

and that the stories about the Canaanite gods find no parallel in the Biblical story.

6. The Problem of the Date of the Conquest.

A few years ago there were scholars who denied that there had ever been an extensive Israelite conquest of Palestine. Instead they insisted that small groups of ancestors of the later Israelites had drifted in from the desert and so that the population had gradually changed from Canaanite to Israelite. Today it is questionable if anyone would longer hold such a position. Too many cities have been excavated and shown to have had tremendous, powerful walls at the end of the Canaanite period. Often a thick burnt layer separates the Canaanite remains from those of Israelite civilization above. The fact of an Israelite conquest can today hardly be doubted.

However, the date of the conquest still remains a question. This is, of course, closely connected with the question of the date of the exodus from Egypt (cf. II.E.5). The figure given in 1 Kings 6.1 seems to many to decide the matter conclusively in favor of an exodus during the 18th dynasty in Egypt, and therefore of a conquest about forty years later. Some students would even feel that Biblical integrity was dependent upon the acceptance of this particular date for the exodus and the conquest.

The present writer does not feel this way. Systems of chronology such as we have today, of numbering centuries one after the other, were hardly in existence until well along in the Christian era. The Bible does not tell us the month in which Abraham left Ur, nor the month in which David died. God could have caused this information and thousands of similar facts to be included in the Bible if He had chosen. The Bible does not tell us in what century the exodus occurred. If we can determine these matters from other evidence, they are interesting to know, but they should never be considered as articles of faith.