

THE HEBREWS ARE COMING! (AMARNA LETTERS)

An Egyptian woman digging in the mounds of dirt near her home in the village of Amarna came upon lumps of hardened clay that she thought were worthless. It turned out that the small bricks of dried clay were priceless artifacts—diplomatic letters written by Babylonian and Canaanite rulers to their protector, the Egyptian Pharaoh. The letters from Canaan mention attacks from roving bands of outsiders—the *Habiru*. Were these Habiru actually the *Hebrews* under Joshua's leadership who were conquering the land God had promised to Abraham?

Some scholars believe that the four hundred Amarna letters give us exactly that—stunning, confirming evidence of Israel's successful military campaign against the Canaanite cities. Other scholars disagree, claiming that the letters date to the wrong time (1370–1335 BC)—too early for Israel's appearance in Canaan. What is clear is that the presence of nomadic people in Canaan was not unusual and Egypt seemed powerless to help.



▼ **THE AMARNA LETTERS** confirm the Bible's claim that God put great fear in the hearts of the Canaanites for the people of Israel—"our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you" (Joshua 2:11).

▼ **NEFERTITI** was Pharaoh Akhenaten's queen. This stunning limestone bust of the famous queen was found at Amarna. She had six daughters with Akhenaten, two of whom became queens of Egypt.



▼ The tablets found at Amarna were not written in Egyptian hieroglyphics but in Babylonian-style cuneiform writing. No cuneiform tablets had ever been found in Egypt before this!