



cure an important oil field near the city of Karkuk. About seven miles west of Karkuk lie the ruins of the Nuzi. Over 4000 texts have been discovered at Nuzi, which reflect legal practices common to many seen in the book of Genesis. At Nuzi we see examples of the transfer of one's birthright in exchange for goods, and a father's dying blessing treated as a legally binding declaration, both of which occurred with Jacob

after returning from his Palestinian conquest (2 Chron. 32:21). The prophet Nahum declared God's judgment upon the city because of its corruption (Nahum 1:1-3; 3:5-7).

Karkuk. Early in the opening stages of the war, coalition special operation forces together with members of the Kurdish resistance worked to se-

and Esau (Gen. 25:30-34). In Nuzi texts, we also see handmaids given to a new bride, and given to a husband to bear children if the woman was childless. When Abraham and Sarah failed to trust God's promise to give them a son, they were likely simply following the customs of their former homeland by bearing Ishmael through Sarah's handmaid Hagar (Gen. 16:3).



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Faithful Sayings

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Biblical Events upon the Iraqi Battlefield

By Kyle Pope

In 2003, coalition forces began a push to disarm the Iraqi regime led by Saddam Hussein. When that happened, many Americans became glued to their televisions, radios, and newspapers following the events as they unfolded. As I began consulting a map to track the stages of the war, I began to realize that the places described hold a great deal of significance to students of the Bible.

Al Furat and Dijlah Rivers. Two rivers cut through the heart of Iraq, the Al Furat (or Euphrates) and the Dijlah (or Tigris) rivers. These two rivers are the lifeblood of this region, forming the "Fertile Crescent." Virtually all of the major cities of Iraq lie on or are connected to these rivers. In ancient times the Persian Gulf came further inland covering the modern cities of Umm Qasr and Al Bosrah. The Bible, in describing a pre-flood geography vastly different from what we know, describes the Euphrates and Tigris (or Hiddekel) as flowing from Eden (Gen. 2:8-14). This association with early human history is part of the reason this area is called the Cradle of Civilization. In the New Testament, Stephen mentions Abraham's home using the Greek name for this area, Mesopotamia, meaning literally "between the rivers" (Acts 7:2-4).

An Nasiriyah. Early in the conflict, coalition forces moved against the Iraqi city of An Nasiriyah in order to establish a river crossing on

the march towards Baghdad. On the western side of the Euphrates some thirteen miles from Nasiriyah stand the ruins of the ancient city of Ur. Some scholars believe this site was the city of Abraham's birth. The Bible states that God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, to go to a land that the Lord would give his descendants as an inheritance (Gen. 11:26-12:5; 15:7). The New Testament writer of the book of Hebrews offers Abraham's faithfulness as an example of seeking a better, "heavenly country" (Heb. 11:8-16). The ruins near Nasiriyah are not universally accepted as the biblical Ur of the Chaldees. Some place Abraham's birthplace in northern Iraq or eastern Turkey.

As Samawah. Sixty miles north of An Nasiriyah in the town of As Samawah coalition forces encountered resistance in the early stages of the war. Twenty-one miles east of Samawah are the ruins of the town of Uruk (biblical Erech). The Bible says this city was built by Nimrod, a descendant of Ham, described as a "mighty hunter." He built a number of cities including Babel, Erech, and Accad (Gen. 10:6-10).

An Najaf. As coalition forces pushed north, a suspected chemical weapons factory was seized near the city of An Najaf, about 96 miles south of Baghdad. About half-way between Najaf and Baghdad are the ruins of the ancient city of Babylon. The Hebrew name for this city is Babel. Babylon is its Greek name. When Assyria carried away the northern kingdom of Israel, residents of Babylon were brought to live in northern Palestine (2 Kings 17:24). In part, these people would become the ancestors of the Samaritans of the New Testament. Not long after this, Babylon assumed an ominous place in biblical history. During the time of the Judean king Hezekiah, Isaiah prophesied a time when Babylon would destroy Jerusalem and carry off its inhabitants (2 Kings 20:12-18). When Nebuchadnezzar rose to power, this prophecy was fulfilled. In Babylon Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego were brought to the royal court where they maintained their faithfulness (Dan. 1:8). In this city Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream of four earthly kingdoms destroyed by an eternal kingdom (Dan. 2:44). Christians believe that this kingdom is the church. Here Nebuchadnezzar was humbled when he ex-

alted himself (Dan. 4:28-37) and Belshazzar, the final co-king of Babylon, saw a hand write his own judgment upon the wall. While Belshazzar drank from objects taken from the temple in Jerusalem, the Medes and Persians took the city (Dan. 5:1-30). The horror of Babylon was still remembered in New Testament times as the name became a synonym for the oppression of Rome (Rev. 17:5, 18).

Ad Diwaniyah. Some coalition forces pushed north through the region between the Tigris and Euphrates coming to the town of Ad Diwaniyah. Twenty miles east of Diwaniyah are the ruins of the ancient city of Nippur. In ancient times (as today) a canal ran from Erech, north to the ancient city of Sippar, near modern Baghdad. The Bible calls this canal the "river Chebar," after its Akkadian name *Kabaru*. Nippur sat on the shore of this canal. Although it is not mentioned by name in the Bible, it was to cities like Nippur, along the Chebar that many of the exiles from Judah were brought during the Babylonian captivity. Along the Chebar, Ezekiel received his vision recorded in the book which bears his name (Ezek. 1:1-3).

Mosul (Al Mawsil). In northern Iraq bombing occurred regularly at a town on the western banks of the Tigris named Mosul. According to the Bible, after Nimrod moved north of Babel and Erech he built two other cities near Mosul. Nineteen miles south, on the east side of the river, is Nimrud, called Calah in the Bible (Gen.

10:11-12). Just opposite Mosul, on the other side of the river, are the vast ruins of Nineveh. The Bible tells us Jonah was told to go and preach to Nineveh (Jonah 1:1-3). Although he first ran in the opposite direction, he ultimately preached to them and they accepted his warnings (Jonah 3:1-10). Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian empire during the time of Sennacherib, who was murdered by his sons

