Old Testament Introduction
The Bible’s Buried Secrets
Chapter 5, BBS Preamble

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

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

***Overview***

What is for the most part an exact copy of the 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.

***Script***

Quote:

Narrator: God is dead, or so it must have seemed to the ancestors of the Jews in 586 BC. Jerusalem, and the temple to their God are in flames. The nation of Israel, founded by King David is wiped out.

William G. Dever:[[1]](#endnote-1) It would have seemed to have been the end, but it was rather the beginning.

N: For out of the crucible of destruction emerges a sacred book, the Bible; and an idea that will change the world, the belief in One God.

Thomas Cahill:[[2]](#endnote-2) This is a new idea. It was an idea that nobody had ever had before.

Lee I. Levine:[[3]](#endnote-3) Monotheism is well ensconced. Something major happened. It is very hard to trace.

N: Now, a provocative new story from discoveries deep within the earth and the Bible.

Eilat Mazar:[[4]](#endnote-4) We wanted to examine the possibility that the remains of King David’s palace are here.

Dever: We can actually see vivid evidence here of a destruction.

Amnon Ben-Tor:[[5]](#endnote-5) Question number one, who did it?

N. An archaeological detective story puzzles together clues to the mystery of who wrote the Bible; when; and why?

Gabriel Barkay: [[6]](#endnote-6) And it was very clear that it was some kind of a tiny scroll.

Ron Tappy:[[7]](#endnote-7) I immediately saw very clear, very distinct letters.

P. Kyle McCarter:[[8]](#endnote-8) It is the ancestor of the Hebrew script.

N: And from out of the earth emerge thousands of idols that suggest, God had a wife.

Amihai Mazar:[[9]](#endnote-9) We just found this exceptional clay figurine showing a fertility goddess.

N: Powerful evidence sheds new light on how one people, alone among ancient cultures, finally turn their back on idol worship to find their One God.

Carol Meyers:[[10]](#endnote-10) This makes the God of ancient Israel the universal God of the world that resonates with people at least in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions to this very day.

N: Now, science and Scripture converge to create a powerful new story of an ancient people, God and the Bible. Up next on NOVA, *The Bible’s Buried Secrets*.

Unquote.

***Commentary***

One can only begin here, with the Babylonian Captivity of the Judean people (586-516 BC), if one is shilling the view that the legal creation of the Jewish Vassal State by Persia in 516 BC is in fact the starting place: that nothing of actual significance has gone before.

According to this false view, the amalgamated people who developed in Babylon are for the most part Canaanites. These Canaanites, possibly having melded previously, have brought with them the J and E traditions of their tribes; there, in Babylon, they were thrown together with Judean Canaanite or Jebusite captives, who brought a D tradition with them. P scribes, combined the various traditions; added their own embellishments, which may have accounted for half of the finished document; eventually, publishing an edited version in five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These final documents are the justification for the existence of the Jews.

According to this lie, the books of the Law did not originate as five distinct books as we now know them.

In this fabrication, Moses is not a real person, at least not the hyper-prophet claimed in the biblical narrative, the most he could have written, if he existed at all, is a small part of one of the four traditions (J, E, D, or P).

According to this obfuscation, the Exodus is the 516 BC event of the Jews leaving Babylon, not the 1406 BC departure of the Israelites from Egypt; neither is there any actual nineteenth century BC migration from Ur, including Abram with his family: everything is just a literary invention that justifies and sets the stage for 516 BC.

In this prevarication, David and Solomon are not the real kings of a glorious nation; they are nothing more than petty tribal chieftains.

This is one version of the fairy stories known variously as the Documentary, Supplementary (seemingly invented around 2014 AD), or Fragmentary Hypothesis (which is so new that nobody has yet written an encyclopedia article for it as of October 18, 2017, AD).[[11]](#endnote-11) This fulfills the parable, “When they persecute you in one lie, go grab another lie.” You will witness the internal self-contradictions be exposed as the *Bible’s Buried Secrets* stumbles from one falsehood to another.

While it is true that the Jews find the beginning of their legal existence in 516 BC; that the Jews have little in common with their ancestors, especially in the ancestral form of worship which is now devoid of the Shəkinah, the Presence of God’s Glory: still the Jews do have a mostly Judean ancestry and, that ancestry is the remains of the Israelite tribes of 1406 BC and before. The Judeans became the default tribe, sheltering whatever was left of all the rest of the thirteen tribes of Israel, after the demise of 722 BC, which obliterated the northern kingdom. Yes, these Jews and Israelites had intermarried with Canaanites, Moabites, and others: yet, that fact, in and of itself, provides no warrant whatsoever for this ludicrous attempt to rewrite history. Inconceivable! Moreover, the Shəkinah will return in 4 BC, and be manifested in power in 33 AD.

To succeed in building such a fairy story, the perpetrators will need to prove that neither David nor Solomon existed either; or if they did exist, it was not as a glorious kingdom; it was, at most, according to this lie, just a petty, minuscule tribal fiefdom. This seems to be why Finkelstein is so eager to discredit the ruins of the Jebusite stronghold later on; as well as why the *Bible’s Buried Secrets* so carefully inserts the point into the narrative.

These gainsayers, having no spiritual relationship of their own, judge it impossible for anyone else to have such a spiritual relationship: hence, anything spiritual is denied as fiction (Luke 11:13; Romans 8:16).

The Babylonian Captivity of the Jews is a strange, although startling place to begin a scientific discussion of Biblical Archaeology or Bible Introduction. We might have expected some sort of sequential timeline: either from the biblical internal provenance (chronology), or from the available external archaeological evidence. There is a logical ordering to this material, and it does not begin in Babylon. This introduction would be more appropriate as a course on the justifications for unbelieving liberal Judaism.

Everything about this introduction screams its newness: God only *seems dead*, it only *seems like the end*; it *is the beginning*, it *emerges*, it is *new*, *something happened* [in 500 or 516], it is *discovery*, it is *possibility*, it is *vivid*, it *converges* [for the first time in history].

There is nothing new about *The Bible’s Buried Secrets*. Virtually everything in it was known a century ago: from the artifacts, to the Bible, to the bizarre theories intended to explain the convergence of archaeology or science and the Bible. The Merneptah Stele was discovered in 1896.[[12]](#endnote-12) Is Tel Zayit new (discovered in 2005)?[[13]](#endnote-13) The Gezer calendar was already known in 1908.[[14]](#endnote-14) The first of many Documentary Hypotheses was first proposed in the nineteenth century.

The idea being presented: that the Jews wrote the Bible and invented monotheism (ca 500) out of thin air and non-existent source documents is patently absurd. That the Jews first got serious about obedience to Yahweh’s requirement of monotheism is patently obvious. But having finally embraced monotheism, in loyalty to which deity? In spite of their final rejection of polytheism, the Jews drift farther and farther away from Yahweh, the God of the Bible. The God of Judaism, the God of Christianity, and the God of Islam cannot be subsumed under the Rubric of monotheism: for they are not at all the same, or even similar. God is not made in the image of man.

The God of the Bible does not resonate with anything else. He is not dependent on us. He was not invented by us. He is unlike us. He does not need our acceptance. He will not cease to be God and disappear if we reject Him. He alone will judge the earth.

The Jews did not find God in 500. He found them and saved them from a predicament that they had brought upon themselves. He had repeated such salvation several times previously in their own history.

Nor did the Jews write the Bible, the most casual study of the prophetic office shows that prophets wrote the Bible. The rules for prophets, under the death penalty for error, are so strict that no mere scribe would dare to tamper with biblical contents, and detailed rules were in place to guarantee that such tampering never took place. The best place to answer the questions “who wrote the Bible; when; and why?” is through careful examination of the internal provenance. If the internal provenance can be linked with external artifacts, so much the better, but these are not essential, for the most part, in understanding internal provenance.

The suggestion that God had a wife is another absurdity. It is very clear from the Bible that God had a wife; not a sensual consort; rather a redeemed people whose relationship to Yahweh was to be salvific, spiritual, and worshipful, with respect for fellow Israelites, all mankind, and the rest of creation.

How good is the Bible? That would be a fair question to ask. The answer is that the Bible is so good that biblical archaeologists would not know where to take their first shovel-full of dirt, without the Bible. It was the Bible that told them where to dig for “Buried Secrets.” Archaeology is very dependent on the Bible. The Bible is not at all dependent on archaeology. The details gleaned from archaeology are nice to know, even important to know; yet, the world would not end if they were never discovered. On the other hand, mankind would still be hopelessly lost without the Bible, whenever the earth ends.

The word, converge, suggests a parity of fact between science and Scripture. No such parity exists. *The Bible’s Buried Secrets* treats the Bible as an inferior and unreliable source of information. The reality is that science is the inferior and unreliable source of information. Science depends on man for veracity. The Bible depends only on God for Truth.

What *The Bible’s Buried Secrets* actually does is dig up an old and wicked pattern of thinking. Such thinking helped undermine the faith of Kaiser Wilhelm II. There were other factors, of course. These factors combined to lead to WWI and WWII, and virtually every war since. Without the absolute authority of Yahweh, the God of the Bible, clearly expressed in the Bible, mankind simply has no reason to believe that war is sin. Nor does mankind see the need to bow to God as King: so, the whole point of the Bible is lost. *The Bible’s Buried Secrets* is a wicked presentation.

[[15]](#endnote-15)

1. William G. Dever (1933 …), an American Archaeologist serving at the University of Arizona (1975 to 2002). Works: Gezer (1966-1971), Khirbet el-Kôm and Jebel Qacaqir (1967-1971), Tell el-Hayyat (1981-1985), Cyprus (1991).

“[Idolatry] was representative of the outlook of the majority of the population, and that the Jerusalem-centered ‘book religion’ of the Deuteronomist circle set out in the Hebrew Bible was only ever the preserve of an elite, a ‘largely impractical’ religious ideal.”

“I am not reading the Bible as Scripture… I am in fact not even a theist. My view all along—and especially in the recent books—is first that the biblical narratives are indeed ‘stories,’ often fictional and almost always propagandistic, but that here and there they contain some valid historical information. That hardly makes me a ‘maximalist.’

“Archaeology as it is practiced today must be able to challenge, as well as confirm, the Bible stories. Some things described there really did happen, but others did not. The Biblical narratives about Abraham, Moses, Joshua and Solomon probably reflect some historical memories of people and places, but the ‘larger than life’ portraits of the Bible are unrealistic and contradicted by the archaeological evidence.”

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_G._Dever> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Thomas Cahill (1940 …), an American author with no special qualifications in archaeology. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Cahill> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Lee I. Levine, professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a rabbi without any special qualifications in archaeology.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lee_I._Levine> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Eilat Mazar (1956 …), Israeli archaeologist with Shalem Center, Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University. Works: Jerusalem, palace (2005), fifth century wall (2007), tenth century city wall (2010), Ophel inscription (2012). Ophel Treasure (2013).

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

Ophel inscription: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ophel_inscription>

Ophel Treasure: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ophel_Treasure> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Amnon Ben-Tor, a professor at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Works: Horvat Usa (1963), Tel Yarmuth (1970), Azor (1971), Athienou, Cyprus (1971-1972; with T. Dothan), Tel Qiri (1975-1976), Yoqne‘am (1977-1979; 1981; 1987-1988), Tel Qashish (1978-1979; 1981-1985; 1987), The Selz Foundation Hazor Excavations in Memory of Yigael Yadin (1990-present). Ben-Tor’s observation is well taken. Who did it? By default, Israel defeated both Jericho and Hazor.

<http://archaeology.huji.ac.il/depart/biblical/amnonb/amnonb.asp> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Gabriel Barkay (1944 …), Israeli archaeologist with Bar-Ilan University. Works: Lachish, Ketef Hinnom (1979), École Biblique (1970), Temple Mount, Solomon's Stables. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Ron E. (and Connie) Tappy, is a professor at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Works: Tel Zayit (1998-2005), Hebrew alphabet dated 1000-901 BC.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/09/international/middleeast/09alphabet.html?module=Search&mabReward=relbias%3Aw%2C%5B%22RI%3A11%22%2C%22RI%3A14%22%5D&_r=1&>

<http://www.pts.edu/tappyr> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., professor at Johns Hopkins University and consultant epigraphist. Works: Tel Zayit, Tel Beth Shemesh, Tel Ashkelon, coauthor with Tappy on Tel Zayit inscription. <http://neareast.jhu.edu/bios/kyle-mccarter/>

<http://cas.ou.edu/2013-daa-dsa> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Amihai Mazar (1942 …), Israeli archaeologist at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Works: Tel Qasile, Tel Batash (Timnah, 1977-1989), Bet She’an (1989-1996), Tel Rehov (1997 …). Eilat’s Cousin <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amihai_Mazar> [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Carol L. (and Eric) Meyers, a feminist biblical scholar a professor at Duke University with no special qualifications in archaeology.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carol_Meyers> [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Documentary_hypothesis>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supplementary_hypothesis>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Supplementary_hypothesis&action=history>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fragmentary_hypothesis> [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merneptah_Stele> [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zayit_Stone> [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. The Gezer calendar belongs to the same class and date as the Zayit stone. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gezer_calendar> [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
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