

SOLOMON'S SEAPORT

One of the most interesting and important excavations of recent years has been conducted at Ezion-geber, the site of Solomon's seaport. Its significance becomes clear when we analyze recent attitudes toward king Solomon.

Unbelievers in the Scriptures in recent years have often derided the scriptural story of the greatness of king Solomon. It has been held that he was possibly a petty king, subject to either Hiram of Tyre or to the Pharaoh of Egypt. Thus H. G. Wells in an article in Current History Magazine, January, 1938, (p.43-44) belittles "Solomon in all his Glory", saying of his pride in "his poor little temple" that "it is very like the innocent pride of a Gold Coast negro whose chief has bought a motor car." Even the first edition of The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia follows this trend for it says (p.2824): "The wisdom for which Solomon is so celebrated was not of a very high order."

In the face of these attitudes even Bible believers might wonder whether the biblical story of Solomon is entirely true. Up to the present no monument has been discovered which bears his name or declares his greatness. Evidence of an entirely different nature however has been found.

Space here does not permit discussion of the discoveries of Solomon's stables between 1926 and 1929 at Megiddo showing that this was actually one of the cities devoted largely to stables for the horses of king Solomon, as described in I Kings 9:19. No one but a powerful king could have had such establishments. The greatness of the power of Solomon seemed proven, but what about his wisdom?

The end of the 9th chapter of I Kings describes the building of a sea port by Solomon at Ezion-geber at the head of the Red Sea and his sending boats from there to Ophir for gold. One wonders at once why a wise king would put a sea port so far overland from his capital at Jerusalem. It would be far cheaper to carry the goods from Jerusalem which must be exchanged for the gold of Ophir down to the Mediterranean