



The Caller

A Weekly Newsletter of the Elizabethtown church of Christ
Vol. XXXXIII July 16, 2017 No. 26

**Confidence
Corner
John F. Board**

In this week's *Confidence Corner* I wanted to share some information regarding an archaeological find that I mentioned in class last Wednesday evening. The particular archaeological find

that I mentioned is called the Behistun Inscription.

As we have noted in other articles, we have to be careful what we say about archaeology and how it impacts the Bible. We never want to use language such as "this archaeological find proves the Bible." It is better to note that an archaeological find can help confirm something we find in the Bible.

Also note that there may be times when people try to disprove the Bible based upon archaeological information. In these cases it is important to note that either the archaeological information has been misinterpreted or there is some other explanation.

In Bible class I was mentioning that it was not out of the question for the people of God to have written the entire book of Deuteronomy on a stone for all to see when they entered the area of the Promised Land. This was not totally unlikely because the Behistun Inscription, as I noted in class, is three times as long as the book of Deuteronomy. According to one Bible Dictionary, the Behistun Inscription is a trilingual inscription carved by Darius the Great in the face of a 500-foot cliff near Hamadan. The relief and inscription recount the genealogy of Darius and depict his victory over Gaumata the Usurper. It is written in Old Persian, Elamite, and the Babylonian variety of Akkadian. When the inscription was discovered above the modern Bisitun (Behistun of Persia), it provided the key to deciphering cuneiform and the Akkadian language.

jfb

Elizabethtown Church of Christ Live Righteous Youth Rally

Devoted

Acts 2:42-47

July 28-29, 2017

**Keynote Speaker:
Matt Cook (Henderson, TN)**

**Class Teachers:
Nathan Ferguson (Franklin, KY)
Spencer Clark (Louisville, KY)
Nick Secula (Smiths Grove, KY)**

**Registration Times:
Friday @ 6:30 p.m.
Saturday @ 9:00 a.m.**

**Please RSVP or call for more information
at 270-765-6446.**

Limited Housing Available

Sunday's Sermons:

**A.M. — But God
Ephesians 2:1-6**

**P.M. — Who Have You Told About God?
Acts 17:22-24**

Hebrew Parables and Jesus' Use of Parables

Biblical scholars vary on whether or not Jesus' parables are unique or if they are like stories told in the region during the Old Testament and inter-testamental period. The best evidence seems to suggest that Jesus' parables, though having some similarities to OT *mashalim*, were in fact truly unique. Consider the following in the paragraphs below.

In the Old Testament *mashalim* is used to define various literary forms—as a maxim: “like mother, like daughter” (Ezek. 16:44); a byword: “You have made us a byword among the nations, a laughingstock among the peoples” (Ps. 44:14); a riddle: “I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old” (Ps. 78:2); a parable: Nathan's story of the poor man's lamb (2 Sam. 12:1–4); and an allegory: “Son of man, set forth an allegory and tell the house of Israel a parable” (Ezek. 17:2–10).

Some in New Testament studies have likened ten *mashalim* in the Old Testament to the parables of Jesus. The most famous of Old Testament *mashalim* is the Parable of the Ewe Lamb, which Nathan the prophet uses to confront King David about his sin. Upon hearing this parable, David is outraged that anyone would do such a cursed thing and exclaims, “The man who has done this deserves to die!” (v. 5). It is then he learns that he, David, is the man.

So, while the Jewish world was familiar with parables as a means of teaching, very little before or after the life and ministry of Jesus—apart from Nathan's parable to King David (2 Sam. 12:1b–4)—matches his parables. The contrast of Jesus' parables and the Hebrew tradition is obvious. The Hebrews used the *mashal* to clarify and interpret what they thought the text was saying to the people of Israel. Jesus' parables are complete in and of themselves with little exegesis or clarification required. Though Jesus affirms another's quote of an Old Testament text—as in the Good Samaritan parable (Luke 10:25–37) when the lawyer cites the Old Testament (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18)—his story form had its own life and operated within its own authority.

We must remember that those listening to Jesus were struck by the power in his stories for he taught them “as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Mark 1:22). Jesus employs a storytelling technique familiar to His people but with an interesting twist. Jesus goes beyond merely reinforcing biblical concepts and instead introduces revolutionary ideas about God. In this way Jesus gave little opportunity for people to leave without a response.

*John F. Board
Elizabethtown, KY*