

Lecture on Archaeology
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at Faith Theological Seminary)

With only four hours in which to survey the developments of Archaeology during the past one hundred years, it's been very hard to select just what to deal with in each of the four hours, and I decided that, having touched on the main principles during the three hours, and having given illustrations of their application, that instead of giving further illustrations of the same type, or going more deeply into the principles of archaeology, I would take a different subject, one that is closely connected with archaeology, in which I draw the greater part of the material from archaeology, but which approaches the subject from a little different direction. That is to say, the archaeological material we have been looking at, while it is of tremendous value in increasing our understanding of the Bible, has as its principle interest today the light it throws on this question: Is the Bible a correct account of the events that occurred at the time? And, of course, much of the attack on the Bible has come from those who have said it is made up of myths and legends made up long after the events occurred. There is much more material that we could look at showing the factual nature of the historical statements of the Bible, the dependability of its statements on material things.

But today I'd like to look at the same general question from a little different viewpoint. Is there material connected with archaeology which touches upon the question not simply whether the factual statements in the Bible of what happened in the past are true, but upon the question of whether actually in the Bible there was One directing and controlling, causing that the results of the wording would be exactly what he desired, One who knew not only the convenient act of historical situations, but who knew the future in a way that man could never know it.

In other words, does material in archaeology throw any light upon the question of whether there is a supernatural element in the Bible, imparting knowledge that could not possibly be available to an ordinary human being, no matter how good an observer he might be. In introducing this material I think it is good to turn to the 41st chapter of the book of Isaiah. In that 41st chapter of Isaiah we find that Isaiah is presenting God's challenge to the false gods. He's presenting God's call to the heathen gods of the day to admit their nothingness, to admit that he is the only God, the only supernatural power. And he brings an interesting argument. Look at chapter 41, verse 21, where the Lord says, "Produce your cause, bring forth your strong reasons, says the king of Jacob. Let them bring them forth and show what shall happen; let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come." And the next verse says, "Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods; yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together." Can these heathen gods predict the future? Well, if God gives that as a challenge to them, to declare that they can't predict the future, they are not really gods. It is reasonable to turn it around and ask: Is there evidence that He is really God, by in some way showing that He is able to predict the future? Has He given evidence of that kind?

Now we hear so much about prophecy from different sources that we don't realize just how difficult a thing it is to predict the future. And so before we look at the evidences as to whether God has actually predicted the future, why don't we take a few minutes to look at this general question of predictive prophecy. Just how easy or how hard is it to predict the future? The fact of the matter is that there are so many variables entering into human life, there are so many unpredictable features entering into human life, that most attempts to predict the future have either been so vague, that no matter what happens, somebody might say it really was a true prediction, or have a record of comparatively small percentage of accurate predictions of the future.