

# ANGLO-ISRAEL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Centre for Jewish Studies, University of Manchester  
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Joe Dwek CBE

## MANCHESTER LECTURE SERIES

Autumn 2007

Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> November 2007

**PROF. KENNETH A. KITCHEN** (Liverpool University)

### THE HEBREW BIBLE AND ITS CRITICS – A VERDICT FROM THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

Disputes over the veracity of the Hebrew Bible go back at least 2000 years, when Josephus answered critiques issued by Apion and others in the 1<sup>st</sup> century of our current era, and by the Egyptian historian Manetho from earlier still. However, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present, such disputations over the origins and veracity of the writings in the Hebrew Bible have reached their apogee. Theoretical literary analyses of the Torah in the 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> centuries were followed by the attempted 'rewriting' of the histories of biblical Hebrew literature and religion and the history itself, in practice abolishing from reality almost anything from before the Monarchy; this culminating in Wellhausen's works, whose seemingly smooth logic became dominant, such that their basic theories became virtually canonized as official 'truth' during the past 120 years.

All this speculation occurred in stark isolation from any ancient cultural context. But the epoch of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present has also witnessed the dramatic resurrection of the civilizations of the Ancient Near East, giving us the *real* context of the biblical writings. For 3000 years before imperial Rome, we now have entire archaeologies of those regions, and many thousands of written documents (often well dated) in over a dozen languages. These give us invaluable external, tangible standards against which to re-examine the old, dogmatic theories, and the actual structure and contents of the Hebrew Bible, through its entire range, from the 'primeval times', the patriarchs, the exodus, lawgiving, and the entry into Canaan amongst other peoples, as well as considerable background throughout the monarchy period from David to the fall of Jerusalem, the Babylonian exile and the restoration thereafter. It is now time for change.

**LECTURE COMMENCES AT 7.00 p.m.**

(Light refreshments from 6.30 p.m.)

**Room A101, Samuel Alexander Building**  
(formerly Arts Building, The University of Manchester)

**ALL WELCOME - ADMISSION FREE**

**For further information, or to indicate your wish to attend, please contact:**  
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