Unearthing the Past Through Revelation:

A Urantia Book Perspective on Archaeology

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"It is a precarious enterprise, and only a fool would try to compress a hundred centuries into a [few] pages of hazardous conclusions. We proceed." —Will Durant, The Lessons of History

Personal Note

I started out thinking I'd write a little paper on how modern archaeology measures up to *The Urantia Book*. After all, I'd done something similar when I studied historical geology back in college. And there certainly is plenty of archaeological material in *The Urantia Book*.[1] But as I undertook the effort, several things became progressively clear: 1) What I'd "done" back in college was, well…it was *something*…but it was far less impressive than I had remembered; 2) I'm not in my late teens anymore and energy and leisure time are now precious commodities; 3) I am not an archaeologist; and 4) Modern archaeology is a vast, complex specialized science where theories often prevail more because of politics and ideological biases than a vigorous "pursuit of the unknown." (UB, 79:8.4)[2]

This paper also began ostensibly with a focus on the *Göbekli Tepe* archaeological site of recent renown. However, Göbekli Tepe research is limited. The dig site is only 30 years

[1] More precisely, there is considerable *anthropological* and *ethnographic* information in *The Urantia Book*. Cities of the ancient past are alluded to only intermittently—and rarely in scientific detail. I'll simply refer to all of this as *archaeology*: the logical study of the ancient past of humans on our world.

[2] Citations of this form are references to *The Urantia Book* using Standard Reference Numbering. For example (UB, 4:5.6) corresponds to Paper 4, Section 5, Paragraph 6.

old and perhaps only about ten percent excavated. True, some striking and vivid structures have been excavated, but we lack a sense of the wholeness of this hill. I soon found that relatively little could be said about Göbekli Tepe without venturing into wildly speculative territory. Many others have ventured into speculative territory, and the world hardly needs another paper contributing more speculation.

Now, I said to myself, "My formal background in the natural sciences might let me sort through all of this." But I had to admit that my scientific education may have been more of a *miseducation*. It had been "decidedly secular" (UB, 195:8.3) and perhaps not even especially scientific. One professor explained to me that "Doctor of Philosophy" is an antiquated term and that science is just data collection, tabling, and lukewarm conclusions always qualified with "further research needed, send more funding." Another professor counseled me that my future in science would best be secured as a research-program empire builder with a coterie of low-wage graduate students, and that I should stop worrying about all the scientific details I was grappling with. On another occasion, a doctoral graduate from Oxford University explained to me that their PhD merely "signals to employers that you've put in your time in the lab, processing samples." These encounters showed me that "science" today often is more an assemblage of disconnected exercises in data collection, career advancement, and *ad hoc* rationalizing than it is a pursuit of truth. After fifteen years as a practicing scientist myself (now retired), I can sadly report that science today is indeed more a *career* then a *calling*. It is far from what the authors of *The Urantia Book* might suggest it be: a "quest for knowledge and wisdom." (UB, 50:5.7)

So, I became stuck for a bit on this paper. I brooded over how anyone can say anything about anything when today's science seems so primitive, unscientific, and removed from the pursuit of truth. Thankfully, I turned to prayer and trusted mentors. A way forward was discovered.

This paper is no longer the (obviously untenable) *formal scientific paper*. It is an *essay* on the philosophic basis of the archaeological pursuit. Essays offer relatively light conclusions, provisional stances, plenty of open questions, and a generally searching and humble tone. While I eventually touch upon Göbekli Tepe in this essay, I do so lightly and within a broader context.

The aim of this essay is to explore a larger philosophic point: *The Urantia Book* calls for an altogether different approach to the sciences. Perhaps some things can be said about modern archaeological pursuits, but it is more valuable to ask *how* to conduct all scientific pursuits in the light of this epochal revelation.

I hope this essay is of some use. May these words be something that can further serve the glory of God, our Universal Father.

Introduction

The Urantia Book's portrait of the deep history of humanity is strikingly different from anything archaeologists have ever written about or theorized about. This is a bold statement, so allow me to qualify and temper it. The material in *The Urantia Book*, of course, exists on a spectrum. On one end of the spectrum, near the times of recorded history, *The Urantia Book* often broadly aligns with mainstream archaeological understanding.[3] But prior to the curtain that seemingly obscures detailed human history before around 6000 B.C., *The Urantia Book* describes activities unknown to any archaeologist over the last 150 years. It is a stunningly novel presentation of new facts.

I could generate a long, bulleted list of detailed factual matters of this sort, but that list would be incomplete and, frankly, tedious. Instead, let's talk about the most obvious problem modern day secular archaeology has at its core. It does not acknowledge that God exists, and he reaches down to us humans. While it is certainly true that humans have struggled upward on our own, *The Urantia Book* explains that God and his delegated agencies also minister to us in a cosmic attempt to uplift us. Modern archaeology makes no provision for this.

Evidence of this downreach should be discoverable in the archaeological record, if one knows to look for it. This paper reviews archaeology today, notes some of the problems that make it difficult to recast its pursuits in a revelatory light, suggests better initial archaeological assumptions, and examines data from two archaeological sites—one well known and one more obscure—in light of *The Urantia Book*.

Brief History of Archaeology

Before the 1840s, most of what today we regard as the specialized sciences were studied collectively under the umbrella of *natural philosophy*. Scientists from Isaac Newton to Mary Somerville boldly pursued a broad understanding of the natural world with no regard to any "divisions" among certain sectors of knowledge. A philosopher like Herbert Spencer would write just as freely on biology as they did on sociology. Hypotheses were bold, data that supported suppositions varied from adequate to almost wholly lacking, and "common sense" often drove hypotheses and reasoning. Above all, these natural philosophers assumed God was the Creator of all things.[4] They expected to find God's "fingerprints" all over the laws of nature they were discovering. They

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[3] Except when it doesn't. No archaeologist has written about a center of learning on the islands of Lake Urmia, for example.

[4] Herbert Spencer had a dim view of medieval institutionalized religion. Still, he was not an atheist. In his "superstition revolt" (UB, 195:9.1), he named his concept of God "The Unknowable."

expected to see the "providential" hand of God manifest in the outworkings of human history. Their scientific pursuits were done theistically, in humility, under God.

By the early 1900s, things had begun to change. Some sciences had definitely spun off from natural philosophy into distinct, highly specialized fields. Physics, geology, sociology, and others appeared as distinct departments in universities. Their tenets, doctrines, research areas, and even career paths were becoming delineated. A teenager could enroll in a university, "major" in one of these fields, and graduate with highly specialized technical knowledge and the promise of a long career spent dissecting one small part of nature without much regard to how it fits into the larger whole. Funding for research began to be awarded to those who were politically savvy and to those who could best recite and hew to the tenants of their specialized science. Independently financed philosophers and self-financed gentlemen scholars virtually went extinct from these specialized sciences, relegated to being regarded as fringe scientists (or the lately pejorative label "pseudoscientist"). Alongside these developments there also continued the aggressive growth of scientific atheism and materialism. Today, some 92 percent of leading scientists—members of the National Academy of Sciences—reject a belief in a personal God (Larson & Witham, 1998). Leaders of the specialized sciences, and the subordinates they influence, grow ever more distant from God and therefore ever more distant from the truth. This alarming situation is actually one reason *The Urantia Book* was been bestowed upon us.

But let us return to the early 1900s. At this time archaeology remained comparatively undeveloped as a specialized science. One could find specialists from other sciences moonlighting as archaeologists, or self-financed gentleman scholars mounting expeditions, or even amateurs financed by museums crawling over the world and digging into the past to understand where we came from. Archaeological publications of the day were written in a brisk, engaging, personal style, with collegiate-level language but still broadly accessible owing to a lack of any specialized lingo; they wrote fairly plainly. While no teenager could "major" in archaeology at a university, plenty of people could pursue the unknown in archaeology with nothing more than the courage and financial means to do so. This was the state of things at the time *The Urantia Book* was bestowed upon us.

By the 1960s, archaeology had become a thoroughly specialized, "professionalized" science. Degree programs at universities were common. Field techniques multiplied and were rapidly refined as fierce competition among researchers grew. Political agendas began to impinge on archaeology. For example, following World War II it became politically inexpedient, if not altogether taboo, to continue investigating theories of an ancient "noble" race whose elevated genetics had an outsize impact on human history. This sounded all too much like corrupt Nazi political ideology. What instead emerged

was a politically comfortable consensus around the *Out of Africa* theory of human history. This theory drew attention away from any discussions of the role of "superior" genetics in human history. Archaeology became ideologically driven in other ways: European and American archaeologists dug *vertically* to look for support for theories of incremental evolution through time, while Soviet archaeologists favored digging *horizontally* in search of evidence of past class oppression to advance Marxist ideologies (Hiebert & Kurbansakhatov, 2003). And through all these investigations, religion was regarded as nothing more than superstitious rituals to be cataloged and profiled, not as a transcendent and *real* Godward pull designed into our very being, much less the result of revealed truth from God or his supermaterial delegates.

Later in this essay I'll examine an archaeological site in Turkmenistan that experienced both an early, imaginative archaeological excavation as well as a modern (recent) one. Lessons from this examination may help us understand how much boldness and humility we ought to have as we consider modern archaeology.

Science and God

> *"Man is to be understood as the final purpose of the creation; set upon the earth as the masterpiece of the works of Omnipotence, contemplating the world by virtue of sapient reason, forming conclusions by means of his senses. It is in God's works that man recognizes the almighty Creator, the all-knowing, boundless and eternal God. And under God's rule, man is called to live righteously, stirred by the perfect justice of God's divine law."*
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> *–Carl Linnaeus, ca. 1730s*

Stunningly, the above quote is representative of how leading scientists wrote in the 18th century. Contrast this with the contemporary scientific voice of Richard Dawkins: "The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference."[5]

Or consider the beginning of Paper 102: "To the unbelieving materialist, man is simply an evolutionary accident. His hopes of survival are strung on a figment of mortal imagination; his fears, loves, longings, and beliefs are but the reaction of the incidental juxtaposition of certain lifeless atoms of matter." (UB, 102:0.1) This isn't just a strawman by *The Urantia Book*'s authors. It is a restatement of prominent atheist-philosopher Bertrand Russell: "[Man's] origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves

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[5] This quote is first attributed to Dawkins' book *River Out of Eden*, but it appears widely these days.

and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms." (Russell, 1903) Russell concludes his broad attack on the metaphysical and the religious, not in humility, but in the arrogant assertion, "All these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand."

Russell's influential 1903 essay set the tone for a century of Godless science. Indeed, present-day mainstream specialized sciences operate under materialist, positivist philosophies that leave no room for God or supermaterial agencies. Any theories that attempt to introduce God as a fundamental presupposition are labeled *pseudoscience* on Wikipedia, typically the top search result on the Web for most topics. Attempts to remove that label are aggressively reversed by senior editors, typically within minutes. *The top website in the world for general encyclopedic knowledge operates under materialist assumptions.*

Godless assumptions are catastrophic for a correct understanding of nature and our history by the sciences, including archaeology.

Science and Paradigms

A college science textbook is both a blessing and a curse. In one sense, what a blessed time to live in! The history of the earth, the rudimentary mechanical operations of living cells, the history of human civilization—these are all neatly packaged into affordable 400-page books covered over 15-week semesters under the guidance of an elder professor. Student comprehension is generally demonstrated by reciting the key tenets from these books on exams (some professors may add critical thinking and problem solving to those exams, as well). Successive classes and textbooks build upon prior ones. By the time an undergraduate receives their science diploma, they are quite versed in the understanding of the way things are thought of as being today in that specialized science. All told, one must admit it is impressive that a young adult in their early 20s can accumulate so much knowledge so quickly and have it so warmed up in their mind that they can be gainfully employed in the workforce.

But there's also a curse lurking here. Thoughtful scientists know about it, but most stopped thinking about it early in their careers. It is the problem of "scientific dictation" (UB, 132:2.4), to which I can personally attest. As an undergraduate science student, it seemed all I could do was be an "intellectual parrot" (UB, 132:2.4) in my classes. When I asked questions that poked at the edges of prevailing theories or questioned an underlying assumption (usually because I had read something different in *The Urantia Book*), I was not rewarded. But when I recited material directly according to prevailing standard understanding in a textbook, I was rewarded.

Part of me wishes I had been more courageous. "Professor," I never actually asked in any geology class, "why is methodological naturalism our presupposition in all our

explorations of the universe? Why can we not presuppose a designer? Also, why are mantle plumes the convenient explanation for *every* feature on the earth not explained by plate tectonic theory?" But I recognize this would have been asking too much of myself at that young and insecure age. I wanted to be accepted. I wanted to get high grades. I wanted to get a good job. I was told that science is intrinsically a pursuit of truth, and I was told to accept that assertion dogmatically—without critical and independent examination—to obtain those high grades.

I was encountering *paradigms*, an issue the philosopher and science historian Thomas Kuhn famously warned about (Kuhn, 1962). Thomas Kuhn's cautioned that paradigms systematically constrain novel thought and reward conformity.

Until just a few hundred years ago, any thinker who promulgated his scientific theory would start his thinking from scratch—from fundamentals—and he would write as if talking to a broad interdisciplinary audience. For example, when Isaac Newton was promulgating his theory of light and optics, there were numerous other reputable but competing theories: "sight is emanations from the human eye," "light is made up of corpuscles," and so forth. But then Newton published his seminal work on *Optics*, and this not only won out over other theories because of its elegance and explanatory power, but it actually became one of the first *science textbooks* for college classrooms. With Newton's *Optics*, young scientists-in-training did not have to start their theories from scratch, but instead could build their research atop a set of agreed-upon presuppositions and governing equations.

The dark side to this was that novel theories that did not match Newton's theories were all too quickly rejected out of hand. "That's not what Newton said," a practicing scientist might have said even to Maxwell as he suggested that his electromagnetic theory applied to light. Geologists know about this problem. The theory of continental drift was proposed in the early 20th century but was rejected by geologists for decades with a "we all know continents are too big to move; all the textbooks say so" dismissal. Meanwhile, thoughtful promulgators of continental drift like Alfred Wegener (and *The Urantia Book*) were shunned. Only in death was Wegener vindicated. By the 1970s, geology textbooks were being rewritten to incorporate continental drift (plate tectonic theory) after decades of all reputable scientists saying it was an

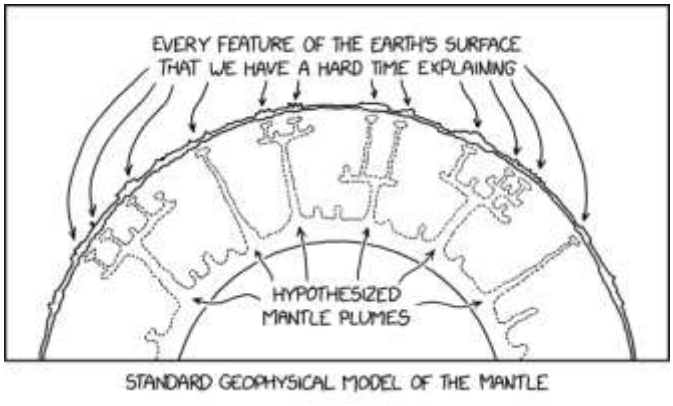

Figure 1. Comical portrayal of a paradigm constraining thought. Credit: https://xkcd.com/3141/ (CC-NC)

absurd theory. And today plate tectonic theory has become so dominant as to become a new form of paradigm-restricted thinking (Figure 1).

Another problem in the sciences is the involvement of the human ego. Liam Bright, a philosophy professor, asked the question, "Why do scientists lie?" (Bright, 2021) He explored the answer to this from several angles, and I think his most persuasive argument was that we assume all scientists are "gold" souls, as in the *golden rulers* of Plato's *Republic* who pursue truth and nobility of one's soul. That is, we assume all scientists idealistically pursue truth—no matter where it leads—and the betterment of man's material circumstances. Indeed, many scientists tell themselves in the mirror each morning they are precisely that kind of scientist. But in truth, scientists today are more likely "silver" souls or "bronze" souls. The silver soul pursues honor, credit, and fame. The bronze soul pursues money, luxury, and a materially comfortable middle-upper class Western lifestyle. As a retired scientist, I find this argument borne out by my experiences. And because so many scientists seek power and prestige (or money and luxury) more than they seek *truth*, they often resist novel interpretations in their field where they might have to say, "My findings were incorrect and need to be revised."

As I put myself to the task of considering archaeology and *The Urantia Book*, I reminded myself of all of this. I set out to inspect a few archaeological sites in the light of an epochal revelation. Very soon, my attention was arrested by something in an unlikely part of the world.

Anau, Turkmenistan: A Humbling Investigation

> *"You have already found a bronze culture in Turkestan dating before 9000 B.C., and the Andites early learned to work in iron, gold, and copper, as well." (UB, 81:3.4)*

When I first read this in *The Urantia Book*, I breezed right past it. "Sure," I said, "I'm sure archaeologists have found that. That 9000 number sounds about right." But no, I later found out this is not a statement that can be easily accepted. As I learned some rudiments of archaeology, I found that precisely *zero professional archaeologists* would say this. Not today. Not in the early 20th century. Archaeologists would instead say with unassailable confidence, "we *know* the first bronze cultures arose around 3500 B.C. No bronze existed in 9000 B.C." Yet here is *The Urantia Book*, talking about bronze (and other things like plumbing and stone buildings) far earlier than anyone imagines possible. Some people find this disturbing, as if it undermines the book's credibility since "modern science knows" there could not be bronze in 9000 B.C. But since I take this book to be a revelation and a "co-ordination of essential knowledge" (UB, 0:12.11), I was provoked to investigate.

I began by considering potential human source-works[6] for this provocative sentence about bronze being found in 9000 B.C. It appeared as if some concepts in Paper 81 of *The Urantia Book* parallel concepts and phraseology in Henry Fairfield Osborn's *Man Rises to Parnassus* (Block, 2017:20). *The Urantia Book*'s authors are known to extract parts of concepts from existing human works and adjust them as needed to make them truthful. In this section that parallels Section 3 of Paper 81, Osborn publishes a table that includes the following: "Copper used at Anau, Turkestan, 4000 B.C." (Osborn, 1926:154). This is not an especially provocative statement; copper is only one element in bronze, and 4000 B.C. is near the widely accepted start of the Bronze Age. And yet, *The Urantia Book* authors *changed* this from 4000 to 9000 B.C., and from copper to bronze—bronze being a more advanced metallurgic technique. Why would the authors take a line of text that was fully acceptable to mainstream archaeologists of the 1920's (as well as those of today) and change it to something every archaeologist then and now would summarily reject, unless this is an "authoritative elimination of error?" (UB, 101:4.6) I was intrigued. Perhaps I could find out more about this *Anau*.

Anau is a village today near Ashkhabad, Turkmenistan near the capital city of Ashgabat[7] at the base of the Kopet Dag[8] (Figure 2). It is lightly inhabited today after having been severely damaged by a 1948 earthquake. Within Anau there are the ruins of a 15th century mosque, but more interesting are two earthen mounds, or *kurgans*. Artificial mounds like this occur

Figure 2. Map showing modern-day Caspian Sea, Turkmenistan, and the Kopet Dagh.

[6] The authors of *The Urantia Book* were mandated to use existing human concepts whenever possible. Some people have found likely sources of these human concepts in early 20th century literature published by popular well-known presses such as Yale Press, Princeton Press, MacMillan, etc.

[7] Multiple transliterations into English exist for names in central Asia. Ashgabat may also be spelled Ashkhabad, Kopet Dagh may be spelled Kopetdag, and so forth.

[8] Dagh is just a transliteration of the Persian word for "mountain." So it would be as redundant to call them "Kopet Dagh mountains" as it is to name a hill "Table Mesa" or to refer to the "Sahara Desert."

worldwide[9] as the result of ancient communities building atop their own rubble: "The average primitive community rose from one to two feet every twenty-five years as the result of the mere accumulation of dirt and trash" (UB, 81:3.3) Where they haven't been worn down by natural erosion, they often catch the eye of geologists or archaeologists, because they do not match the characteristic features of the surrounding landscape.

The presence of these kurgans near Ashkhabad arrested my attention for two reasons:

1) *The Urantia Book* states that the Adamsonite headquarters—one of two centers of the violet race—was "situated east of the southern shore of the Caspian Sea near the Kopet mountains." (UB, 78:1.3). Could the Anau kurgans contain the remnants of Adamson's long-ago headquarters?
2) There is a Urantia Book reference to *Adonia*, a "central Asian commercial metropolis, being located near the present city of Ashkhabad." (UB, 79:1.4). Adonia is a curiously Greek name for a site in central Asia. However, *The Urantia Book* describes a group of Adamsonites, led by a descendant of Adamson and Ratta, leaving central Asia in 10,000 B.C. and colonizing Greece. (UB, 80:7.3) Could these kurgans at Anau be remnants of an ancient metropolis that had been inhabited by proto-Greeks?

These were tantalizing possibilities, so my investigation continued. I discovered the impressive Raphael Pumpelly, a late 19th and early 20th century American geologist and self-taught archaeologist (Figure 3). In 1903, while traveling in central Asia searching for evidence of possible ancient forerunners of European peoples in central Asia, Pumpelly passed through Anau. His trained geologist eye recognized the two kurgans as likely sites of former human habitation. "Thenceforth," he wrote, the "kurgans assumed a direct interest." (Pumpelly, 1918:706). At this time, no systematic archaeology had ever taken place in Turkestan[10]—just unstructured hunting for "curios" (Pumpelly, 1905:14). Although a Russian general (Komorov) had dug a trench through one of the Anau kurgans several decades earlier, he had only been looking for gold. Within this general's trench, Pumpelly noted simple pottery with black paint on red clay.

Figure 3. Raphael Pumpelly ca. 1900

[9] There are different names for these across cultures, such as tepe, depe, tell, tumuli, etc.

[10] In the early 20th century, *Turkestan* was a much larger region than the modern-day Turkmenistan. Turkestan was divided into several "-stan" countries, and its easternmost part was annexed by China. Nevertheless, Anau and Ashkhabad were in Turkestan and are today in Turkmenistan.

Pumpelly set his mind to returning for a major excavation, which he did the following year in 1904.

They found four successive cultures within these two kurgans. And just as Osborn had described (and *The Urantia Book* had repeated with alteration), they found copper artifacts in the oldest and second oldest of these four successive cultures (Figure 4). Could these four cultures be the "four diverse cultures" of Adamsonites near the Kopet Dagh according to *The Urantia Book*? (UB, 77:5.10) And could these copper artifacts hint at additional bronze artifacts that simply had not yet been unearthed at Anau? The excavation was limited in spatial extent, after all.

Figure 4. Copper artifacts from Anau kurgan lower layers.

Remarkably, the excavation of 1904 was Pumpelly's first genuine archaeological excavation in his life, so he brought along renowned Mediterranean archaeologist Dr. Hubert Schmidt. Schmidt brought with him an entrenched paradigm of Mediterranean archaeology—Susa, Chaldea, and Egypt. (Pumpelly, 1918:746) Pumpelly, on the other hand, had no preconceptions about established archaeological ages. Pumpelly reported that Schmidt continually ascribed younger dates to layers in the kurgans to align to what was already known of Mediterranean archaeology; Schmidt "refused to admit that [the oldest excavated layer] was older than the third millennium B.C." (Pumpelly, 1918:731). Pumpelly, on the other hand, favored older dates based on assumptions of the rates of debris accumulation, and at the time he concluded the oldest layer in these kurgans was *from the 9th millennium B.C.* This was the date he published for these oldest layers in his 1908 report. He therefore placed copper artifacts in the 9th millennium B.C.

I also discovered that the Russian Revolution of 1905 had put an end to Pumpelly's investigations at Anau. His 1904 excavation also had been cut short because of a locust swarm. It seemed to me that Anau perhaps faded into memory, lost to time and memory by the 1930s, with nothing but a preliminary interpretation. One that *The Urantia Book* was trying to hint needed to be re-examined.

I must pause the narrative to confess: at this point, my pulse was racing! I felt as if I had

done a bit of digging (no pun intended) and perhaps uncovered something big, some clever way in which *The Urantia Book* had taken one published fact and altered it to be more truthful by reverting to original archaeological interpretations unsullied by mainstream archaeological thought. After all, in his memoir a decade later, Pumpelly wrote that it was "necessary to reduce the dates" of some of the layers in the Anau kurgans because of "important changes in the chronology of Egypt and Babylonia" (Pumpelly, 1918:728). It seemed to me as if the insecure self-taught archaeologist had lost his nerve and gave in to conventional "we all know" thinking about Anau. Part of me was ready to wrap up this section and confidently leave it there, insisting that someone return to Anau with fresh eyes, someday, when the government of Turkmenistan might be more permissive.

But could it really be that a Russian revolution and decades of soviet rule had wiped Anau from memory? This was, after all, "arguably the most important archaeological site in all of Central Asia" (Warner, 2019). I decided to look into this a bit more.

I came across Dr. Fredrik Hiebert from the University of Pennsylvania. His expedition in the late 1990's returned to Anau and produced an impressive volume of archaeological findings (Hiebert & Kurbansakhatov, 2003). Hiebert's data include new data from his expedition, cross-comparison to data from Pumpelly, and also previously unpublished data from the Pumpelly expeditions found in obscure museums and personal collections of family descendants. In this volume, Hiebert disclosed that Soviet and Turkmen researchers continued to investigate Anau throughout the 20th century. Moreover, *dozens* of additional excavations were conducted by Soviet archaeologists along the base of the Kopet Dagh throughout the 20th century.

It was genuinely humbling to read Hiebert's nearly 500-page volume. I found I had been all too eager to prejudicially dismiss all of 20th century archaeology prior to coming upon this volume (which took some effort to acquire since I do not have access to archaeological libraries). Although I believe Hiebert has some potential systematic biases—he fits Pumpelly's findings into "the modern synthesis", which sounds suspiciously like a constrained paradigm—overall I found his work methodical, restrained, disciplined, and thorough. Hiebert put the date of the oldest layers in the Anau kurgans at no older than 4600 B.C.—still impressively old, but not as old as Pumpelly suggested might be possible, and certainly not especially provocative for any copper artifacts found in these layers.

Hiebert's data is convincing. Using multiple samples analyzed with radiocarbon dating, Hiebert shows that even the oldest layers of the Anau kurgans are, indeed, not so very, very old (Figure 5). Although small errors can occur with radiocarbon dating, overwhelming evidence shows it to be a trustworthy analysis technique for samples containing organic carbon as old as about 10,000 B.C. Hiebert also found many

additional artifacts in these kurgans, and frankly none of them looked especially advanced and they all were similar in form to artifacts found at other excavation sites along the base of the Kopet Dagh.

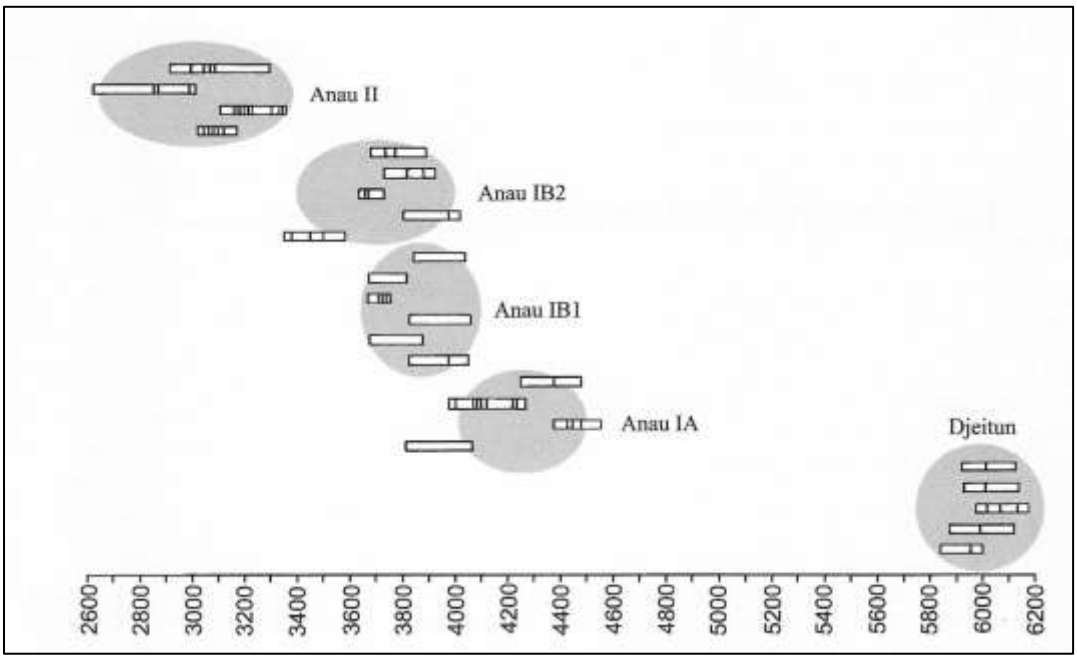

Figure 5. Radiocarbon dates (B.C.) of samples from layers within the older of the two Anau kurgans. Djeitun, another excavation near the Kopet Dagh, is shown to be older than Anau.

As I read Hiebert's findings, I felt the zealous ecstasy of my freewheeling imagination melting away and a more sober set of answers forming in my mind:

1) Could the Anau kurgans be the remnants of Adamson's headquarters? **No.** These dates are far too recent. By 5000 B.C. Adamson and the Adamsonites were long gone, replaced by steadily more barbaric Andites and Aryans.
2) Could the Anau kurgans be the lost city of Adonia, possible home of proto-Greeks? **No.** By 5000 B.C. those proto-Greeks were long gone from central Asia, and no artifacts of stone or metal were found in the kurgans that might indicate advanced commercial activity. In fact, the architecture conditions of living preserved in the kurgans seems to suggest a rural and agricultural people, not a "commercial metropolis." (UB, 79:1.4)

And so I sighed as I agreed with some of Hiebert's key summary points: "Deep deposits of alluvial silt [at the base of the Kopet Dagh] have probably hidden sites" and "reconstructions of social structure in Central Asia … have been strongly biased by unrepresentative sampling." A search for Adamson's headquarters or the lost city of Adonia is not going to be as easy as digging into obviously prominent hills.

In this humbler frame of mind it seemed to me that, at best, the Anau kurgans might be

remnants of the fourth and final culture of Adamson's descendants (UB, 77:5.10). Instead of all four cultures being within two kurgans—a tantalizing thought—both kurgans may reflect only the final of these cultures. Or perhaps these people whose activities are preserved in these kurgans are barbarians who lived there *after* the fourth Adamson culture had left Turkestan.

Another thought occurred to me. The Anau kurgans are noticeable today precisely because they rise above the flat surrounding landscape. But why so high? Mostly because the building technique was sun-dried mud bricks. But a village of sun-dried bricks hardly sounds like the description of Adamsonite advanced building technique, much less techniques of a commercial metropolis engaged in commerce in stone and metal. Ironically, any long-lost city of Adonia may be hard to find precisely *because* its advanced techniques didn't tend to accumulate into prominent kurgans. A city like this also might have been off the beaten path—not directly along the famed Silk Road—because it would likely be close to the natural resources it used to manufacture its commerce materials.

It seemed to me, then, that my search for easy answers about evidence of the Adamsonites or Andites ended in a humbling exercise. Modern archaeology may be flawed because it does not have revelatory or theistic suppositions underlying it. It may be subject to incrementalism and politics. But it is still a disciplined enterprise worthy of respect. Meanwhile, as for myself, I learned I must not be led astray by the eagerness of my "preconceived opinions" or "settled ideas" (UB, 109:5.3). The same thing I insist of paradigm-bound archaeologists I must also insist of myself.

Presuppositions for Revelation-Informed Archaeology

> *"The Urantia Book presents a cosmic context for human civilization, proposing that divine influences and celestial administration played direct roles in humanity's early development." (Johnson, 2025:60)*

Taking a step back from the humbling exercise of investigating Anau, I pursued a different line of thought. I wondered: If I were to write a new textbook of archaeology—the delineation of a new paradigm—what are some of the key tenets or presuppositions I would suggest in that textbook that can be taken from *The Urantia Book*? Obviously, I'm in no position to write an archaeological textbook. But it still proved to be a useful thought exercise that helped me see my second archaeological investigation in this essay with clearer, more sober eyes and with less unrestrained zeal.

Here, then, are those presuppositions—better initial assumptions for archaeology.

1. God exists. Above all else, a new paradigm for archaeology must be founded on the fact that God exists, and that he reigns and has a great and glorious purpose for the universes of time and space. Humans may be subjected to cataclysms and the consequences of unfortunately exercised free will (as in the Lucifer rebellion), but we on this world were in no way set adrift nihilistically and aimlessly among the stars.

2. Human history is much older than we think. Time after time, *The Urantia Book* relentlessly, consistently, and unapologetically gives absolute dates in the past for the doings of humans that are way larger than any mainstream archaeologist would say is possible. Japanese history beginning in 12,000 B.C.? (UB, 79:6.3) Use of metals, plumbing, and stone building materials on Crete in 12,000 B.C.? (UB, 80:7.2) Maritime trade between India and Mesopotamia by 7000 B.C.? (UB, 79:3.6) Advanced cities of superhumans as far back as 500,000 years ago? These are just a tiny sampling of *The Urantia Book*'s many provocative assertions. No one has *ever* put forth dates as old as these. *The Urantia Book* consistently seems to be admonishing us that, when we have been digging, we have been far too superficial in our digs. More evidence is out there, though some of it may have degraded beyond recognition.

3. Genetics underlie social progress. Archaeology today generally seeks to tell a simple story: new ideas emerge at one place and time and then spread to all other places through humans exchanging ideas and cultural practices. It's a tidy story, and there's truth in it. But archaeologists err when they assume that all humans are "born equal," (UB, 70:9.15)—the notion that all humans and human cultures equally have an opportunity to originate new ideas and to adopt new practices. *The Urantia Book* reveals a fundamentally different reality of human history. Innovative ideas in civilization, true advances, aren't equally bound to arise anywhere on earth. Sometimes, the ideas are revealed to us by God reaching down, through his delegated agencies, and gifting us the knowledge, as in Dalamatia (UB, 66:5) or Eden (UB, 77:5). Other times the ideas originate from humans, but invariably they are ones with superior genetics, as with the Andites. And the ability for other cultures to adopt improved ideas is likewise dependent to some degree on abilities conferred by genetics. No archaeologist today who wants to keep their tenured professorship would dare entertain these taboo ideas.

4. Our world's history is particularly muddled. On a world not affected by sin and rebellion, one might expect a more steady upward march through developmental stages of civilization, all under the watchful leadership of a Planetary Prince. But "Urantia is not proceeding in the normal order." (UB, 52:6.1) *The Urantia Book* reveals

a tortuous path of advances and regressions by various cultures. Modern archaeology assumes, for example, the use of bronze began about 3500 B.C. and must have had one origin point that subsequently spread to all other locations. But such is not the case. "Away from the more advanced centers of civilization there were no distinct periods, such as the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages; all three existed at the same time in different localities." (UB, 81:3.4). Advanced techniques were taught at long-forgotten cities such as Dalamatia and Eden, and they were carried forward by those who had the ability to hold onto those techniques (most could not).

5. Civilization is a goal of God's design. Modern archaeologists don't imagine there is any particular goal in mind as humans struggle and strive through time. As atheistic materialists, they do not confer any special status to humans, and instead see us as just the latest in random, goalless Darwinian evolution. Ask any mainstream archaeologist today if they think humans will still be alive on earth in a million years with advanced civilization and almost all of them will say "no" or "we can't know." Most will imagine we will be the cause of our own extinction. *The Urantia Book* reveals a fundamentally different picture: humans being drawn upward toward God, toward increasing and purposeful levels of order and organization and brotherhood. We may have experienced setbacks—some not even of our own doing but by machinations of higher beings who sinned—but the book leaves no doubt that our world is destined for light and life—a condition of advanced global civilization and human thriving, even down to the genetic level.

6. "Many strange things" cloud matters. *The Urantia Book* reveals that, as a result of sin, rebellion, and default, humans have encountered beings who can appear and disappear at will, and "being able to do such things," (UB, 74:4.4) can manipulate the environment in ways beyond human ability. Some of these beings are described as "a strange, unorganized, and unattached influence on Urantia" (UB, 77:6.6). Anytime something extraordinarily peculiar is found in the deep historical past, it may not necessarily have been the work of humans. Archaeologists today will jump through endless hoops to concoct elaborate "humans only" rationalizations of such findings, because to them that is the only allowable framework. But in actuality, something inexplicable and extraordinary might have been a strange doing of some unattached midwayers. What makes this even more difficult is that all of this would have ended 2000 years ago, simultaneous with Jesus' bestowal, and it is difficult to entertain hypotheses that suggest past phenomena that are no longer observable today.

7. "They're digging in the wrong place." Indiana Jones said it. There is a gigantic bias in archaeology: we dig where it is possible to dig, where financial resources practically enable us to dig, where existing conceptual frameworks and research programs suggest it would be interesting to dig, and sometimes where human conceit and faulty assumptions insist we must dig. *The Urantia Book* reveals that many of the most interesting potential archaeological dig sites lay unexcavated, whether they be underwater today (UB, 61:6.1 and 66:7.16) or in unexpected places such as central Asia. Conversely, *The Urantia Book* suggests that one of the *least* interesting places to dig is Africa, and yet a great deal of digging takes place there today.

A More Measured Consideration: Göbekli Tepe

Said Jesus: "The wise man puts the new wine into fresh wine skins."
(UB, 147:7.2)

Göbekli Tepe is a hill in Turkey (Figure 6) that, upon initial excavation in the 1990's, revealed "one of the first [known] manifestations of human-made monumental architecture" (UNESCO, 2018). There are monoliths (obelisks) of solid limestone rock over 15 feet tall hewn as single blocks. The largest of these monoliths weighs about 16,000 pounds (about the weight of 4 full-sized Ford F-150 trucks), and the limestone is thought to have been transported at least a quarter of a mile. Engraved onto the monoliths are rather intricate designs of animals. The site seems to have originated around 9000 B.C., and excavations began about 30 years ago. Presently, only about 10 percent of the site has been excavated.

Figure 6. Map showing location of Göbekli Tepe archaeological site in Turkey.

Curiously, the sophistication of building and artistry apparently *decreases* over time; later monoliths are said to be cruder than earlier ones. And some researchers theorize that the entire site was deliberately buried periodically—a considerable undertaking instead of simply abandoning a site. Some theorize that the pillars may have been the

outgrowth of an original human-burial site, perhaps a sort of ancestor worship (Scham, 2008).

Figure 7. Relief engravings on one of several T-shaped pillars at Göbekli Tepe.

It's easy to get excited about a site like this. Most people know about the impressiveness of Stonehenge, and Göbekli Tepe predates Stonehenge by thousands of years and includes intricate artwork (Figure 7). We are intrigued by the thought process of a people who would deliberately bury a site consisting of such seemingly monumental effort. If there are humans buried at this site leading to its hallowed status among a long-ago people, who exactly were these humans and why did they deserve such grand architecture commemorating their burial site? Readers of *The Urantia Book* may further read into this site their own particular form of speculation. Perhaps the Andites built it? Perhaps genetic and cultural degradation led to the decrease in artistry over time? Perhaps people are buried there! Perhaps they are some of the surely-venerated children of Adam and Eve. So little is yet known about this site, being only slightly excavated, speculation can run rampant.

However, interpretations of this site are changing rapidly. Andrew Curry (2021) points out that, until around 2015, Göbekli Tepe was considered remarkable because it lacked permanent dwellings and seemed to be only a sacred gathering site (Scham, 2008). It also seemed that new monoliths were continually built to replace old ones. But then, more recent excavations revealed evidence of continual residential habitation at the site, as well as ongoing repair and rebuilding of existing monoliths—perhaps after earthquakes or landslides. This revising of interpretations—even to the point of inverting them—is a normal part of the scientific process of testing and refuting hypotheses as more evidence is collected, particularly in a science as tenuous as archaeology where data is often fragmentary. What's disappointing is when scientists publish their interpretations-of-the-moment without the requisite qualifications of humility; bold, minimally qualified speculation are often rewarded with glossy magazine covers and popular press coverage. Think back to Liam Bright's assertion that most scientists are "silver souls" who crave prestige more than truth.

Regardless of the interpretations-of-the-moment from mainstream archaeology, Urantia Book readers have a different reason to be wary of any mainstream archaeological interpretations of Göbekli Tepe. All scientific papers on this site over the past 30 years have been thoroughly entrenched in the archaeological *modern synthesis*—a paradigm—and these papers are hemmed in by preexisting ideas and taken-for-granted assumptions. Consider the following quotes from Lee Clare, the present field director of the excavation site, as quoted in Levy (2025):

- "In the Neolithic we have no real organized religion, with clergy, with priests, that sort of thing. That all comes down much later."
- "**As we know**, in 6000 B.C. institutionalized religion had not yet evolved." (emphasis added)

Are these statements careful interpretive conclusions borne of an objective examination of the archaeological data? No. Are they hypotheses under active and rigorous testing for possible falsification? No. They are presuppositions—*a priori* assumptions—the archaeologists are taking for granted. They reflect the paradigm these archaeologists are operating within. "As we know" really means "as we read in our archaeology textbooks and hold as a settled matter." We cannot expect scientists, beholden to the paradigm in which they came of age as archaeologists, to give up that paradigm easily, even when confronted with falsifying facts. If their psychology is anything like the geologists of the 20th century—and if Thomas Kuhn was correct about "normal science"—it may be many decades or even centuries before sufficient evidence accumulates to overthrow entrenched assumptions of the now-dominant archaeological paradigm. This is a secular equivalent of Jesus' caution that humans usually try to put new wine into old wineskins.

With so little still known about Göbekli Tepe, perhaps I can at least examine the revelation-informed presuppositions suggested earlier and see how they might apply here. If, indeed, "revelation is a technique whereby ages upon ages of time are saved" (UB, 101:5.4), better presuppositions might lead to better investigations and interpretations at Göbekli Tepe.

1. God exists. This matters at Göbekli Tepe, and it would make a difference if it were a presupposition. In a theistic framework, we can assume the Creator has been continually trying to reveal himself to humanity. *The Urantia Book* reveals that primitive religion is designed into us at both the biological level and the mindal level (via the sixth adjutant mind-spirit). With God's existence taken as a given, the monoliths and carvings at Göbekli Tepe might more truthfully be seen as not utterly arbitrary. And researchers might not dismiss the possibility of institutionalized religion that is older than 6000 B.C. According to *The Urantia Book*, humans were called to

worship—presumably in an organized manner—at the temple of the unseen Father in Dalamatia, 500,000 years ago (UB, 66:3.4).

2. Human history is much older than we think. This is one of the big stories arising from Göbekli Tepe already in mainstream archaeology. Stanford archaeologist Ian Hodder said, "[Göbekli Tepe] overturns the whole apple cart. All our theories were wrong." (Symmes, 2010) But instead of being surprised at every new excavation, and instead of "apple carts" being overturned continually, imagine if archaeologists informed by *The Urantia Book* could say, "Well, yes, this makes some sense. Nodites were in this region after 200,000 B.C., and many others influenced by ideas from the first or second epochal revelations might have been in this area."

3. Genetics underlie social progress. This presupposition could help with interpretations at Göbekli Tepe. If any human remains are ever found there (and I consider it likely, now that evidence of ongoing human habitation has been found at the site), an archaeologist informed by *The Urantia Book* could say, "At 9000 B.C. perhaps these were the last of the Nodites in this region. Or perhaps they were one of the waves of Andites. Or maybe these were broad-headed Andonites migrating toward Europe. Human remains falling into Caucasoid, Mongoloid, or Negroid skeletal structures should aid our investigations."

4. Our world's history is particularly muddled. Instead of assuming Göbekli Tepe fits the mainstream narrative of gradual transition from hunter-herder to agriculturists, archaeologists informed by *The Urantia Book* could temper their interpretations by saying, "Well, this could be a relatively more advanced culture because of its proximity to the first Garden of Eden and Mesopotamia. We should not assume they lacked any influence from Andites or Adamites."

5. Civilization is a goal of God's design. This presupposition might not be especially helpful at Göbekli Tepe on its own. The site is what it is; what's there is there. Where this would become helpful would be in relating Göbekli Tepe to many other surrounding sites, or fitting it into a larger regional chronology. There are many other *tepe* sites in the region, some with artifacts even older than Göbekli Tepe.

6. "Many strange things" cloud matters. The 16,000 pound monoliths at Göbekli Tepe are unwieldy for a primitive people to move, to say the least. It is at least

conceivable that the causal explanation for their movement was the “strange, unorganized, and unattached” secondary midwayers, who likely possess superior technology and matter-manipulation abilities. This may be difficult to falsify, but it can at least be one of several competing explanations for how a people with no apparent access to energy sources except human and animal might have seemingly moved and erected these monoliths.

7. “They’re digging in the wrong place.” Göbekli Tepe has been excavated because farmers happened to notice some curious artifacts in their fields (their ploughs kept hitting the tops of monoliths under the thin soil). Although it’s certainly a worthy archaeological site on its own merits, it may not actually be particularly outstanding relative to many other sites that simply have not yet been discovered.

Epilogue

There are vistas dim where clouds dissever

Over far forgotten lands of lavish gleam,

Generations that are gone forever,

Kingdoms crumbling in a dim primeval dream—

Leaving only deserts gray and lonely,

Sites of unremembered cities gloomed and grand,

Tenanted by winds and shadows only,

Desolating winds and dunes of idle sand.

—Poem by R. Pumpelly’s son, presumably written at Anau, 1904

It may sound as if this investigation brought me to a point where I feel like I can’t say much of anything about anything. Well, that may be the case. I certainly can’t say much about Göbekli Tepe, the initial impetus for this paper! But then again, neither can anyone else right now because of how little is known about it.

What this investigation did teach me was some new, specific forms of humility. It feels correct to share those with you, gentle reader, so you might avoid repeating my exact forms of blunders.

1. I don’t know what I don’t know. It’s easy to read *The Urantia Book* and think you have a leg up on all other humans of all stripes on the planet. That you’ve been

blessed with special arcane knowledge, a sort of neo-Gnostic sentiment. There's a kernel of truth to this perhaps, yes: profound philosophic paradoxes that have flummoxed the best theologians for centuries are trivially resolved with what's revealed in *The Urantia Book*. But when it comes to the scientific enterprise—the comparatively dry and mathematical cause-and-effect measurement of our material circumstances—*The Urantia Book* fundamentally wasn't bestowed upon us to solve these gaps in our knowledge. Those are things we must work out on our own in this world (for now), and the best results will come from a rigorous, honest, patient, methodical scientific pursuit that starts with revelation-informed presuppositions. God exists, and he reigns.

2. The world is a big place. It's easy to read about any one archaeological site, and immediately project onto it one's most fantastic ideas. "Surely this is Adonia!" But our world is *gigantic* and looking for any one long-lost site is searching for a small needle in a giant haystack. So far, in archaeology's relative infancy we have found only that which is easiest to find; Anau's kurgans *literally* stick out, begging to be excavated. Although Adonia was "near the present city of Ashkhabad," near is a relative word. Ten miles? One hundred miles? A 100-mile radius around Ashkhabad would encompass an area the size of South Carolina. And Adonia could lie beneath hundreds of feet of alluvium that has washed down from the Kopet Dagh. And what's left there after thousands of years may only be faint traces, particularly if earthquakes continued to shake the city to pieces after it was abandoned. Even my own home with its modern synthetic building materials, if abandoned tomorrow, would be only a faint trace in a thousand years and an advanced archaeologist would have to know exactly what they were looking for and where. These are humbling thoughts.

3. "Impressive" is relative. Both sites considered in this essay have been classified as *very* important to archaeology. But are they really the top-most sites in the world? Again, the world is gigantic. The 11,000-year-old engravings at Göbekli Tepe were skillfully executed, yes, but how do their techniques compare to the 30,000-year-old charcoal drawings in Chauvet Cave in France? Or the 15,000-year-old clay bison sculptures in Cave of the Trois-Frères in France? (Figure 8) And these may have simply been artwork by blue man, perhaps even without much Adamic influence; "The height of the blue man's art was about fifteen thousand years ago." (UB, 80:3.7)

Figure 8. (left) 30,000 year old cave drawings in France. (right) replica of 15,000 year old clay sculpture in France.

A final note: If you've read this far, your mind and temperament might be a bit like mine. My mind has a strong analytic streak. It is no exaggeration to say I have constructed half a dozen spreadsheets analyzing Jesus' apostles, commandments over time, the cosmic allegiances of the Caligastia 100, and more. If archaeology in *The Urantia Book* continues to capture my attention, I might construct half a dozen more spreadsheets.

But if I do this, I have learned through life's hard lessons that I *must* "hold fast the eternal truth" (UB, 195:9.1). Each of us has been gifted one talent[11] in this life: "time in which to insure [our] survival" (UB, 28:6.9). *The Urantia Book* is a marvelous text to analyze to understand details of our material adventures. But analytic activities are not what ensure our survival. We must be born of the spirit; we must choose salvation. "Human salvation is *real*." (UB, 79:1.4).

Have you made your "one brave stretch of faith" (UB, 102:0.2) yet? Have you been saved? If not, that's understandable. The world is big, loud, complex, and full of things to analyze. But put aside your analytic proclivities and see to your salvation now; "Choose you this day whom you will serve." (UB, 153:2.5) And *then* you can get back to your analytic fun with the fifth epochal revelation.

Remember: *The Urantia Book* is not a dispensational revelation! Therefore we still live in the times of the dispensation Jesus inaugurated. His instructions to the world still apply to us today. And the living heart of that revelatory message Jesus told us 2000 years ago: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." (UB, 140:1.5)

[11] Talent in the sense of the word when Jesus told the parable of the talents.

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