

Dear Dr MacRae,

Thank you for your letter. I showed it to a professor of ancient history who is very hostile to Christianity. He said he would look into the matter. A few days later he told me that the best scholars believe that Alexander's people were mistaken when they thought they were throwing into the water the remains of an ancient city. He said there never was a city that could be called "Old Tyre." He said that Tyre had always been an island city, and that this is proved by the fact that at many places in the annals of the ancient Assyrian kings the name of Tyre is followed by the words: "in the midst of the waters".

Dear ...

Thank you for your letter. The reference to the annals of the Assyrian kings reminded me of my student days in Germany when I read many of these annals of Assyrian kings in the original cuneiform writing. I went to the library of the University of Pennsylvania and consulted an index of these annals. It gave references to a number of places where the Assyrian kings had mentioned Tyre, and I found that the name was frequently accompanied by the words: "in the midst of the waters."

Then I looked up the references to Sidon, the other great ancient maritime city. I found that when the Assyrian kings referred to Sidon they added the same words: "in the midst of the waters." Sidon is on the mainland, not an island. The fact that it is also many times accompanied by this phrase proves that the phrase does not indicate that it is situated on an island, but that it is a great maritime center, with its ships going to and fro through the waters, carrying goods from and to cities in all directions.

Whenever I hear of an alleged error in the Word of God, I say: "Wait a minute. Let's get all the relevant facts. When all the facts are looked at, the Bible always proves to be right."

Of course there are many occasions when we cannot get access to all the facts. In such a case it is wise to give the Bible the benefit of the doubt. I was glad that I was able to find the relevant facts in this case.