Old Testament Introduction
The Bible’s Buried Secrets
Chapter 10, Genesis

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qalTJzk4kO0>

***About the Video***

What is for the most part an exact copy of the video script follows. There are a few places where individual speakers could neither be heard nor understood: for this we apologize. Every effort was made to be precise: there were just spots that defeated us. Since this is a quote in its entirety it seemed unnecessary to mark it with quotation marks. The notation for each speaker is tedious enough: Narrator, Reader, etc. If you discover bothersome errors, please reply to this website and point them out. You may verify the script more easily by starting to replay it where the “time” stamps indicate discussion begins. The second of the above links is free from advertising and thus easier to use.

***Overview***

This is just a disgusting hatchet-job on the concepts of history, historicity, how credibility is developed from artifacts,[[1]](#endnote-1) how documents must be interpreted,[[2]](#endnote-2) and devoid of any spiritual essence. If every hint of spiritual inference is removed from the Bible on the basis of subjective scholarly whim, half of the evidence of the Bible is deleted before we begin.

We insist that all evidence is important; that all evidence deserves respect; that the puzzle of life is not complete until every piece is fitted into its proper, God designed, place. If we deny scientific evidence, whole pieces of the puzzle will be left blank. If we deny other material evidence, then all of the arts, history, literature, music, poetry, and the like are rudely cast aside. If we deny spiritual evidence, other places will be missing. If we deny biblical evidence, we cannot arrive at a complete picture. If we tolerate the distortion of evidence, we will see evidenced forced into spaces where it does not belong; or else evidence is so falsified that it no longer fits anywhere. One of the problems with evidence (scientific, material, spiritual, or biblical) is that we always have much more evidence than with which we know what to do. Life is a great mystery: so, we are forced to wait patiently until new evidence is found, a clearer picture emerges, a fresh approach or person provides a breakthrough of insight. The Holy Spirit is given to all who will receive Him. The puzzle cannot be completed until every last person has been given their voice. This is an orchestra, even the triangle is an important instrument. There is no such thing as a small person: there are only creatures.

***Script***

Genesis (time 11:45)

Quote:

Cahill: This is a new idea. It was an idea that nobody had ever had before. God in our sense doesn’t exist before Abraham.[[3]](#endnote-3)

N: It is hard to appreciate today how radical an idea this must have been in a world dominated by polytheism, the worship of many God’s and idols.[[4]](#endnote-4) The Abraham narrative is part of the first book of the Bible, Genesis, along with Noah and the Flood, and Adam and Eve. Though they convey a powerful message, to date there is no archaeology or text outside of the Bible to corroborate them.[[5]](#endnote-5)

David Ilan:[[6]](#endnote-6) The farther back you go in the biblical text, the more difficult it is to find historical material in it. The patriarchs go back to Genesis. Genesis is for the most part a compilation of myth, creation stories — things like that — and to find an historical core there, is very difficult.

N: This absence of historical evidence leads scholars to take a different approach to reading the biblical narrative. They look beyond our modern notion of fact or fiction to ask why the Bible was written in the first place.

Dever: There is no word for history[[7]](#endnote-7) in the Hebrew Bible. The biblical writers were telling stories. They were good historians. And they could, tell it the way it was, when they wanted to. But their objective was always something far beyond that.[[8]](#endnote-8)

Unquote.

***God***

The statement, “God in our sense doesn’t exist before Abraham,” could possibly be true if man were the inventor of god. This, however, is just idolatry of the worst kind, idolatry dressed up in a new suit: just another version of the Emperor’s New Clothes.[[9]](#endnote-9) Moreover, Abraham is not considered a real historic character by *The Bible’s Buried Secrets*. Abraham and monotheism are the inventions of the fertile imagination of an unnamed priest and scribe, we will call P. This neo-creation took place around 500 BC; and in it, God did not “create the world from nothing, and all very good;” rather P created the Torah and God ex nihilo: or so the story goes.

***Corroboration***

The fact that, “there is no archaeology or text outside of the Bible to corroborate them,” is supposed to discredit the historicity of Genesis. Even so, this reasoning, thus far, is constructed on the invisible evidence of the Merneptah Stele. We hope that better evidence will soon be forthcoming. The idea that a highly detailed provenance, the Bible, can be overthrown by a few words of uncertain meaning escapes us. Behind Genesis is a whole raft of artifacts which are here termed, “no archaeology or text.” Figure? The Bible, especially in its ancient manuscripts, is an archaeological artifact in its own right. Granted, the oldest extant of these manuscripts is from the first century BC[[10]](#endnote-10); even so, there is very little reason not to believe that such manuscripts are copies of much older originals. Proof of this rests on the incredible accuracy of the Bible. Virtually everything done in biblical archaeology depends on the Bible. It is the Bible that tells archaeologists where to look, and interprets their finds for them. Without the Bible, the archaeology of the Holy or Promised Land would not exist. While supporting artifacts for Genesis have not yet been discovered in the Holy Land, the leap to, none exist, is a subjective assumption of the worst kind, an assumption that flies in the face of records from Mesopotamia.

***Difficulty***

“The farther back you go in the biblical text, the more difficult it is to find historical material in it,” may be true for Palestine, provided that one accepts the subjective Rubric, no artifacts equals no history. Absurd! “Genesis is for the most part a compilation of myth, creation stories — things like that — and to find an historical core there, is very difficult.” As difficult as it surely seems, this difficulty is the subjective invention of a handful of “experts”, who believe that the authority to define “an historical core” rests with them. What unbridled arrogance![[11]](#endnote-11)

***Criticism***

This “different approach” to reading is not reading at all, it is a most ridiculous example of higher criticism. To “look beyond our modern notion of fact or fiction to ask why,” is to ignore what the Bible has to say about how and why it was written. It should be clear that no expert has the right to destroy the evidence, tear it to shreds, and then stitch it back together in a way that fits his/her absurd theory. There is nothing about this process, which could possibly be any less scientific.

***Liars***

That, “They were good historians. And they could, tell it the way it was, when they wanted to. But their objective was always something far beyond that.” This is nothing more than a blatant thinly-veiled claim that the caretakers of Scripture were nothing more than a bunch of clever liars, motivated by deep, divisive, personal agendas. The voice of Yahweh, and the principles behind inspiration and canonicity are replaced with, “their objective was always something far beyond.” Of course the objective was “far beyond”. The message itself was “far beyond”. Its author is “far beyond”.[[12]](#endnote-12)

***Conclusion***

This is just a disgusting hatchet-job on the concepts of history, historicity, how credibility is developed from artifacts, how documents must be interpreted, and devoid of any spiritual essence. If every hint of spiritual inference is removed from the Bible on the basis of subjective scholarly whim, half of the evidence of the Bible is deleted before we begin.

[[13]](#endnote-13)

1. The credibility of artifacts is developed from their provenance. Provenance does not develop from mere artifacts. The Jews maintained their provenance in the temple, because the artifacts themselves were not that important to them. What was important to the Jews, at least to some of them, was what Yahweh thought of them. So they kept their records of provenance on file in the most holy place, in a manner similar to our use of county courthouses. The Egyptians, on the other hand, were totally consumed with the flesh, hence the propensity to record most provenance directly on the monuments themselves. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Documents must be interpreted from the argument and intent of the original author. To claim that a book like Exodus has no single author defies the facts as presented. To perform dissections based on invented themes is not profitable. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Note that, according to Cahill’s statement, God does not exist outside of the mind of man. Cahill is shilling the idea that Abraham invented God. We expect that the ultimate goal is to peddle the idea that Abraham lived around 516 BC: that it was the Jews who invented God and monotheism in the sixth century BC. What a load! What about Adam? What of the claim that God created the world from the beginning? [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. It is a very rash assumption to suppose that the world is no longer “dominated by polytheism.” The world was filled with pantheistic animism and polytheism then; it is still dominated by pantheistic animism and polytheism now. The proposal that monotheism has triumphed is patently false. Even if it were true, this one god is not a thing that I would wish to worship; it is yet another manmade thing; another idol to add to the pantheistic, animistic, and polytheistic hoard, not different from all the other idols. The God that I would worship is Yahweh, Who made me, sustains me, and maintains regular conversation with me through the Holy Ghost. This is the God of Genesis. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. There is no evidence for them outside of the Bible; therefore, they are not historical events. Neither is there any corroborative evidence for Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or Moses: what of it? The absence of external corroboration means that we classify records as pre-history until corroboration is found; the absence of external corroboration most certainly does not mean that we classify records as fiction, or even parable. Nor does such absence give us the warrant to rearrange the evidence to suit our own poisoned agenda. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. David (and Lilach) Ilan, a chair at Hebrew Union College. Works: Tel Arad, Tel Dan, Tel Megiddo. <http://huc.edu/directory/david-ilan> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. This is not exactly true. The specific word, “history”, is not found in the KJV text. On the other hand, the word, written, in one of the various past tenses is found there, some 268 times in all, 141 of them in the Old Testament. It is not difficult to establish the modern concept of history from these texts.

What is being contested here is the basis for history. Is history, fundamentally, the analysis of documentation (the Bible) or is it the analysis of artifacts (archaeology)?

The Bible is decreed to not be history on the basis of presuppositional opinion only. Many passages of the Bible exist for which there is no external evidence whatsoever. Are they either history or not history? *Argumentum ex silentio* cuts both ways and proves nothing. Archaeology cannot be used as a magical switch: one minute, a Bible passage is not historical; with the next new discovery, it suddenly becomes historical. The Bible passage didn’t change; arbitrary subjective opinion changed.

Fundamentally, the Bible is an archaeological artifact in its own right; it deserves the same archaeological respect and treatment as is granted to the Merneptah Stele, or any other archaeological artifact.

Furthermore, if the Bible is to be subjected to misinterpretation, how is it that, less consistent and less reliable artifacts are not also subjected to misinterpretation? This line of reasoning falsely separates the Bible, which is an archaeological artifact in its own right, from other legitimate archaeological artifacts. It also ignores the fact that archaeological artifacts, which contain writing, are many times more significant and valuable than archaeological artifacts, which do not contain writing. Above all, it is writing that defines the artifacts, and not the other way around.

By twisting these facts inside out *The Bible’s Buried Secrets* seeks to justify the reconstruction of the Bible into a new and foreign document. This is bad scientific practice: in the examination of evidence, to separate the evidence, then piece it back together in a different pattern. This is not a permissible scientific technique. Yet, that is exactly the process that will be followed. By cleverly employing genuinely pivotal historic events, what actually happened in these events will be distorted to rewrite history and create a new and false reality. If this technique could be made acceptable, then we would have every right to cut the Merneptah Stele into chunks, and cement these chunks back together as we please. We might even make the Merneptah Stele say, “Libu is made non-existent. Meshwesh is laid waste and his seed is not.” We should even claim that the Merneptah Stele was chiseled up in 1391 BC (Amenhotep III Stele), and shows evidence that the Libu had already conquered most of Egypt: that is, if we were really determined to rewrite history in the most ludicrous way.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amenhotep_III> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. The “objective … beyond”, was to disclose the fact that over, above, and in parallel with history, a whole invisible spiritual world exists, with which the historical world is in unbroken tangency: so that they, the Israelites were picked by Yahweh to continue the dispersion of that message to the world. The biblical narratives contrast with Egyptian and other narratives in their modesty and the absence of hyperbole.

We might more accurately, but conversely say that the Egyptian writers were telling stories. They were good historians. And they could, tell it the way it was, when they wanted to. But their objective was always something far beyond that. One need only consider the complexities, exaggerations, and variations of the Osiris, Isis Horus mythology to realize that the Egyptians were fond of whoppers. Merneptah was willing to deface the history of his predecessor, Amenhotep III in order to blow his own horn. The artifact should properly be called the Amenhotep III Stele or at least the Amenhotep III-Merneptah Stele. The objective beyond, found in Egyptian monuments was political glorification and promotion: things which are conspicuously absent in the biblical narrative. Moses, Joshua, and later David are ever representing themselves as the servants of Yahweh. The victories are exclusively His.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osiris_myth>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merneptah_Stele> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Emperor%27s_New_Clothes> [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papyrus_Fouad_266> [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. These so-called experts arrive at this naked opinion: first, by claiming that the Bible itself is not an artifact; second, by ignoring Sumerian, Akkadian, as well as other evidence. While this mountain of evidence does not leave us with a name-by-name corroboration of the Bible; it does leave us with enough of an overall understanding of the era and milieu to establish considerable general credibility. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. It should be evident who the real liars are here. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. If you have been blessed or helped by any of these meditations, please repost, share, or use any of them as you wish. No rights are reserved. They are designed and intended for your free participation. They were freely received, and are freely given. No other permission is required for their use. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)