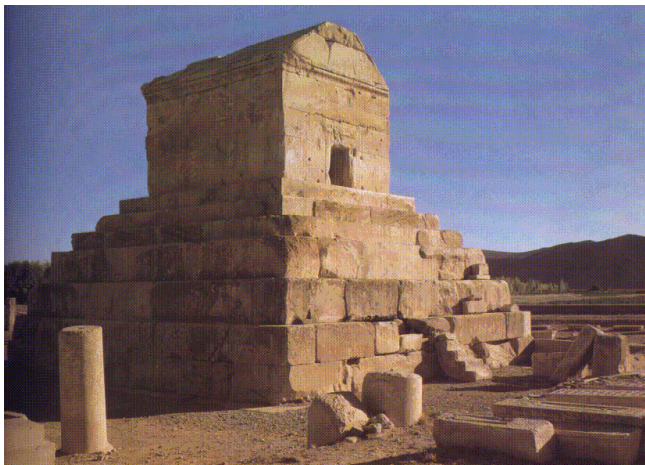


9. Is the Old Testament Historical



Tomb of Cyrus the Great

The Problem: If the Bible is God's word it should not only be spiritually true but also factually true.

The Bible records the history of God's interaction with mankind. We therefore should be able to verify events that occurred. The question we should ask is, "Are the historical claims validated in facts outside the bible?"

Some tend to view the Christian faith as a form of circular reasoning. The perception of the skeptical world can be summed up in the following way.

Christianity is based on the Bible. The Bible is a book of faith. If you believe the Bible based on

faith then Christianity is real to you. Sciences on the other hand is described as "Objective" and "Real" dealing with facts.

Archeology. Comes from the Greek words; Archaio + logos "The orderly arrangement of ancient things"

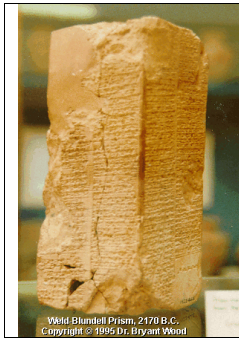
By comparing the places and events in the Bible to actual physical evidence we can demonstrate the truthfulness of the Bible in historical matters. By showing the Bible is correct on historical events does not prove the Bible is correct on spiritual matters. But it does dismiss critics claims about the Bible not being "True". And brings us to the following conclusion. "if the Bible is true on these historical events then its claims of "Revelation" about events in the future can also be trusted"

Cyrus the Great was both a biblical and historical person. The Bible tells us after the defeat of Babylon by the combined Median-Persian Empire. The Persian empire had a different philosophy then the Babylonian on its Jewish captives.

Cyrus made a proclamation permitting the people of Judah to return home and to rebuild the Temple. (2 Chron 36:22-23, Ezra 1:1-4). This is event in the bible can be validated with Persian documents, and history. The "Cylinder of Cyrus" gives us the declaration from Cyrus himself. We can actually go to his tomb to validate his history. This same claim cannot be made for many books.

The Koran for example writes about Jesus 600 years after the events with conflicting claims about historical events. The "Book of Mormon" also claims to be a book with a historical basis. To this day no claims from the "Book of Mormon" have been archeologically verified. So if a book cannot be proved "True" on a historical basis the logical question would be, why would it be true on a spiritual basis?

In this way the logical test of Truth can be validated "If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken" Deut 18:21.



World Blumenthal Prism, 2170 B.C.
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Sumerian King List

The Sumerians established the first civilization in the biblical world. Several clay tablets and prisms containing the list of the kings have been found in the ruins of Mesopotamia. Surviving copies of the Sumerian king list date to 2100 BC

What is amazing is that the kings are divided into two groups. Those who ruled before a great flood and those who ruled after it. Equally amazing is that the lengths of reigns and life spans of these kings drastically decreased after the flood as did life spans of people recorded in the Bible.



Ancient Flood story

Accounts of massive floods are found in many cultures around the world. The Gilgamesh Epic the saga of an ancient Babylonian King, (Gilgamesh) includes an expanded flood story on Tablet 11, similar to the flood story of Genesis 6-9. The best known copy of the Epic was found at Nineveh on a series of baked clay tablets.

Copies of the Epic and other flood stories have been found in the Near East. The popularity of the flood theme argues for its historicity and supports the flood of Noah's time. Tablet 11 (Right) of the Gilgamesh Epic tells of a great flood brought on earth by the wrath of gods and includes a hero who is told to build a ship, to take every kind of animal along, and to use birds to check if the water had receded



Ur, Hometown of Abraham

Ur is mentioned as the hometown of Abraham 4 times. Ur has been occupied before 2000 BC. Since 1800 Excavations have in the city have occurred have revealed a great deal about the city. The Zigurattit of Ur has been uncovered from the city.

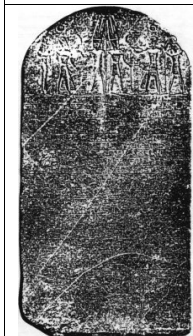
Finds show that Abraham's ancestral home had been a powerful city-state before it fell. If Ur's decline and fall came during Abraham's time, perhaps archaeology has provided another clue as to why Abraham Abraham's father relocated his family to Haran. Both cities worshiped the moon god. Gen. 11:31, 15:7, Neh 9:7, Acts 7:24



Hittite Capital

The ancient Hittite's large capital city has been recovered about 90 miles east of Ankara, Turkey. The Hittite's rule extended to Syria and Lebanon in the 2nd millennium BC. The city fell around 1200 BC. Although Hittites are mentioned often in the Old Testament, almost nothing was known about them until modern times. One hundred years ago, critics thought the Hittites were an imaginary people made up by the biblical authors.






Finding the Hittite's empire forced that claim to be withdrawn and supported the biblical record. The find also helps explained the language, history and literature of people who appear in the Old Testament. From the Hittites Abraham purchased a burial site in the cave of Machpeallah.

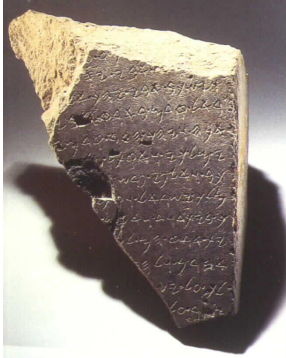


Mereptah Stele

The hieroglyphic text of the stele made in Egypt describes the victories of Pharaoh Merneptah around 1230 BC over the Libyans and people of Palestine. The stele stands more than seven feet high. The Merneptah Stele contains the earliest extra biblical mention of the name "Israel" thus far known. The Egyptian pharaoh brags of a victory over Israel around 1230 BC.

Although this battle between Egypt and Israel is not mentioned in the Old Testament, the stele does show that the Israelites were in fact living in the Promised Land at that time, and that their entrance into the land had already taken place by 1230 BC.

		
	<p>Jericho, The earliest ruins at Jericho date to the Stone Age (Neolithic). A tower (right) found in the Jericho ruins dates back before Abraham's time. The tower is made from stones obtained when the surrounding moat was cut. It was connected to a mud brick wall. There is debate over whether Joshua's wall of Jericho has been found. Massive erosion has removed much of the remains of the period and mud bricks could easily erode away over the centuries</p>	<p>The biblical importance of Jericho is underscored by the fact that it is referred to more than 50 times in the Old Testament. Perhaps the most significant references are those in Joshua 6, which tell of the Israelite conquest of the city, their first victory in the Promised land. Archaeology has shown where the city once stood, and that it guarded the key spot for entering into the Promised Land from the east.</p>
	<p>Canaanite gods and goddesses Between 1929-1939 excavators found hundreds of stories about Canaanite gods and goddesses written on clay tablets among the ruins of the ancient city of Ugarit in modern Syria. The Old Testament repeatedly refers to gods and goddesses, like Baal and Ashtaroth worshipped by the Canaanites living among the Israelites in the Promised land</p>	<p>The importance of these finds are their affirmation of the biblical record regarding pagan influences on Israel and their struggle to overcome them. The prophets of Israel strongly warned God's people to not worship these gods in Numbers 25, 1 Kings 11, Jeremiah 23, and Hosea 13</p>
	<p>Shishak's Invasion A record of Pharaoh Shishak's raid of 140 places, including the kingdom of Judah, has been found in Egypt carved on a wall in the Karnak Temple of Amun, god of Thebes (Luzor today). The Shishak Relief (Sheshonk I) commemorates his victory over Rehoboam when Solomon's temple was robbed of its riches (925BC). The Relief shows that Egypt raided Israel, not just Judah.</p>	<p>According to the Old Testament (1 Kings 14 and 2 Chronicles 12), Pharaoh Shishak of Egypt invaded Judah during the fifth year of King Rehoboam's reign. "Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem because they had transgressed against the LORD, with 1200 chariots, and 60,000 horsemen; and the people were without number that came with him out of Egypt" (2 Chronicles 12:2-3). Other verses that refer to Thebes (the city of No) in Egypt are Jeremiah 46:25 and Ezekiel 30:14-16</p>
	<p>Pool at Gibeon This remarkable pool, dating to before 1000BC, was found largely intact in Gibeon six miles north of Jerusalem in excavations around 1956. The pool of Gibeon goes down 80 feet. The original diggers removed 3000 tons of limestone. A tunnel of the pool runs under the city to an outside spring. This internal water supply was important in case of siege.</p>	<p>2 Samuel 2:13 and Jeremiah 41:12 speak of a great water pool at Gibeon. The find verifies the location of the Pool at Gibeon as mentioned in the Bible and shows the great effort taken to have a secure source of water.</p>



House of David Inscription
(Dan Inscription)
In 1993 and 1994 an archaeologist working at the Old Testament site of the city of Dan found three pieces of an inscribed stone referring to David. This stone inscribed in Aramaic with the expression "The house of David" refers to King David's descendants. Originally part of a victory pillar of a neighboring king of Damascus (possibly Hazael),

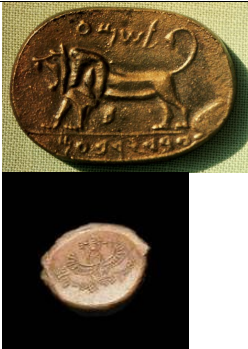
The Tel Dan inscription is a very important find because it is the first reference to King David found outside of the Bible. The stone has been dated to 2-3 centuries after David's time. It mentions a "king of Israel" possibly Joram son of Ahab and a King of the "House of David" possibly Ahaziah of Judah.



The piece of pottery may contain the oldest mention outside the Bible of King Solomon's Temple (AP Photo)

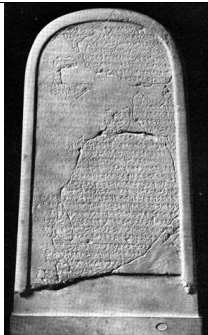
House of Yahweh Ostrakon
This find appears to be a receipt for a donation of three shekels of silver to the House of Yahweh (Solomon's Temple). This Ostrakon (writing on a piece of pottery) is 4 inches wide and 3.5 tall. It is not known where it was found. Some scholars date it between 835 and 796 BC, some 130 years after the Temple was built.

This extremely important find is the oldest mention of Solomon's Temple that has been found outside of the Bible.



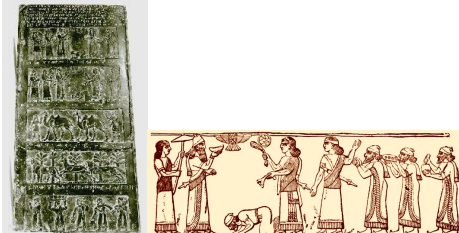
Jeroboam seal
Excavations at several sites in modern Israel and antiquity shops have turned up carved semi-precious stones belonging to members of the royal courts of kings in the Old Testament. Dating from about 900 BC to about 600 BC, these stones were used to press images into pieces of clay that sealed up kings important documents.

Seals were found for Uzziah (around 760 BC), Hoshea around 730 BC), and Hezekiah (around 700 BC). One of the most famous seals, found at Medgiddo, depicts a lion with words, "belonging to Shema, servant of Jeroboam". Seals with the names of other kings were found also (See 1 and 2 Kings)



The Moabite Stone
In 1868, A German missionary found a stone slab over three feet tall near Dibon, east of the Dead Sea. Inscribed on the stone were the accomplishments of Mesha, King of Moab around 850 BC. This stone is sometimes called the Mesha Stele.

The Moabite stone is one of the earliest finds that mentions biblical people. The stone says that King Omri and his son Ahab "humbled" Moab for many years. After Ahab's death, King Mesha said he had "Triumphed" over Ahab's family and that Israel had "perished forever". Some scholars say that the stone also contains a reference to the "House of David"



Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser
This 6.5 foot tall black basalt obelisk (Four sided pillar) reports in pictures and words the conquests of Assyrian King Shalmaneser III Israel's foe.

This find is the only picture we have so far of an Israelite king. This is the first mention of tribute paid to Assyria by Israel. King Jehu's reign is mentioned in 2 Kings 9-10.

	<p>King Uzziah Burial Plaque A stone plaque, found on the grounds of the Russian church on the Mt. Of Olives, reads: "here, the bones of Uzziah, King of Judah were brought. Do not open." King Uzziah ruled Judah 792-740 BC, at the same time that Amos, Hosea and Isaiah were prophesying. He was 16 years old when he became king and he reigned in Jerusalem for 52 years. As long as he sought the LORD God gave him success.</p>	<p>According to 2 Chronicles 26, Uzziah sinned against the LORD and was stricken with a leprous disease toward the end of his life and upon his death was buried in a "field of burial that belonged to the kings"</p>
	<p>Siloam Carving The inscription comes from the days of Hezekiah (701 BC) who ordered the tunnel to be made so the water from Jerusalem's Gihon Spring could be brought in to the city to a man-made reservoir, The Pool of Siloam. This tunnel provided water to Jerusalem during the anticipated siege of the King Sennacherib of Assyria.</p>	<p>The inscription celebrates the completion of this remarkable tunnel as mentioned in 2 Kings 20:20, 2 Chronicles 32:20.</p> <p>Two boys discovered this ancient Hebrew inscription carved in stone along the wall of a tunnel as they were wading through the southern end of the tunnel's waters in 1880.</p>
	<p>The Gezer Calendar This small palm-sized limestone tablet bears one of the first examples of Hebrew writing known (971-913 BC) Found at Gezer, one of King Solomon's fortress cities, this tablet contains a school memorization drill-a short poem about the agricultural seasons in biblical Palestine.</p>	<p>The text gives insight into when certain tasks were done during the agricultural year. It shows literacy in the 10th century BC.</p>
	<p>The Lachish Reliefs Among the ruins of the Nineveh palace of Assyrian King Sennacherib were found 62 foot long relief's that picture the fall of the Judean fortress of Lachish in 701 BC, over 100 years before the attack on and fall of Judah.</p>	<p>These Nineveh palace carvings of the Lachish defeat amplify the biblical record concerning the siege of the kingdom of Judah in the days of King Hezekiah. In 2 Kings 18:13 it says "Now in the 14th year of King Hezekiah did Sennacherib, king of Assyria, come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them." However, before the Assyrians could capture Jerusalem they were destroyed by "God's angel" and Sennacherib withdrew (2 Kings 20:35, 2 Chronicles 32)</p>

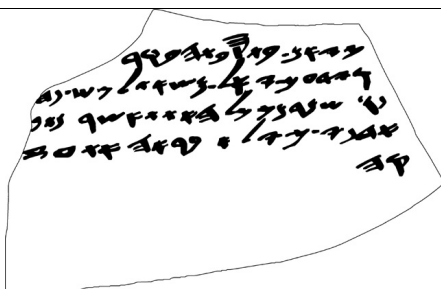


Sennacherib Prism

A 15-inch tall, six-sided baked clay prism from ancient Assyria contains the story of the invasion of the kingdom of Judah by Sennacherib in 701 BC. The prism was found at Nineveh.

King Sennacherib of Assyria is mentioned in 2 Kings 18-19. Isaiah prophesied that God would protect Jerusalem against attack by Sennacherib (Is 36-37, 2 Chron. 32). While the prism does say the Assyrians trapped Hezekiah in Jerusalem "like a bird in a cage", like the biblical record, it says nothing of them conquering the city.

The Bible says that God spared Jerusalem. The prism, together with the Lachish reliefs and excavations, adds detail to the biblical account. King Hezekiah prayed to the Lord. Isaiah brought him God's message. That night the LORD smote 185,000 Assyrians, and Sennacherib went back to Nineveh and later was killed by his sons (Isaiah 37:35-38)



Lachish Letters

In 1935 an archaeologist unearthed several letters, written about 588 BC, on 21 pottery pieces (ostrata) from among the burned ruins of the ancient city Lachish of Judah. The Lachish messages were desperate pleas by the Judean defenders of the city for military assistance. Apparently the city was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar before the letters could be sent.

The letters show Judah was trying to obtain help from Egypt, relying on man rather than God. One Ostrakon mentions that no fire signals from another defense city, Azekah could be seen. Jeremiah 34:2-7, prophesied the conquest of Judah, destruction of Jerusalem, and exile to Babylon. 2 Kings 24-25



City of Babylon

The Ruins of ancient Babylon, capital of Babylonian Kingdom, cover 2000-3000 acres in Iraq, 56 miles south of Baghdad.

Babylon's ruins include one of many ziggurats (Stepped towers) from the area. Later finds include ruins of the palace of King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:29) The palace of Nebuchadnezzar, who destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC and sent the Jews into exile, was the site of Belshazzar's feast in Daniel 5. Jeremiah wrote that the Lord would make Babylon desolate forever (Jer 25:12, 51)


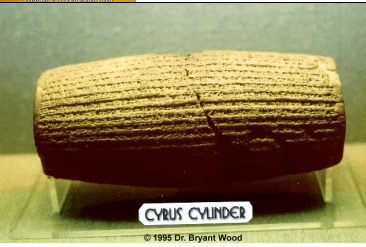


Babylonian Chronicle starts with Nabonassar (8th cent. BC) Mentions the march of Nebuchadnezzar to Egypt to visit Ramses II.

The Babylonian Chronicle

This clay tablet is a Babylonian chronicle recording events from 605-594 BC. It was first translated in 1956 and is now in the British Museum. The cuneiform text on this clay tablet tells, among other things 3 main events: 1 The Battle of Carchemish (famous battle for world supremacy where Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeated Pharaoh Necho of Egypt, 605 BC.), 2 The Accession to the Throne of Nebuchadnezzar II, the Chaldean, 3. Capture of Jerusalem on the 16th of March, 598 BC.

Regarding the capture of Jerusalem the clay tablet reads: "In the seventh month (of Nebuchadnezzar-599 BC.) in the month Chislew (Nov/Dec) the king of Babylon assembled his army, and after he had invaded the land of Hatti (Syria/Palestine) he laid siege to the city of Judah. On the second day of the month of Adar (16th of March) he conquered the city and took the king (Jehoiachin) prisoner. He installed in his place a king (Zedekiah) of his own choice, and after he had received rich tribute, he sent (them) forth to Babylon."

	<p>Babylon nations record Tablets found in Babylon, dated 595 BC and 570 BC. List rations of oil and barley delivered by the royal storehouses to the deposed Jehoiachin and his entourage</p>	<p>This is important because it confirms what the biblical account of his treatment in 2 Kings 25:27. Jehoiachin was released by Evil-merodach, Nebuchadnezzar's successor in 37th year of his captivity (561 BC)</p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">CYRUS CYLINDER © 1995 Dr. Bryant Wood</p>	<p>The Cyrus Cylinder The 9-inch long clay cylinder found at ancient Babylon, dating to 539 BC, tells of King Cyrus of Persia's conquest of Babylon and of his decree to let captives held by Babylon return to their lands and restore their temples.</p>	<p>Cyrus sent the Jews back to their homeland after many years of exile in Babylon as Isaiah prophesied (2 Chron. 36:23, Ezra 1, Is 44:28) This "Return-home" decree was one of many issued by Cyrus. Through not mentioning Judah, it confirms that this was Cyrus's policy and gives credibility to the biblical record.</p>
	<p>Darius The Great The tombs of Persian kings, Darius I, Artaxerxes I and Darius II are at Naqsh-e Rostam. Along with the Tombs, the autobiography, the text which is carved in the rock at Behistun and known to the Greek Historian Herodotus tells the story of his rise to power.</p>	<p>Darius was involved in the rebuilding of the Jewish temple in Ezra 5-6. Darius son Xerxes was the King in the book of Ester. Darius grandson Artaxerxes I allowed Nehemiah to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the city and walls. (Neh 2:8)</p>

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