

As you just look at it it is an absolute blank. The principles are so different from what you are accustomed to. There is not a great deal of problem to learn about the major principles. I feel that the man who is going to devote himself to Bible study, if he can know a little bit about the cuneiform field he can use reference books in that area and understand the references to it in a way that is worth while and helpful.

The major subject today is cuneiform. Cuneiform is a word that means the shape of a wedge; wedge-shaped. The reason for this is the material they had in Mesopotamia to write on which lent itself to this kind of writing. You take a pen and try to write on a clay tablet and you could not make any impression at all. And of course you can do like they did in Egypt where they made the beautiful big pictures on the monuments. Well you can't do that on clay tablets very well! But they found very early that they could take a little instrument like a little screw driver and push that in, and one end is a little lower than the other. Now I've put some cuneiform writing on the board . . . you get an idea of cuneiform writing. Notice this line which has a little wedge shaped thing up at the top of it. That is the major thing in cuneiform writing. It is a line. Some of them are up and down; some of them are horizontal. I don't know whether I have any oblique here. Yes, there is a combination of two oblique ones here making this crescent shaped mark. This stylus could be pressed into the clay tablet and make these little marks; and they can make them very small, or they can make big monuments with these marks. But they always are deep at one end and shallow on the other. It is customary in writing them to write them the way I have it there. If you picked up a book that came out about 70 yrs. ago about cuneiform, you find they showed them there in heavy black marks, looking like a wedge. But that has not been done now for about 50 yrs. in any publication I have seen. Now they do them all in outline