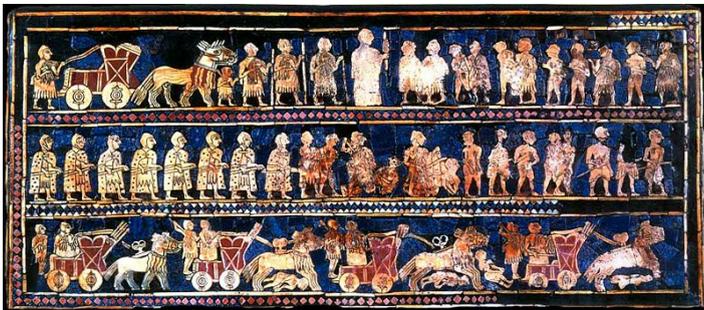
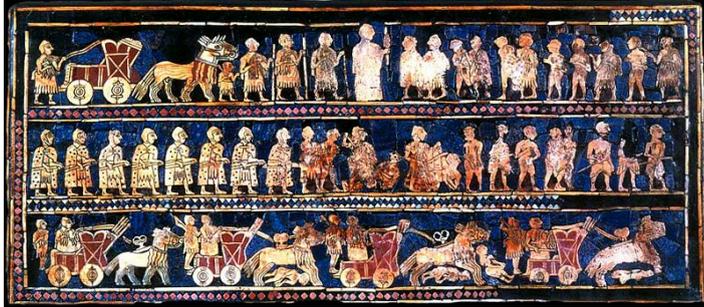


Lesson 10

Standard of Ur



INTRODUCTION

Every society has its own signs of identity.

Today these may be a flag, a logo, a coat of arms, a brand, a lifestyle, or even symbols on social media.

This lesson explores how **archaeological discoveries help us understand the mindset of ancient civilizations.**

Opening question:

👉 *If archaeologists discovered objects from your life 4,000 years from now, what would they say about your values?*

In ancient times, people also left behind such “messages about themselves.” One of the strongest examples is **the Standard of Ur.**

Two examples of modern “standards”

- **The U.S. Presidential Seal** represents the political way of life in the United States.
- **The Cross** represents the Christian way of life.
- **The Standard of Ur** represents the way of life of the ancient world.

The Presidential Seal of the United States

The Presidential Seal is the official symbol of the office of the President of the United States.

It includes the President's coat of arms, an eagle taken from the Great Seal, a circle of stars, and the words:

"Seal of the President of the United States."

Description and symbolism

In its right (dexter) talon, the eagle holds an olive branch with 13 olives and 13 leaves, symbolizing peace.

In its left (sinister) talon, it holds arrows, symbolizing that at times war may be necessary to defend the nation.

The eagle holds a ribbon with the words **"E Pluribus Unum"**, meaning *"Out of many, one."*

The number 13 represents the original thirteen colonies.

The shield on the eagle's chest has 13 red and white stripes, again representing the colonies, while the blue band above them symbolizes their unity as one nation and the authority of Congress, which makes laws for all.

Above the eagle is a golden "glory" or halo, containing 13 white clouds, 13 white stars, and many smaller stars.

The 50 stars on the deep blue background surrounding the eagle represent the 50 U.S. states.

The words **"Seal of the President of the United States"** surround the seal on a light-colored field.

What Does the Cross Represent in the Christian Faith?

The Cross is more than just a symbol of Christianity.

This simple image carries the message of **God's love, humility, and the fulfillment of His promise of salvation.**

The Cross is the central symbol of the Christian faith. It reminds us of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the redeeming power of His suffering and death.

Therefore, the Cross is a sign both of **Christ Himself** and of the **faith of Christians.**

2 THE STANDARD OF UR — WHAT IS THIS ARTIFACT?

The Standard of Ur is an archaeological artifact from the ancient city of **Ur**, where Abraham grew up.

Key facts:

- Date: **2600–2400 BC**
- Found in royal tombs
- About **4,500 years old**
- Preserved in the British Museum
- A trapezoid-shaped box decorated with inlaid mosaics
- Made of stone and shell

The artifact has **two sides**:

- **The War Side**
- **The Peace Side**

The story is read **from bottom to top**, symbolizing a movement from labor to authority.

3 WHAT IS DEPICTED

Each side of the Standard of Ur is divided into **three registers (levels)**.

♦ Lower register — Labor

- Ordinary people
- Hard physical work
- The foundation of society

👉 The society understood that **life begins with work**.

♦ Middle register — Spiritual and social life

- Offerings and gifts
- Order
- Shared culture

👉 People understood that life is not only about work, but also about **inner order and faith**.

♦ Upper register — Authority

- The king is shown larger than the others
- He represents leadership, protection, and responsibility

👉 Authority was seen as **service to society**, not personal gain.

4 MEANING — WHAT THIS TELLS US ABOUT PEOPLE

The Standard of Ur is a **visual confession of worldview and belief**.

It shows:

- how people understood order in life,
- what they considered important,
- what their society was built on,
- how they connected work, faith, and authority.

⚠️ A key detail:

There are **no images of pagan gods, idols, temple cults, or sacrifices to foreign deities** on the Standard of Ur.

👉 This is **unusual for Mesopotamia**.

5 CONNECTION TO THE BIBLE

The city of Ur was **Abraham's hometown** (see Genesis 11–12).

“Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house...’”

(Genesis 12:1, NKJV)

This means:

- Abraham did not grow up in a primitive environment,
- he knew culture, order, and authority,
- his faith was a **conscious decision**, not an escape from ignorance.

👉 Archaeology shows that **God called Abraham out of the center of civilization, not out of wilderness**.

6 THEOLOGICAL CONCLUSION

The Standard of Ur reveals two main roles of a ruler:

- to protect the people (war),
- to provide stability and life (peace).

The Bible reveals these same qualities in God:

- God is our **Defender**,
- God is our **Provider**,
- God is the **King who cares for His people**.

👉 This prepares the mind to understand the **Kingdom of God**.

7 OTHER DISCOVERIES FROM UR

Archaeology from Ur adds depth to the picture:

- The invention of the wheel — growth in warfare and economy
- Music and lyres — advanced culture
- Rich jewelry — high standard of living
- The Royal Game of Ur — strategy and leisure
- The sculpture “**The Ram in a Thicket**”, discovered by Leonard Woolley

A Foreshadowing of Redemption Before the Law of Moses



The sculpture “**The Ram in a Thicket**”, along with a similar image found on the end panel of the Standard of Ur, reminds us of the biblical account in **Genesis 22:13** — the story of a substitute sacrifice and God’s mercy, long before the crucifixion of Christ.

This image points to a crucial truth: **God does not accept human sacrifice**, even though such practices existed among pagan nations of that time. In the story of Abraham, God clearly shows that **He Himself provides the sacrifice**, and that a person must never sacrifice his children.

In this way, God reveals to Abraham a foundational principle: **the salvation of the soul comes not through human sacrifice, but through God’s provision.**

About two thousand years after Abraham, this principle reaches its ultimate fulfillment at the cross of Calvary, where **God gives His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for the sin of the world.**

It is important to note that the idea of a substitute sacrifice and the rejection of child sacrifice existed **long before Moses wrote the Book of Genesis.**

Archaeological images and cultural patterns suggest that this truth was **passed down orally** and known in certain circles before it was recorded in Scripture.

In this case, archaeology does not replace the Bible.

Instead, it **confirms the ancient depth of biblical revelation**, showing that God was revealing the truth of salvation and His will to humanity long before the Law was given through Moses.

Below is a **clear, meaning-focused English translation**, adapted for **teens and youth**, theologically careful, respectful to Scripture, **not literal**, with Bible quotations aligned to **NKJV style**.

8 PRACTICAL APPLICATION

(How archaeology becomes a mirror for our lives)

1. Everyone has their own “standard”

The Standard of Ur silently shows what mattered most to that family: work, order, authority, and responsibility.

In the same way, our lives speak every day about our values—even when we say nothing.

Bible:

“You will know them by their fruits.” (Matthew 7:16, NKJV)

Application: What does my life say about me—through my choices, priorities, and how I spend my time?

2. Faith is a choice, not just a tradition

Abraham grew up in the advanced culture of Ur. He knew order, religion, and social norms.

Yet he chose to leave—not blindly, but because he heard and trusted God’s voice.

Bible:

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called... and he went out, not knowing where he was going.”

(Hebrews 11:8, NKJV)

Application: Do I believe because it is my family’s tradition, or because I personally know God and trust Him?

3. Authority and influence are responsibility, not privilege

On the Standard of Ur, the king is shown above the people, but not separated from them.

This reflects an understanding of authority as **service**, not personal advantage.

Bible:

“Whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.”

(Mark 10:43, NKJV)

Application: If God gives me influence, do I use it to serve others?

4. Work is part of God’s design

The lower register of the Standard of Ur shows labor as the foundation of life.

The Bible confirms that work was given to humanity **before the Fall**.

Bible:

“Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.”

(Genesis 2:15, NKJV)

Application: Do I see my work as God’s calling, or only as a burden?

5. God forms faith through order, not chaos

The Standard of Ur shows a clear structure of life: **work** → **faith** → **authority**.
God works through meaningful order, not confusion.

Bible:

“For God is not the author of confusion but of peace.”
(1 Corinthians 14:33, NKJV)

Application: Is there order in my spiritual life—or only emotions, chaos, and spontaneity?

Key Thought to Remember

The Standard of Ur reminds us that God speaks not only through the text of Scripture,
but also through history, culture, and human choices—
so that our faith may be **conscious, living, and real**.

9 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did God call Abraham specifically out of Ur?
 2. What values were important to the people who created the Standard of Ur?
 3. What does the “standard” of a modern person look like today?
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10 FINAL THOUGHT

The Standard of Ur shows that God began the story of faith not in the wilderness,
but in the **heart of civilization**—
so that faith would be a **deliberate choice**, not an accident.
