



# **What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It?: What Archeology Can Tell Us About the Reality of Ancient Israel**

*William G. Dever*

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For centuries the Hebrew Bible has been the fountainhead of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Today, however, the entire biblical tradition, including its historical veracity, is being challenged. Leading this assault is a group of scholars described as the "minimalist" or "revisionist" school of biblical studies, which charges that the Hebrew Bible is largely pious fiction, that its writers and editors invented "ancient Israel" as a piece of late Jewish propaganda in the Hellenistic era.

In this fascinating book noted Syro-Palestinian archaeologist William G. Dever attacks the minimalist position head-on, showing how modern archaeology brilliantly illuminates both life in ancient Palestine and the sacred scriptures as we have them today. Assembling a wealth of archaeological evidence, Dever builds the clearest, most complete picture yet of the real Israel that existed during the Iron Age of ancient Palestine (1200–600 B.C.).

Dever's exceptional reconstruction of this key period points up the minimalists' abuse of archaeology and reveals the weakness of their revisionist histories. Dever shows that ancient Israel, far from being an "invention," is a reality to be discovered. Equally important, his recovery of a reliable core history of ancient Israel provides a firm foundation from which to appreciate the aesthetic value and lofty moral aspirations of the Hebrew Bible.

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