

as far as our knowledge of ancient history was concerned. But then Prof. Pinches of the British Museum went into the Babylonian tablets in the museum, and found some thousands of tablets that had been brought from ancient Babylon. Mostly lists of property, bills of sale, all that sort of thing.

But he went through these things to see if he could find the name Belshazzar. Sure enough. From a tablet dated in the life of Nabonidus he found the name Belshazzar so there had been such a man at that time. Then he found a tablet which said that a house was rented for three years for Belshazzar the king's son, so this brought Belshazzar right into the royal family.

Then Prof. Dougherty of Yale U. took of the study of these Babylonian tablets and he went further with it and he wrote a book which is published in the series of Yale Oriental Research which he called Nabonidus and Belshazzar. In this book he says that the evidence he found proves that Nabonidus in the latter years of his reign went to Tema in the Arabian desert and devoted himself there to the study of archaeology. And that he left his son Nabonidus as actual ruler and co-king along with him. Prof. Dougherty said, You go thru the literature from that time up to the time of Christ and you find that the histories tell about those days --they will mention Nabonidus but they never mention Belshazzar. These facts except for the statement in the Bible are not known for all those years.

Evidently the Persians vilified Belshazzar and made the people forget all about him, did not mention him in their accounts at all. But the tablets prove Belshazzar existed at that time; that Belshazzar was actually co-king along with Nabonidus, but as Prof. Dougherty points out, three times in the vv. that I read to you, it is said that Daniel would be made the third ruler in the kingdom. What does third ruler mean? Nabonidus was the first ruler. Belshazzar was the second. So the fact that Belshazzar was the second ruler and Daniel would now be made the third ruler, is preserved to us thru all these centuries in the Bible and only discovered in recent years.

I want to say this: We can depend upon the statements in the Bible. We may not fully understand them. It is God's Word. Its depth goes far beyond anything that any human being can plumb. It has in it == It does not attempt to give us science. It does not attempt to give us history, even the history of Israel fully. It is giving us the story of God's dealing with the people and the preparation for the coming of Christ. But where it touches upon these things it touches upon them accurately, and we can depend on what it says.

Every now and then (like in this case) we find a suggestion of something that was previously unknown.

In the book of Isaiah we find many times where Isaiah speaks of God as having spread out the heavens, of having stretched out --it uses a strong word--of having stretched out the heavens. It uses it a number of times. Some of these are in the perfect tense.