

# DEEPER STUDY

## NEWSLETTER

Issue 008

The delay in sending out issue #8 was due to two factors: the Thanksgiving holiday and a business trip I had to take to London. My wife Cindy and I had a wonderful time, taking in many of the regular tourist stops, but also spending some time at both the British Museum (see below) and the British Library. I hope you agree that the wait for this issue was worth it. Please let me know what you think of this issue. Your feedback is always so valuable to me and so appreciated.



**Steve Singleton**

### Light from without: Archaeology

As a side benefit of my trip to London my wife Cindy and I were able to explore the British Museum, a lifelong dream of mine. In coming issues I will be sharing some of what we saw there.

In this issue, I will cover three artifacts from the Babylonian city of Ur, mentioned in the Bible (Gen. 11:29–32) as the home of Terah and his three sons, Haran, Nahor, and Abram, whom God later renamed Abraham.

Ur is located in Iraq, about halfway between Baghdad and the Persian Gulf, and some 10 miles west of the Euphrates River as it runs today (see the map).



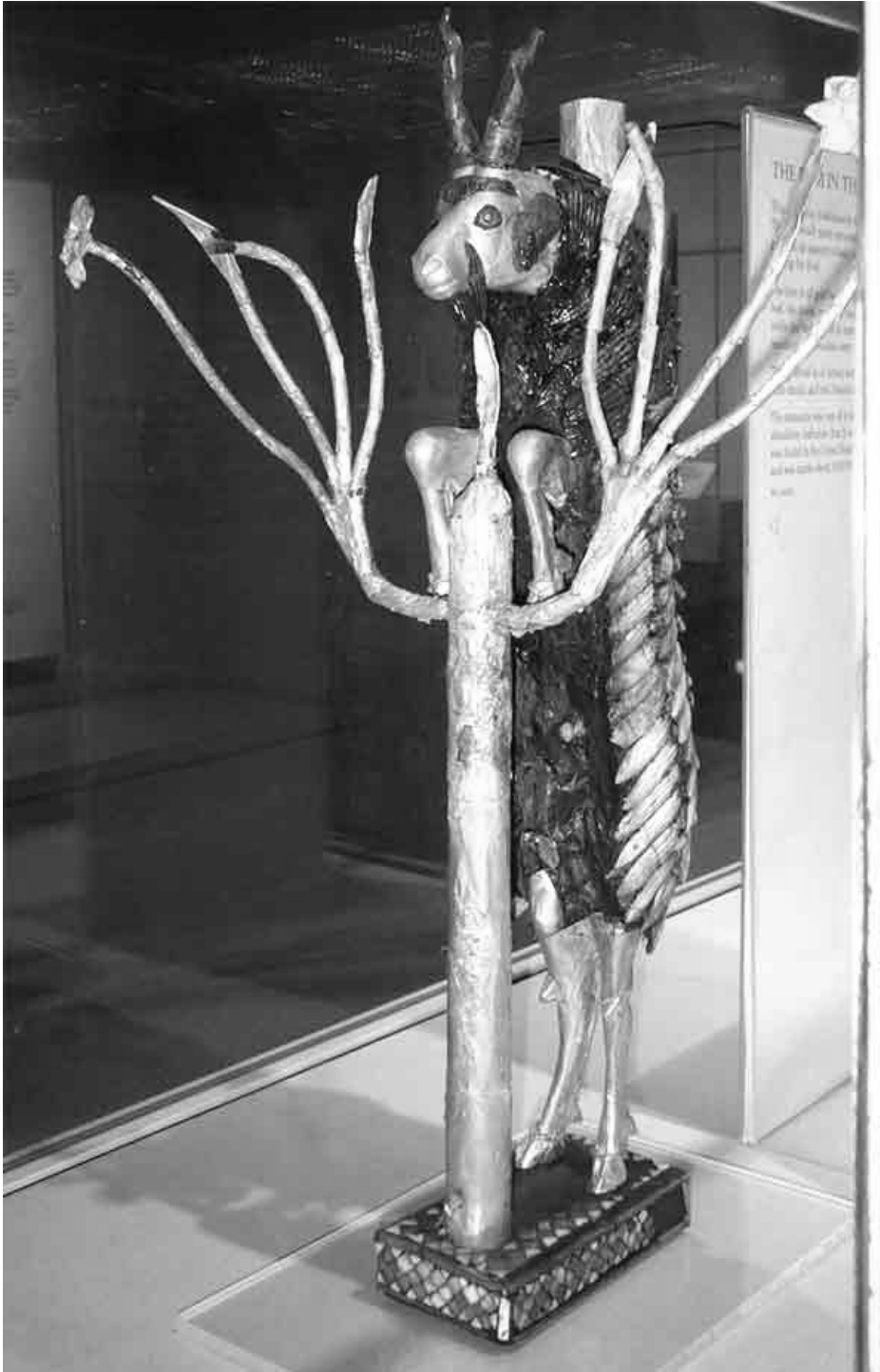
**Sir C. Leonard Woolley**  
(1880 – 1960)

The Englishman Sir Leonard Woolley excavated the site from 1922 to 1934. In the process he discovered a ziggurat, palaces, temples, houses, numerous artifacts, some 2000 skeletons, and thousands of documents inscribed on clay tablets in cuneiform.

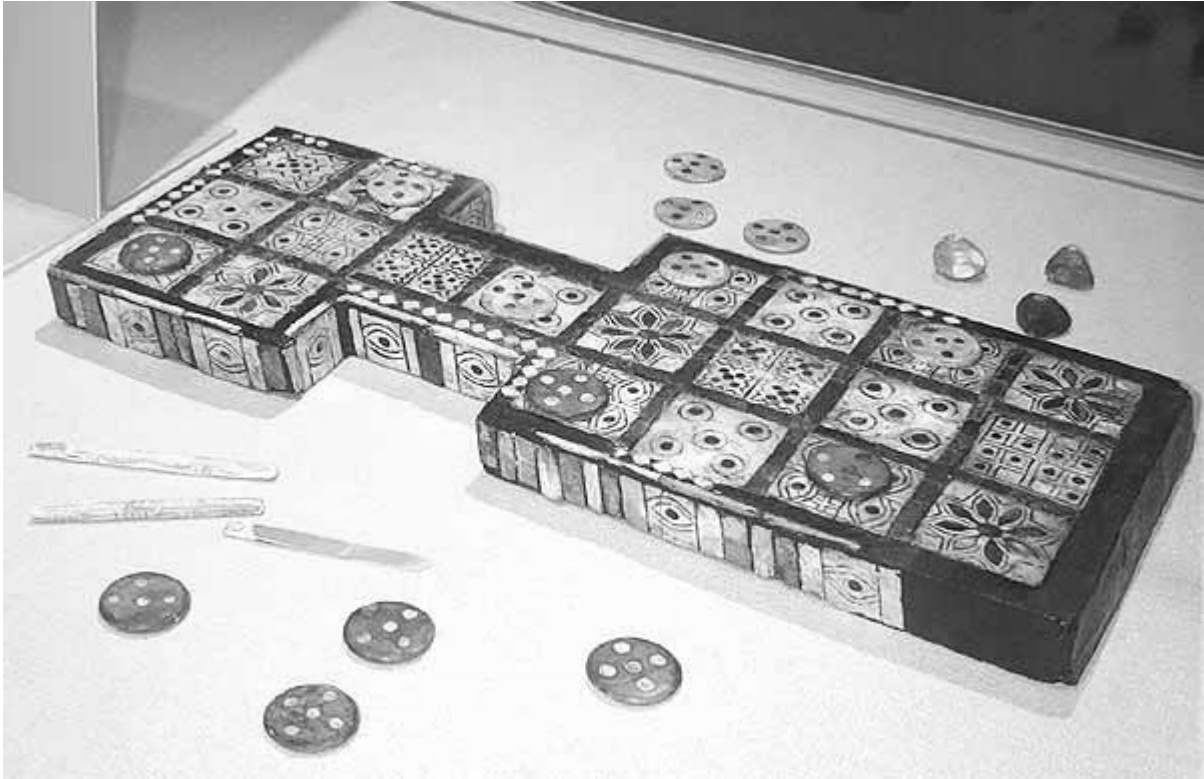




^ This is some of the surprisingly modern-looking gold jewelry once worn by the royal women of Ur. Many of the team's discoveries, including the tombs of nearly 2000 people, date from about 2600 BCE.



^ This sculpture, which Wooley called "Ram Caught in a Thicket" (though it's actually a goat), was discovered in one of the royal tombs of Ur is made of gold-covered wood and the semi-precious stone lapis lazuli. This sculpture is all the more remarkable in view of the story of Abraham's finding a ram caught in a thicket to offer as a sacrifice in place of his son Isaac (see Genesis 22:13-14).



^ A boardgame dated at around 2600 BCE was found in the royal tombs of Ur. The squares are inlaid with either limestone or lapis lazuli. Each player had five pawns, moved according to the results of a toss of a pair of knucklebones (one of a sheep and one of an ox). Apparently landing on a rosette signified good luck, while landing in a non-rosette space forced the player to pay a penalty. This much is revealed in a tablet dated at around 177-176 BCE that describes the game.

What do these discoveries reveal to us about Abraham and the book of Genesis?  
Here are two points.

- The Ur of Genesis 11 really existed, helping to confirm the historical nature of the biblical account. This is all the more significant because of how early in the Genesis record Ur is mentioned (somewhere between 2000 and 1800 BCE). Ur was already a center for politics, literature, and art at least 600 years earlier.
- Because of the Ur excavation we now know that Abraham came from a sophisticated, literate urban center. Although his *later* life was semi-nomadic, living out of a tent, Abraham and his family were probably among the most educated people of their time. This also supports the account of Abraham's receiving a written document as deed for his burial plot at Machpelah (Gen. 23: 16–20).

## Want to go deeper?

1. Explore almost 90 photos and/or documents relating to **Ur in the British Museum**
2. The University of Chicago's Oriental Institute has an extensive website dedicated to **The Royal Tombs of Ur**. This website includes a slideshow of numerous other artifacts from Ur.
3. A similar website is hosted by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (in Philadelphia, PA) for its exhibit, **Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur**, on exhibit from March 13, 2004 through May 28, 2005.
4. Saudi Aramco World magazine ran an article on Ur in its March/April 1968 issue (vol. 19, no. 2). You can read the article, **"Ur of the Chaldees,"** online.
5. In 1927 E. A. Budge, curator of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities at the British Museum, in his book *The Book of the Cave of Treasures*, included two sections entitled **"Abraham and the City of Ur"** and **"Excavations at Ur of the Chaldees."** Keep in mind that the excavation continued until 1934, so this information is necessarily incomplete. In fact, an Anglo-American excavation has taken place even more recently. Nevertheless, his account of the Woolley excavation, available online, provides a detailed account of what was discovered in the first five years of the dig.
6. Several of Leonard Woolley's books on Ur and ancient Mesopotamia are available. By clicking on the links below, you can purchase them new or used by way of Amazon.com:

**Ur of the Chaldees** revised and updated edition of *Excavations at Ur* (used or new)

**The Sumerians** (used or new)

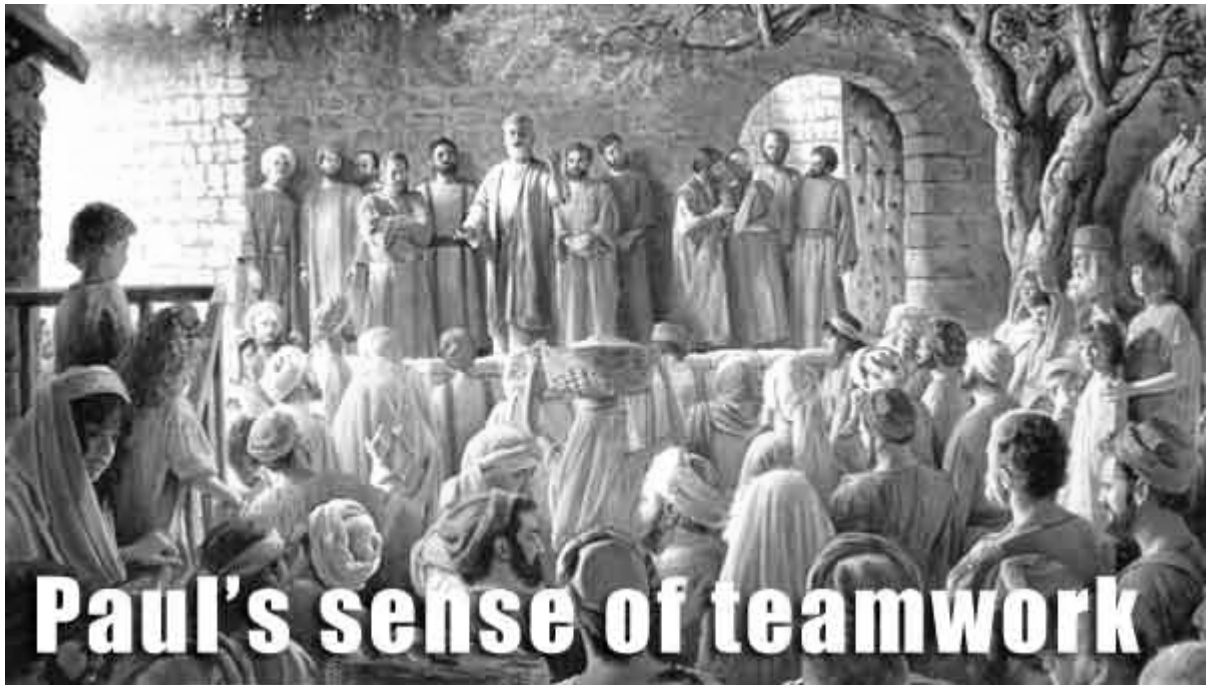
**Buildings of the Third Dynasty** (new only)

**Discovering the Royal Tombs at Ur** (used only)

You may also want to read his book on Near Eastern archaeology:

**Digging up the past** (used only)

You may also be able to find some of his books in your local public library.



In the pursuit of his Christian ministry, Paul had a keen sense of teamwork, teamwork with God and with his brothers and sisters. This awareness he expresses by using compound Greek words that begin with the prepositional prefix, *sun-*. With an object in the dative case, *sun* means "together" or "with." This same prepositional prefix has carried over into English, occurring in such words as "symbiotic," "symphony," "synergy" (the Greek *sun-*, represented by sym- or syn-). What follows is a brief survey of the words Paul employed to express this sharing of ministry. You will discover that such sharing continues among 21st-century Christians.

This is definitely connected with the passages we have already examined (see [Issue #1](#)) regarding the believer's connection with Christ. If you are united with Christ, and I am too, then we are also united with each another. See more on this subject at the end of this article.

That's why Paul calls us "co-citizens" (noun: *sumpolitēs* – Eph. 2:19), "joint heirs" (noun: *sygklēronomos* – Rom. 8:17; Eph. 3:6; compare Heb. 11:9; 1 Peter 3:7), and says we will co-reign (verb: *sumbasileuō* – 1 Cor. 4:8; 2 Tim. 2:12). Because we are bound up with Christ, we share in His city, His inheritance, and His rule. But we also share the expectation of these future blessings with each other. Because of this, we co-rejoice (verb: *sugkairō* – 1 Cor. 12:26; Phil. 2:17, 18).

Meanwhile, the struggle continues, and we suffer together (verb: *sumpaschō* – 1 Cor. 12:26). To endure such suffering, we co-console each other (verb: *sumparakaleomai* – Rom. 1:12). We live and die together (verbs: *suzaō* *sunapothaneō* – 2 Cor. 7:3).

But through it all, we are co-workers (verb: *sunergeō*; noun: *sunergos*). Paul says that he and his associates are "God's coworkers" (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1), an amazing testimony both to the condescension of God—willing to stoop so low to work with the likes of us—and the corresponding elevation of Christians. Paul's letters yield for us an amazing number of men and women that Paul calls his coworkers: Timothy, 1 Thess. 3:2; Rom. 16:21; "everyone," 1 Cor. 16:16; the Corinthian Christians, 2 Cor. 1:24; Titus, 2 Cor. 8:23; Priscilla and Aquila, Rom. 16:3; Urbanus, Rom. 16:9; Epaphroditus, Phil. 2:25; Clement and others, Phil. 4:3; Mark and Aristarchus, Col. 4:10; Phile. 24; Jesus Justus, Col. 4:11; Philemon, Phile. 1; Demas and Luke, Phile. 24. One brother Paul calls "my yoke-fellow" (noun: *suzugos*)—Phil. 4:3, a term synonymous with coworker (though it could be the man's name).

Others Paul describes as if they are team members with him in an athletic competition—contending, striving, or struggling together (verbs: *sunagōnizomai*, *sunathleō*): the Roman Christians, Rom. 15:30; and the brothers and sisters in Philippi, Phil. 1:27; in particular two Christian women, Euodia and Syntyche, Phil. 4:3.

Two brothers Paul calls his "co-slaves" (noun: *sundoulos*): Epaphras, Col. 1:7; and Tychicus, Col. 4:7. Two he names as his "co-soldiers" (noun: *sustratiōtēs*): Epaphroditus, Phil. 2:25; and Archippus, Phile. 2. Because Paul considers himself a worker, a slave, a soldier, and an athlete for Christ, those who share the load with him also share these descriptions. This includes those of us who are laboring in the kingdom in modern times.

As a frequent prisoner for Christ, Paul appreciated those who ministered to him in prison, even if they themselves were free to come and go. Four he describes as "co-prisoners" (noun: *sunaichmalōtos*): Andronicus and Junias (or the name could be feminine, Junia), Rom. 16:7; Aristarchus, Col. 4:10; and Epaphras, Phile. 23. It could be that at least some of these voluntarily served Paul so constantly that their imprisonment was self-imposed.

All of these first-century Christians as well as Christians alive today are partakers or partners in the work of the kingdom (noun: *summetochos* – Eph. 3:6; 5:7). We share, have fellowship with, participate with, and keep company with other believers (verbs: *sugkoinōneō*, *symmerizomai*, *synamignumi*; noun: *sugkoinōnos*)—Rom. 11:17; 1 Cor. 5:9, 11; 9:13, 23; Eph. 5:11; Phil. 1:7; 4:14; 2 Thess. 3:14 (compare Rev. 1:9; 18:4).

Paul uses several compound terms to describe Christian unity. He says we must be united, of one accord, literally, "co-souls" (noun: *sumpsuchos*—Phil. 2:2. We are conformed together (verb: *summorphomai*, *suschōmatizomai*; noun: *summorphos*—Rom. 8:29; 12:2; Phil. 3:10, 21; compare 1 Peter 1:14), and fitted together (verb: *sunarmologeomai*—Eph. 2:21; 4:16. We cooperate and assist one another (verbs: *sunantilambanomai*, *sunupourgeō*—Rom. 8:26 (compare Luke 10:40); 2 Cor. 1:11. We are built together (verb: *sunoi kodomeomai*)—Eph. 2:22; and made co-members of the same body (noun: *sussōma*)—Eph. 3:6.

All of this togetherness, we must remember, is not a natural state—far from it! If left to ourselves, we human beings split apart at every seam, whether it is race, ethnicity, gender, or class. It is only Christ that binds us together. Only in Him can it be possible to say that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free,



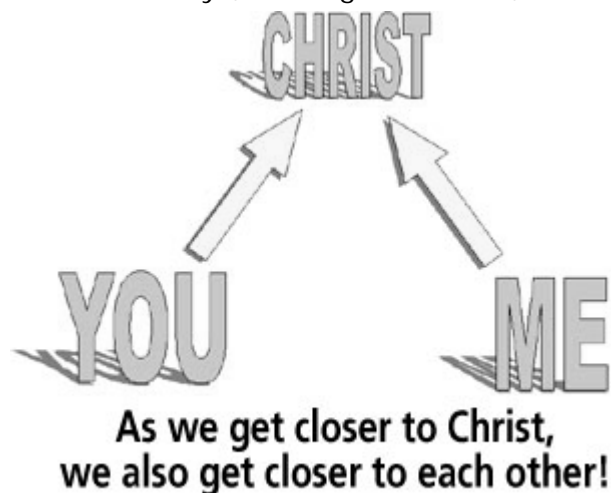
neither barbarian or Scythian, male or female; all are one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 3:11).

The **article in issue #7** explains how Paul expresses the Christian's union with Christ using the prepositional phrase, *together with Christ* (Greek: *sun tōi christōi*). He reinforces this by employing compound verbs in which *sun-* is added to the beginning of the verb. This occurs in several of the key passages in Paul's writings.

In Gal. 2:20, Paul uses "co-crucified" (*sunstauroō*) to describe how becoming united with Christ's death changes the believer. Compare Matt. 27:44, Mark 15:32, and John 19:32, where the same verb describes the literal crucifixion of the thieves who died with Jesus. Paul says that as a result of his union with Christ's death, he has died to the law, in order to live to God (v. 19). In the next verse he adds that he is no longer the one living, but Christ is living in him. True, he still lives "in flesh," but it is a life of trusting in the Son of God, who loved him and gave himself up in his behalf. Note that this happens for the individual, not just for believers as a group. Christ died, not for humanity, but for you and me and everyone else as individuals, and only as individuals can we respond to Him.

This concept of "co-crucified" recurs in Rom. 6:6. Paul says, "Having known this, that the old man was *co-crucified*." Although Christ goes unmentioned, the connection is definitely between the believer and Christ—He was the one crucified.

The consequence of this death of the old man is a burial, for Paul earlier says, *we were buried together with Him* (*sunetaphēmen autōi*) through baptism into death (v. 4). As a result of this union with Christ's crucifixion and his burial, we also share in the new life of His resurrection: "we believe that also *we will live with him*" (*suzēsomen*, v. 8). Paul uses these same verbs in the parallel passage in Colossians (co-buried and co-raised, 2:12; co-made alive, 2:13; see also 3:1).



Because we belong to Christ, we belong to each other. Our union with Him unites us with every other person who is also united with Him in a grand and eternal fellowship.

### **Want to go deeper?**

For an excellent study on Christian unity, especially as applied to the local church, I highly recommend *The Love of Christ in the Local Congregation* by my friend and coworker, Larry Deason, which you can **order free of charge** from the publisher. They even pay the shipping!

In case you are interested in doing this kind of research into the way Greek words are used in the New Testament, I would recommend **Englishman's Greek Concordance**. If you click on the link in red, you can go to its listing at Amazon.com and see how it is laid out, according to Greek alphabetical order of the underlying Greek words. There's an index in the back so that you can look up the English word in a text and find out all of the Greek words it represents. It is also keyed to the Greek dictionary in Strong's Concordance. In this way, you can study all of the occurrences of a Greek word, not just those that happen to be translated in the same way. You can get *Englishman's Greek Concordance* new for not much over \$20, which is really a bargain. Used copies are also available, cutting the price nearly in half. You can also watch out for *Englishman's Greek Concordance* at used bookstores; it is sometimes available at such places.

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