

Bible History

Gospel Foundation Of Faith: Shelf 1 — Volume 3

Archaeology is the general study of things that remain from ancient civilizations. It is a wide field of study that includes the digging up and dusting off any relic of the past. Biblical archaeology is a special field of study that relates to the discovery of artifacts that refer to the existence and history of people and events in the Bible. The study of biblical archaeology produces some very exciting evidences that verify the historical accuracy of the Bible. **No archaeological discovery has ever contradicted the historical statements that are made in the Bible.**

Bible archaeology is also directed to discoveries in the development of the languages of the biblical text. Countless discoveries have been made that shed light on the meaning of Greek and Hebrew words. Such studies greatly aid Bible students, not only in understanding the text of the Bible, but also in understanding the culture of the people of Bible times. Here are some of the more exciting discoveries that have been made throughout the years.

1. **T or F:** Several archaeology discoveries have been made that contradict historical statements that have been made in the Bible.
2. **T or F:** Archaeological discoveries have been made throughout history that shed light on the history of the times, history and events surrounding Bible characters.

~ The Moabite Stone ~

On August 19, 1868, a German missionary in Palestine by the name of **F. A. Klein** was introduced to a very large black stone about one meter high. It was about a third meter wide and about twenty-nine centimeters thick. At the time, Mr. Klein had no idea concerning the real significance of this stone and its precious inscription.

Mr. Klein returned to Germany to collect money in

order to purchase the stone from the Arabs. However, during the time he was in Germany, a French scholar by the name of Clermont Ganneau, who was working in Jerusalem, heard of the German missionary's discovery. He thus set out at once for **Dibon**, Moab where the stone had been discovered.

Surrounded by the hostile Arabs, Clermont Ganneau made a "squeeze" (that is, an impression) of the inscription on the stone. He then returned to Jerusalem. Because of the great attention the stone was receiving, the Arabs thought that it was some superstitious idol. They thus heated the stone and poured cooled water over it in order to break it into pieces. They parted the pieces among themselves and scattered in many directions.

When Clermont Ganneau returned to offer the Arabs about two thousand dollars (about five times the price Klein had offered them), the stone had already disappeared. After many months of searching, only about two-thirds of the stone inscription was recovered. However, thanks to the work of Clermont-Ganneau in making the impression of the inscription, archaeologists still had the complete inscription that was on the stone.

After a careful translation of the inscription, it was discovered that this stone memorial was made during the reign of Mesha, king of Moab (about 850 B.C.). It was made as a tribute to Chemosh, the Moabite god. This Mesha is the same Mesha of 2 Kings 3:4,5. The inscription tells how Chemosh, the Moabite god, became angry with Moab, and thus brought the nation under the subjection of the Israelites. Mesha tells how the cities and lands of Moab were returned to him during his reign. It also reveals how Mesha rebelled against Ahab, king of Israel.

The following is a portion of the inscription:

I [am] Mesha, son of Chemosh-melech, king of Moab, the Dibonite. My father reigned over Moab 30 years and I reigned after my father. I have made this monument for Chemosh at Qorhah, a monument of salvation, for he saved me from all invaders, and let me see my desire upon all my

enemies. Omri was king of Israel, and he oppressed Moab many days, for Chemosh was angry with his land. His son [Ahab] followed him and he also said: I will oppress Moab. In my days [Chemosh] said: I will see [my desire] on him and his house, and Israel surely shall perish forever. Omri took the land of Medeba [Numbers 21:30], and [Israel] dwelt in it during his days and half the days of his son, altogether 40 years. But Chemosh [gave] it back in my days. I built Baal-Meon [Joshua 13:17] and made therein the ditches; I built Kirjathaim [Numbers 32:37]. The men of Gad dwelt in the land of Ataroth [Numbers 32:3] from of old, and the king of Israel built there [the city of] Ataroth; but I made war against the city and took it And I took from thence the Arels of Yahweh and bore them before Chemosh.



Moabite Stone

Throughout the inscription Mesha speaks of many cities he built. He also records how he built many canals and aqueducts to supply his people with water. Mesha also used the Hebrew word “*Yahweh*,” a reference to the Old Testament Hebrew word for God. The inscription tells how Chemosh, the Moabite god, became angry with the people of Moab and allowed Omri, King of Israel, to conquer them and force them to pay tribute. It tells of the Moabites winning back their independence after the death of Ahab, king of Israel. Every detail of the Moabite stone corresponds to historical statements in the Bible. This has been one of the most significant archaeological discoveries concerning the historical accuracy of the biblical text.

3. Near what city was the Moabite Stone discovered?
(A) Rome, (B) Dibon, (C) Jerusalem, (D) Damascus
4. Who was the original archaeologist who first discovered the Moabite Stone?
(A) Ganneau, (B) Klein, (C) Mesha, (D) Henry
5. Who made the Moabite Stone?
(A) Shishak, (B) Ahab, (C) Solomon, (D) Mesha

~ Obelisk Of Shalmaneser III ~

In 1846 a young lawyer by the name of Henry

Layard of Constantinople made a discovery that opened our knowledge to early Assyrian history. While doing his amateur excavation at Nimrod, located in the upper Mesopotamian region, he came across a memorial monument or obelisk made by Shalmaneser III, king of Assyria. The obelisk was a four-sided black limestone pillar that stood about two meters high. It had five rows of roughly written bas reliefs (writing in clay that afterward hardens) inscribed on its sides. There were explanations in cuneiform writing at the top and bottom of the inscriptions.

This obelisk was a commemoration of the victorious acts of Shalmaneser III. The inscriptions on the face of this monument are significant in that they mention Jehu, king of Israel. In fact, there is an inscribed picture of Jehu on the monument. This inscription pictures Jehu bowing before Shalmaneser III.



Black Obelisk
of Shalmaneser III
Oriental Institute

This is the only picture we have of an Israelite king. Jehu reigned in Israel from 841 to 814 B.C. Shalmaneser III reigned in Assyria from 859 to 824 B.C. The monument verifies that these two kings were contemporary, just as the Bible says.

Three times on the monument it is mentioned that Shalmaneser came up against the coalition of kings of Damascus and Palestine, all of whom he defeated. Damascus, whose king was Hazael (2 Kg 8:7ff), and Israel, whose king was Ahab, had an agreement to fight together against invading forces. This information is given on the monument. In the eighteenth



Jehu bowing down before Shalmaneser III

year of Shalmaneser's reign, it is said that he went up against only one king, the king of Damascus. Ahab, the king of Israel, had been killed at the battle of Karkar in

853 B.C. After the death of Ahab, Israel evidently terminated their league with Hazael, king of Damascus.

The obelisk mentions that “Ahab, the king of Israel” had the strongest armies of the military group that fought against Shalmaneser at Karkar. This is confirmation of Ahab’s ninth century B.C. rule. When Jehu became king of Israel he decided to pay tribute rather than fight Shalmaneser. The inscription reads, “Tribute of Jehu son of Omri; silver, gold, bowls of gold, chalices of gold, pitchers of gold, lead, a royal scepter, staves I received from him.”

Shalmaneser uses the expression “son of Omri” in reference to Jehu as the successor of Omri, not the literal son of Omri. Ahaziah and Joram reigned after Ahab and before Jehu. Omri reigned before Ahab.

After the attacks of Assyria on Damascus, Hazael began his vengeful campaign against Israel. 2 Kings 10:32 states, *“In those days the Lord began to cut off parts of Israel; and Hazael conquered them in all the territory of Israel.”* This was the beginning of the end of Israel because the nation had forsaken trust in God and had placed herself at the mercy of a foreign king.

6. Over what kingdom did Shalmaneser reign when he made the Black Obelisk as a memorial?
(A) Assyria, (B) Babylon, (C) Rome, (D) Asia
7. What Israelite king is pictured on the Black Obelisk?
(A) Hezekiah, (B) Joram, (C) Omri, (D) Jehu
8. During whose reign of the northern ten tribes of Israel did God begin His campaign to do away with this part of Israel?
(A) Hezekiah, (B) Hazael, (C) Ahab, (D) Jehu

~ The Inscriptions of Shishak ~

On monuments in Egypt, Shishak is given credit for the establishment of the 22nd Dynasty of Egyptian Pharaohs. At the end of the 21st Dynasty, which was marked by the death of Pasebkhanu II, Shishak ascended to the throne of Egypt. His reign extended from 945 to 924 B.C.

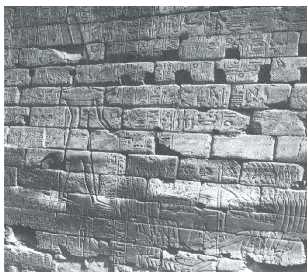
In 1 Kings 11 it is recorded that when Solomon became displeased with Jeroboam he forced him to flee to the land of Egypt. This event took place dur-

ing the reign of Shishak. Therefore, Jeroboam was in Egypt during the reign of Shishak who was the Pharaoh of Egypt.

When Solomon died, Jeroboam returned to Palestine to rule over the northern ten tribes of Israel. This was the fulfillment of the prophecy made by Ahijah (1 Kg 11:31ff). At the same time, Rehoboam reigned over the southern tribes of Israel. Rehoboam was on the throne of Judah for about five years when Shishak began his plunder of Palestine. In 1 Kings 14:25,26 we read,

Now it happened, in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. And he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house. He took away everything. He also took away all the gold shields that Solomon had made.

Jerusalem was saved from being totally destroyed by Shishak. However, all the riches of the city were taken and the Jews of Judah became the servants of the king of Egypt (2 Ch 12:8). One cannot help but think that Jeroboam told Shishak about all of Jerusalem's riches while he was in Egypt. He possibly even encouraged Shishak to subdue Rehoboam. Regardless of what Jeroboam told Shishak, Shishak took advantage of the opportunity to subdue Jeroboam's competitor in the south because he knew that Jeroboam would not interfere with his campaign against Judah.



Shishak's campaign against Israel that are carved on the walls of the temple of Karnak, Egypt

On the walls of the temple of Amon, at Karnak in Egypt, Shishak left inscriptions describing his campaigns into Israelite territory. The inscriptions picture Shishak presenting 156 manacled prisoners from Palestine who were given in tribute to the Egyptian god Amon. It is believed that each of these prisoners represents a city in Palestine that was taken

by Shishak. Special mention is made of the city of Megiddo that was located about twenty kilometers southeast of Mount Carmel in Palestine. When Megiddo was excavated some years ago, a broken stela (an inscribed stone slab) was found that bore tales of Shishak. It also showed that Shishak might have set up a monument of remembrance in Palestine. On the south wall of the temple of Amon in Egypt, Shishak also left a list of conquered cities, not only of Judah, but also the northern kingdom of Israel.

9. Who was the Pharaoh of Egypt when Jeroboam was in exile in Egypt?
(A) Rehoboam, (B) Shishak, (C) Ahabm (D) Hezekiah
10. When Solomon died, who reigned over the southern kingdom of Israel?
(A) Jeroboam, (B) Rehoboam, (C) Hazel, (D) Jehu
11. Which Pharaoh inscribed on a temple wall in Egypt his victories over Israel?
(A) Sennacerib, (B) Shishak, (C) Jeroboam, (D) Ahab

~ The Annals Of Sargon II ~

In Isaiah 20:1 Isaiah dated one of his oracles in the year when Sargon sent his commander-in-chief to subdue the city of Ashdod. “In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it.” In this passage Sargon was named as the king of Assyria. Critics once said that the Bible at this point was inaccurate. The criticism was based on the fact that the name Sargon was not at the time found in secular history among Assyrian kings. The Bible was the only historical document that mentioned this king. However, little was known about the Assyrian Empire when these criticisms were made.

A French consular by the name of Paul-Emil Botta discovered the ruins of the palace of Sargon II in Khorsadad of the old Assyrian Empire. Khorsadad was located on the north end of the Tigris River. Botta’s expeditions later led to the discovery of many valuable documents that told of Sargon’s wars throughout his reign. A total of 22,000 tablets were eventually discovered at Khorsadad and the

surrounding regions. Studies of these tablets have resulted in a tremendous amount of information that directly relates to the history of the Bible, and thus, our knowledge of the events of Bible times.

In 725 B.C. Shalmaneser V went to war against the city of Samaria, the capital of Israel. He fought against the city for a period of approximately three years. At the close of the siege, Shalmaneser mysteriously disappeared from the picture and Sargon II finished the task of destroying Samaria. In 2 Kings 17:3 Shalmaneser is given credit for starting the siege against Israel. In verse 6, however, it is simply stated that the “king of Assyria” finished the siege of Samaria. In his personal records which he made back in Assyria, Sargon claimed the final victory.



Procession of Sargon's Israelite captives being led to Khorsadad, Assyria

There is no contradiction here between the Bible and secular history. The annals of Sargon II simply fill in where the Bible is silent. Shalmaneser began the war against Israel and its capital, and Sargon II, who later became king of Assyria, finished the task. After he had captured the city, Sargon's records say that he led 27,290 prisoners away into captivity. He records in his records of the events,

I besieged and captured Samaria, carrying off 27,290 of the people who dwelt therein. Fifty chariots I gathered from among them

After he conquered many cities in Israel, Sargon recorded that he took prisoners from Samaria and placed them in exile in Gozan (or, Guzana). Excavations have confirmed that Jews lived in these areas of exile. This is exactly what the Bible says in 2 Kings 17:6. *“In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria [Sargon] took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by*

the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes” (See also 2 Kg 17:24).

In Isaiah 20:1 we read that Sargon sent Tartan to fight against Ashdod. As far as the Bible account, we do not know the reasons for this attack. However, in the annals of Sargon this can be further explained. The annals read,

Azuri, king of Ashdod, planned in his heart not to pay tribute. In my anger I marched against Ashdod with my usual bodyguard. I conquered Ashdod, and Gath. I took their treasures and their people. I settled in them people from the lands of the east. I took tribute from Philistia, Judah, Edom and Moab.

The dates of cities, peoples and countries found in the annals of Sargon correspond with the historical mention of the same in the Bible. The countries of Egypt, Elam, Moab, Edom, and the Medes, Philistines, and the Syrian people are all mentioned in the documents of Sargon. Sargon II was one of the greatest kings of Assyria who influenced events in the Bible. The annals of Sargon that were discovered at Khorsadad, combined with other Assyrian documents that have been discovered, are valuable in that they tell us of the historical environment in which the Israelites lived.

12. Who was the king of Assyria when Tartan fought against the city of Ashdod?
(A) Sargon, (B) Shishak, (C) Ahab, (D) Hezekiah
13. Against what city of the northern kingdom of Israel did Shalmaneser II go to war?
(A) Ashdod, (B) Jerusalem, (C) Damascus, (D) Samaria
14. Which king planned in his heart that he would not pay tribute to Assyria?
(A) Ahab, (B) Asuri, (C) Sargon, (D) Jehoram

~ Hezekiah's Tunnel ~

Hezekiah, Sennacherib and Esarhaddon are three kings who develop a very exciting chapter of ancient history. After the death of Sargon II, Sennacherib, his son, came to the throne of Assyria. He reigned from 705 to 681 B.C. Taking advantage of the royal turnover in Assyria, Hezekiah, king of Judah, *“rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve*

him” (2 Kg 18:7).

After his rebellion, Hezekiah received word that Sennacherib was going to regain his oppression of Jerusalem (2 Ch 32:2). Upon hearing this news, Hezekiah took immediate measures to fortify the city of Jerusalem against a probable Assyrian attack. In 2 Chronicles 32:3,4 we read of some of the steps that Hezekiah took in order to make the city more secure against invading forces,

He [Hezekiah] took counsel with his leaders and commanders to stop the water from the springs which were outside the city; and they helped him. Thus many people gathered together who stopped all the springs and the brook that ran through the land, saying, “Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?”

Hezekiah cut a tunnel from the pool of Gihon, which was outside the walls of the city, to the pool of Siloam, that was inside the city walls. A statement that was made at the close of his reign tells specifically what he did. *“This same Hezekiah also stopped the water outlet of Upper Gihon, and brought the water by tunnel to the west side of the City of David”* (2 Ch 32:30).

Hezekiah then concealed the pool of Gihon in order that the Assyrians not have water near the city during any siege of Jerusalem. The last report we have of this tunnel in the Bible is at the close of Hezekiah’s reign.

Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah – all his might, and how he made a pool and a tunnel and brought water into the city – are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? (2 Kg 20:20).

As time went by, this tunnel became unnoticed and eventually lost. The last mention that was made of it was in the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus which was written around 200 B.C. (Ec 48:17). The tunnel was evidently unknown during the time of Josephus (A.D. 37-115) because he makes no mention of it in his writings and description of Jerusalem. It was

not until the nineteenth century that the tunnel was discovered.

The discovery of the tunnel was made by Edward Robinson, an American scholar, and Eli Smith, a missionary in Syria. In the first part of the nineteenth century they walked through the entire length of the tunnel and found that it was a total of 1,750 feet in length (approximately 533 meters). Other characteristics of the tunnel were its zig-zag course and average height of about two meters.

The most significant discovery concerning the tunnel was stumbled upon by a young boy. While playing near the pool of Siloam, he slipped and fell. From where he lay he noticed some crudely scratched markings on the side of the wall. The boy told his teacher, Conrad Schick, what he had discovered. When Schick investigated the inscription he found that the markings covered an area about three-fourths of a meter long and about half a meter high. After further investigation, it was found that the inscription was written in classical Hebrew.

For the biblical scholarship of the world, this inscription represents some of the oldest writings of ancient Hebrew. The writing was contemporary with the days of Hezekiah, around 700 B.C. The inscription reads,

The tunnel is completed. This is the story of the tunnel. While the stonecutters were lifting up the pick, each toward his neighbor (from opposite ends), and while they were yet 3 cubits apart, there was heard a voice of one calling to another; and after that pick struck against pick; and waters flowed from the spring to the pool, 1,200 cubits, and 100 cubits was the height of the rock above.



Inscription of Hezekiah's tunnel

Another important discovery gained by the inscription was the length of a cubit in relation to modern-day measurements. The length of the tunnel as given in the inscription was 1,200 cubits. By measuring the tunnel and comparing inches with cubits it was found that one cubit is equal to about 18 inches. This would be approximately 30.5 metric centimeters.

15. What king of Assyria determined to make war against Hezekiah because he refused to pay tribute to Assyria?
 (A) Sennacherib, (B) Sargon, (C) Ahab (D) Shishak
16. When he learned that the Assyrians were planning to attack Jerusalem, what did Hezekiah do?
 (A) Build a tunnel, (B) Fortify the walls, (C) Make weapons of war, (D) Surrender

~ The Prism Of Sennacherib ~

The history of the clash between Hezekiah and Sennacherib is significant in reference to Old Testament history. After Hezekiah's revolt against Assyria, Sennacherib began his plunder of Judah. In 2 Kings 18:13 it is stated, *"And in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them"* (See 2 Ch 32:1; Is 36:1). One of the cities that fell to Sennacherib was the city of Lachish.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, A. H. Layard discovered at Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, thirteen stone slabs in bas relief (inscribed writing) depicting an attack on a well-fortified city. It was believed, and later confirmed, that this was the city of Lachish. These bas reliefs found in Sennacherib's palace show the spoils of the city of Lachish which were presented to Sennacherib who is pictured to be on his throne in Assyria.

In view of Sennacherib's plunder of Palestine and attack against Jerusalem, Hezekiah made some strategic decisions. Hoping to buy more time from Sennacherib, Hezekiah *"sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, 'I have done wrong. Turn away from me. Whatever you impose on me I will pay.' And the king of Assyria assessed Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of*

gold” (2 Kg 18:14). In view of what Hezekiah planned to do, we must interpret this decision on his part to pay tribute as an effort to stall any plans Sennacherib had against Jerusalem. Hezekiah’s plans may have worked for a brief period of time. Though Sennacherib received tribute from Hezekiah, he still persisted in his efforts to plunder Jerusalem, the would-be high point of his Judean campaign.



The Prism of Sennacherib

This is where we have a turn of events for the unfortunate Sennacherib who had dreams of capturing the city of Jerusalem. Here is where the importance of the prism of Sennacherib comes into the picture. This prism (also known as the Taylor Prism) is a six-sided monument that was made by Sennacherib in 691 B.C. It contains the last records of Sennacherib concerning his campaigns in Judah. On the monument, Sennacherib tells of his battle against Judah as follows,

As to Hezekiah, the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke, I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts and to the countless small villages in their vicinity, and conquered [them] by means of well-stamped [earth] ramps, and battering-rams brought [thus] near [to the walls] [combined with] the attack by foot soldiers, [using] mines, breeches as well as sapper work. I drove out [of them] 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, big and small cattle beyond counting, considered [them booty]. Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage.

Sennacherib nowhere claims final victory of Jerusalem. This is not revealed on his prism simply because his defeat was a humiliating experience for the armies of Assyria. Where Sennacherib stops in his description of the events that took place around Jerusalem, the Bible continues. In 2 Kings 19:35 we read,

And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the Lord went out and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one

hundred and eighty-five thousand. And when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses – all dead.

When Sennacherib surrounded Jerusalem, Hezekiah went to God in prayer (2 Kg 19:14-19). God faithfully answered that prayer by destroying the army of Sennacherib.

After his dreadful defeat, Sennacherib *“departed [from Jerusalem] and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh”* (2 Kg 19:36). The Bible does not say how long Sennacherib dwelt in Nineveh before his assassination. His fate is recorded in 2 Kings 19:37.

Now it came to pass as he was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword. And they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

There has also been discovered in the Annals of Esarhaddon the following words which correspond perfectly with the biblical account of these events. Esarhaddon stated,

... they rebelled. In order to exercise royal authority they killed Sennacherib. I became a raging lion, my mind was a fury these usurpers ... fled to an unknown land. I reached the quay on the Tigris, sent my troops across the broad river as if it were a canal. In Addar [December ... I reached Nineveh well pleased]. I ascended my father's throne with joy. The south wind was blowing ... whose breezes are propitious for royal authority ... I am Esarhaddon, King of the world, King of Assyria ... son of Sennacherib.

17. Against what kingdom did Hezekiah revolt that eventually led to an attempted assault on Jerusalem?
(A) Assyria, (B) Egypt, (C) Babylonia, (D) Syria
18. In what city was Sennacherib's Prism discovered?
(A) Jerusalem, (B) Babylon, (C) Samaria, (D) Nineveh
19. Who destroyed the army of Sennacherib?
(A) Egypt, (B) Babylon, (C) Judah, (D) An angel

~ Jehoiachin's Rations ~

In 597 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came up against and besieged the city of Jerusa-

lem. He laid siege to the city and conquered it. An ancient Babylonian account recorded this event.

In the seventh year, the month of Kislev, the king of Addad mustered his troops, marched to Hatti-land, and encamped against [that is, besieged] the city of Judah and on the second day of the month of Adar he seized the city and captured the king. He appointed there a king of his own choice [lit. heart], received its heavy tribute and sent [them] to Babylon.

When Jerusalem fell, many Jews were taken into captivity, including their king, Jehoiachin (2 Ch 36:9,10). During the period Jehoiachin was in captivity, Nebuchadnezzar died and his son, Evil-merodach, rose to the throne of Babylon. The Bible records that Jehoiachin immediately found favor with the new king of Babylon. *“Evil-Merodach king of Babylon ... released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. He spoke kindly to him, and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who were with him in Babylon”* (2 Kg 25:27,28). The last verse of 2 Kings 25 reads, *“And as for his [Jehoiachin’s] provisions, there was a regular ration given him by the king, a portion for each day, all the days of his life”* (vs 30).

Jeremiah lived contemporary with these events. He prophesied from 627 to 575 B.C. He also recorded that the king of Babylon gave rations to the captured king of Judah.



Ration Receipt Issued For
Jehoiachin

So Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments, and he ate bread regularly before the king all the days of his life. And as for his provisions, there was a regular ration given him by the king of Babylon, a portion for each day until the day of his death, all the days of his life (Jr 52:32,33).

In 1899, the German Oriental Society equipped a large expedition under the direction of Professor Robert Koldewey, an architect, to excavate the mound of Babel in the area of the Euphrates River. After a period of eighteen years they discovered

what is called the Ishtar Gate. Many other articles were found such as 300 clay tablets. These tablets were boxed and sent to a museum in Berlin, Germany. There they stayed until 1935.

In 1933, a man by the name of E. F. Weidner accepted the task of translating these tablets. The job was strenuous and sometimes very disappointing. However, after much hard work, Weidner suddenly came upon a familiar biblical name, **Ja-V-Kinu**, or Jehoiachin. He became even more sure that this was the Jehoiachin in the Bible when he found other tablets referring to this Jehoiachin as “king of the [land of] Judah.” The tablets identified him as “Yaukin, king of the land of Yahud.” What is even more exciting for Bible students is that Weidner discovered in the tablets one that specifically contained the actual food allowances of the king of Babylon which he had ordered to be given to Jehoiachin. Once again, the Bible was proved to be historically accurate. This is what we would expect since it is the word of God.

20. What kingdom eventually brought an end to Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel?
(A) Assyrian, (B) Egypt, (C) Babylonian (D) Syrian
21. Where was Jehoiachin in prison when Evil-Merodach gave him a portion of food rations every day?
(A) Jerusalem, (B) Babylon, (C) Samaria, (D) Nineveh
22. In the historical tablets that were discovered by the Euphrates, who was mentioned as the “king of Judah”?
(A) Jehoiachin, (B) Hezekiah, (C) Jeroboam, (D) Ahab

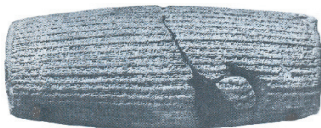
~ The Cyrus Cylinder ~

Isaiah prophesied during the years from 739 to 695 B.C. During this time he made a prophecy concerning a man by the name of Cyrus. *“Thus says the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held – to subdue nations before him and loose the armor of kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut”* (Is 45:1). This prophecy was made approximately two hundred years before its fulfillment.

In Daniel 5:25-28 the termination of Belshazzar’s reign was foretold. Daniel’s inspired interpretation of the handwriting on the wall of the Babylonian palace

said that Belshazzar's kingdom was coming to an end. The very evening of the vision of the handwriting and interpretation, Belshazzar was slain and Darius the Mede began to reign over the kingdom (Dn 5:30,31). This Darius the Mede, who was placed over the city of Babylon by Cyrus, was probably the ruler of the Medo-Persian Empire at the time these events occurred.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Hormuyd Rossam discovered a barrel-like clay cylinder that described the policies of Cyrus and how he overtook Babylon. This significant discovery has since been referred to as the Cyrus Cylinder.



Cyrus Cylinder

The following portion of the inscription of the Cyrus Cylinder discusses the fall of the city of Babylon.

Marduk ... looked through all the country searching for a religious ruler He pronounced the name Cyrus, King of Anshan, declared him to be the ruler of all the world He made him set out on the road to Babylon, going at his side like a real friend. His widespread troops – their number, like that of the water of a river could not be established – strolled along, their weapons packed away. Without any battle, he [that is, Marduk] made him [Cyrus] enter his [Marduk's] town, Babylon, sparing Babylon any calamity. He delivered into his hands Nabunaid, the king who did not worship him.

Cyrus evidently took the city of Babylon without any battle. This is what both the biblical account and the Cyrus Cylinder account reveal. The date of this conquest was around 539 B.C. This was approximately two hundred years after the prophecy of Isaiah. The inscription also contains the following statement, *“I am Cyrus, king of all, the great king, the mighty king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four corners of the earth.”* These words of Cyrus are recorded also in the second book of Chronicles, as well as Ezra 1:2. 2 Chronicles 36:23 states,

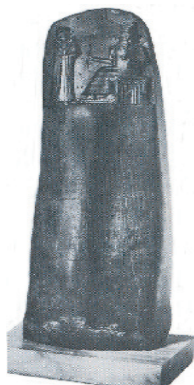
Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth

the Lord God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? May the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up!

Cyrus was a humanitarian. He cared for people and wanted all people to be at ease in their own land. His policy of letting captured peoples return to their native lands is clearly depicted on his monumental cylinder. His policy was the exact opposite of that of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings. He allowed people to return to their lands as the Bible states and the cylinder historically confirms.

There are scores of archaeological artifacts that confirm the history of the Bible, as well as the languages and customs of Bible times. There are the **Mari Tablets** that were written primarily from the eighteenth century B.C. by northwestern Semites. These tablets explain many Israelite traditions. There are the **Nuzi Texts**. These texts release an enormous amount of information concerning the social and legal customs during the times of the patriarchs. The giving of a slave girl to a husband by the wife if the wife cannot bear children, is found in these texts. These texts also further explain the birthright laws. Such laws were kept by Esau and Jacob. The **Execration Texts** belong to the late twentieth and nineteenth centuries B.C. They contain valuable information about the political and ethnic history of Palestine in the early patriarchal period.

The **Amarna Tablets** explain numerous activities of the old Babylonian Empire. The **Canaanite Alphabet Tablets** from Ugarit give us a vast amount of secular history contemporary with the times of Moses. There are also small artifacts as coins, potsherds, or stone documents that list names as Pontius Pilate, Sergius Paulus, Herod the Great, Herod



Code of Hammurabi
King of Babylon
1755 – 1750



Complete scroll of Isaiah that was discovered in the Dead Sea caves in 1947. Dates from 175 B.C. to A.D. 68.

Antipas, Agrippa I and II, Bernice and countless other characters of the Bible. Biblical archaeological discoveries have piled up so much in the last few decades that books on Bible archaeology must continually be revised in order to keep our knowledge current about great discoveries.

The historical accuracy of the Bible does not prove the inspiration of the Bible. However, if the Bible is inspired it must be historically accurate. Other books of history can be historically accurate. If their record of history contradicts archaeology, then their credibility falls. If the Bible could be found to be in contradiction with history revealed through archaeology, then its inspiration would be brought under question. But the Bible is in harmony with history because it is the inspired word of God.

- 23.** When Belshazzar was assassinated, who began to reign over the kingdom of the Medes?
(A) Darius, (B) Sennacherib, (C) Nebuchadnezzar, (D) Hezekiah
- 24.** Which kingdom of the Medo-Persians Empire eventually conquered the city of Babylon without any battle?
(A) Hezekiah, (B) Darius, (C) Joram, (D) Cyrus
- 25.** Which king allowed the Israelites to return from captivity in all the lands to which they had been taken throughout the centuries?
(A) Cyrus, (B) Darius, (C) Nebuchadnezzar, (D) Sennacherib

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

1. What is significant about the Moabite Stone in reference to the history of Israel?
2. What is significant about the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III in reference to the kings northern kingdom of Israel?
3. In what ways did Shishak affect all of Israel?
4. In what ways did Sargon II affect the Israelites?
5. Why did Hezekiah build a tunnel?
6. How was Sennacherib prevented from conquering Jerusalem?
7. How does Jehoiachin's Ration Receipts explain events related to the final years of Judah?
8. In what ways did Cyrus affect the history of the Israelites while they were in captivity?



ABBREVIATIONS**OLD TESTAMENT**

Genesis - **Gn**, Exodus - **Ex**, Leviticus - **Lv**, Numbers - **Nm**, Deuteronomy - **Dt**, Joshua - **Ja**, Judges - **Jg**, Ruth - **Rt**, 1 Samuel - **1 Sm**, 2 Samuel - **2 Sm**, 1 Kings - **1 Kg**, 2 Kings - **2 Kg**, 1 Chronicles - **1 Ch**, 2 Chronicles - **2 Ch**, Ezra - **Er**, Nehemiah - **Ne**, Esther - **Et**, Job - **Jb**, Psalms - **Ps**, Proverbs - **Pv**, Ecclesiastes - **Ec**, Song of Solomon - **Ss**, Isaiah - **Is**, Jeremiah - **Jr**, Lamentations - **Lm**, Ezekiel - **Ez**, Daniel - **Dn**, Hosea - **Hs**, Joel - **Jl**, Amos - **Am**, Obadiah - **Ob**, Jonah - **Jh**, Micah - **Mc**, Nahum - **Nh**, Habakkuk - **Hk**, Zephaniah - **Zp**, Haggai - **Hg**, Zechariah - **Zc**, Malachi - **Ml**

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew - **Mt**, Mark - **Mk**, Luke - **Lk**, John - **Jn**, Acts - **At**, Romans - **Rm**, 1 Corinthians - **1 Co**, 2 Corinthians - **2 Co**, Galatians - **Gl**, Ephesians - **Ep**, Philippians - **Ph**, Colossians - **Cl**, 1 Thessalonians - **1 Th**, 2 Thessalonians - **2 Th**, 1 Timothy - **1 Tm**, 2 Timothy - **2 Tm**, Titus - **Ti**, Philemon - **Pl**, Hebrews - **Hb**, James - **Js**, 1 Peter - **1 Pt**, 2 Peter - **2 Pt**, 1 John - **1 Jn**, 2 John - **2 Jn**, 3 John - **3 Jn**, Jude - **Jd**, Revelation - **Rv**

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