

## ~ELAM 1 (432)

### (E'lam)

#### .. Language

#### .. History

- One of the five sons of Shem from whom descended families, according to their tongues, in their lands, according to their nations.
- The sons of Shem were **Elam** and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram. (**Genesis 10:22**)
- These were the sons of Shem according to their families, according to their tongues, in their lands, according to their nations. (**Genesis 10:31**)
- The sons of Shem were **Elam** and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram, and Uz and Hul and Gether and Mash. (**1 Chronicles 1:17**)
- The names of **Elam's** sons are not specified, his name, however, designates both a people and a region on the Southeast border of Mesopotamia.
- Historically, the name **Elam** applied to an area in what is now called Khuzestan in Southwest Iran. It included the fertile plain on the eastern side of the lower Tigris Valley, watered by the Karun and Karkheh rivers, and evidently extended into the mountainous regions bordering this plain on the North and East, although these two boundaries are the least certain.
- A region called Anshan is believed to have been situated in these mountainous regions and is represented in inscriptions as forming a part of Elam from an early period. Elam, located at the extreme eastern end of the Fertile Crescent, was, therefore, in somewhat of a frontier position, being one of the regions where territory populated and generally dominated by Semitic races confronted or merged with races descended from Noah's other sons, principally the Japhetic line.
- The land of **Elam** was called *elamtu* by the Assyrians and Babylonians and *Elymais* by the classical Greek writers, who also at times referred to it as *Susiana* after the city of Susa, or Shushan, at one

time evidently the capital of Elam. Under the Persian Empire, Susa or Shushan was a royal city.

- The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now it came about in the month Chislev, in the twentieth year, that I myself happened to be in Shushan the castle. (**Nehemiah 1:1**)
- That in those days as King Ahasuerus was sitting upon his royal throne, which was in Shushan the castle. (**Esther 1:2**)
- It was situated on the trade routes leading off to the Southeast and also up into the Iranian plateau. Efforts to gain control of these routes made **Elam** the object of frequent invasion by Assyrian and Babylonian rulers.

## .. Language

- In discussing **Elam**, reference works generally claim that the writer of Genesis listed **Elam** under Shem only on a political or a geographic basis since, they say; the people of **Elam** were not Semitic. This view they base on the claim that the language of the **Elamites** was not Semitic.
- Investigation, however, reveals that the earliest inscriptions found in the geographic region designated **Elam** are mere lists of objects pictorially jotted down on clay-tablets with the numbers of each beside them, indicated by a simple system of strokes, circles and semicircles, their contents at this time are purely economic or administrative. [**Semitic Writing**, by G. R. Driver, London, 1976, pp. 2,3]
- These inscriptions could reasonably be called **Elamite** only as meaning that they were found in the territory of **Elam**.
- The weight of the argument of those opposing the inclusion of **Elam** among the Semitic peoples, therefore, rests principally upon later inscriptions in cuneiform, regarded as dating considerably within the **Second Millennium B.C.E.**, as well as on the Behistun monument of the **Sixth Century B.C.E.**, which contains parallel texts in **Old Persian**, **Akkadian**, and **Elamite**.
- The cuneiform inscriptions attributed to the **Elamites** are said to be in an agglutinative language, one in which root words are joined together to form compounds, thereby distinguished from inflectional

languages. Philologists have not been able successfully to relate this **Elamite** language to any other known tongue.

- In evaluating the above information, it should be remembered that the geographic region in which the descendants of **Elam** eventually concentrated may well have been occupied by other peoples prior to or even during such **Elamite** residence there, just as the early non-Semitic Sumerians resided in Babylonia. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* [1959, Vol. 8, p. 118] states:

- The whole country designated **Elam** was occupied by a variety of tribes, speaking agglutinative dialects for the most part, though the western districts were occupied by Semites.

- That the cuneiform inscriptions found in the region of **Elam** would not of themselves prove that the true **Elamites** were originally non-Semitic can be seen from the many ancient historical examples that can be cited of peoples adopting a tongue other than their own because of domination or infiltration by foreign elements.

- There are likewise examples of ancient peoples simultaneously employing another language along with their own for commercial and international uses, even as **Aramaic** became a lingua franca used by many peoples.

- The Hittites of Karatepe wrote bilingual inscriptions, evidently in the **Eighth Century B.C.E.** in Hittite hieroglyphic script and in old Phoenician. Some 30,000 clay tablets of the time of Persian King Darius I were found at Persepolis, a royal Persian city. They were mainly in the language termed **Elamite**. Yet Persepolis would not be called an Elamite city.

- Further showing that it is unwise to view the table of nations at (**Genesis Chapter 10**) as purely geographic, and not actually genealogical, is the evidence in the form of sculptures carved for **Elamite** kings and dated by archaeologists as far back as the time of Sargon I, whose rule they assign to the latter part of the third millennium. These sculptures not only present the form of typical Akkadian [**Semitic Assyro-Babylonian**] figures but also bear Akkadian inscriptions. [*The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, edited by J. D. Douglas, 1980, Vol. 1, p. 433]

•• **History**

- The first Biblical mention of **Elam** as a country, or nation, is in the time of Abraham, **2018-1843 B.C.E**, when Chedorlaomer king of **Elam** marched with an alliance of kings against a Canaanite coalition of kings in the Dead Sea region.
- Now it came about in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of **Elam**, and Tidal king of Goiim. (**Genesis 14:1**)
- That these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, that is to say, Zoar. (**Genesis 14:2**)
- All these marched as allies to the Low Plain of Siddim, that is, the Salt Sea. (**Genesis 14:3**)
- Chedorlaomer is indicated as the leader of the alliance and as having held suzerainty over the Canaanite kings, upon whom he now inflicted punishment.
- Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but the thirteenth year they rebelled. (**Genesis 14:4**)
- And in the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer came, and also the kings who were with him, and they inflicted defeats on the Rephaim in Ashterothkarnaim, and the Zuzim in Ham, and the Emim in Shavehkiriathaim. (**Genesis 14:5**)
- And the Horites in their mountain of Seir, down to Elparan, which is at the wilderness. (**Genesis 14:6**)
- Then they turned about and came to Enmishpat, that is, Kadesh, and defeated the whole field of the Amalekites and also the Amorites who were dwelling in Hazazontamar. (**Genesis 14:7**)
- At this point the king of Sodom went on the march, and also the king of Gomorrah and the king of Admah and the king of Zeboiim and the king of Bela, that is to say, Zoar, and they drew up in battle order against them in the Low Plain of Siddim. (**Genesis 14:8**)
- Against Chedorlaomer king of **Elam** and Tidal king of Goiim and Amraphel king of Shinar and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings against the five. (**Genesis 14:9**)

- Now the Low Plain of Siddim was pits upon pits of bitumen, and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah took to flight and went falling into them, and those who remained fled to the mountainous region. (**Genesis 14:10**)
- Then the victors took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food and went on their way. (**Genesis 14:11**)
- They also took Lot the son of Abram's brother and his goods and continued on their way. He was then dwelling in Sodom. (**Genesis 14:12**)
- After that a man who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew. He was then tabernacling among the big trees of Mamre the Amorite, the brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner, and they were confederates of Abram. (**Genesis 14:13**)
- Thus Abram got to hear that his brother had been taken captive. With that he mustered his trained men, three hundred and eighteen slaves born in his household, and went in pursuit up to Dan. (**Genesis 14:14**)
- And by night he resorted to dividing his forces, he and his slaves, against them, and thus he defeated them and kept in pursuit of them up to Hobah, which is north of Damascus. (**Genesis 14:15**)
- And he proceeded to recover all the goods, and he recovered also Lot his brother and his goods and also the women and the people. (**Genesis 14:16**)
- Then the king of Sodom went out to meet him after he returned from defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, to the Low Plain of Shaveh, that is, the kings Low Plain. (**Genesis 14:17**)
- Such a campaign, requiring a round-trip journey of perhaps 3,200 kilometers (2,000 miles), was not unusual for Mesopotamian kings even in that ancient time. Secular history confirms that in the early part of the **Second Millennium B.C.E.** there was such a period of **Elamite** dominance in the Mesopotamian region.
- An **Elamite** official named Kudur-Mabuk who successfully occupied the prominent city of Larsa, along the Euphrates north of Ur,

appointed his son Warad-Sin as king there. Noteworthy is the fact that Warad-Sin and Rim-Sin, Warad-Sin's brother who succeeded him as king, are both Semitic names, further substantiating a Semitic element in **Elam**.

- This period of **Elamite** power in Babylonia was upset and terminated by Hammurabi, and it was not until the latter part of the **Second Millennium B.C.E.** that **Elam** was able to conquer Babylon and again establish control for a period of some centuries.
- It is believed that it was during this time that a stele bearing the famous Code of Hammurabi was taken from Babylonia to Susa, where modern archaeologists discovered it.
- **Elam** again was reduced to a subordinate position by Nebuchadnezzar I, not the Nebuchadnezzar who, several centuries later, destroyed Jerusalem, but it continued to be a frequent participant in the power struggle between Assyria and Babylon until finally Assyrian Emperors Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal or Asenappar, defeated the **Elamite** forces, transplanting some of the people to the cities of Samaria.
- Rehum the chief government official and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king, as follows: (**Ezra 4:8**)
- Then Rehum the chief government official and Shimshai the scribe and the rest of their colleagues, the judges and the lesser governor's across the River, the secretaries, the people of Erech, the Babylonians, the inhabitants of Susa, that is, the **Elamites**. (**Ezra 4:9**)
- And the rest of the nations whom the great and honorable Asenappar took into exile and settled in the cities of Samaria, and the rest beyond the River, and now (**Ezra 4:10**)
- Also, Israelite captives were sent into exile in **Elam**.
- And it must occur in that day that Yehowah will again offer his hand, a second time, to acquire the remnant of his people who will remain over from Assyria and from Egypt and from Pathros and from Cush and from **Elam** and from Shinar and from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. (**Isaiah 11:11**)

- **Inscriptions of the Assyrian emperors vividly describe this subjugation of **Elam**.**
- **Following the downfall of the Assyrian Empire, **Elam** appears to have come under Japhetic or Aryan control. The Medes and Persians are thought to have spread into the Iranian plateau region several centuries earlier, and under Cyaxares, the Medes fought with the Babylonians in overthrowing the Assyrian capital of Nineveh.**
- **And I began to see in the vision, and it came about, while I was seeing, that I was in Shushan the castle, which is in **Elam** the jurisdictional district, and I proceeded to see in the vision, and I myself happened to be by the watercourse of Ulai. (**Daniel 8:2**)**
- **Seems to indicate that **Elam** thereafter became a Babylonian district. Whatever the immediate effects on **Elam** from the Assyrian collapse, the Persians evidently succeeded in taking from Elam the region called Anshan, as Persian rulers Teispes, Cyrus I, Cambyses, and Cyrus II were all respectively called by the title King of Anshan.**
- **While some consider such conquest of Anshan to be in fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy concerning **Elam**.**
- **This is what occurred as the word of Yehowah to Jeremiah the prophet concerning **Elam** in the beginning of the kingship of Zedekiah the king of Judah, saying; (**Jeremiah 49:34**)**
- **This is what Yehowah of armies has said; Here I am breaking the bow of **Elam**, the beginning of their mightiness. (**Jeremiah 49:35**)**
- **And I will bring in upon **Elam** the four winds from the four extremities of the heavens. And I will scatter them to all these winds, and there will prove to be no nation to which the dispersed ones of **Elam** will not come. (**Jeremiah 49:36**)**
- **And I will shatter the **Elamites** before their enemies and before those seeking for their soul, and I will bring upon them a calamity, my burning anger, is the utterance of Yehowah. And I will send after them the sword until I shall have exterminated them. (**Jeremiah 49:37**)**
- **And I will set my throne in **Elam**, and I will destroy out of there the king and the princes, is the utterance of Yehowah. (**Jeremiah 49:38**)**

- And it will certainly occur in the final part of the days that I shall gather the captive ones of **Elam**, is the utterance of Yehowah. (**Jeremiah 49:39**)
- Most scholars place the conquest of Anshan by Teispes many years prior to the pronouncement of that prophecy made in about **617 B.C.E.**
- **Isaiah's warning at;**
- That is why I have said; Turn your gaze away from me. I will show bitterness in weeping. Do not you people insist on comforting me over the despoiling of the daughter of my people. (**Isaiah 22:4**)
- For it is the day of confusion and of downtreading and of confounding that the Sovereign Lord, Yehowah of armies, has in the valley of the vision. There is the demolisher of the wall, and the cry to the mountain. (**Isaiah 22:5**)
- And **Elam** itself has taken up the quiver, in the war chariot of earthling man, with steeds, and Kir itself has uncovered the shield. (**Isaiah 22:6**)
- Foretold that **Elamite** archers would be among those attacking Judah and Jerusalem. The **Elamites** were also prophesied to unite with Media in despoiling Babylon, **539 B.C.E.**, Media by that time being under the rule of the Persian Cyrus II, King of Anshan.
- There is a hard vision that has been told to me, The treacherous dealer is dealing treacherously, and the despoiler is despoiling. Go up, O **Elam**! Lay siege, O Media! All sighing due to her I have caused to cease. (**Isaiah 21:2**)
- **Elamites** thus contributed toward the release of Israel from exile, yet having aligned themselves at various times with enemies of God's people, **Elam** along with the other nations would, in due time, be made to drink of the cup of God's wrath and go down into Sheol.
- And I proceeded to take the cup out of the hand of Yehowah and to make all the nations drink to whom Yehowah had sent me: (**Jeremiah 25:17**)



- And all the kings of Zimri and all the kings of **Elam** and all the kings of the Medes. (**Jeremiah 25:25**)
- And all the kings of the north who are near and far away, one after the other, and all the other kingdoms of the earth that are on the surface of the ground, and the king of Sheshach himself will drink after them. (**Jeremiah 25:26**)
- And you must say to them; This is what Yehowah of armies, the God of Israel, has said; Drink and get drunk and puke and fall so that you cannot get up because of the sword that I am sending among you. (**Jeremiah 25:27**)
- And it must occur that in case they refuse to take the cup out of your hand to drink, you must also say to them; This is what Yehowah of armies has said; You will drink without fail. (**Jeremiah 25:28**)
- For, look! It is upon the city upon which my name is called that I am starting off in bringing calamity, and should you yourselves in any way go free of punishment? You will not go free of punishment, for there is a sword that I am calling against all the inhabitants of the earth, is the utterance of Yehowah of armies. (**Jeremiah 25:29**)
- There are **Elam** and all her crowd round about her grave, all of them slain ones, those falling by the sword, who have gone down uncircumcised to the land down below, those who have caused their terror in the land of those alive, and they will bear their humiliation with those going down into the pit. (**Ezekiel 32:24**)
- On the day of Pentecost, **33 C.E.**, **Elamites** were among the thousands hearing the message spoken by the disciples in the language then currently spoken in **Elam**.
- And yet how is it we are hearing, each one of us, his own language in which we were born? (**Acts of Apostles 2:8**)
- Parthians and Medes and **Elamites**, and the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, and Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and the district of Asia. (**Acts of Apostles 2:9**)
- As a nation and people, however, they have since ceased to exist, even as foretold at;

- This is what occurred as the word of Yehowah to Jeremiah the prophet concerning **Elam** in the beginning of the kingship of Zedekiah the king of Judah, saying; (**Jeremiah 49:34**)
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