
Letters

MORDECAI, DANIEL AND THE TABLE OF NATIONS

Dear Editor,

As one who has enjoyed Mr Cooper's series on the history of man, I would like to know if he knows of secular records mentioning the biblical Mordecai or Daniel, since each had positions of high authority in pagan nations?

Mordecai is stated in Scripture as being second only to King Ahasuerus (Esther 10:3), who ruled over 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia (Esther 1:1). He wrote to all the provinces (Esther 9:20,29) in their own languages (Esther 8:9), and was feared throughout all the provinces (Esther 9:3,4).

Daniel, named Belteshazzar by the prince of the eunuchs (Daniel 1:7), was the third ruler under Belshazzar (Daniel 5:29). He was over 120 princes under Darius (Daniel 6:1,2). A decree was published in all languages to fear the God of Daniel (Daniel 6:25,26).

It would seem likely that these men should appear in secular writings.

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The Author Replies ...

Thank you for the most interesting enquiry concerning Mordecai and Daniel. My researches into the Table of Nations, alas, did not bring me up to their time, so I personally have little to offer. However, much can be gleaned from modern books on these characters, for an example of which I quote from Merrill J. Ringer's **Archaeology and the Old Testament**:-

'Although the names Vashti and Esther have not been found in contemporary sources, both have

satisfactory Persian etymologies and there can be no reasonable doubt that they are historical. The name Mordecai is Babylonian Mardukai, occurring quite frequently in late Babylonian inscriptions, and is derived from the name of the god Marduk. The names of the chamberlains and other Persians in the book cannot as yet be proved authentic, but since many of them are apparently Elamite, the recent discovery of numbers of Elamite administrative tablets from the reign of Artaxerxes I bids fair to illuminate the problem.

Especially illuminated by the discoveries at Susa is Haman's method for fixing the date for the destruction of the Jews by casting dice (Esther 3:7). M. Dieulafoy, the excavator of Susa, actually recovered one of these quadrangular prisms on which were engraved the numbers one, two, five and six."

This was written 42 years ago, and it would be interesting to discover exactly what the (then) newly-discovered Elamite tablets revealed. I would recommend Unger's book (still available) to anyone interested in the historicity of the Old Testament books and characters, and if anyone is able to look up the new Elamite records then I for one would be very interested indeed to hear about what they tell us.

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REFERENCES

1. Unger, M., 1954. **Archaeology and the Old Testament**, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pp. 308-309.

CONTEMPORARY SUPPRESSION OF THE THEISTIC WORLD VIEW

Dear Editor,

Dr Jerry Bergman's analysis of the 'Contemporary Suppression of the Theistic World View' [CEN Tech. J., 9(2):267-275] is to be welcomed and commended. May I comment, however, on some issues raised? (My concern here is with those creationists who subscribe to the bases of faith outlined in the front of your journal.)

The Question of Suffering

- (1) We are taught to expect and rejoice in suffering for the sake of Christ — we ought not to be surprised or dismayed (John 15:18-21; 1 Peter 4:12-14; Matthew 5:11-12).
- (2) We must learn from Scripture and from history that those who oppose us are also under the government of God; their power to control and influence is only granted so long as God sees fit, for purposes hidden in His infinite wisdom (Psalm 94:3-4; cp. vv. 22-23).
- (3) The Almighty will not allow His Truth to be derided for ever, but will shortly arise with fury and with vengeance against His enemies (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).
- (4) God Himself is with those who trust Him and walk humbly before Him. He is well able to place us in positions of influence, or allow us to suffer 'affliction with the people of God' (Hebrews 11:25), as He sees fit (Psalm 146:8; Luke 1:49-53).
- (5) We need not therefore fight anxiously for our personal 'rights', but instead our conduct must be humble, honourable and holy; the Almighty will avenge His children in due time (Romans 12:19-21). Whilst protesting appropriately against unlawful practices that