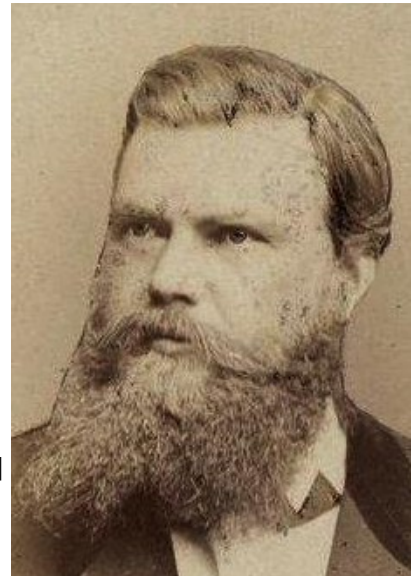


The Land of Ophir?

Have you heard of the Land of Ophir? It is in the Bible. The Bible says there was gold there. Young Karl Mauch (1837-1875), wanted to find Ophir. Karl had an Atlas for Christmas. He looked at the map of Africa. It was mostly blank. No towns. No roads. No one knew what was there! "When I grow up" said Karl, "I will explore Africa."

Karl did not give up his idea. As he grew up he got ready for Africa. He got fit. He learned about languages. He studied medicine. He studied geography. He studied mathematics. He learned about plants and animals. He had to earn his living so he gave lessons to other people. Africa is hot and Karl would have to walk a long way in Africa. He practised. He put on many warm clothes and then he walked long distances. "There will be snakes in Africa," he said. "Perhaps they will get into my tent while I am asleep. I must be ready for that too." So he tried taking snakes to bed with him!



Karl needed money to go to Africa. A map maker gave him some money. Karl's trip would help him make better maps. Karl became a sailor. He sailed to Africa on a German ship.

In Africa he went on foot and by ox-waggon. He kept a diary. He made maps. He saw many places where there was gold. But what about Ophir?

On 5th of September 1871 Karl thought he had found it. He had arrived at the ruins of Great Zim-bab-we. This had once been a city. The tall walls still stood. There were towers. Surely this was the spot!

It was a good guess. But the ruins are not old enough to be Ophir. Karl was right about the gold. Great Zimbabwe had had gold mines. No one had written about the ruins before. It was a great discovery.



There were people living near Great Zimbabwe. They did not know about Jesus. They had no Bibles. Andrew Louw (1862-1956) went to tell them. He was a missionary and he came to Great Zimbabwe about twenty years after Karl. Soon he became very ill. The people had a ruler called a chief. He said to Andrew, “Why does your God make you ill? I will help you. My gods will make you better. Shall we will sacrifice to them?”

Andrew prayed, “Lord, please make me better. Then the African people will understand that you only are the true God.”

God made Andrew better. The people came to listen to him. The chief sent them to hear.

Andrew's wife came to be with him. They learned to write the language of the people. It was the the TjiKalanga language. They taught the people to read. They translated the Bible for the people.¹ Now the people could read God's word themselves.

¹ Information from <https://rff.christians.co.za/the-reformed-church-in-zimbabwe-rcz/> and other sources.