Old Testament Introduction
The Bible’s Buried Secrets
Chapter 0, Introduction

Synopsis

… the NPR/PBS TV presentation, *The Bible’s Buried Secrets*, sponsored by NOVA, compels a response.[[1]](#endnote-1)

*The Bible’s Buried Secrets* promises to deliver a scientifically and exegetically based analysis of relevant archaeological discoveries and the Bible. It does deliver an amazing presentation of an extraordinary assortment of artifacts ... so it is worth viewing … Yet, at what cost? To many viewers, *The Bible’s Buried Secrets*, will come across as just a nice Bible story.

However, it is anything other than a nice Bible story. We will show that it is unbelievably deceptive and filled with errors….

What an education and decades spent in science application, science, mathematics, statistics, Bible, biblical chronology, and research, coupled with years of military life does, is make one hypersensitive and hyper-vigilant to particular kinds of error…. So the errors foisted in *The Bible’s Buried Secrets* now appear as violent atrocities…. The archaeological conclusions of *The Bible’s Buried Secrets* are statistically in error. The biblical conclusions are largely based on irrelevant texts and poor exegesis. The authorities speaking, are sometimes cut off in midsentence, so that they are made to say that of which their life’s work is the opposite. Other primary authorities, fundamental knowledge, and sometimes even artifacts are simply ignored. Everybody and everything gets defamed: hard working archaeologists, archaeology, and the Bible all suffer at the hands of *The Bible’s Buried Secrets*.

As a result, this collection is … an apologetic … a polemic … a rebuttal … a book. It has so far grown into 33 chapters: it is far from finished.

Dedication

This collection is dedicated to Dr. Bruce K. Waltke[[2]](#endnote-2) (1930 …), one of my first seminary teachers, and my teacher of Old Testament Introduction, Psalms, Old Testament Text Criticism, and Old Testament Theology at Dallas Theological Seminary. I would gladly claim Dr. Waltke, only seven years my senior, as my mentor, yes, and friend, except for the fact that I’m not sure he would be happy with such a title: since I was not his best student. Dr. Waltke is listed as a professor of Old Testament and Hebrew; and he is in fact, one of the world’s leading authorities in such matters. Such credentials hardly give him the credit due. Dr. Waltke is a polymath, as fluent in Greek as he is in Hebrew, at home in discussions of archaeology as he is in text criticism. He most likely possesses total recall: for I have heard other doctors of theology contrast his linguistic skills to theirs, as one who towers above them in ability. And towers is an appropriate word: for even at Dallas Theological Seminary, among a large faculty of exceptionally gifted professors, Dr. Waltke was exceptional. He was so exceptional that we students were in awe of him, and try as hard as we did, that awe, in some sense blocked our learning. We did not pass his courses as much as we survived them. His lessons would mature as our learning ripened at a much later date, after much rumination[[3]](#endnote-3). Thank you, Dr. Waltke; I wouldn’t have had it any other way: tough teaching sharpens thinking.

Author

In 1971, I was a new Christian and a Vietnam era vet. I was never down country. Instead I was stationed at Kadena AFB, Okinawa in 1968-69, an Aircraft Maintenance Officer, charged with supervising the preventive maintenance of B-52, KC-135 and other aircraft. Shortly after my arrival on Okinawa, I got involved with The Navigators. Later, I resigned my commission and served The Navigators as the Kadena AFB team leader (1969-70), where we conducted on-base evangelism, taught Bible Studies, held prayer services, memorized Scripture, counselled each other, usually in the context of one-to-one, led Sunday school classes, and otherwise supported the USAF chapel program. Other team leaders and their teams did similar service at Sukiran Army base, Futenma Marine base, Naha, White Beach, Hansen, Manila, and anywhere else we needed to go. We worked together.

Once a year, we sponsored an all Asia Bible conference in Oiso, Japan. A lead speaker came in from the United States, and attendees came from Okinawa, Japan, Korea, and even the Philippines. I helped support three such Bible conferences.

We also conducted missionary thrusts. I participated in one such thrust in Korea where we did on-base evangelism at Soul, Red Cloud, and other bases.

My mentor, The Navigator representative on Okinawa, Ken Metzger and I went on an all-Asia jaunt to explore the feasibility of establishing other Navigator missions throughout the Orient. We visited Guam, Hong Kong; Manila and Angeles, Philippines; Bangkok and U-Tapao, Thailand. I also made several trips to Clark AFB, Philippines; and one trip to CCK AFB, Taiwan with USAF.

Summer of 1970, I was back in the States, pulling KP duty for The Navigators at their conference grounds and headquarters, Glen Eyrie, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Around Thanksgiving, I moved to Fort Worth, Texas, where I attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in the spring semester of 1971. That 1971, in the fall, I entered Dallas Seminary. But I was ill equipped, with insufficient technical background, to cope with a course in Old Testament Introduction.

Years later, with nearly thirty-years more experience in industry, I will have accumulated the necessary technical skills to cope with a few aspects of Old Testament Introduction. I wrote my thesis on *A Chronology of the Book of Judges*. What I bring to the table is training and experience in science application, science, mathematics – particularly statistics, Bible – particularly biblical chronology, and research. I also learned a lot about the necessary techniques of archaeological analysis simply from watching the “Antiques Roadshow”[[4]](#endnote-4) on TV. The process of examining antiques, especially discovering their provenance, and their evaluation is identical in nature to that of examining, and valuing archaeological artifacts, with their provenance. Of course, archaeology involves much, much more: for one does not usually find archaeological artifacts lurking in one’s attic or closet.[[5]](#endnote-5) So the science of archaeology[[6]](#endnote-6) must begin elsewhere.

Introduction

Needless to say, Old Testament Introduction (OTI) was not my favorite course. I certainly never intended to write a book on the subject, not that this will be a book: at best a collection of essays. Later, when the course had ended, I vowed never to give another second to OTI. Nevertheless, the NPR/PBS TV presentation, *The Bible’s Buried Secrets*, sponsored by NOVA, compels a response.[[7]](#endnote-7)

*The Bible’s Buried Secrets* promises to deliver a scientifically and exegetically based analysis of relevant archaeological discoveries and the Bible. It does deliver an amazing presentation of an extraordinary assortment of artifacts. Most viewers will never have the chance to see a better presentation of artifacts relevant to biblical archaeology: so it is worth viewing for the purpose of seeing such things. Yet, at what cost? To many viewers, *The Bible’s Buried Secrets* will come across as just a nice Bible story.

However, it is anything other than a nice Bible story. We will show that it is unbelievably deceptive and filled with errors. We must disabuse ourselves of the idea that “the media is the message.” When the music, and amazing, even spectacular photography are stripped away, what remains is the naked presentation. That presentation is mostly irrelevant verbiage; filled with the opinions of experts and non-experts, usually quoted out of context to their actual work: all thrown up in a barrage of disinformation, the proverbial snow machine, so much blowing of smoke….

What an education and decades spent in science application, science, mathematics, statistics, Bible, biblical chronology, and research, coupled with years of military life does, is make one hypersensitive and hyper-vigilant to particular kinds of error. Living with the incessant fear of dropping a nuclear bomb on the cement, of crashing a billion-dollar airplane, or seeing the thousands of caskets return from Vietnam will do that for you: make you hyper-vigilant. So, the errors foisted in *The Bible’s Buried Secrets* now appear as violent atrocities: as if one had bombed Dresden, inundated a city by flood, or shot someone to death before your very eyes. Many of you will see nothing at all. I can see nothing but mayhem. The archaeological conclusions of *The Bible’s Buried Secrets* are statistically in error. The biblical conclusions are largely based on irrelevant texts and poor exegesis. The authorities speaking, are sometimes cut off in midsentence, so that they are made to say that of which their life’s work is the opposite. Other primary authorities, fundamental knowledge, and sometimes even artifacts are simply ignored. Everybody and everything gets defamed: hard working archaeologists, archaeology, and the Bible all suffer at the hands of *The Bible’s Buried Secrets*.

As a result, this collection was never intended to be a course in OTI. In its defense of the Bible, it is an apologetic. In its refutation of *The Bible’s Buried Secrets*, it is a polemic. It is a rebuttal of all things false in the use of science and Scripture. We hope that you will find it helpful in your personal walk with Christ.

[[8]](#endnote-8)

1. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/bibles-buried-secrets.html>

which is easier to view, without commercial interruption, at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qalTJzk4kO0> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce\_Waltke [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. The digestive process, not the psychological disorder. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow/ [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. The weight of this parallel must not be overlooked. Archaeology, is precisely defined as the orderly and systematic search, identification, evaluation, and discovery of provenance of old, long-forgotten objects: objects left in an old house that has since fallen down and been buried in dirt; objects abandoned when flooding caused a river to change its course; objects buried in the sudden advance of a Sirocco, Shamal propelled simoom, avalanche, earthquake, or volcanic eruption; as well as objects left behind and forgotten as the result of war. Such objects are not fundamentally different from objects forgotten in an attic or closet: except in age, provenance, and value.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dust_storm> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Technically, archaeology is not science: it does not regularly employ the scientific method, or other science essentials (except in some technical tests); it cannot, for the most part, repeat, replicate, or even conduct experiments. Rather, archaeology is the application of the results of science. This distinction will become important as we go along. On the other hand, 14C dating is science, so as long as specimens are not totally consumed: repetition, replication, experimentation, and even peer review may continue. In archaeology, as with engineering, the emphasis is on the application of science, not on the science itself. Few archaeologists or engineers are privileged to actually work at science proper, at what must be termed scientific research. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/bibles-buried-secrets.html>

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qalTJzk4kO0> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
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