is, "The first man." That's what the governor was called – the one appointed by the Roman government to be the leader and the top government official of the land (the island of Malta). He was called the first man. That's the way Luke records him.

Then sometimes you can read the last two chapters of Acts (27 and 28), and you can trace Paul's journey. You can read that he was on a grain ship. The Roman centurion who was transporting troops on the ship also agreed to take Paul as a prisoner. You can trace their route with a map. They have discovered the ancient routes of the grain ships. They used to go along the coast of Crete. They would stop at Malta and Puteoli, just like Luke describes their journey. It was a common route.

**Apparent Inaccuracies in the Bible**

As we close, I want to give you a couple of things that were once thought to be an accuracy's in the Bible – some apparent inaccuracies. First of all, there was a man named Paul Rader, a wealthy man back in 1930, who made a public offer that if anybody could give him a real contradiction in the Bible, he would give them $1,000 cash. This was 1930, during the Great Depression. $1,000 was a lot of money. It's not too bad today, but it was even worth a whole lot more then. Nobody stepped forward and said, "I've found the contradiction in the Bible." People looked, and those who were serious about it looked enough to see that it was not a contradiction.

Something that was thought by a lot of people for many years to be an inaccuracy in the Bible was when the Bible talked in the Old Testament about the Hittites. They had found evidences of some of the other civilizations, but not the Hittites. So you can get an old copy (if you can find one) of Encyclopedia Britannica, and look up Hittite, and it will say something like, "This is a mythological group of people mentioned in the Bible. They never really existed. They're just mentioned in the Old Testament." But then guess what happened in 1906? An archaeologist by the name of Hugo Winckler discovered in Turkey the ruins of a vast city which was the capital of the Hittite nation which spread all over the Middle East. There were Hittites all over the place. Once archaeologists came and started translating the tablets that Hugo Winckler found, they found evidence of the Hittite nation all over the Middle East. So they had to rewrite their stories about the Hittites as not existing.

In Daniel 5, King Belshazzar said, "OK, if anybody can read that writing on the wall, I'll make him the third ruler of the kingdom." We asked the question, why the third ruler? Well, discoveries in 1948 let people know that Belshazzar wasn't really the king? The king was Nabonidus, who liked to travel. So when he would leave the country to go off on a trip, he would leave Belshazzar in charge. So Belshazzar was king as long as Nabonidus was not around, but he was officially the second ruler in the kingdom. So anybody that he wanted to promote, he would have to make them the third ruler of the kingdom. So people would point to that in the Bible and say, "Aha, somebody made a mistake. Belshazzar was the king. Why did he make someone third ruler of the kingdom instead of second?" Since 1948, nobody (at least, who is knowledgeable) has made that accusation.

So that's the way it is. People think there's something inaccurate about the Bible, but if they live long enough, they see that it's absolutely accurate, reliable, and dependable in everything it says. We can trust it.

John 3:12 records the Lord Jesus Christ saying, "If I told you earthly things you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" We believe the heavenly things, the spiritual things, and we believe the earthly things. The Bible is totally accurate in everything it says. For this reason, it is our rule and guide of faith. It is the one revelation that God has given us – special revelation (other than His Son). And everything we know about His Son, we know from the Bible. This is a rule and guide of faith. If you make any New Year's resolutions this year, you should make this the number one: to really get into the Word of God, and to saturate your mind with God's word.

Leon Adkins, 2003

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