

DO YOU BELIEVE?
A BOOK SERIES FROM RATIO CHRISTI

BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

***DISCOVERING BIBLICAL RELIABILITY
THROUGH ARCHAEOLOGY***

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 **RATIO
CHRISTI**

FAITH & REASON are at odds in our culture. For many, faith has come to mean little more than wishful thinking and blind belief. Such a concept is completely foreign to the pages of Scripture and historical Christianity. As Edward Feser notes, “In short, reason tells us that there is a God and that he has revealed such-and-such a truth; faith is then a matter of believing what reason has shown God to have revealed. In that sense faith is not only not at odds with reason but is grounded in reason.”

WHAT IS RATIO CHRISTI?

Ratio Christi, Latin for “the reason of Christ,” wants to help reverse this trend of anti-intellectual Christianity. We organize apologetics clubs at colleges, universities, and even for high school groups in order to strengthen the faith of Christian students and faculty and challenge the rampant atheism and secularism on most campuses. Our mission is to fill the intellectual gap, to make Christianity something worth thinking about, both personally and in the public square.

RATIO CHRISTI IS HIRING APOLOGISTS.

Ratio Christi isn’t just another apologetics organization. We use our theological training to share the Gospel on college and university campuses across the globe. We reach the people that nobody else can – and we need your help.

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BIBLICAL HISTORY: IS IT TRUE? IS IT ACCURATE?

“Rebellion to Tyrants is Obedience to God.” Those are the words surrounding the scene on a national seal, designed and proposed by Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams a couple of months after the American colonies declared their independence from Great Britain. They clearly believed in and were influenced by the story of the biblical Exodus, enough so that they proposed this national seal depicting Moses and the Israelites on the shore, and pharaoh and his chariots being drowned in the Red Sea, as a symbol of freedom and liberation from tyranny.

But there are also voices, such as Canadian scholar John Van Seters or the American-born, Dutch scholar Thomas Thompson who conclude that Moses himself has about as much historical reality as King Arthur.¹ Seters and Thompson are not alone as countless other biblical scholars, academics, and skeptical Near Eastern archaeologists (often called “biblical minimalists”) are also deeply suspicious about the historical reality of the Exodus and other events in the Old Testament.²

So did the Exodus happen? Is the Biblical story true? Does it really matter anyway? Is it merely a myth invented by the Israelites while they were in Babylonian exile in the 6th century B.C.? Did the biblical Patriarchs exist exactly as we read about them on the pages of the Old Testament? Perhaps a more fundamental and foundational question is, “Can we trust *any* of the stories recorded in the Bible to be faithful historical accounts of what really happened?”



When Professors Are Skeptical of the Bible

When I was an undergraduate student in archaeology years ago, I remember one of my professors chuckling at the idea that anyone *believed* the stories in the Bible — especially

the stories recorded in the Old Testament. I had a crisis of faith. I grew up as a Christian, and I believed the stories in the Bible, but now my professors were telling me that there was little to no archaeological evidence for most Biblical stories. Consider the following passage from Israeli archaeologist Amon Ben Tor, author of *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel* (one of my undergraduate textbooks).

*[An] ...intense urge to prove the Bible cannot affect the pious believer. For such a person, the scriptures contain their own truth and need not be criticized or proven. This need is prevalent, in what must be construed as an irrational manner, among large sections of the secular public, which find it important that the archaeologists prove that all the events in the Bible did indeed occur and that all the figures mentioned and the episodes described are entirely consistent with reality. There is in this demand a violation of archaeological integrity and an attempt to impose upon archaeology unattainable objectives – that is the **proof of faith**.*³

“The *pious* believer?!” “...the Scriptures contain *their own truth*?!” It seems as if Professor Ben Tor believes that great amounts of faith will be enough to overcome the doubts of the truly *genuine* and *pious* believer’s questions on the Bible’s reliability. What was I to do? I could either continue to believe with little or no evidence. I could reject it altogether and walk away from my childhood faith (as many have done, and continue to do!). Or I could carefully investigate the stories of my faith to see if in fact there was any evidence.

Looking back now on this passage from Ben-Tor’s book I can see his radical separation of *faith* and *reason*, as if there were a necessary separation between what the Bible records, and the facts of reality. He thus assumes an implicit *fideism*, the idea that evidence is unnecessary or even harmful to faith. Additionally, Ben Tor also chides those who would desire to see a connection between the events recorded in the Bible with historical *reality*. When Ben-Tor, as well as other archaeologists make statements of skepticism towards the Bible, this is not a conclusion from archaeology or the study of artifacts, rather it is an outworking of an underlying *philosophy* and *worldview* to which they adhere. They are in fact, engaging in philosophy.⁴

The stories I had read about in the Scriptures as a boy were truly epic! I wanted to know, however, if they were actually true. Was it possible for archaeology to prove faith? What is the proper relationship between archaeology and the Bible? How should I (or anyone else for that matter) properly think about these matters? These were some of the questions which pressed hard on my mind.

I scoured the library for answers, and to my delight I discovered scholarly books by archaeologists and historians who resolved many of my questions. I felt a sense of relief for finding answers. As Millar Burrows accurately remarked in his book, *What Mean These Stones?*, “While it is often painful to a devout soul to be disillusioned, the conscientious student of the Bible will be grateful to the archaeologist for getting rid of superstition and

clearing the ground for honest and intelligent investigation.”⁵

Much of the information in this booklet is the product of my own personal journey to discover whether the biblical stories are true, and whether the Bible itself is historically reliable.

To get started, let's lay some groundwork on what archaeology is, and then we'll examine its relationship to the Bible and Christian apologetics. Finally, we will survey some of the historical and archaeological evidence for some the major periods in the Old Testament history.

Archaeology 101

Simply put, archaeology investigates the past through the study of *artifacts* which have been left behind by past human cultures. An artifact is anything created or modified by humans.

Archaeology traces its earliest beginnings to Europe and America in the 18th Century. In 1594 the ruins of the ancient Roman city of Pompeii were discovered in southern Italy, but it wasn't until many years later, in 1709 that excavations began in Pompeii's sister city of Herculaneum. Both cities were violently destroyed by an eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79. The volcanic ash buried three first-century Roman cities: Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Stabiae. These cities were amazingly preserved, including their citizens, houses, public buildings, roads, and amphitheaters, with everything still in them as it was, two-thousand years ago. This discovery brought with it a great treasure trove of historical and archaeological data about the ancient Roman world.

Then, in 1784 American president Thomas Jefferson investigated an Indian Mound in the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia near Charlottesville. In the mound, he discovered the remains of men, women, children, and pottery. He estimated that the mound could have possibly contained the remains of up to one thousand individuals. Such early explorations were the very beginnings of *scientific* archaeology. Before that, archaeology was primarily treasure hunting, grave-robbing, or both.⁶

Archaeology is like history, but is nevertheless distinct from it. Whereas archaeologists study the past through *artifacts*, historians study the past through *written texts, inscriptions, or manuscripts*. There is, of course, crossover between these two disciplines, as archaeologists often discover historical inscriptions which are of great interest to historians.

The Rosetta Stone & Historical Inscriptions

One of the most important historical inscriptions in the history of archaeology was discovered in the late 18th century. In 1799, while Napoleon's army engineers were

reinforcing an ancient Mamluk fort near the town of Rosetta, Egypt, a lieutenant named Pierre-François Bouchard discovered a large slab composed of granodiorite. The slab [or stele] contained three inscriptions (from top to bottom): *hieroglyphics*, *demotic*, and *Greek*. It known today as the Rosetta Stone, currently on display at the British Museum.⁷

The decipherment of the Rosetta Stone in 1822 by Jean-François Champollion was a breakthrough for understanding both ancient Egypt and the historical and cultural background of the biblical Exodus narrative. Prior to the decipherment, sources of Egyptian history were mainly from Greek and Roman writers, as well as the Old Testament (more on this later!).

Also of great historical and archeological interest are the *Lachish Letters*. The Lachish Letters date to around 590 B.C., towards the end of the Old Testament kingdom of Judah. At that time, Lachish (*Tell ed-Duweir*) was a very well-fortified city which guarded Jerusalem's southern territory. The Lachish "letters" are broken potsherds called *ostrakon* with inscriptions on them. The Lachish Letters record the pleas of a Judean military officer calling for aid from the impending invasion of the Babylonian armies which swept through Judea under king Nebuchadnezzar, who eventually razed both cities to the ground (see Jeremiah 34:7 and Jeremiah 52).

Although the disciplines of archaeology and history follow similar paths, archaeologists, as we've stated above, focus on the material and physical remains of human cultures. What makes archaeology scientific are the methods it employs to study these artifacts. Archaeologists don't just randomly dig artifacts from the ground; there is a method to the discipline.⁸

In archaeology, context is critically important. Just as words in a written text should never be taken out of their context, archaeological artifacts must always be understood in light of their archaeological context.

The Beginnings of Biblical Archaeology (1890-1948)

Many historians of archaeology view the year 1890 as a watershed moment in the history of "biblical archaeology." In that year, British archaeologist **Sir William Matthews Flinders Petrie** utilized pottery to date strata (or layers) at a site in Israel called, Tell el-Hesi.⁹ With Petrie's careful use of pottery as a dating tool, the era of *scientific*, biblical archaeology properly began. Debates about exactly *when* to place biblical events in their proper place in historical (or chronological) time also arose as well. Ancient pottery (or *ceramics* as they are now referred to in the scientific literature) has since become central to establishing historical context for archeologists working in the ancient Near East.

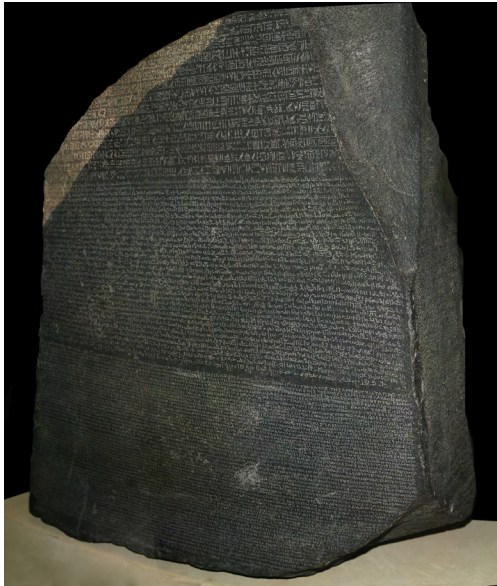


FIGURE 1. *The Rosetta Stone*

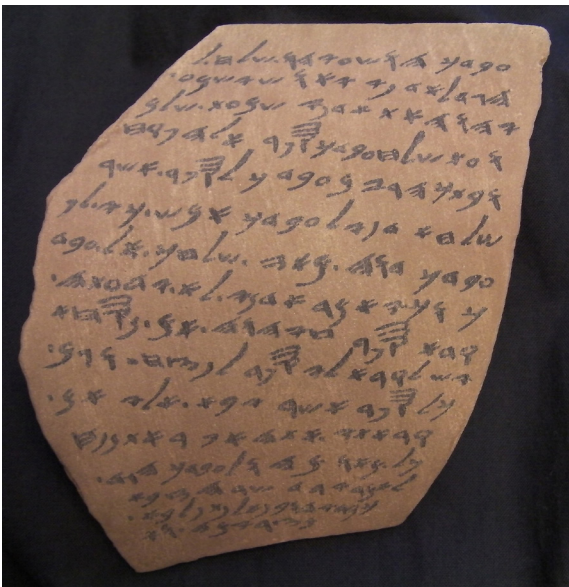


FIGURE 2. *The Lachish Letters*

EARLY DISCOVERIES

When Charles Darwin published his landmark book, *On the Origin of Species* (1859), scientific archaeology was in its infancy. But in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, two significant findings in Asia captivated the world and greatly advanced archeological science. These finds were the discovery of Ancient Mesopotamia and the discovery of the Hittites.

The Discovery of Ancient Mesopotamia

In the mid-nineteenth century archaeologists working in Iraq began to re-discover ancient neo-Assyrian cities mentioned in the Bible. For instance, in 1839 an Englishman named Austen Henry Layard discovered and excavated the ancient cities of Nineveh and Nimrud, located near the modern city of Mosul in Northern Iraq.

Layard is also credited with the first tablet discoveries. He found them in the southwest palace within the royal palace of Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.) in 1849. Three years later, Layard's colleagues Hormuzd Rassam and W.K. Loftus found another library of an additional ten thousand tablets on the opposite side of the site, at the palace of Ashurbanipal (668-627 B.C.).

Most of the tablets were just fragments, broken and incomplete. However, a number of them could be deciphered. Unbeknownst to Layard and his colleagues at the time, the clay tablets contained large portions of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, in addition to the *Enuma Elish* and the *Myth of Adapa* (the Mesopotamian "Adam").

Understanding how to read and decipher the massive cuneiform library did not take place until a crucial discovery was made in Persia (ancient Iran) in the Kermanshah Province, at a place called Mount Behistun. It is known as the "Behistun Inscription."

The Behistun Inscription is a large multilingual inscription located approximately 330 ft. high and carved into a solid rock face during the reign of the Persian king, Darius the Great (550-486 B.C.). The inscription is in three languages: Old Persian, Elamite and Babylonian. The first record of the inscription by a European was in 1598, by an Englishman, named Robert Sherley. But it wasn't until 1821 that an officer with the East India

Company, named Sir Henry Rawlinson, began to study the inscription in earnest. Rawlinson, along with several others, (Edward Hincks, Julius Oppert and William Henry Fox), eventually and successfully deciphered the text and inscription.

An assistant of Rawlinson's, George Smith, was the first scholar to read the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. What made him take particular interest in it, is what he discovered in the eleventh section of Tablet XI — a flood story with very clear parallels to the flood story recorded in the Bible, in Genesis 6-10. In 1870 Smith published the first modern translation of the great Epic of Gilgamesh.

The Discovery of the Hittites

In 1906, near the bend of the Halys River located near the modern Turkish village of Boğazkale, German professor and Assyriologist, Hugo Winckler started full scale excavations of an unknown empire. After several years of digging, Winckler eventually unearthed an entire city including a massive library containing 10,000 clay tablets. The tablets were written Akkadian and Sumerian hieroglyphics, as well as another pictographic script unknown to scholars. We now know that the unknown language inscribed on the tablets was ancient Hittite.

The Hittites are mentioned over sixty times in the Old Testament. 2 Samuel 11 states that Bathsheba's husband, Uriah was a Hittite. Additional references to the Hittites include, Genesis 26:34, Joshua 1:4, 1 Kings 10:29 and 1 Kings 11:1 as well as many others. The common Hebrew word to denote the Hittites *hittî* is based on the name Heth (Genesis 10:15; 1 Chronicles 1:13).

Abraham encountered the Hittites at Hebron (Gen. 23:3-20); Esau married three Hittite women (Gen. 26:34; 36:2-5). The Hittites are also included in the standard list of seven people groups in Palestine (Deuteronomy. 7:1) and subsequently also one of the groups Israel fails to drive out of the land when they entered it (Judges 3:5).

Up until the early 20th century the only known historical reference to a civilization called the Hittites was in the Bible (in the Old Testament). Archaeology was only a burgeoning science in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and much was still unknown about the archaeological remains of the material culture of the ancient world. Even in these early stages, however, the new science of archaeology was proving to be a valuable ally for understanding and affirming the biblical text.

Biblical Archaeology & the Albright-Wright School

The mid-twentieth century (1925-1948) saw the high watermark of biblical archaeology in the work of the American archaeologist William Foxwell Albright and George Ernest Wright. Albright, Wright, and others attempted to synthesize the general

chronology of the Old Testament with the linguistic, archaeological & cultural background of the Ancient Near East.¹⁰ The Albright-Wright school of thought greatly influenced a generation of scholars and archaeologists, including the late Frank Moore Cross of Harvard University, Lawrence Stager, also of Harvard; paleographer, P. Kyle McCarter at Johns Hopkins, William G. Dever at the University of Arizona, Bruce K. Waltke of Regent College and Dallas Theological Seminary, and Joe D. Seger at Mississippi State University (who I personally studied under as an undergraduate archaeology student), as well as countless others.

The “Albright-Wright school” successfully tempered skepticism towards the historicity of the biblical text. Yet, as it gradually fell out of fashion, new questions arose over the historicity of key Old Testament events – namely the historical reality of the Exodus and Conquest. This brings us to a vitally important and hotly debated subject in biblical archaeology: chronology. When did the biblical events happen?

When Did It Happen?

In 2001 archaeologist William G. Dever published a book titled, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It?* In the book he explores whether history and archaeology can tell us anything about King David and his United Kingdom of Israel. When the book was written, King David’s existence was being highly questioned in some sectors of biblical scholarship. Dever defended David’s existence but stopped short of affirming the historicity of the Exodus, Moses, and the biblical Patriarchs.

As the title of Dever’s book indicates, timing and chronology are at the heart of the contemporary debate on whether archaeology and history can affirm biblical records. What did the biblical writers know, and when did they know it? When did the events recorded in the Bible happen, if they happened at all?

It is true that many critical ancient Near Eastern archaeologists don’t see evidence of the historical reliability of the Bible, but I would argue that their arguments assume a mistaken chronology; they place biblical events in the wrong historical period. These assumptions stem in part from presuppositions they have about the exact nature of the biblical text, as well as an underlying skepticism towards supernaturalism and miracles.

To illustrate the significance of this error, think back to the 1981 movie *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, in which the fictional character Indiana Jones has located where he believes the famous Ark of the Covenant is buried. The Nazis are also looking for the lost Ark, but Indy quickly discovers that the Nazis are digging in the wrong place. The mistake is similar with many skeptical, and critical archaeologists today. But instead of looking for evidence in the wrong *place*, they are placing biblical events in the wrong chronological time frame, and unsurprisingly they are not finding evidence of these events within that time frame.

Chronology is critically important in aligning recorded events to their corresponding

date in time and in history. To be sure, this is no easy task for any ancient historian. It is a point of much heated debate, not only among biblical historians but among secular historians as well. Therefore, one of the goals of the biblical archaeologist is to investigate exactly how biblical history correlates with the history of the other nations it encounters. Biblical chronology continues to be a source of much debate today among biblical scholars.

Archaeologists working in the ancient Near East today have a well-established archaeological periodization which is divided by different archaeological “ages” distinguished by the various metals or materials primarily used in those periods. For example, a standard archaeological periodization can be found in, Amihai Mazar’s, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000-586 BCE* (1990).¹¹

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| NEOLITHIC PERIOD | 8500 - 4300 B.C. |
| CHALCOLITHIC PERIOD | 4300 - 3300 B.C. |
| EARLY BRONZE AGE | 3300 - 2300 B.C. |
| EB IV – MB I | 2300 - 2000 B.C. |
| MIDDLE BRONZE AGE II | 2000 - 1550 B.C. |
| LATE BRONZE AGE | 1550 - 1200 B.C. |
| IRON AGE I | 1200 - 1000 B.C. |
| IRON AGE II | 1000 - 586 B.C. |

One of the difficulties in accurately reconstructing biblical chronology is that cultures mentioned in the Bible (such as the Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, etc...) had different ways of reckoning time and history. When an archaeologist digs up a pottery fragment there is no universal calendar date inscribed on it.

Dr. Edwin R. Thiele was one of the first scholars in the twentieth century to recognize the importance of chronology for understanding the Old Testament. In 1951 he published a ground-breaking book titled, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*. Here, he set out to accurately reconcile the reigns of the Old Testament Hebrew kings with neighboring Near Eastern cultures. In the opening chapter Dr. Thiele’s opening words are worth pondering. He writes:

Chronology is the backbone of history. Absolute chronology is the fixed central core around which the events of the nation must be correctly grouped before they may assume their exact positions in history and before their mutual relationships may be properly understood. Without exact chronology there can be no exact history. Until a correct chronology of a nation has been established, the events of that nation cannot be correctly integrated into the events of neighboring states. If history is to be a true

*and exact science, then it is of fundamental importance to construct a sound chronological framework about which may be fitted the events of states and the international world.*¹²

Chronology is essential for understanding the Bible in its original historical context, in addition to its alignment with the cultures of the ancient Near East. Because of the influence of the *Documentary Hypothesis* by German scholar, Julius Welhausen in the 19th Century, most Old Testament scholars today date the composition of the Pentateuch to around the time of the Babylonian exile (circa 586 B.C.).¹³ If this dating is correct, then the events recorded in it must be ahistorical.¹⁴ This is one of the reasons why chronology is vitally important to biblical archaeology and Christian apologetics.

Following in the footsteps of Thiele's work on biblical chronology, the late Dr. Jack Finegan has written a comprehensive, and well documented book on chronology in the ancient world, including some of the chronological anomalies found in the Bible. Finegan also offers scholarly solutions and synchronisms to most of the major issues which arise among critical scholars.¹⁵

The most recent work on biblical chronology is the work of Andrew E. Steinmann, who is currently Hebrew professor at Concordia University in Chicago, and independent scholar, and biblical chronologist, Rodger Young. Steinmann's book, *From Abraham to Paul: A Biblical Chronology* (2011) follows and expands upon the work of Thiele and Finegan. The core idea of Thiele, Finegan, Young, and Steinmann is that the Bible itself gives us *internal* clues on exactly *how* to date certain events if we carefully look for them in the text. On many occasions the biblical writers give exact historical and chronological markers which can help the biblical historian and/or archaeologist locate certain events in history, as well as the corresponding archaeological evidence for or against them.

In a review of Steinmann's book, *From Abraham to Paul*, Rodger Young states that, "The Bible doesn't just 'contain' chronological markers. It *abounds* in them. This is unlike the sacred writings of most other religions."¹⁶ Furthermore, he elaborates:

*There are 125 exact chronological markers for the 410 years from the first year of Solomon to the release of Jehoiachin from prison, plus numerous chronological clues of a more general nature. The precise markers include lengths of reign for the various monarchs, cross-synchronizations between the two Hebrew kingdoms, and year-synchronisms to Assyrian and Babylonian kings whose times of reign can be calculated from extra-biblical sources.*¹⁷

The Bible is certainly *full* of chronological markers which connect and pinpoint certain events in the Bible with other events in ancient history. Luke's account of the birth of Christ (Luke 2:1-3) is an excellent example of a New Testament biblical writer providing *chronological* clues which can be investigated:

*In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.*¹⁸

Chronology & the Exodus

As mentioned above, a central debate among biblical archaeologists and Christian apologists is the dating of the biblical Exodus. In its excellent “Counterpoints” series Zondervan recently published a book (2021) on the dating of the Exodus with six highly competent biblical scholars (most of which are practicing archaeologists) as contributors.¹⁹ One of the main points of contention in the book centers around the interpretation of a key Old Testament passage relating to the Exodus.

In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites came out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the Lord.

1 KINGS 6:1

As we have pointed out above, the Bible gives us specific clues on how to reconcile biblical history with ancient history. 1 Kings 6:1 is another example. The overarching question is whether we should take the numbers in 1 Kings 6:1 *literally*, or *figuratively* in attempting to pinpoint the date the biblical Exodus. Most of the contributors are in agreement on the date when Solomon laid the foundation of the temple in Jerusalem – 966 or 967 B.C.. The point of dispute, however, is whether the writer of 1 Kings 6:1 intended the 480 years to be a *literal* number, or whether it should be read and understood as a *figurative*, or perhaps ancient *convention* of time-reckoning?

The two major views on the Exodus date fall on one side or the other on the interpretation of this text. They are known respectively as the “Early Date (15th Century)” – 1446 B.C., defended by archaeologist, Dr. Scott Stripling, and the “Late Date (13th Century) – ca.1270-1240 B.C., presented by Egyptologist, Dr. James Hoffmeier.²⁰ Of course, 1 Kings 6:1 is not the only diagnostic tool for determining *when* the Exodus occurred. Egyptian and Palestinian history, culture, geography, linguistics, archaeology, and ceramics also figure largely into the debate as well. As to my own personal views on Exodus date, and the subsequent archaeological evidence, I personally hold to the early dating (15th Century, 1446 B.C.) scheme for biblical, historical as well archaeological reasons.²¹

HOW DO WE KNOW THE PAST? A PRIMER ON PRIMARY SOURCES

The question of *how* we know the past is also critically important when it comes to understanding how archaeology is related to Scripture. The science of history-writing and historical knowledge falls under the disciplines of *historiography* and the *philosophy of history*. *Historiography* has to do with how history was written, as well as questions of historical objectivity, and historical knowledge. The *philosophy of history* is a philosophical (and/or theological) analysis of history – and whether there is any *meaning* in history.

Essentially, historical knowledge of the past stems from three primary sources:

1. Eyewitnesses
2. Historical Records
3. Archaeological Evidence

Knowledge of historical events is mediated through these three primary sources. Without *eyewitnesses*, a knowledge of critical details of historical events would never be known, and in some cases the events themselves would not be known. *Historical records* and/or inscriptions, are the written records of the eyewitnesses (or claimed eyewitnesses). There is much debate among scholars as to the reliability of historical sources and if historical objectivity is possible. *Archaeology* is a study of the artifacts and physical remains of past human cultures. Archaeology can provide vitally important historical information not found in the historical record, and can also verify (or, establish levels of probability) certain events recorded in historical texts and inscriptions.

Three Philosophical Views of Primary Sources

1. **Historical Positivism** – Never go beyond what the primary sources tell us.
2. **The New History** (or the **New Archaeology**) – Primary sources can be supplemented with comparative data drawn from other disciplines such as sociology,

anthropology, linguistics, etc.

3. Post-Modernism – Under the Post-Modern view there is a school of thought in Near Eastern archaeology which goes by the name, the **Copenhagen School of Biblical Interpretation** – also called, **Biblical Minimalism**.²²

While there is some value to the top two views (1 and 2) – each have their *pros* and *cons* – the third view is indefensible and contradictory.

Under the Post-Modern view there is a school of thought in archaeology which goes by the name the **Copenhagen School of Biblical Interpretation**, also been labeled **Biblical Minimalism**.

In his book, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, Egyptologist Kenneth Kitchen outlines the essential ideas of the **Copenhagen School** when it comes to the Biblical text.

1. The author's intention is an illusion created by readers.
2. The text is an interpretable entity independent of its author.
3. Language is infinitely unstable, and meaning always deferrable.
4. One must approach... [texts] with a hostile suspicion, against the grain, denying integrity where possible in favor of dissonance and a search for inner contradiction.
5. All texts are incomplete, as language is unbounded.
6. Structure is more important than context.²³

The basic problem with the **Copenhagen School** is that it is self-contradictory. All three scholars of the Copenhagen School have written extensively on the Copenhagen view, yet, if their own methodology is applied to their own texts we could not trust anything they have written.

If an author's intention is an *illusion*, then why should anyone trust anything they write? If the text is an *interpretable entity*, independent of its author, then the postmodernists texts would be subject to this principle and could have no objective meaning. If language is *infinitely unstable*, then from the moment (anything) is written, the objective meaning will be unattainable.

On the contrary, primary sources – such as the Biblical text – are and will continue to be a valuable source of historical data. There have been thousands of archaeological discoveries which reveal this reality.

For the remainder of this booklet, we will list a few important (and controversial) archaeological discoveries as they relate to the Bible – an archaeological “greatest hits.” It should be noted that not every single story, person, or event has been discovered in the archaeological record. As archaeological research continues to advance, however, new discoveries are made every year continues to confirm the historical reliability of the biblical text.

The Tower of Babel & The Ziggurat and Eridu

The ruins of the city of **Eridu** in southeastern Iraq are among the most fascinating in the entire ancient Near East. Considered to be the oldest city in history, it was built on virgin sand with no previous occupational levels. Considered to be the oldest city in history, **Eridu** It was built on virgin sand with no previous occupants. According to Sumerian mythology, **Eridu's** descendants were survivors of a “great flood.” The earliest city stratum dates to the **Ubaid Period** (around 4300-3500 B.C.).

Most people are familiar with the Biblical story of the **Tower of Babel** (Gen. 11:1-9). The Bible story records how God *confounded* and *confused* the languages of the earliest city dwellers who lived after the great flood of Noah, because of their spiritual hubris. The Hebrew word **Babel** appropriately means “to confuse.”

The earliest structures which can rightfully be designated as “towers” in the ancient world were **ziggurats** (or “stepped-style pyramids”). Ziggurats are older than the great pyramids of Egypt and predate them by centuries. Some scholars believe that ziggurats are prototypes (in design) of the stepped pyramids of Egypt, although though the usage and function of the two structures may have been different.

Eridu is the location of the first and oldest ziggurat. Many scholars have thought that the biblical tower of Babel must have been in ancient Babylon, but the historical and archaeological evidence points to the older and more ancient city of **Eridu** as the location of the original “tower of Babel.”

The subject of the exact function and purpose of ziggurats in southeastern Mesopotamia is fascinating and could be an entire book by itself. The biblical author is more concerned, however, with the reason that God confused the languages and scattered those who desired to “. . . build city with a tower that reached into the heavens” (Gen. 11:4).

The confusion of languages at Babel (Gen. 11) occurred when a large number of Noah's descendants moved towards *urbanization* (living in cities). Currently, there are approximately seven to eight ancient sites with the name “Babel” in Mesopotamia (Iraq), but only one of these locations (**Eridu**) meets all the biblical criteria of the site where a tower was built.

Centered at **Eridu** there was a rapid *expansion* and *dispersal* of people to the north, south, east, and west as far as Egypt – throughout Anatolia (Turkey), and well into the Levant (Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan). Archaeologists call this massive migration, the “**Late Uruk Expansion**.”²⁴ Archaeological and material culture attest to this expansion, including diagnostic artifacts such as *beveled rim bowls* (created from a wooden mold, mass-produced, sun-dried, easy to manufacture), *large spouted jars* (used for beer), and *administrative* (pictographic) *tablets* for accounting.

Eridu was abandoned in the **Late Uruk period** and not occupied for several hundred years afterwards. Under the **Uruk Expansion** sites are established on virgin soil, there are attacks on the existing communities, and we see the world's first “segregated communities.”²⁵ This is presumably because the migrating peoples could not speak the same



FIGURE 3. *The city of Eridu in southeastern Iraq. Many archaeological, geographical, cultural, and historical factors point to the ziggurat at Eridu as the original “tower of Babel” recorded in Genesis 11.*

language. Ancient Sumerian sources call **Eridu** “Babel.” At **Eridu** there is a large temple complex which existed in eighteen occupational phases. Each phase grew in both size and complexity. Next to the temple complex there existed a large platform which was believed to be the foundation of a ziggurat – however, the entire site was abandoned right at the time of the **Uruk Expansion**. It wasn’t until hundreds of years later during the **Third Dynasty of Ur (Ur III)** until the ziggurat was completed by the reformer king, **Ur-Nammu** at the beginning of the Ur III period. The very first pyramids in Egypt were called *mastabas* which eventually developed into “stepped pyramids.” These looked nearly identical to the ziggurat in Mesopotamia. Archaeological, geographical, cultural, and historical factors all converge, and point to the ziggurat at **Eridu** as the original “tower of Babel” recorded in Genesis 11.

The Exodus

HARDENING OF THE PHARAOH’S HEART

The biblical episode of the hardening of pharaoh’s heart (Exodus 7-12) as well as the polemical nature of the recorded plagues in these passages indicate eyewitness insights into the culture of ancient Egypt (see, Acts 7:22). This historical confirmation of Scripture could not be known without a knowledge of hieroglyphics which came from the Rosetta Stone.²⁶

Cosmic Order in Ancient Egypt

Exodus 7-12 outlines ten plagues through which God judged Egypt and the Pharaoh. In ancient Egyptian cosmology there was a vitally important principle that permeated all of reality – the principle was embodied in the Egyptian word **Ma’at**.²⁷ It roughly translates as “cosmic order,” “doing what is right,” or “truth,” but it also connotes other related ideas. As John Currid notes, “Ma’at was the cosmic force of harmony, order, stability and security. It may simply be defined as universal order” [9]. It was the divine duty of the Pharaoh to uphold and keep **ma’at** (harmony, order, and life) in the land of Egypt. The direct opposite of **ma’at** was chaos and disorder. The ten plagues caused by God directly undermined not only the authority and divinity Pharaoh himself, but also the Egyptian gods whom the pharaoh represented. In the biblical stories, Yahweh is the supreme ruler (the one true God), and in complete control, not pharaoh or the Egyptian gods. The Exodus narrative is thus a grand polemic against Egypt, against the pharaoh, and against Egypt’s gods.²⁸ Once again, this historical illumination and insight into the biblical text would not be possible without the translation of hieroglyphics from the Rosetta Stone.

The Importance of the Heart

Related to the concept of **Ma’at** is the concept of the *heart* (or **jib**). Many ancient Egyptian texts indicate the vital importance of the heart (**jib**) in Egyptian life and especially in the afterlife. The heart was thought to be the true spiritual center of the person and

became very important in determining what would happen to the deceased in the afterlife.

In the **Papyrus of Ani** (provenance unknown), we get a glimpse into what would happen when the heart was examined in the afterlife. In the scene [see the image on the opposite page] Ani can be seen standing next to the Egyptian god Anubis with his heart in a scale balance on one side, and the hieroglyphic feather representing (**Ma'at**) or truth and righteousness on the other side. Ideally the heart would be balanced with the feather of truth and the Pharaoh would enjoy a happy and joyful afterlife. If the heart was too hardened and/or heavy and outweighed the feather, it would be consumed by **Amemit** (representing the crocodile headed creature to the right).

Furthermore, one of the most important religious documents in ancient Egypt, the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, outlines spells and rituals to keep the heart “soft” and “light” so that the deceased would enter the afterlife in good standing.

Throughout Egypt archaeologists have discovered thousands of amulets, necklaces and inscriptions connected to keeping the heart (**jib**) pure and undefiled. Both heart and scarab amulets, have been found extensively on mummies throughout tombs in Egypt. The amulets were discovered on the bodies of the mummies themselves or enfolded in the linen wrappings covering the heart to “protect it” in the afterlife.



FIGURE 4. *The Papyrus of Ani which shows Anubis weighing a heart to determine if the heart was balanced with Ma'at.*

Pharaoh's heart is mentioned at least ten times in the Plague Narratives in Exodus 7-11, indicating the author's (i.e. Moses') intimate cultural familiarity of the importance of the heart (and ma'at) in Egyptian culture. This indirect and internal textual evidence argues that the events recorded in the book of Exodus was written by someone who had a deep understanding and familiarity with Egyptian culture (Moses).



FIGURE 5. *A Scarab Heart Amulet used to protect the "jib" in the afterlife.*



FIGURE 6. *A Heart Amulet which was also used to protect the "jib" in the afterlife.*

SERÂBÎT EL-KHADÎM & THE SINAI INSCRIPTIONS

One of the more remarkable and controversial discoveries related to the historical Exodus comes from a recent publication (2016), *The World's First Alphabet: Hebrew as the Language of the Proto-Consonantal Script*, by paleographer and biblical scholar, Dr. Douglas Petrovich.²⁹ In his book Petrovich states that he has translated ancient inscriptions from the Sinai Peninsula (known as the Proto-Sinaitic Inscriptions) at the ancient turquoise mine of Serâbît el Khadîm, as well as others discovered at **Wadi el-Hôl**. In doing so, he discovered the names of Moses and Manesseh, as well as several other Old Testament biblical figures. The dates of the inscriptions range between 1850-1446 B.C.. According to Petrovich, the ancient Israelites worked in these turquoise mines during the Israelite sojourn and inscribed stele (large stone slabs) with a very early proto-consonantal Hebrew language, likely invented or developed under Joseph, or one of his relatives.³⁰ The implications for Old Testament history are tremendous. If Petrovich's translations are reliable,



“Our bound servitude had lingered· Moses then provoked astonishment· It is a year of astonishment because of the Lady”

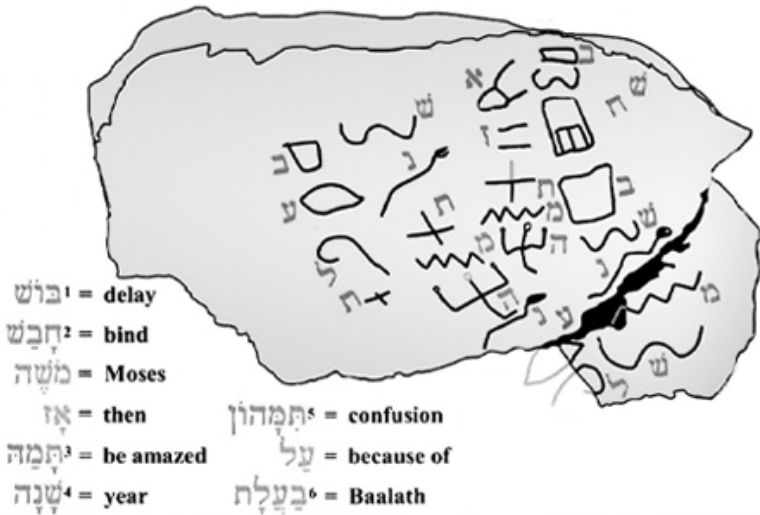


FIGURE 7. *The Sinai Inscriptions which contain the names of Moses and Manesseh as well as other Old Testament figures.*

then they argue strongly for a 15th Century Exodus date, thus confirming the reliability of the Old Testament accounts of both the Hebrew sojourn into Egypt under Joseph and the historical Exodus under the leadership of Moses. Unfortunately, Petrovich's thesis has not been widely accepted outside evangelical circles for a variety of reasons. Two new inscriptions recently discovered in Israel, however, may provide additional support for Petrovich's thesis – one is from the ancient site of Lachish, and the other one was recently discovered on Mt. Ebal in ancient Samaria.

Lachish Milk Bowl Ostracon

In 2018 archaeologists from the Austrian Archaeological Institute discovered an inscription at the ancient site of Lachish (Joshua 10:31-33) on a broken piece of pottery with writing on it which archaeologists call an ostracon. Ostracon (ostraca – plural) are valuable sources of historical and archaeological information (see **Goliath of Gath Ostraca** in the following pages). Because of the archaeological context the ostracon excavated at Tel-Lachish dates to the 15th Century B.C., and very likely contains what could be one of the earliest Hebrew inscriptions in Israel. According to Petrovich, "The letters on the LMBO are direct descendants of this [Proto-Consonantal - Hebrew] alphabet. The presence of the LMBO [Lachish Milk Bowl Ostracon] in Canaan at the end of the 15th century BC is one more problematic find for the late exodus view (ca. 1260 BC) and one more feather in the cap for the early exodus view (1446 BC)."³¹

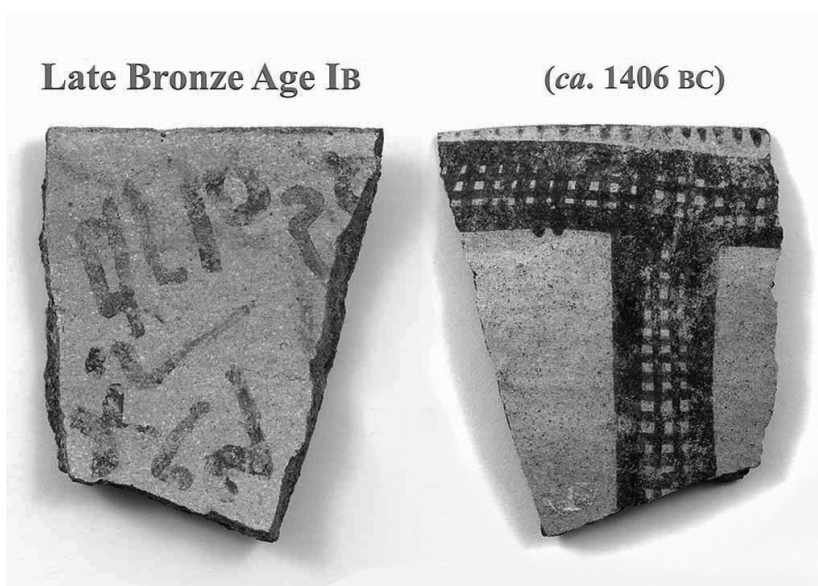


FIGURE 8. *The Lachish Milk Bowl Ostracon which provides more evidence to suggest that Exodus occurred earlier than previously thought.*

Mt. Ebal Curse Tablet Inscription

*“And it shall come to pass, when the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt set the blessing upon mount Gerizim, **and the curse upon mount Ebal.**” ... “Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord, the God of Israel in mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded...”*

DEUTERONOMY 11:29; JOSHUA 8:30-31

In addition to the Lachish Milk Bowl Ostrakon (LMBO) above, perhaps one of the most interesting and potentially biblically significant discoveries in decades is the discovery of an ancient inscription on Mt. Ebal located in ancient Samaria (in the West Bank in Israel). In 2019 a small lead tablet was recovered from a previous excavation on the biblically significant site of Mt. Ebal, located in ancient Samaria near the ancient site of Shechem (Tel Balata). In 2019 archaeologist, Dr. Scott Stripling took a small team to the West Bank (Israel) near Shechem (modern day Nablus) on Mt. Ebal overlooking the ancient site. In the 1980’s Israeli archaeologist, Adam Zertal excavated a rectangular shaped altar which dated to circa 1250 B.C.. Underneath the rectangular altar Zertal discovered a circular altar (Locus 4, Stratum II) which can be dated to circa 1406 B.C.. This circular altar excavated by Zertal could very well be the very altar erected by Joshua after his victory over Ai which is recorded in Joshua 8. It was in the debris (or dump pile) of Zertal’s early excavations that Stripling and his team discovered the lead curse tablet inscription via wet sifting. What the team discovered was a small lead tablet (a defixio or “curse tablet”) with what could likely be the oldest Hebrew inscription ever found in Israel, and the oldest name of Yahweh discovered to date (circa 15th Century B.C.). The inscription can only be



FIGURE 9. *This tablet from Mt. Ebal near Shechem lends credence to the theory that some of the books of the Hebrew Bible were written down earlier than originally thought.*

viewed via X-Ray tomography (a high-tech imaging process used by archaeologists and paleographers). The inscription is a very early “Hebrew-like” writing in the form of a chiasm (a parallelism) which says:

Cursed, cursed, cursed—cursed by the God Yhw. You will die cursed. Cursed you will surely die. Cursed by Yhw—cursed, cursed, cursed.

The project’s epigraphers, are Professor Gershon Galil of the University of Haifa and Pieter van der Veen of Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz.

The inscription could directly link to the covenant renewal ceremony on Mt. Ebal, described in Deuteronomy 27 and Joshua 8. Moreover, the team claims the tablet is evidence that certain books of the Hebrew Bible could have been written down hundreds of years earlier than most biblical scholars previously thought.³² To date, peer review publication of the discovery is forthcoming, but circumstantial, historical and biblical evidence of the discovery is very promising.

Archaeological Evidence for King David & His Time

As was mentioned above, biblical minimalists from the Copenhagen School were highly skeptical of the historical reliability of the Old Testament, especially the existence of King David mentioned in the Old Testament historical books. In 1993 an archaeological discovery in northern Israel greatly tempered this skepticism.

THE TEL-DAN INSCRIPTION

One of the first historical inscriptions referencing the Old Testament king David was discovered in 1993 in Northern Israel by archaeologist, Aviram Biram. The inscription dates from the 9th Century BC and is from an Aramean King who boasts that he defeated his two southern neighbors, “the house of Israel,” and “the house of David.” The Aramaic term used is *bytdwd* (“beth-David” or “house of David”).



FIGURE 10. *The Tel-Dan Inscription which provides evidence of the historical reality of King David and the house of Israel.*

THE GOLIATH OF GATH OSTRACA & THE CITY OF TWO GATES

One of the most popular stories from the Old Testament is the epic battle between David son of Jesse, and Goliath of Gath – the huge warrior of the Philistine army (1 Samuel 17:4). Archaeologist Scott Stripling writes that, “In 2005 an inscription dating to around 1000 B.C. was unearthed at Tell es-Safi [ancient Gath]. The inscription may mention the name of Goliath from the monumental battle of David and Goliath.”³³ The inscription was written in Semitic letters on a broken piece of pottery (ostraca), and was discovered at Tell es-Safi, the ancient site of Gath overlooking the Valley of Elah – the place where the confrontation between David and Goliath took place. Another very important site near the Valley of Elah associated with the David and Goliath episode is Khirbet Qeiafa. The site is mentioned in 1 Samuel 17:52, and has been recently identified by Israeli archaeologist Josef Garfinkel as a city with “two gates” Sha’arayim just north of the Valley of Elah, associated with the confrontation between David and Goliath of Gath.³⁴



FIGURE 11. *This piece of pottery from the Valley of Elah where David fought Goliath may mention the name "Goliath."*

The Book of Isaiah

Of all the Old Testament books, the book of the prophet Isaiah is perhaps one of the most well attested books archaeologically and historically.³⁵ In 2009 Israeli archaeologist Eliat Mazar discovered two clay seals located approximately two meters apart in the Ophel excavations in the old city of Jerusalem. One contained the name of the Judean king, Hezekiah, and on the other, Isaiah the prophet (Isaiah “nvy” – an abbreviation of the Hebrew word “nvy” *Nevaim prophet*).³⁶

THE NEO-ASSYRIAN SEIGE OF JERUSALEM

In the early 8th Century BC, the Judean King Hezekiah received word that Jerusalem would be invaded and besieged by the Assyrian war machine led by King Sennacherib. The event is recorded in the Old Testament books of Isaiah 33 and 36, 2 Kings 18:17, 2 Chronicles 32:9-10. and is also mentioned by the Greek historian Herodotus, although he does not mention Judah. Hezekiah and his military advisors were aware of the brutality and the virtually unstoppable siege warfare of the Assyrian army, so he prepared Jerusalem for the coming onslaught by creating a tunnel to supply water for the city. It was a given that Sennacherib would surely try to cut off the water supply in his siege of Jerusalem. Hezekiah also broadened the defensive walls around Jerusalem attempting to make it more defensible during the time of the siege.

Hezekiah’s Tunnel (Inscription) – 2 Chronicles 32 & 2 Kings 20:20

Hezekiah’s tunnel is also called the Siloam tunnel because it linked to the Gihon Spring and the Pool of Siloam. Both were sources of underground water in Jerusalem which is built on karst topography (water permeable limestone). In 1871 the tunnel was identified by British explorer Sir Charles Warren as possibly being the one dug by King Hezekiah. The inscription is now in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum in Turkey.

Hezekiah’s Broad Wall (Jerusalem) – Nehemiah 3:8 & Isaiah 22:9-10

The broad wall (as it is called) in Jerusalem was discovered by Israeli archaeologist Nahman Avigad in the 1970s. It is a massive structure and indicates the extreme measures that King Hezekiah went to prepare for Sennacherib’s invasion. The wall is 23 ft. thick, 213 ft. long, and over 10 ft. high. The broad wall was built specifically to repel the siege machines of the neo-Assyrian armies of Sennacherib.

The Oriental Institute Prism – Isaiah 33 & 36, 2 Chronicles 32, 2 Kings 19

In the 8th Century B.C., the Assyrian king Sennacherib invaded Samaria (Northern Israel) with the full intentions on invading and subduing the kingdoms of the southern part of Israel. His invasion culminated with the siege of Jerusalem, which was the capital city when Hezekiah ruled as king of Southern Israel. The Biblical account of the event is recorded in several Old Testament passages – **Isaiah 33 and 36, 2 Chronicles 32:9.**

In the 19th Century additional evidence was discovered which affirms this Biblical account. In **2 Kings 19:15-19** the Bible records that King Hezekiah prayed to God that



FIGURE 12. *This seal discovered in the old city of Jerusalem contains the name of the Judean king, Hezekiah.*

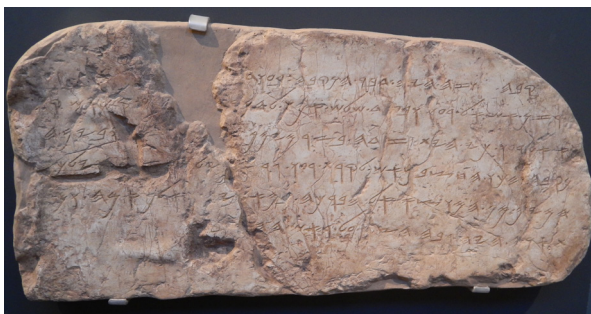


FIGURE 13. *This inscription led British explorer Sir Charles Warren to believe that the tunnel in Jerusalem linking the Gihon Spring to the Pool of Siloam was built by King Hezekiah.*



FIGURE 14. *Discovered in the 1970s, this wall is evidence of the lengths King Hezekiah went to protect Jerusalem from the armies of Sennacherib.*

He would protect Jerusalem from destruction. In **verses 32-34** God spoke through the prophet Isaiah and stated that Sennacherib and his army would not shoot one arrow into the city, nor would a shield be raised against it (v. 32).

Assyrian history and archaeology bear this record to be true. Sennacherib did not fire one arrow into Jerusalem nor did he besiege it. In 1830 a hexagonal shaped prism was discovered by Colonel Robert Taylor. After this find, two other prisms were discovered which contained nearly identical information with only slight variations: the **Oriental Institute Prism** (University of Chicago) and the **Jerusalem Prism**. The **Taylor Prism** (British Museum) contains six paragraphs written in Akkadian cuneiform. On the prism, Sennacherib's scribes state the following of King Hezekiah:

As for the king of Judah, Hezekiah, who had not submitted to my authority, I besieged and captured forty-six of his fortified cities, along with many smaller towns, taken in battle with my battering rams. ... I took as plunder 200, 150 people, both small and great, male and female, along with a great number of animals including horses, mules, donkeys, camels, oxen, and sheep. As for Hezekiah, I shut him up like a caged bird in his royal city of Jerusalem.

Ancient Babylon & Nebuchadnezzar

The Old Testament books of Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel record that Judah was carried off into captivity by the neo-Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar. Historical evidence affirms that there were three such deportations: 597 B.C., 586/7 B.C. and 581 B.C.. Nebuchadnezzar took many Jewish youths as well as important government officials. Three significant captives were **Daniel, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel**.

Since the 19th Century our understanding of the Neo-Babylonian empire has grown exponentially. One of the most amazing discoveries was the grand entrance into the ancient city of Babylon, called the **Ishtar Gate**. When Nebuchadnezzar rose to power he ordered the gate, which was in disrepair, to be rebuilt and enhanced to its former glory.

It is highly probable that Jewish exiles, and officials would have walked by these very walls as they were war trophies of Nebuchadnezzar. The Processional Way and Ishtar Gate would have been the likely route Jewish captives would have entered the city. Interestingly, the lion – a mythical symbol of Babylon, associated with the goddess Ishtar, would be made impotent by the God of Daniel as he was cast into the lion's den (see, Daniel 6).



FIGURE 15. *The Oriental Institute Prism is one of three records of Sennacherib's dealings with King Hezekiah that supports the Biblical account found in 2 Kings.*



FIGURE 16. *The lion, associated with the Babylonian goddess Ishtar, would have been on the Ishtar Gate that the Jewish exiles would have passed through.*

ARCHAEOLOGY & FAITH

There is a general understanding among professional archaeologists that “nothing is one hundred percent certain” when it comes to archaeological discoveries. This certainly doesn’t mean, however, that our knowledge of the past is elusive or unattainable, but rather that it is graded on a scale of probability. Archaeological artifacts and discoveries present a *cumulative case* that is made over years of fieldwork, research and publication. So, when Bible believing Christians and Jews say that the Old and New Testament is “proved” by archaeology, what we mean is that the Bible is a reliable historical source indeed. There is plenty of room for faith to flourish alongside reason and evidence in historical research. **Faith is only as good as its object**, and the object of Christian faith is confirmed by evidence from multiple areas of study, including *science, history, philosophy*, and *archaeology*.

*For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were **eyewitnesses** of his majesty.*

2 PETER 1:16

ENDNOTES

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- 3** Amon Ben-Tor, Editor, *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992) [Introduction], 9 [emphasis mine].
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- 7** For more on the discovery and decipherment of the Rosetta Stone, see Andrew Robinson’s, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-François Champollion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
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- 9** See, Currid, 28-30, and Moorey, 26-53.
- 10** See, P.R.S. Moorey, *A Century of Biblical Archaeology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), especially, pp. 54-86. Also, John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1975). Bright was a student of Albright, and his book reflects the Albright-Wright synthesis in OT history and archaeology.
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- 12** Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings, New Revised Edition* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1983), 33.
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- 16** Rodger Young, "Book review: From Abraham to Paul: A Biblical Chronology, by Andrew E. Steinmann" https://www.academia.edu/34234496/Book_review_of_Andrew_Steinmann_From_Abraham_to_Paul_A_Biblical_Chronology_Concordia_2013_ (accessed 21 Nov. 2021) [emphasis mine].
- 17** Ibid.
- 18** For more on the historical evidence for this, see my online article on "The Census of Quirinius" at <https://epicarchaeology.org/archaeology-and-the-new-testament/was-there-a-census-during-the-time-of-augustus/>
- 19** *Five Views on the Exodus: Historicity, Chronology and Theological Implications*, Mark D. Janzen, General Editor (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2021).
- 20** For a much more detailed and nuanced treatment on this question, see, *Five Views on the Exodus* (2021), listed in the footnote above.
- 21** For one of the most recent and exhaustive scholarly treatments of the early dating Exodus scenario, and how this plays out in Egyptian history, I highly recommend the recently published book by scholar and archaeologist, Dr. Douglas Petrovich, *Origins of the Hebrews: New Evidence of the Israelites in Egypt: From Joseph to the Exodus* (Nashville, TN: New Creation, 2021). In this book, Petrovich weaves together an amazing tapestry connecting all of the relevant threads of Egyptology, biblical history, and linguistics into a picture of one of God's greatest acts in the Old Testament – the deliverance of His people from bondage and death.
- 22** For more on this see Keith Windschuttle's excellent book, *The Killing of History: How Literary Critics and Social Theorists are Murdering Our Past* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 1996).
- 23** Kenneth Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishers, 2006), 6.
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- 28** Especially see John D. Currid's, *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament* (Wheaton: IL: Crossway Books, 2013).
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- 33** Scott Stripling, *The Trowel and the Truth: A Guide to Field Archaeology in the Holy Land*, Second Edition (Ramona, CA: Vision Publishing), 103.
- 34** <https://www.baslibrary.org/biblical-archaeology-review/35/1/8> (accessed 30 Sept. 2022).
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