

A few years before that time Dr. Albright had carried on a few weeks of excavation at Tell el-Ful. Before doing so he had inquired about securing permission from the owners of the land, and was told that the two acres on the flat summit of the hill were not divided into distinct properties but were held on the shareholding plan, as was often the case in the hills of Palestine. They were owned jointly by sixty-six shareholders, and sometimes a share would belong to several families. It would have been an extremely difficult task to look up all these people in order to bargain for the right to excavate there. Accordingly, Dr. Albright decided to use a different method. He hired a few men, went to the hill and started digging.

What then occurred was most amazing. As he stood on the hill prior to digging and looked around everything appeared simply like barren land. One could hardly think that anyone was living in the area. Yet when the men began to dig, people started almost immediately to come out of mud hovels and caves. Hundreds of people came rushing out, converging on the hill where he was digging, and demanding that he show evidence of any right to dig in their hill. He then dismissed the men whom he had hired for a day, and hired some of the partial owners to work for him in their place, saying, "We will ask the courts to decide on a fair price."

During the next few weeks Dr. Albright was able to spend less than half of his time digging in the mound. The other half was consumed with arguments in the courts. At first some of the owners insisted that \$2,000 would be a fair rental for these two acres of very poor land. Since Dr. Albright had much less than this available for the entire cost of the excavation it was well worth the time spent arguing. In the end the court set a fair price of \$35 as a proper rental for permission to excavate the hill. It did not cost much, but the negotiations were a great nuisance, and if Dr. Albright had not possessed a wide knowledge of native customs and been willing to take a great deal of time and bother in carrying the thing through to a conclusion, the expense might have been prohibitive. Such problems frequently arise when one desires to excavate in a populated area. Jeremiah's prophecy about the cities of Babylonia has never been applicable to Palestine.

But Jeremiah made this prediction not about Palestine but about Babylonia. Today there are great cities along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. These cities are centers of busy, teeming life, but they are not located where the great cities of Jeremiah's time stood. If one visits the area where the great cities of ancient Babylonia were situated he will find it to be utterly desolate. When one of these cities is excavated it is sometimes necessary to carry all the drinking water as far as twenty miles. It is an excavator's paradise because there are no multitudes of local people to demand exorbitant rentals or to be constantly in the way of the work. It is "a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby."

No such change occurred in the case of Palestine, or Egypt, or of almost any other area. Jeremiah could not possibly have known that the cities of Babylonia would come into such a situation. One who knows the future spoke through Jeremiah.

God knew that hundreds of years after Jeremiah spoke the river Euphrates would open a new channel in the mountains hundreds of miles north of Babylon, cutting across into a different valley, and thus eventually forming a new channel for itself through the flat country farther south. Where the Euphrates