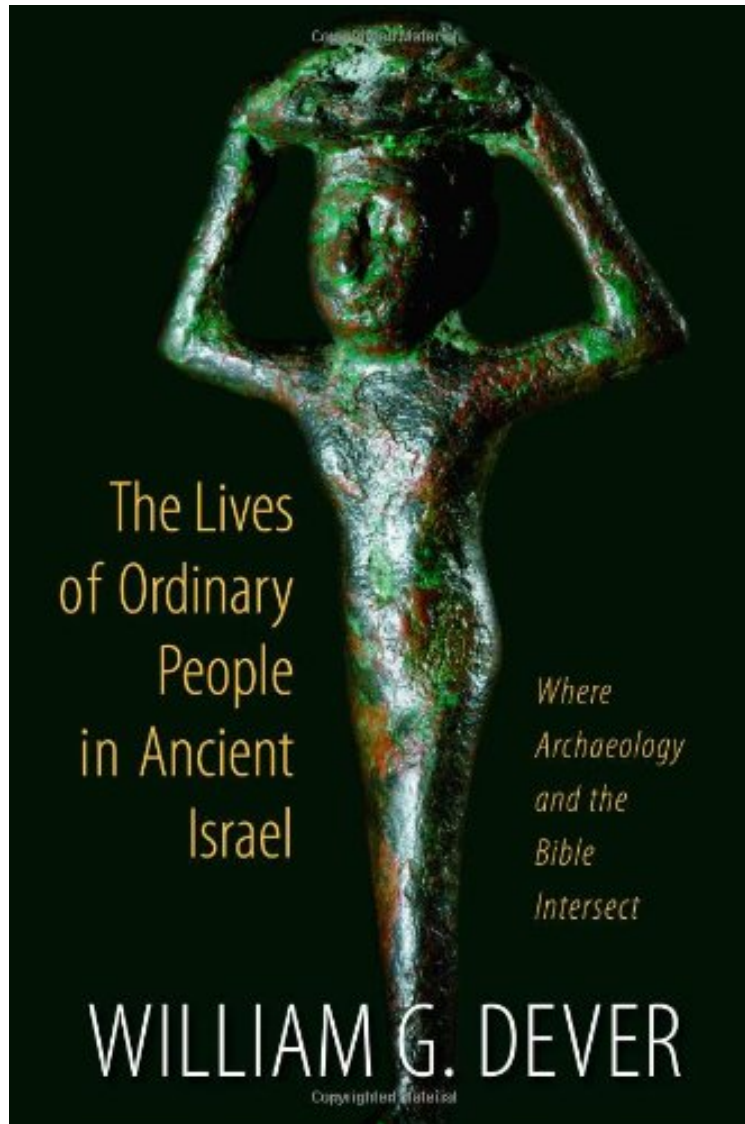


[Download pdf] The Lives of Ordinary People in Ancient Israel: When Archaeology and the Bible Intersect

The Lives of Ordinary People in Ancient Israel: When Archaeology and the Bible Intersect

William G. Dever

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William G. Dever : The Lives of Ordinary People in Ancient Israel: When Archaeology and the Bible Intersect before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Lives of Ordinary People in Ancient Israel: When Archaeology and the Bible Intersect:

20 of 21 people found the following review helpful. Privileging Archaeology in the study of "Ancient Israel"By James T. SparksI am a great fan of William Dever. His "trilogy":What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They

Know It?: What Archeology Can Tell Us About the Reality of Ancient Israel Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From? Did God Have a Wife?: Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel were each excellent books which used Dever's vast knowledge, much of it firsthand through his own excavations and research, to write about and to understand the history of Ancient Israel. This work continues in the same vein. Unlike other "histories" of Ancient Israel, particularly those of the "minimalist" school about which Dever is scathing in his critique, but also "biblical historians" who primarily use the Biblical text to create their "histories", Dever privileges archaeology above any written text or academic theory for Israel's origins and history. His knowledge of the archaeology is extensive, even encyclopaedic, and he shares this with the reader throughout the ten chapters. The first two chapters are an overview of method: I. "On History and History Writing" II. "The Challenges of Writing a History of Ancient Israel" These overview chapters are then followed by eight chapters which cover the archaeology, and an interpretation of that archaeology: III. "The natural setting" IV. "The database: sites and hierarchies" V. "Cities and towns" VI. "Towns, villages, and everyday life" VII. "Socioeconomic structures" VIII. "Religion and cult" IX. "Israel's neighbors" X. "Warfare and the end" In each of these chapters, Dever collates and examines the archaeological evidence first. Examining what has been discovered and drawing his conclusions for the society of Ancient Israel from this examination. Only then does he examine the "Biblical Data" to see if the Biblical account can add anything to the understanding that has been gained from Archaeology. Generally, he concludes that the Bible adds very little "verifiable knowledge" to the knowledge that has already been gained through archaeology. The Bible may repeat some of that knowledge, but this is not "archaeology confirming the Bible", but is "the Bible confirming the archaeology". He concludes most of the chapters with a speculative section, where he puts forward an idea of "What was it really like". His main area of focus is the 9th-8th centuries BCE, although he does stray from time to time. Also, he is not seeking to write a history of the "great men", but of the "every man". That is, he is seeking to write about what it was like for the average person, rather than the elites in society - the kings, priests, and prophets. His writing forces one to recognise that much of the Bible is written from a particular point of view, that of the priests, the kings, and the prophets, those with the power and control - and the Bible often overlooks, rejects, or condemns the everyday practices of the average person. Dever points out that we can find out much about the "every man" from what the Bible condemns. As a conservative Christian I enjoyed his book, as I have enjoyed the ones listed above, even if I did not particularly like his conclusions that the "Bible adds little" to our understanding of "what it was really like". However, through reading his introductory chapters, you can understand where he is coming from, and why he comes to that conclusion. At times, however, Dever is inconsistent in his methodology. He frequently talks about the "United Kingdom", a concept found only in the Biblical text and about which the archaeology is silent. Likewise, he talks about the Kingdoms of David and Solomon. David is found in archaeology only in the "Tel Dan Inscription" (and never as part of a "United Kingdom"), while reference to Solomon has, to this point in time, never been discovered. And so, although he states that he "privileges archaeology" in the discussion, his discussion is still framed by the outline of the Biblical text. This aside, this is an excellent book. Filled with knowledge of, and an understanding of, what "Ancient Israel" was really like (however one chooses to think of this entity). 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Bible study for the really serious By Richard E. Hayes Dever, a leading scholar in Old Testament history and archaeology, has written several books for the serious lay reader of the Bible and religious history. This one is especially valuable because the Old Testament reflects almost exclusively the viewpoint of the elite class, rulers and religious authorities, in ancient Israel-Judah. A wider perspective will enhance reading and understanding the Bible. 6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Artifacts of Ancient Israel By Rev. H. Louis Engle This book is written in such a style that it is very readable, author is a good writer. While the book was very informative about extant artifacts from the 8th century BCE and how they illuminate our understanding of that time and its history, I was hoping for more information about the daily lives of those ancestors. The polemics, I found a little tiresome. Nevertheless, I would recommend this book to a person with some previous exposure to the archaeology of this era and area. I've subscribed to Bible Archaeology Review for better than 20 years and studied archaeology in seminary, so this book was an excellent next step in my education concerning the history Dr. Dever focuses on here.

The Lives of Ordinary People tells the untold story of how the vast majority of Israelites the people who are usually overlooked in "typical" histories of ancient Israel lived during the eighth century b.c.e. William G. Dever applies the latest archaeological evidence and his own considerable expertise to answer the question What was it really like to live in Israel's divided kingdom? Writing as an archaeologist who is also a secular humanist, Dever relies primarily on archaeological data rather than the Hebrew Bible for his source material. He uncovers and analyzes rich archaeological troves that provide vital clues about how most people lived. Illustrated by photos, maps, charts, site plans, and specially commissioned drawings, Dever's work brings vividly to life a world too long buried beneath dusty texts and stony landscapes.

Susan Ackerman -- Dartmouth College "Bill Dever has done it again -- assembled cutting-edge archaeological data to paint a vibrant picture of the world of ancient Israel. . . . A wonderful resource for students of the Bible and of the

biblical world."Ziony Zevit -- American Jewish University "Provides a most competent analysis of the pungently grounded, material world within which flesh-and-blood Israelites lived during the eighth century B.C.E. . . . When not using this book as an anthropological trip to the past, readers may explore it as a market for scintillating ideas in which they will find new food for thought and topics for conversation."Carol Meyers -- Duke University "Dever writes with the acumen of an expert scholar and the verve of an accomplished storyteller. . . . His lucid prose transforms complex interpretive problems into an accessible and engaging discussion enhanced by many well-chosen photos and drawings."Ronald Hendel -- University of California "A wonderful read, spiced with vast archaeological knowledge and spirited polemics."Avraham Faust -- Bar-Ilan University "Dever's detailed and thorough discussion, along with the fact that this book is one of very few works that discuss the most fundamental questions concerning Iron Age Israelite society, will make it essential reading for students and scholars."Journal of Ancient Judaism In this handbook, addressed to a general audience, Dever utilizes archaeological evidence to reconstruct the secular history of Israel and Judah in the years 810-701 B. C. E. . . . He surveys the relevant sites, cities, and towns, paying attention to everyday life in these locales. In addition, Dever addresses socioeconomic structures, the religion and cult of Israel and Judah, and the parallel experiences of their neighbors in the eighth century. Religious Studies I recommend this affordable work by a preeminent American archaeologist to university, college, and seminary libraries as well as individuals interested in the archaeology of the ancient Near East. Interpretation For teachers and preachers of the Hebrew Bible who wish to explore what daily life might have been like for ancient peoples in the 8th century B.C.E., William Dever's *The Lives of Ordinary People in Ancient Israel* is an essential read. Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society A well-written survey of eighth-century BC Israel from one of the fields leading archaeologists. The book is geared toward students, and they will find it to be a very helpful handbook. It is the product of a long and fruitful career, and contains a wealth of knowledge. of Biblical Literature A wide range of information on Iron Age II Israel and Judah. . . . It can be quite helpful for a beginning student in providing an overview of many of the more important topics. s in Religion and Theology Written in a lively, engaging and fluent style. . . . The book is to be strongly recommended as a rich resource full of valuable insights. . . . Contains many excellent drawings and photographs. The book would be of great interest to and essential reading for a wide range of scholars and students as well as being easily accessible to non-specialists. Andrews University Seminary Studies I would highly recommend this handbook, written in a style that is all Dever's own, to students, scholars, and laypeople interested in the intersections between archaeology and the Old Testament. Congregational Libraries Today Highly recommended for a detailed view of ancient Israel.