

# JUST BECAUSE THE TERM “YA” WAS FOUND AT EBLA & UGARIT IS NO SIGN THAT YAHWEH IS CANAANITE IN ORIGIN!

Clifton A. Emahiser's Teaching Ministries  
1012 N. Vine Street, Fostoria, Ohio 44830  
Phone (419)435-2836, Fax (419)435-7571  
E-mail caemahiser@sbcglobal.net

Please Feel Free To Copy, But Not To Edit

The “Jesus only” people are busy in an attempt to prop-up their faulty premise that the names “Yahweh” and “Yahshua” have a Canaanite origin. Check any good dictionary or encyclopedia and one will find that the letter “J” never existed in any language before the Middle Ages. It was the Medieval scribes that began the usage in the 1600s. While “J” is the 10<sup>th</sup> letter of the English alphabet, it was the last letter (or 24<sup>th</sup>) to be added by the scribes. Therefore, if “Jesus” is the correct name, the English “J” must be dropped (or “esus”). Neither Paul nor any of Christ’s disciples ever used the term “Jesus” with an English “J”! And, because there is no equivalent in the Greek for the English letter “J”, no early New Testament writer ever wrote the name “Jesus”. That brings up another question: Because the Greek alphabet has both a long and a short “e” ((1) epsilon & (2) eta), which of these two “e’s” do we use? Surely these experts on the name “Jesus” should be able to explain this! So, that leaves us with only the letters (“sus”) to enunciate His Name. And what kind of a name is that? It sounds a little like a hissing snake!

It is coming through the grapevine that these “Jesus only” people are going to try to prove that the name Yahweh can be found in Ugaritic texts, and that that somehow makes the Tetragrammaton to be of Canaanite origin. These “Jesus only” people simply detest the names Yahweh and Yahshua. Even the King James translators became confused with the name Yahshua at Hebrews 4:8. If you have an older KJV you will find it reads: “For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.” The reason that the KJV translators became confused was because both Christ (the Anointed One) and Joshua of the 6<sup>th</sup> book of the Old Testament have the same name. If you have a Revised Standard Version, and check this verse, it reads: “For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not speak later about another day.” Well, which is it, Jesus or Joshua? Again, let all of the “Jesus only” people explain this one also! The KJV translators also made this same mistake at Acts 7:45! The KJV reads: “Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David.” The RSV reads: “Our fathers in turn brought it in with

Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God thrust out before our ancestors. So it was there until the days of David.” Again, I ask, which is it, Jesus or Joshua? I could quote from many commentaries that understand that both Christ and Joshua have the same name. And, once we understand there was no English “J” in either Hebrew or Greek, Joshua can only be properly pronounced with a “Y” sound. Therefore, any man that gets up before his audience and denounces the name of Yahshua, and then turns around and quotes from the book of Joshua is a blathering idiot!

For anyone who pretends to understand the Ugaritic texts, needs to get the three-volume *Eblaitica: Essays on the Ebla Archives and Eblaite Language* edited by Cyrus H. Gordon and Gary A. Rendsburg. The archaeological finds of Ebla predate Abraham by several hundreds of years. It was like finding some lost historic data from Noah to Abraham. As of this date, no older texts relating to Scripture have been found. In volume 2, there is a chapter entitled “Ebla and the Gods of Canaan”, written by Robert R. Stiegliz pp. 79-89, and the name Yahweh is not mentioned once as one of them, nor is it even hinted at! My hope is, with this thesis, I can head Pete Peters off at the pass. On page 79 Stiegliz says:

“... Ebla is thus situated midway between the Mediterranean Sea and the Euphrates River, in a region which was long the meeting ground of diverse peoples: Canaanites, Amorites, Hurrians, Akkadians, and Sumerians.” Of course, the Sumerians were Aryans as attested by Waddell in his *The Makers Of Civilization* and *Egyptian Civilization* with too many references for all of them to be mentioned here. In his *The Makers Of Civilization* on page 86 is a subtitle “The Advent of the ‘Sumerians’ into Mesopotamia & its Date About 3335 B.C.” Surely the Sumerians were Shemites and would have been familiar with the Divine Name. As for the Canaanites, Amorites, and Hurrians, it would somewhat parallel Genesis 15:19-21. I wrote about the Ebla find in my *Watchman’s Teaching Letter #30* thusly:

### THE EBLA FIND

As I promised you last month, I will bring you information on an archaeological find at a place known as Ebla. I will now quote from *The Thompson Chain-Reference Bible*, the “Archaeological Supplement” in part, pages 1791-1793. As this archaeology supplement is being continually updated by Thompson, your edition may read differently than what I am quoting here:

“ ... The most impressive of these mounds is known as Tell Mardikh, which lies some 30 miles south of modern Aleppo, rises 50 feet above the plain, and covers an area of 140 acres ... In the spring of 1964 Dr. Paolo Matthiae, professor of Near East archaeology at the University of Rome, obtained a permit to excavate Tell Mardikh with his wife, Gabriela, and an efficient archaeological team of assistants.

“During the first few years they carried out soundings in various parts of the mound. Uncovered were city gates similar to those of Solomon at Gezer and Megiddo, and two small chapel-type temples like the famous temples of Shechem, Megiddo and Hazor — all dating between 2000 and 1600 years before Christ, the period called Middle Bronze I and II.

“ In 1968 the archaeologists discovered a royal statue which bore a dedicatory inscription to one Ibbit-Lim, ‘Lord of the City of Ebla, to the goddess Ishtar.’ It soon became clear that they were excavating the remarkable metropolis of the kingdom of Ebla, an immense Semitic empire whose center was set on the plains of modern Syria. From occasional references to it in ancient inscriptions — from Ur, Lagash, Nippur, Mari, and Egypt — archaeologists had long suspected the presence of such a civilization in North Syria. Many places and events of history would now fall into proper place.

“ In 1973 work was begun in Early Bronze Age Ebla, which dated between 2400 and 2225 B.C. Excavators found a tablet indicating the city at this period was divided into two sections — an acropolis (high city) and a lower city. The acropolis contained four building complexes: the palace of the city, the palace of the king, the palace of the servants, and the stables. The lower city was divided into four quarters, each of which had a gate: the gate of the City, the gate of Dagan, the gate of Rasap, and the gate of Sipis.

“ In 1975, while excavating in the palace of the city, the chief administrative center, they came upon the ruins of a large three-story royal palace building which had flourished four generations before the birth of Abraham. It contained a spacious audience court (100 to 170 feet, with a portico of carved wooden and stone columns adorned with gold and lapis lazuli), a tower room, and smaller rooms at the entrance of the courtyard. In the tower room were 42 cuneiform business tablets and a small school exercise tablet.

“ During the following year they worked in the two rooms at the entrance of the courtyard. In the first room were about 1,000 business and administrative tablets, which were found ‘rather spread out and disordered.’ The second room was a large library — the authentic royal archives — containing 15,000 tablets that had been regularly arranged on wooden shelves. When the palace was destroyed by fire, however, the flames devoured the wooden shelves, and the tablets settled on top of one another ...

“ In a nearby room were another 1,000 tablets, along with writing implements. This they took to be the scribe’s room. In yet another room were 800 tablets, along with beautifully carved wooden figures, seal impressions, and plaques of wood, gold, and lapis lazuli. One sheet of gold was found ... Professor Pettinato found that the major portion of the tablets were written in Sumerian wedge-shaped cuneiform script — the world’s oldest written language. The tablets themselves, however, dated from the middle of the third millennium B.C. One large tablet was a dictionary giving the Sumerian equivalents of some 3,000 Eblaite words. With the help of this lexicon, Pettinato was able to decipher [sic] many other Eblaite tablets. About 20 percent of the tablets were written in a northwestern Semitic language which Pettinato called Paleo-Canaanite, or Old Canaanite, although the script used was also cuneiform Sumerian. This he says, was the language spoken in Ebla and is closer in vocabulary and grammar to biblical Hebrew than any other Canaanite dialect, including Ugaritic.”

## “ Contents and Significance of the Tablets ”

“ The tablets so far unearthed number nearly 20,000, the majority of them large. Those which have been translated —only a fraction of the total —tell of the economy, administration, education, religion, trade, and conquest of a great commercial empire of which all memory had been lost in the historical traditions of the Near East.

“ ... what they have found already throws a flood of light on so many aspects of research in the field of ancient history and biblical archaeology that in many quarters the Ebla Tablets are now considered more significant for elucidating ancient history and the early backgrounds of the Bible than any other archaeological discovery ever unearthed.

“ With its empire, the city of Ebla, whose population is given in one tablet as 260,000, constituted one of the greatest powers in the Ancient Near East during the third millennium B.C. Its commercial and political influence extended far beyond its own borders —from Sinai in the southwest to Mesopotamia in the east. As a major trade center, it controlled east-west commercial routes for grain and livestock from the west, cedar timber from Lebanon, and metals and textiles from Anatolia —the home of the Hittites —along with trade in silver and gold and the several other commodities from Cyprus and other Mediterranean countries.

“ Ebla was a flourishing Semitic civilization. Her ‘arts prospered and her craftsmen were renowned for the quality of their metal work, textiles, ceramics and woodworkings. They made cloth of scarlet and gold, weapons of bronze, and furniture of wood. Their educational system was far advanced. They kept records in their own language on tablets of clay which they stored in archives deep in the cellars of the royal palace.’ All this existed more than a thousand years before the brilliant civilization of David and Solomon.

“ Ebla had a king and a queen. Like Israel, it anointed its kings and had prophets. The king was in charge of state affairs, and his queen was held in equally high regard. The crown prince helped with domestic and administrative affairs, while the second son aided his father in foreign affairs. The tablets are quite explicit about the structure of the state and about the royal dynasty. Six kings are listed, among which is Ebrum. The resemblance of his name to Eber, the father of the Semites, according to Genesis 10:21, is astonishing, since it is virtually the same name as the biblical Eber, a direct descendant of Noah and the great-great-great-great-grandfather of Abraham.

“ Other names found in these texts and later used by biblical characters are: Abraham, Esau, Saul, Michael, David, Israel and Ish-ma-il (Ishmael).

“ The gods worshipped at Ebla numbered around 500, and included El and Ya. El is a shortened form of Elohim, used later by the Hebrews and in the Ugaritic tablets. Ya is a shortened form of what some think might be Yahweh, or Jehovah, and was used for their supreme god and gods in general. Other principal gods were Dagan, Rasap (Resef), Sipis (Samis), Astar, Adad, Kamis, Milik ...

“ In recording the trade and treaty dealings of Ebla, the tablets give the names of hundreds of individual place-names, among which are Urusalim (Jerusalem), Geza, Lachish, Joppa, Ashtaroth, Dor, and Megiddo, as well as cities east of the Jordan. One tablet (No. 1860) mentions the cities of the plain —in the same order as in Genesis

14:2 (Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela, or Zoar) —as being cities with which Ebla carried on extensive trade. This was the first time these place-names had been found outside the Bible. Dr. David Noel Freedmen had pointed out that this record precedes the great catastrophe involving Lot which many modern scholars have regarded as entirely fictional.

“The texts contain Canaanite stories of the Creation and the Flood and a Canaanite code of law. The creation tablet—a beautifully inscribed ten-line poem—is closer to the Genesis account than anything else discovered. In essence a part of it reads:

“‘There was a time when there was no heaven, and Lugal (‘the great one’) formed it out of nothing; there was no earth, and Lugal made it; there was no light, and he made it.’

“The Flood story is given in five columns on a small tablet ... Ebla is only partially excavated, yet a part of the royal palace, two temples, a fortress, three city gates and tablets which now number nearly 20,000 have been exposed ... At one time Ebla even ruled over and collected tribute from Mari. Reverses came, however, and ancient Ebla was destroyed. Apparently the destruction was incomplete, for Ebla enjoyed something of a second life during the early part of the second millennium B.C. ... Around 1800 B.C. Ebla became a vassal state of the great kingdom of Aleppo, spoken of in the Mari letters as Yamhad. Around 1600 B.C. Naram-Sin, king of Akkad, defeated Ebla in battle and destroyed the city. From this disaster the city of Ebla never recovered, and it remained buried under its own debris until modern excavators began to resurrect it ...”

*Clifton A. Emahiser*

\*\*\*\*\*

#### Addendum By William Finck

Ebla and Ugarit were two different places. Ugarit was on the coast of northern Syria, at the site of the modern Ra’s Shamrah (near Latakia, modern Al Lādhiqiyah). Ebla was closer to the modern Halab, ancient Aleppo, 100 miles NE of Ugarit. Another 100 miles NE of Aleppo is Harran, which I shall discuss below. It should be pointed out that the finds at Ebla are much older than the finds at Ugarit, and examining them helps us to place the finds at Ugarit in a more proper historical context. It should also be pointed out – as I have said in my Phoenician essay – that the Canaanites are **NOT** Shemites, as the archaeologists so often erroneously suppose, and that early forms of the Hebrew language are **NOT** “proto-Canaanite”! Therefore it should further be pointed out that, just because the early inhabitants of both Ebla and Ugarit kept their records in, and apparently spoke, an early form of Hebrew, **that does not make them Canaanite!**

The lands where Harran and Ebla, and perhaps even Ugarit, were located are the ancient Padan-Aram, the home of Abraham’s kin and of Jacob’s father-in-law, Laban the Syrian (see Gen. 12:4-5; 25:20; 27:43; 28:2-7; 48:7 et al.). The people who occupied these lands were clearly **NOT** Canaanites, at least at this early time. Rather they were Abraham’s kin, Hebrews and Aramaeans, and these were the ancient lands of Arphaxad and Aram, who were brothers. That “Ya” was the chief God of the

pantheon of Ebla indeed shows that the people there may once have had the truth, but fell into a state of idolatry, and were subsequently judged: the same pattern seen in the empires of more recent history. Just because Abraham himself had not known our God by the name Yahweh (i.e. Exod. 6:3) does not mean that his ancestors didn't know the name. Rather, it is apparent from the Ebla finds, as well as other sources, that at one time they did know it.

The *Thompson* article cited above shows that names such as Abraham, Esau, Saul, etc. were used in Ebla in the third millennium B.C., a thousand years before Moses. Why wouldn't the children of Israel continue to use names which their ancestors prior to Abraham had used? The Daniel mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel (14:14, 20; 28:3) is not necessarily his contemporary, Daniel the prophet. For instance, another Daniel, who lived much earlier, was mentioned in "The Tale of Aqhat", a story dating to before 1300 B.C., found at Ugarit! (*Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, pp. 149-155). The name of the God "El", and personal names which end in the letters -ya and begin in Ya-, a god named "Yabamat Liimmim", Baal, Anath (Athena!), etc. all appear in the Ugaritic texts reproduced in *ANET*. "El" is called the "Creator of Creatures", and there are many parallels here with the myths and legends of Greeks, Hebrews, Sumerians and Akkadians. Yet the people of Ugarit were not necessarily Canaanites, and even if they were, Canaan also had Noah for an ancestor, and would have grown up with and shared those same traditions found in the other branches of the race. The Canaanites were not quarantined. Surely much of their culture would be common with that of various Adamic families. It would be infantile to think differently. Yet Ugarit lies in lands never considered in ancient times to belong to Canaan, which lay far to the south, bordering near Sidon. Ugarit lies in the neighborhood of Aram, and its occupants, who spoke a dialect similar to Hebrew, which the descendants of Aram also spoke, certainly needn't have been Canaanites, and in all probability they were not. There is much imagery in the legends of Ugarit which leads me to believe that they certainly were not Canaanites, and a much more thorough study of their archaic literature is needed by all.

One tablet from the Baal legend of Ugarit says at its end: "Written by Elimelech the Shabnite. Dictated by Attani-puruleni, Chief of Priests, Chief of (Temple)-herdsmen. Donated by Niqmadd, King of Ugarit, Master of Yargub, Lord of Tharumeni." (*ANET*, p.141). Another describes a "Lady Hurriya ... Whose eyeballs are the pureness of lapis" (*ANET*, p. 144), and lapis-lazuli was blue. In another place, Tyre and Sidon and their idols Asherah and Elath are mentioned (*ANET*, p. 145). Yet if these tablets are correctly dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> c. B.C., Phoenician Israelites may have produced them, yet these mentions are not an indication of the authors by themselves. Further study of these legends are essential to determine their entire significance.

Observing the more accurate chronology of the Septuagint, there are roughly 1,300 years between the time of the flood and the call of Abraham, years which we know very little about. Indeed, the Bible is practically silent concerning these years, for which it offers us nothing more than Genesis chapters 9, 10 and 11. 1,300 years of discrepancy between the Masoretic text and the Septuagint text would put us today at approximately at 7,300 years rather than 6,000 years after Adam. Why don't these "Jesus only" people address this time discrepancy issue?