

it found that the freight rate from New York to Winnemucca, Nevada was five times as great as the freight rate to San Francisco, five hundred miles further, and going through Winnemucca. On being asked for the reason for such a difference, the answer was given that the rate to San Francisco had to compete with the cost of shipment by sea, which, at that time, prior to the digging of the Panama canal, would have to go from New York clear around the southern end of South America. Thus this trip, many thousands of miles by water to San Francisco, was so much cheaper in expense than a trip overland that the railroad thought it necessary, in order to get this business, to carry it for one fifth of what the railroad considered a proper rate to Winnemucca, Nevada, a distance only five-sixths as great. Since water transportation is so much cheaper and simpler than land transportation, why would Solomon, if he were so wise, build his navy of ships at Ezion-geber.

As Glueck traveled southward through the Arabah, and particularly as he approached the northern end of the Aqabah branch of the Red Sea, he discovered a surprising answer to this problem. He found tunnels dug into the side of the cliffs, At the mouth of these tunnels he found evidence of ancient burning, and bits of metal, and pottery evidence that dated them to the time of Solomon. Careful examination showed that these were copper and iron mines. Transportation of the copper overland from much of this region to Jerusalem would cost more than the copper would be worth. But by simply carrying it down to Ezion-geber, there putting it on ships and floating it down to Ophir, and in Ophir trading it for gold, it could be changed into something that would be well worth the overland trip from Ezion-geber to Jerusalem. Thus it became clear that Solomon's building his navy of ships at Ezion-geber was, after all, not so unintelligent as it had appeared at first sight.

Incidentally, the discovery of these copper and iron mines also threw light on another verse of scripture, the last part of which had formerly been widely doubted. We read in Deut. 8:9 the words: "A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass."

The Hebrew word here translated "brass" could better be translated "copper." Brass is an alloy of copper. This Hebrew word stands for copper or any alloy of it. Critics had asserted that the verse was inaccurate, saying that there were no copper or iron mines in Palestine. Yet here was evidence that Solomon had dug copper and iron mines in Palestine, just as the verse in Deuteronomy had predicted, and the reason for building a navy of ships in Ezion-geber was evident.

It is interesting to note that Solomon's extensive mercantile and mining activity is not mentioned in the Bible. The Bible was not written to present industrial and business history. It was written to tell about God, about man's sin, and about God's provision for man's redemption. This is its purpose. It touches on other matters only incidentally, but whenever it does, we can accept its statements as true. Here it mentions Solomon's building of ships at Ezion-geber, and describes how the ships brought him gold from Ophir, but does not tell what the ships took to Ophir, nor why he built his navy at this particular place. Skeptics may for a time deny the reasonableness of a Biblical statement about history or science, but when we learn the additional facts that the Bible does not give, we find evidence that the statements in the Bible are true.

After the long trip southward through the Arabah, Dr. Glueck reached the upper end of the Gulf of Aqabah, where he saw an artificial mound that a German archaeologist had already identified as containing the remains of Ezion-Geber.

Ezion-Geber was a small city, not a large one like Megiddo. Glueck was anxious to dig into it and see what he might find.

Returning to the United States, he raised some money for the purpose, and the next year he began to excavate Ezion-Geber. It soon became apparent that this was not a city that had gradually grown up over a long period, but one that had been built in accordance with a definite plan. Although not nearly as large as Megiddo, it was skillfully laid out, and must have required a large force of skilled artisans for its construction, particularly in view of the great factory complex that was its predominant feature. For a monarch in Jerusalem to send a sufficient force of men all the distance down to Ezion-Geber to build a city according to this detailed plan, and to provide them with the necessary supplies and equipment, must have been a very expensive undertaking. No one but a powerful ruler would have been able to do it. Here was further proof of the power of King Solomon.