

Biblical Archaeology

INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

PART 1

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Ostraca

The most numerous items found by archaeologists during excavations of ancient sites are **potsherds**, or broken pieces of pottery. These fragments of earthenware are also referred to as **ostraca (ostrakon singular)**, from the Greek word for “shell, sherd.” Pottery fragments served as inexpensive **writing materials** in many places in the ancient Middle East, including Egypt and Mesopotamia. **Ostraca** were used for recording **contracts, accounts, sales**, and so forth, just as memo pads and sheets of paper are used today. Generally written with ink, the texts on ostraca varied from just one word to several dozen lines or columns.

The names of Manasseh's (Joseph's son) sons

When the Israelites conquered the Promised Land and divided it among the tribes, the site of Samaria was located in the tribal territory of Manasseh. According to Joshua 17:1-6, ten clans of **Manasseh**, through his grandson **Gilead**, were allotted tracts of land in this area. They were **Abiezer**, **Helek**, **Asriel**, **Shechem**, and **Shemida**. The sixth male, **Hepher**, had no grandsons but had five granddaughters—**Mahlah**, **Noah**, **Hoglah**, **Milcah**, and **Tirzah**—and each of them received a tract of land.—Numbers 27:1-7.

In 1910, George A Reisner and others of the Harvard Semitic Museum discovered 63 potsherds containing inscriptions written in ink. The potsherds were found in the remains of the treasury of the palace of Ahab in ancient Samaria. Ahab was king of Israel (Northern Kingdom). Thirty of them identify the clan/district name of 7 of the 10 offspring of Manasseh recorded in Joshua 17:2-3 and Numbers 26:28-33. Each of the five sons of verse 2 are identified; **Abiezer** (1 ostracon), **Asriel** (2 ostraca), **Helek** (6 ostraca), **Shechem** (1 ostracon), and **Shemida** (17 ostraca). Two of the daughters of Zelophehad the son of Hephher (verse 3) are identified; **Hoglah** (2 ostraca) and **Noah** (1 ostracon).

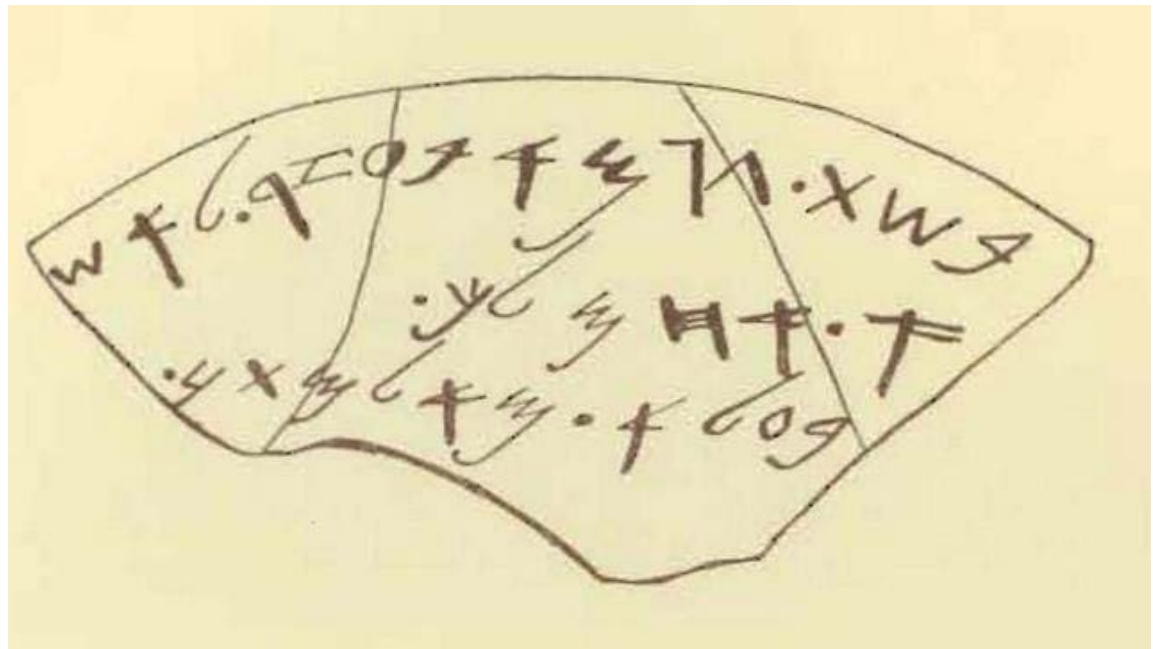
G A Risner, G F Fisher and D G Lyon, *Harvard Excavations at Samaria, 1908-1910*. Vol. II: Plans and Plates. <http://www.etana.org/node/747>.

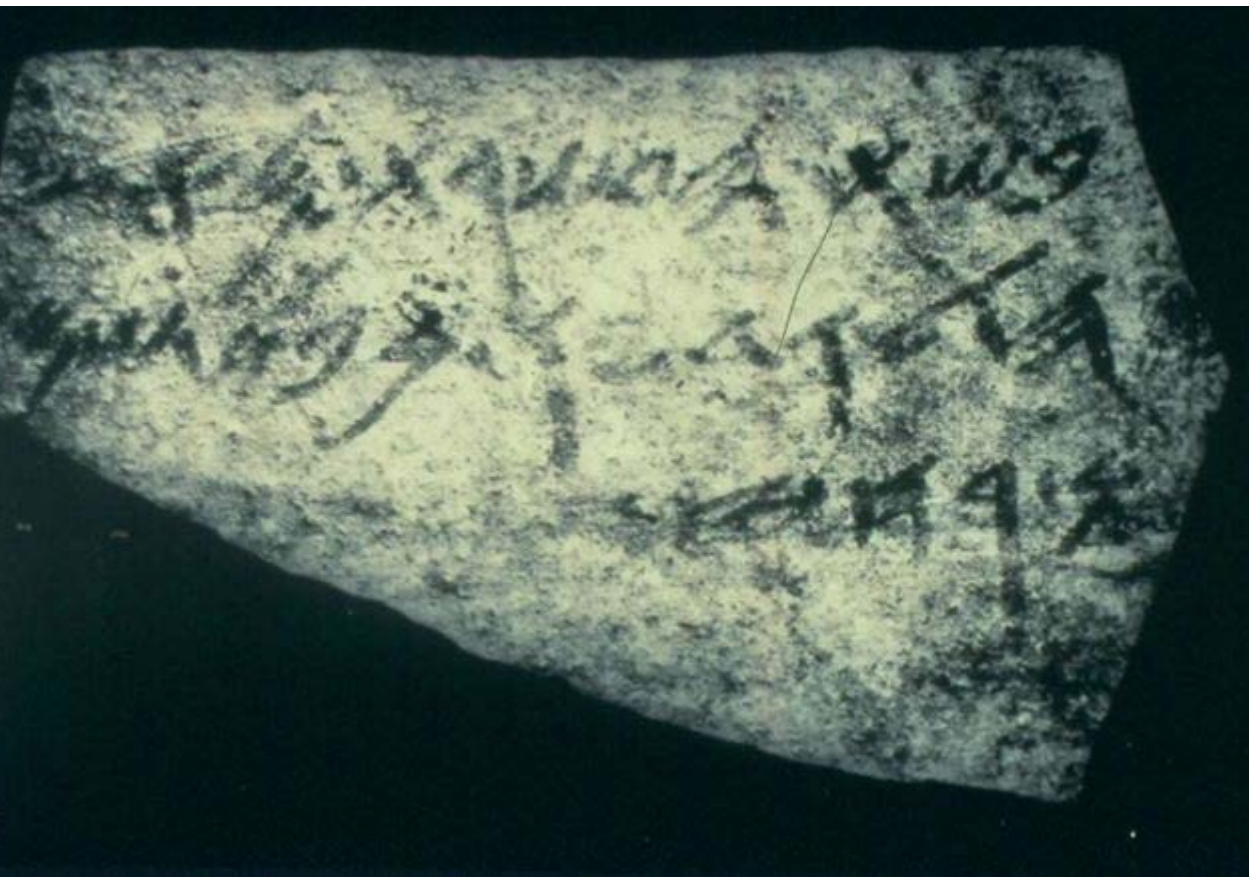
These ostraca appear to be the oldest biblical archaeological discoveries and provide compelling evidence for the people associated with Israel's early tribal history.

Samaria Ostraca Drawing

“In the tenth year, from Azzah to Gaddiyaw, a jar of refined oil.”

Samaria Ostrakon 17a





Pharaoh Shishak

The military campaign into Israel by Pharaoh Shishak, the first Egyptian king to be mentioned in the Bible, was found recorded on the walls of the Temple of Amun in Thebes, Egypt. The image is of Shishak attacking his enemies. Thereby confirming the Bible.

1 Kings 14:25–26.

K. A. Kitchen, Shishak's Military Campaign in Israel, Confirmed, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, May/June, 1989, pages 32–33.



The Merneptah Stele

This stele dates to the reign of Pharaoh Merneptah (1236–1223 BC). It commemorates the victories of Egypt. However, the last paragraph contains a fascinating reference to Israel:

Canaan has been plundered in every evil way ... **Israel** is devastated having no seed.

This is the earliest documentation of Israel besides the Bible and the only known mention of Israel in Egyptian records. It resides in the Cairo Museum.





David's capture of Jerusalem

After Saul died, David became king (1010 BC), he united Israel and his capital was at Hebron. Jerusalem was a Canaanite city occupied by the Jebusites and David desired to have it for his seat of power.

However, it was built on a limestone outcrop with walls on top of steep canyons thereby making it well fortified and almost impossible to capture. The inhabitants had access to a plentiful supply of fresh water from the Gihon Spring which was accessed via a shaft that reached down to the spring. The water would be of great value and particularly if the city came under siege.

When David's army reached Jerusalem, the Jebusites were so confident that the city would not fall, they taunted David by saying that even the blind and the lame could defend the city.

2 Samuel 5:6-9, 1 Chronicles 11:6

Apparently, David new about the water shaft, so he said to his men that the only way to conquer the Jebusites will be via the water shaft and he will make the man who is able to enter the city, the commander of his army. We then read that it was Joab the son of Zeruiah who claimed this honour.

In 1887, the British engineer, Captain Charles Warren discovered a (the) shaft that now bears his name which runs from within the old city to a spot near the Gihon Spring.



The narrow and tall shaft was demonstrated to be transversable when a member of Warren's team climbed from the top to the base. It has been long thought that this is the water shaft that Joab scaled to launch his surprise attack on the city. In 1998, while a visitor center was being constructed, builders discovered that there was an additional passageway, about two meters higher and starting from the horizontal curved tunnel that skirted the 14 metre vertical shaft, and continued to the pool much nearer to the Gihon Spring.

In 2005, archaeologists discovered the ruins of walls that would have protected the overland path to the spring prior to the tunnel's construction. Further evidence for this being the original water shaft that Joab climbed comes from the discovery of **ceramics** which date to the **18th century BC**.



The House of David Inscription

In 1993, at the completion of a 25-year excavation of the archaeological site at Tel Dan in northern Israel, someone noticed lines of writing on a rock being highlighted by the afternoon sun. Upon closer examination, it was revealed to be a stele fragment mentioning King David's dynasty. It is the first mention of King David, and the earliest mention of a significant biblical figure, outside the Bible. The inscription is now in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.



The Hittites

A group of people called Hittites are mentioned 47 times in the Bible, one had prominence as being one of King David's mighty men and the husband of Bathsheba. His name was Uriah the Hittite. But there was no evidence of their existence and many claimed the Bible to be wrong. However, in 1906 German explorers while searching the ruins of the ancient city of Bogazkoy in Turkey uncovered five temples, magnificent sculptures and over 10,000 clay tablets. They announced to the world that the Hittites had been found.

Douglas Connelly, *Amazing Discoveries that unlock the Bible*, Zondervan, 2008, page 26.



Those who used the absence of archaeological evidence about the Hittites to mock the accuracy of the Bible were left embarrassed and silent, God's word will always be attacked by some people, but a good rule of thumb is : “The biblioskeptic is always wrong.”



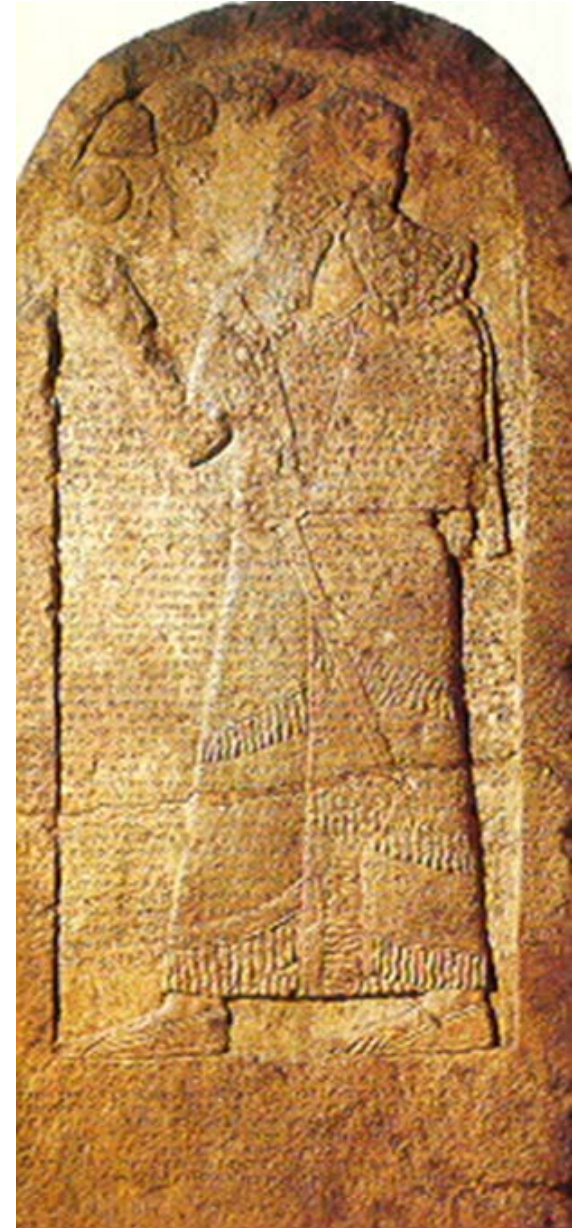
The names of biblical kings on an Assyrian stele

A stele of Shalmaneser III, king of Assyria from 859-824 BC showing him saluting his gods, was found and now resides in the British Museum (room 6). The text which covers both front and back of the stele describes Shalmaneser's first six military campaigns including specific mention of Ahab (king of Israel) and Ben-Hadad (king of Syria). Ahab succeeded his father Omri as king of the northern kingdom of Israel and married Jezebel as mentioned in 1 Kings 15-22. Whereas, Ben-Hadad was king of Syria (Aram) and is mentioned in 1 Kings 20 and 22.

The relevant quotation is:

*I approached Karkara. I destroyed,
tore down and bound Karara, his
royal residence. He brought along to
help him 1,200 chariots, 1,200
cavalrymen, 20,000 foot soldiers
belonging to Hadaezer [**Ben-Hadad**]
of Damascus, 2,000 chariots,
10,000 foot soldiers belonging to
Ahab the Israelite.*

The Stela of Shalmaneser III



Naboth's Vineyard

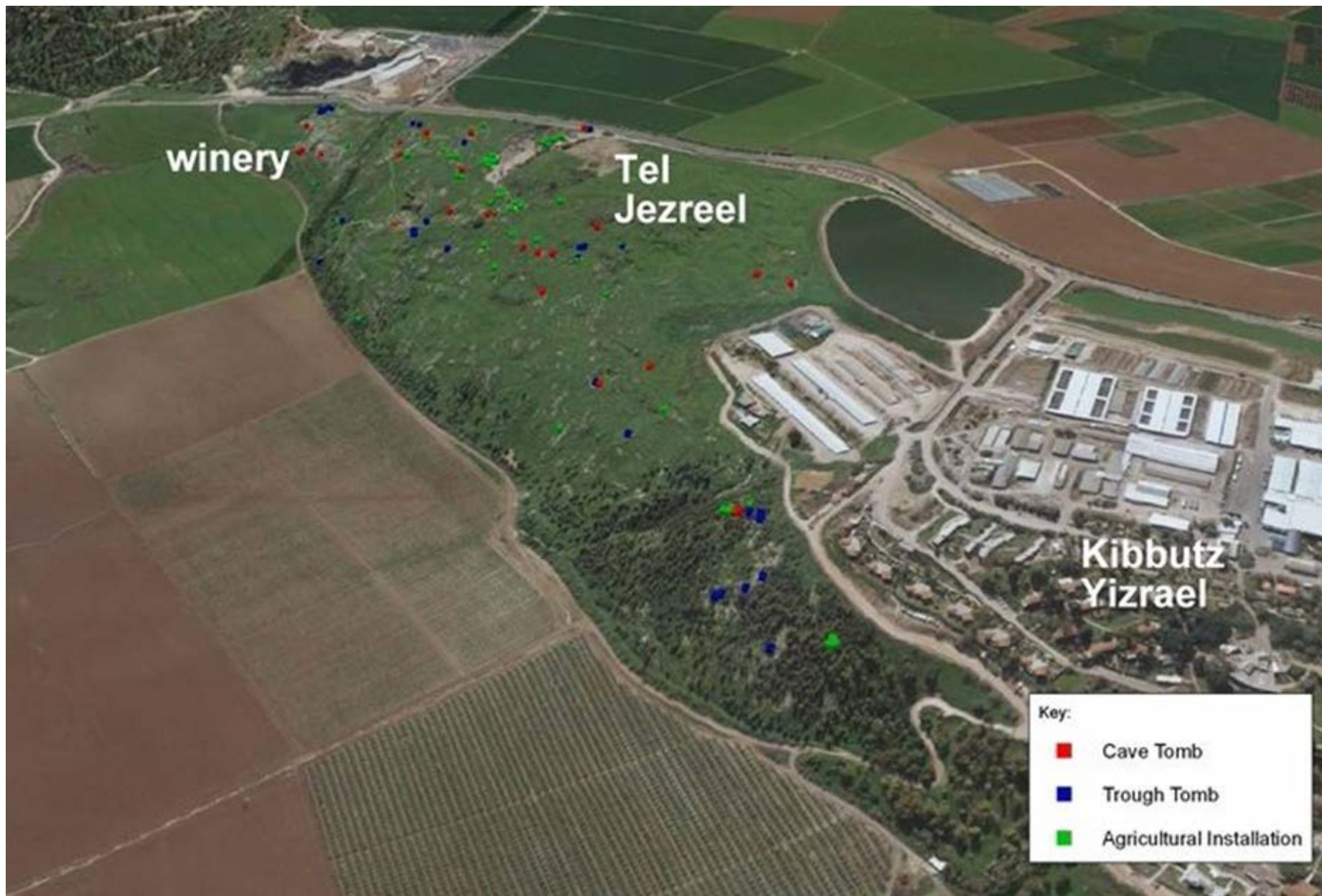
Ahab, the king of the northern kingdom known as Israel, coveted a vineyard which was close to his palace. The vineyard was owned by Naboth and Ahab asked to buy it or exchange it for what he considered to be a better vineyard. Naboth refused, because it was against the Mosaic Law to sell his ancestral land. Ahab's wife, Jezebel asked him why he was downcast (sulking) and he told her that Naboth would not sell him his vineyard.

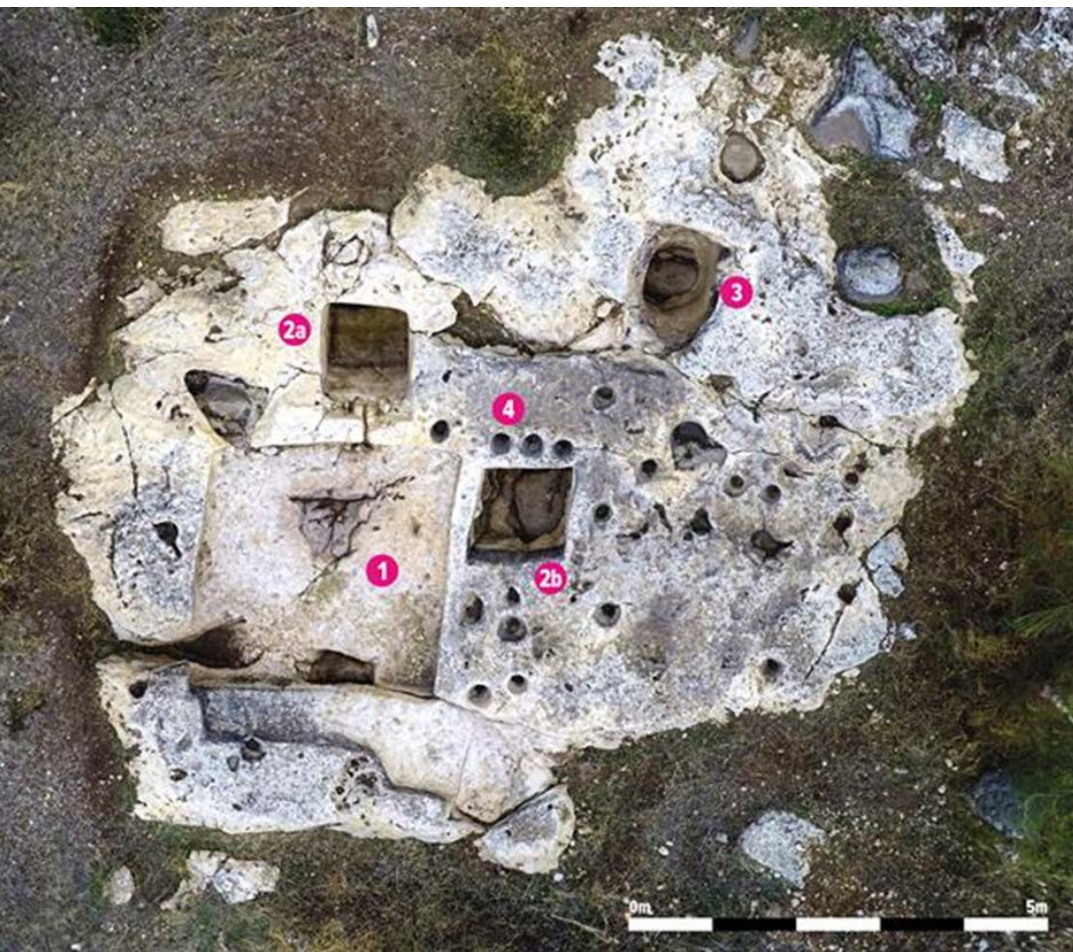
The passage goes on to give an account of how his Phoenician wife Jezebel, hatches a successful plan to have Naboth killed and his vineyard seized. Their triumph is short-lived, as Elijah pronounces God's judgement on them both. Ahab repents but his dynasty is ended with the death of his son Joram and Jezebel is eaten by dogs.

1 Kings 21:23.

2 Kings 9.

Since 2012, Norma Franklin of the University of Haifa and Jennie Ebeling of the University of Evansville, Indiana, USA, have supervised a team excavating the Jezreel Valley. Initially they commissioned an airborne LiDAR (light imaging, detection, and ranging) scan method, that measures distance to a target by illuminating the target with pulsed laser light and measuring the reflected pulses with a sensor. Differences in laser return times and wavelengths can then be used to make digital 3-D representations of the target. This process revealed several features that had remained hidden for centuries. They identified 360 features on the landscape, among them 57 wine and olive oil presses and other agricultural installations.





The image shows the complex cut into limestone bedrock consisting of a treading floor (1), two vats (2a and 2b), a basin (3) and numerous mortars or pits (4). Freshly treaded grape juice would flow from the rectangular treading floor into the primary fermentation vat (2a). The division between the two tanks is sectioned through to allow for the flow of the grape juice as can be seen. The close-up image shows this clearly. After a few days, the wine-to-be would be strained into jars and then left in a cool place for secondary fermentation.

The authors state that it is not easy to date ancient rock-cut wineries, but they provide solid circumstantial evidence for their assignment of this winery to being that of Naboth.

1. They were able to carbon date a few fragments of plaster from the base of the treading floor which showed the final use of the treading floor was between the mid first century BC to mid first century AD.
2. They conclude that the Jezreel winery was hewn during the Israelite monarchy, based on comparisons with other wineries whose date is known with greater accuracy.
3. The absence of evidence of a beam or screw press, which were later innovations.

4. A strong clue as to the exact location of Naboth's vineyard is given in 2 Kings chapter 9. As a consequence of Ahab and Jezebel's role in the death of Naboth, God spoke through Elijah that Ahab's dynasty would come to an end and his wicked wife Jezebel would be eaten by dogs. All this came about when the commander of Israel's army Jehu, mounted a *coup d'etat*, and Ahab's son and then king, Joram went to meet him along with Judah's king Ahaziah. Jehu kills Joram and has his body dumped on what was once Naboth's vineyard (verse 25). Ahaziah was mortally wounded as well. The authors reasoned that the place where Joram was killed and his body dumped, was the same spot where they uncovered the vineyard.

The winery was next to a military compound as well.

The fall of Samaria

The fall of Samaria to Sargon II, (Sennacherib was his son) king of Assyria, was found recorded on his palace walls, as was the defeat of Ashdod by Sargon II.

- 2 Kings 17:1–6, 24; 18:9–11.
- Isaiah 20:1.
- Britannica Online, retrieved May 2, 2011.



The siege of Lachish

The siege of Lachish by Sennacherib was found recorded on the Lachish reliefs.

- 2 Kings 18:13, 17.
- britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/mes/panel_palace_of_sennacherib-4.aspx.

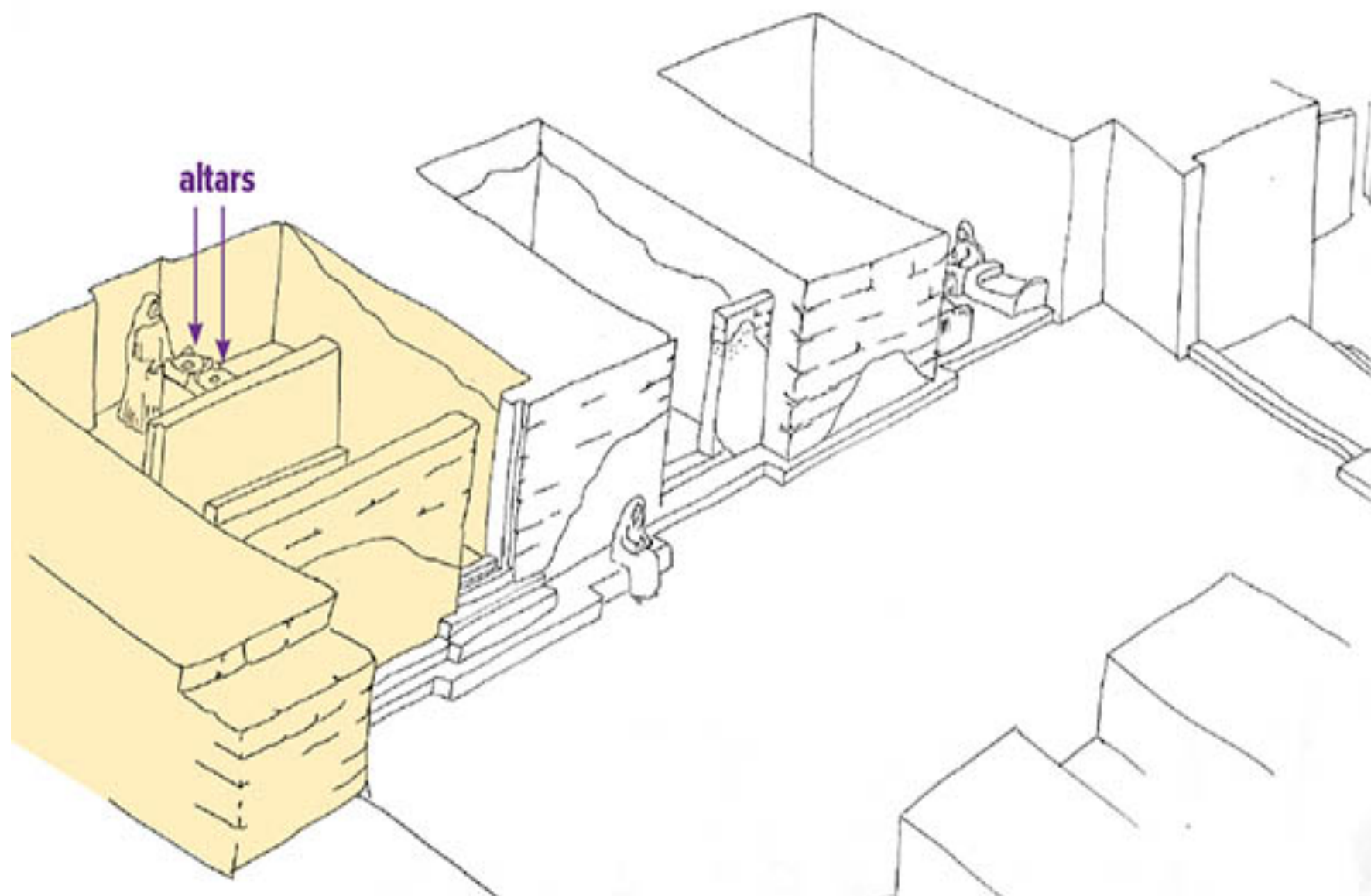


Further excavations of Lachish

The Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) excavated the remaining three rooms of the gate at Lachish and they found one was used as a shrine for the worship of gods. This is not surprising because king Josiah of Judah; *broke down the shrines at the gate—at the entrance to the Gate of Joshua, the city governor, which is on the left of the city gate.* The director of the IAA excavation, Saar Ganor, described what they found: *Steps to the shrine gate in the form of a staircase ascended to a large room where there was a bench upon which offerings were placed. An opening was exposed in the corner of the room that led to the holy of holies; to our great excitement, we found two four-horned alters and scores of ceramic finds consisting of lamps, bowls and stands in this room.* 2 Kings 23:8.

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/ancient-toilet-shows-judeans-fought-idol-worship-1.5443823>





Most surprising of all was the discovery of a seat carved of stone with a hole in the centre and what the archaeologists describe as a toilet. This latrine was unquestionably a form of desecration of the shrine room. When Jehu killed king Ahab's son Joram, all his family and all those associated with his kingdom, he tore down the temple of Baal and the Bible goes on to state; *They demolished the sacred stone of Baal and tore down the temple of Baal, the people have **used it for a latrine** to this day.*

2 Kings 10:27.





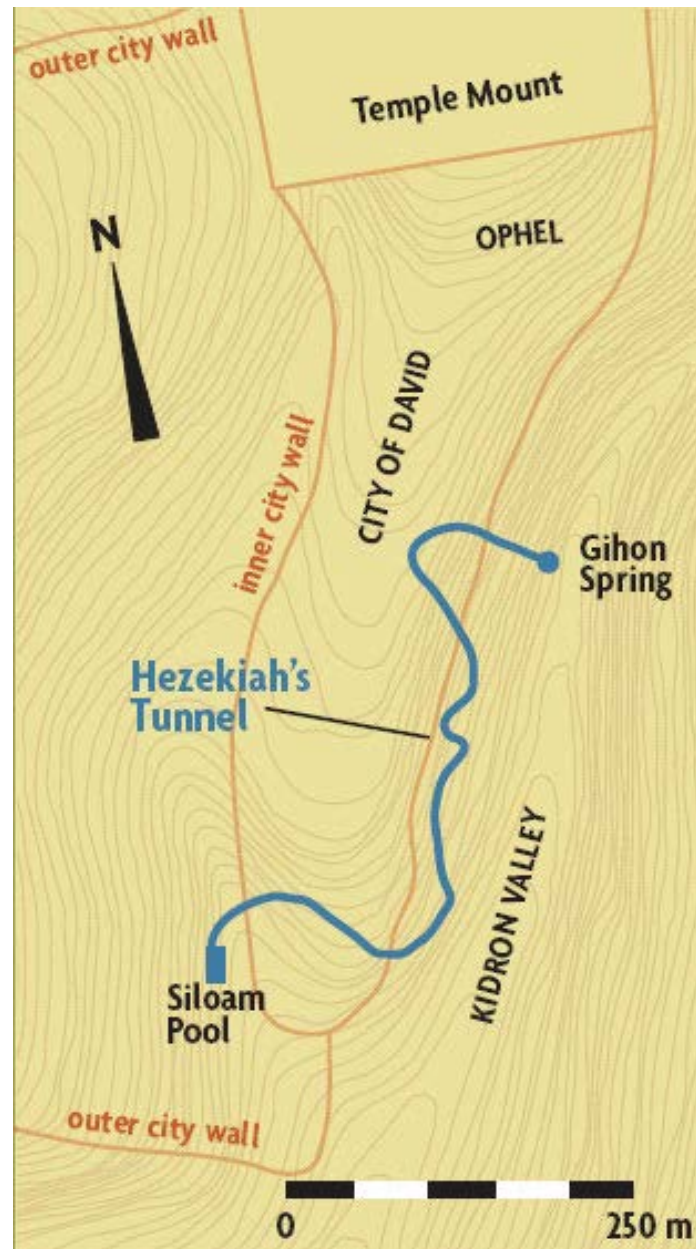
Hezekiah's Tunnel

The Bible states that the Judean king Hezekiah commissioned a tunnel to be built to carry water from the Gihon Spring, which was outside the city wall, to within the city, in order to give Jerusalem an adequate water supply in the event of a siege from the threatening Assyrian army.

The tunnel was constructed between the period 727 BC and 698 BC and was discovered by Edward Robinson, an American Bible scholar, in 1838. It is still carrying water and people can walk along all of its 533 meters.

2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chronicles 32:3–4.





Hezekiah's Wall, mentioned in 2 Chronicles 32:5, parts of which, are present today for all to view.

Judea's godly king took steps to prepare Jerusalem for an Assyrian invasion. Not only did he have the tunnel constructed, he also had a large wall built to protect the City from the Assyrian battering rams.

The wall was unearthed in the 1970s by Israeli archaeologist Nahman Avigad and dated to the reign of King Hezekiah. The Broad Wall as it became known, is a massive defensive structure, seven meters thick. The unbroken length of wall uncovered by Avigad's dig, runs 65 metres long and is preserved in places to a height of 3.3 metres.

Scripture implies that the wall and water tunnel project were hastily completed due to the imminent threat of Sennacherib's army. This haste is evident by an analysis of the wall. Avigad noticed that the stones used to build the wall were smaller than the stones normally used for such protective structures. It now appears that in his haste, Hezekiah used stones from nearby homes. This is confirmed by Isaiah who was the Lord's prophet advising Hezekiah and who wrote; *Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many: and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool. And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall.*

This statement is also a confirmation of the historicity of Isaiah's writings as well as the Bible's mentioning of Hezekiah's construction.

Isaiah 22:9-10.



Hezekiah's bulla (seal)

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem announced a significant discovery on December 2, 2015; the first seal impression of a Judahite king ever found by archaeologists in Jerusalem.

The impression says, “Belonging to Hezekiah [son of] Ahaz, king of Judah.”

“Although seal impressions bearing King Hezekiah’s name have already been known from the antiquities market since the middle of the 1990s—some with a winged scarab (dung beetle) symbol and others with a winged sun—this is the first time that a seal impression of an Israelite or Judean king has ever come to light in a scientific archaeological excavation,” Dr Eilat Mazar said in the Hebrew University press release.



The Taylor Prism

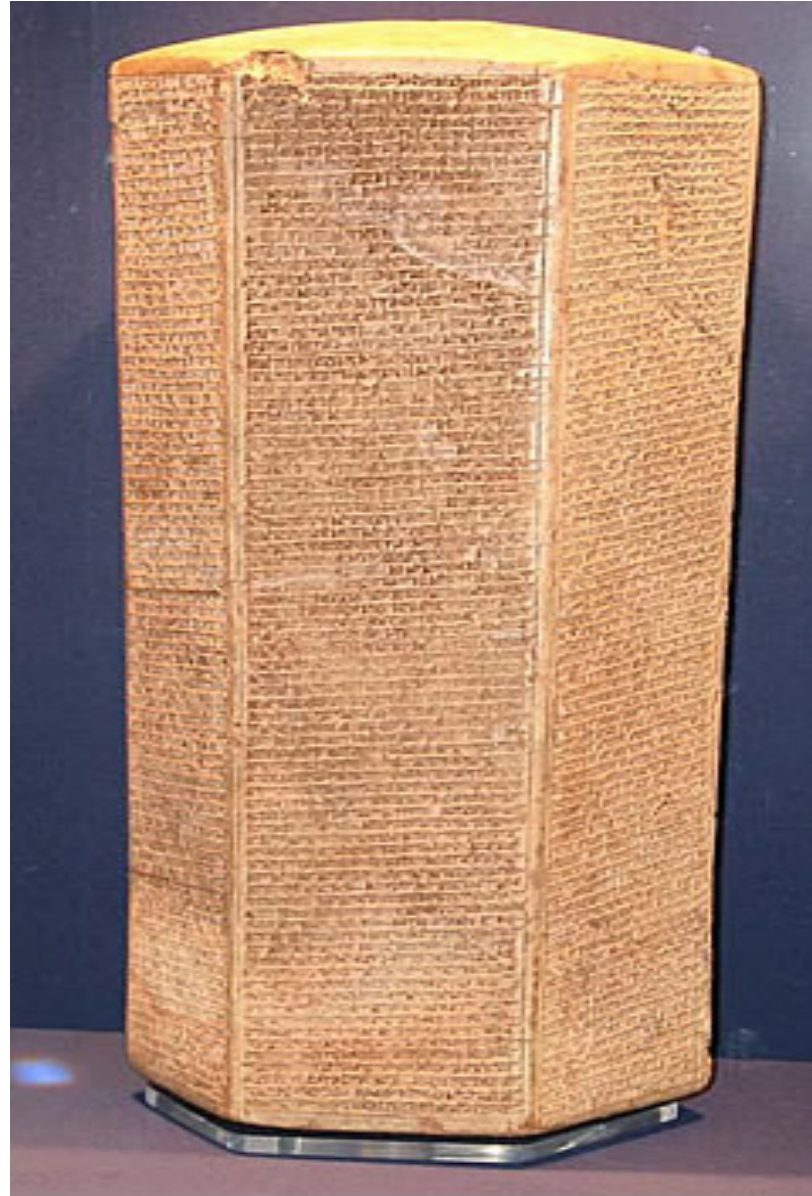
Hezekiah's name is on an Assyrian stele. King Hezekiah had his tunnel and wall constructed in order to have protection and a plentiful supply of water during a siege from the all-conquering Assyrian army. But Hezekiah had no need for any defensive measures because the Lord was on his side. He prayed in the temple and in the morning, 185,000 men of the Assyrian army were dead. This event is confirmed by the Greek historian Herodotus who refers to it in his manuscript; Histories which he wrote in approximately 450 BC. Sennacherib consequently retreated to Nineveh. However, he did record his victories on stele.

wikipedia.org/wiki/Assyrian_siege_of_Jerusalem.

This stele has been named after Colonel Taylor of the British army, who discovered it in 1830, in the ruins of Sennacherib's palace in Nineveh. It resides in the British Museum. The stele confirms the following points made in the Bible—Sennacherib did invade Judah; he conquered many cities and trapped Hezekiah in Jerusalem. In addition, the stele reveals that Hezekiah paid him tribute, but this happened before Sennacherib came to Jerusalem. It seems likely that Sennacherib added this statement as a way of explaining why he did not lay waste to Jerusalem as he had done to 46 other cities. No mention is made of the capture of Jerusalem.

2 Kings 18:14-15.

The Taylor Prism

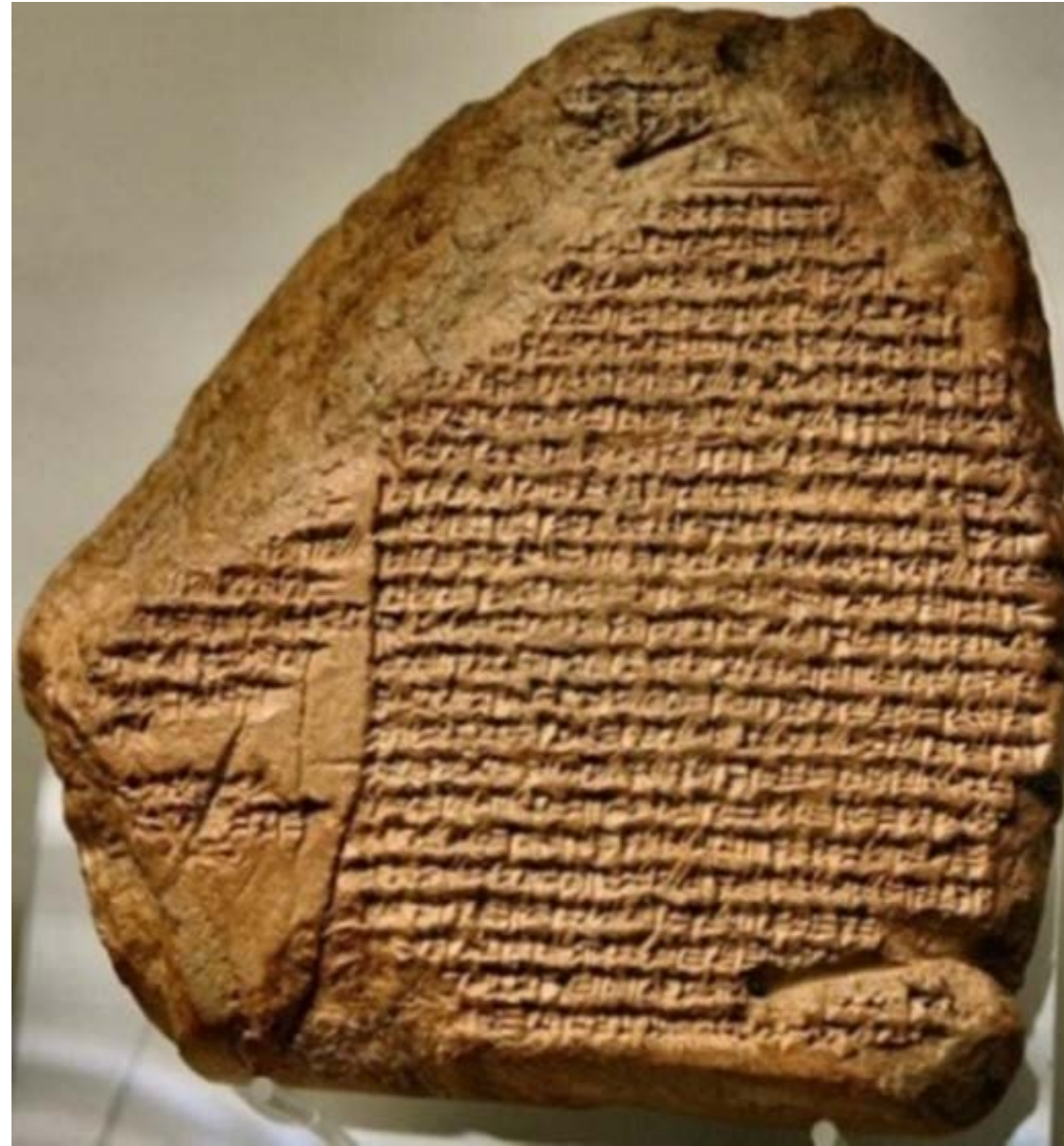


Belshazzar

The existence of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, named in Daniel chapter 5, was doubted. The last king of Babylon was Nabonidus, according to recorded history. However, tablets were found showing that Belshazzar was Nabonidus' son who served as coregent in Babylon. This being the case, Belshazzar could only offer to make Daniel 'third highest ruler in the kingdom' (Daniel 5:16) for reading the handwriting on the wall, the highest available position. Here we see the accurate nature of the biblical record, once again confirmed by the discoveries of archaeology.

The Nabonidus Chronicle resides in the British Museum.

le Nabonidus Chronicle



The Moabite Stone

The Moabite Stone is an ancient slab of stone erected in 850 BC by King Mesha; it contains a long inscription commemorating a victory resulting from his revolt against King Ahab of Israel. It was found at Dibon, Jordan, in 1886 by F. A. Klein, a German clergyman. Although it was broken when Klein tried to purchase it from the local Arabs, most of the fragments were recovered. The stone resides at the Louvre in France.

2 Kings 1:1; 3:4–5.



Amulet scroll

The oldest passage of scripture currently known, was found written on a tiny scrap of silver. It was rolled up and apparently worn around someone's neck, and was buried with the person. It was found by Dr Gabriel Barkay during the excavation of burial caves in the Shoulder of Hinnom area in 1979 and can be seen today in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. An examination of the Hebrew letters fixes it to about **600 BC**. It contains an inscription of the Aaronic Blessing of Numbers 6:24–26:

The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.



Nebuchadnezzar II's campaigns in the West

The inscription states that after re-equipping his army, Nebuchadnezzar marched to Syria in 599 BC. He marched westwards again in December 598 BC, as Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, had ceased to pay tribute. Nebuchadnezzar's army besieged Jerusalem and captured it on 15/16th March 597 BC. The new king of Judah, Jehoiachin, was captured and carried off to Babylon. A series of expeditions to Syria brings this chronicle to an end in 594 BC.

The tablet, describes the events exactly as they are stated in the Bible; 2 Kings, chapter 24:1, 11-14.



Nebuchadnezzar's chief official

While searching through Babylonian financial accounts in the British Museum's great Arched Room, visiting professor Michael Jursa came across a name he half remembered, Nabu-sharrussu-ukin, on a 2,600-year-old Assyrian cuneiform tablet. Professor Jursa, an Assyriologist, checked the Old Testament, and there in chapter 39 verse 3 of the Book of Jeremiah, he found, though spelt differently, the same name: Nebo-Sarsekim. He was, according to Jeremiah, Nebuchadnezzar's chief officer and he was present at the siege of Jerusalem. The tablet is dated to Nebuchadnezzar's tenth year, which was 595 BC, 11 years before Jerusalem was besieged.

Dr Irving Finkel, a British Museum expert, commented:

This is a fantastic discovery, a world-class find. If Nebo-Sarsekim existed, which other lesser figures in the Old Testament existed? A throwaway detail in the Old Testament turns out to be accurate and true. I think that it means that the whole of the narrative (of Jeremiah) takes on a new kind of power.

biblearchaeology.org/post/2008/04/nebo-sarsekim-found-in-babylonian-tablet.aspx, retrieved April 25, 2011.

The British Museum's Great Arched Room



Evidence of Jeremiah's jailers

While Jerusalem was under siege from the Babylonians (588-586 BC), Jeremiah under God's instruction, urged the people to surrender and live, while those who do not will die. As a consequence, some of King Zedekiah's officials took Jeremiah and threw him into a cistern which was empty, although Jeremiah did sink into the mud. Two of these officials were Jehucal son of Shelemiah and Gedaliah son of Pashur.

Jeremiah 38:1-6.

In 2005 archeologist Dr Eilat Mazar of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem discovered a bulla (a clay seal) when she was digging near the Dung Gate of the Old City. It was dated to the sixth century BC and the Paleo-Hebrew writing on it was translated as: *belonging to Jehucal son of Shelemiah son of Shovi.*



While digging further in 2008 in the same area, Dr Mazar discovered another bulla also dated to the sixth century BC, this time with the inscription: *Gedaliah son of Pashur*.

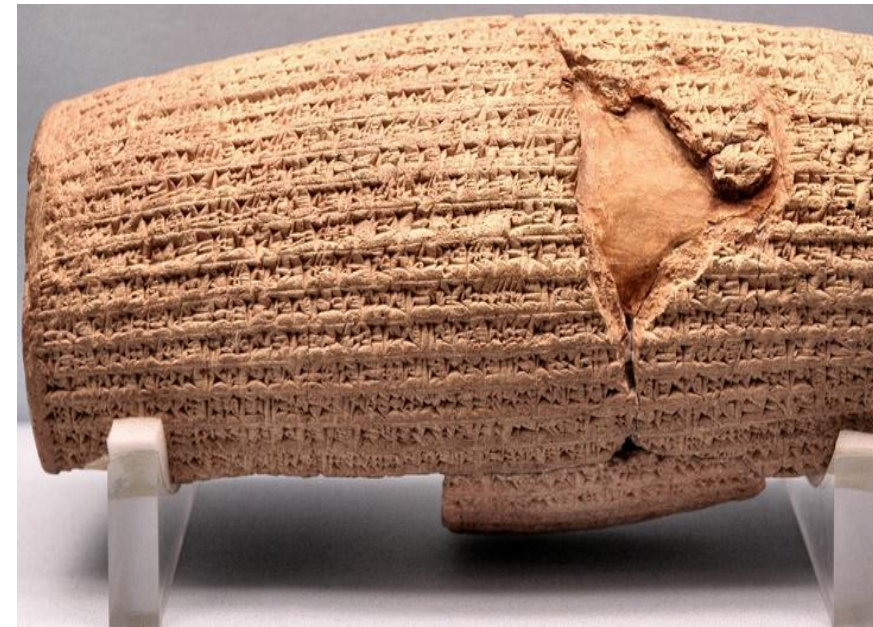
The significance of these bullae is that they confirm the reliability and accuracy of the Bible even down to the names of the king's officials.



Cyrus the Great

Cyrus captured Babylon in 539 BC. But about 200 years before then, God foretold in the Book of Isaiah how He would raise up Cyrus and use him as His instrument. Cyrus is also mentioned in Ezra 1:2–4 and in 2 Chronicles 36:22–23. The Cyrus Cylinder, which tells of Cyrus' exploits after he captured Babylon, was uncovered in 1879 and now resides in room 55 at the British Museum.

Isaiah 45:1–5.



Cyrus was buried in a simple gabled stone tomb outside his capital of Pasargadae in modern Iran. According to the historian Strabo, this inscription once graced the structure

Passer by, I am Cyrus, the son of Cambyses, who founded the empire of Persia, and was king of Asia. Grudge me not therefore this monument.

[wikipedia.org/wiki/Pasargadae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pasargadae), retrieved April 25, 2011.



Further confirmation that Cyrus was once king of Persia comes in the form of an inscription on a palace ruin, stating:

Cyrus the king, an Achaemenid (Persian).

wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus_the_Great,
retrieved April 25, 2011.



Darius the Great

Darius I (the Great) reigned over Persia from 521-485 BC as one of the most able Persian kings. Darius continued Cyrus the Great's policy of restoring the Jewish homeland. In 520 BC the Jews resumed work on the still unfinished temple in Jerusalem . Darius assisted by ordering the project to continue, even granting generous subsidy to help revive temple worship (Ezra 6:1-12). The temple was completed in 516 BBC in the sixth year of Darius' reign.

Darius the Great was king of the Persian Empire from 522–486 BC. On the request of the Jews, he ordered a search of the records and recovered the decree to restore the Jerusalem temple, the construction of which, had been discontinued. Darius the Great's tomb has been discovered at a site in Iran and is identified by an inscription.

Nearby Darius's tomb are three others which are thought to be those of the biblical characters: Xerxes, Artaxerxes and Darius II.

Ezra 6:1–12.

[wikipedia.org/wiki/Darius_I_of_Persia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darius_I_of_Persia), retrieved April 30, 2011.





A great god is Ahuramazda, who created this earth, who created yonder sky, who created man, who created happiness for man, who made Darius king, one king of many, one lord of many.

I am Darius the great king, king of kings, king of countries containing all kinds of men, king in this great earth far and wide, son of Hystaspes, an Achaemenid, a Persian, son of a Persian, an Aryan, having Aryan lineage.



The Dead Sea Scrolls

These documents were held by a small Essene community who lived in the Judean desert on the western shore of the Dead Sea. They were written from about 200 BC to AD 70. They cover all the books of the Old Testament except those of Esther and Nehemiah. They support for the integrity of the Bible in two major ways.



Firstly, they pre-date the oldest preserved written text of the Hebrew Bible by approximately 1,000 years, yet they are almost identical with the standard Hebrew Masoretic text, which confirms the remarkable precision used in the copying of scripture. This gives believers great confidence that the Bible we have today is the same, with the exception of very minor details, to what was originally written.

The Shrine of the Book, Israel



Secondly, they give strong support to the unity of the authorship of Isaiah. Critics have claimed that the book had two authors: one, the original, wrote the first 39 chapters (which are basically about impending judgment), and later, another who completed the book with prophecies that were subsequently fulfilled. Liberal scholars claimed that the latter half of the book must have been written after the events because of its prophetic accuracy. Yet the Dead Sea Scrolls contain the entire book of Isaiah. A close examination shows no break between chapters 39 and 40. In fact, chapter 40 commences at the bottom of the chapter 39 column, thereby clearly demonstrating the unity of Isaiah.



C. R. Swindoll, *Insight's Archaeology Handbook*, Insight for Living, 2008, page 66.

The Pool of Siloam

Liberal scholars claimed that the Pool of Siloam never existed and that John's gospel was pure allegory; the pool normally referred to by that name was built by Eudocia of Constantinople (AD 400–460) and could not have been the pool of Jesus' time. This liberal line of thinking was shown to be wrong in 2005, when a repair team, excavating a damaged sewer, uncovered two steps. Subsequent excavation revealed three groups of five stairs, each about 60 meters long, leading down to a pool.

John 9:6-7.

This pool was built by King Hezekiah and is about 200 meters from the other Pool of Siloam. Commenting on this discovery, James Charlesworth, a professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, said:

To dismiss John as historically unimportant is absurd. Now it becomes clear that the gospel of John does have reliable historical information. We have found there is such a pool, precisely as John describes it.

Christianity Today, October, 2005.

2 Kings 20:20.



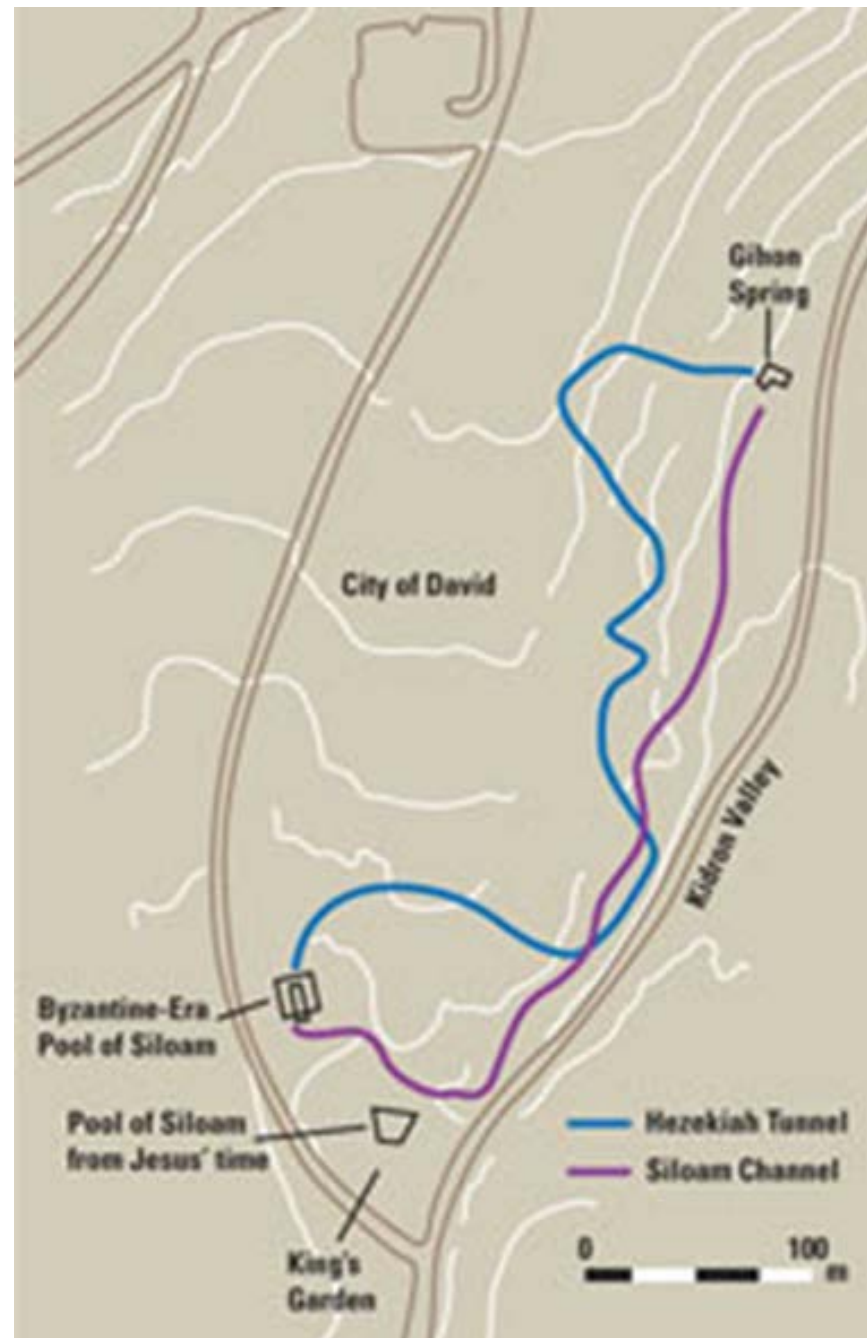
New City Sewer
System That
Resulted in the
Discovery of the
Pool

**Pool
of
Siloam**

Soil still covers
the unexcavated
part of the pool

This is water
from the Gihon
Springs and
Hezekiah's Tunnel
that came through
the previous "Pool
of Siloam". It
continues to flow
today. From here
it flows out and
across the street
into a drain.





The Pilate Inscription

The Bible was the only known source that affirmed Pontius Pilate as being the governor of Judea. Consequently, many doubted that he ever really held that position until 1961, when the Italian archaeologist Dr Frova uncovered a limestone block while he was excavating an ancient theater near Caesarea Maritima. It had inscribed on it a phrase in Latin, which is translated as *Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea*— which is how scripture describes him. Matthew 27:2, Luke 3:1 (Note, Prefect is a Latin word, Governor is its English equivalent).



Caiaphas' Ossuary (A receptacle for containing bones)

Caiaphas was high priest for 18 years (AD 18–36). It is probable that he gained the position by marrying the daughter of Annas, head of a powerful high-priestly clan. Caiaphas is infamous as the leader of the conspiracy to crucify Jesus. Dr Zvi Greenhut of the Israel Museum discovered his ossuary in November 1990. At a meeting of the religious leaders, Caiaphas made this prophetic statement concerning Jesus:

Nor do you consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people and not that the whole nation should perish.

- John 11:50.
- John 18:13.



The Israel Museum statement

The Caiaphas family burial cave was discovered in south eastern Jerusalem. This is the most elegant of the 12 ossuaries found inside. The full name of the deceased – *Joseph son of Caiaphas* – appears twice. The name and the chest's elaborate decorations suggest that this was indeed the ossuary of the Caiaphas from the New Testament.

Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered.
(Matthew 26:57)

The worship of Artemis

During Paul's third missionary journey, he and fellow travelers stopped at Ephesus and argued persuasively about the kingdom of God. Acts 19:11 states: *And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul.*

The remains of the temple of Artemis are shown



As a consequence, many people believed and rejected the worship of Artemis (the Greek name for the Roman goddess Diana, pictured), the goddess of fertility, and the silversmiths who made a living by making statues of Artemis felt the loss of sales and started a riot in order to have Paul and company taken from their midst.

Acts 19:23-27.



The tomb of Herod the Great

Herod the great was the one who ordered all boys 2 years or younger were to be executed (Matthew 2:16).

In May 2007, Professor Ehud Netzer announced that a team of archaeologists from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem had discovered the remains of the sarcophagus and mausoleum of Herod the Great, near the top of Mount Herodium, the cone-shaped hill he had created.

israelnationalnews.com, retrieved December 1, 2008.



The Erastus Inscription

In 1929, an inscription mentioning an Erastus was found near a paved area northeast of the theater of Corinth. The exact inscription, written in Latin, is translated as follows:

Erastus for his aedileship laid [the pavement] at his own expense.

Aediles were elected officials and were responsible for the maintenance of public streets and buildings, they managed the revenues derived from such places and they served as judges

David W. J. Gill provides convincing evidence that this Erastus is one and the same as Paul mentions in his personal greetings at the conclusion to his letter to the Romans (16:23) which he wrote from Corinth, even though it was a common name. The Greek name Paul used to describe Erastus's post is *oikonomos* which was equivalent to aedile.



Again, confirmation of the people mentioned in the Bible

David W.J. Gill, *Tyndale Bulletin*, 1989, 40.2, pages 293-301. http://www.tyndalehouse.com/tynbul/library/TynBull_1989B_40_08_Gill_ErastusTheAedile.pdf

Luke's accurate use of titles

The author of the book of Acts, Dr Luke, carefully recorded the titles of officials as he chronicled Paul's missionary journeys. For example, he mentions *practors* in Philippi, refers to Publius as the *first man of Malta* and the city council of Thessalonica as *politarchs* (Acts 17:6 & 8). This last title has caused some to question the accuracy of Luke since the word was not found in any other Greek literature. Politarches (πολιτάρχη) is a compound of polis (city) and arche (ruler). However, an archaeological discovery in 1835 revealed that *politarches* was an official title; a stone inscription on the Vardar Gate in Thessaloniki used the title and Luke was vindicated.

macedoniantruth.org/forum/showthread.php?t=5630.

ΠΟΛΕΥΑΡΧΟΥΝΤΩΝ ΣΟΛΕΙΑΤΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΚΑ
ΑΤΕΑΣΤΑΙ ΛΟΥΡΟΥ ΤΟΝ ΤΙΟΥ ΣΕΚΟΥΝΑΣ
ΔΟΥΛΟΥ ΔΟΥΛΟΥ ΣΑΒΗΝΟΥ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ
ΕΛΥΣ ΤΟΥ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΚΗΚΟΠΟΥΛΟΥΣ ΔΕ
ΤΟΥ ΠΑΡΜΕΝΙΟΝΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ ΓΑΙΟΥ ΑΓΑΠΗΣ
ΤΟΥ ΤΕΙΤΟΥ ΕΜΕΤΟΥ ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΑΜΜΕ
ΤΟΥ ΑΙΡΗΓΑΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΚΗΚΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΑΥΡΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΑΥΡΟΥ
ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΟΥ ΚΑΡΗΓΑΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΟΥ

Conclusion of Biblical Archaeology

- No archaeological evidence has ever contradicted the Bible
- Evidence has been presented which has confirmed kings, foreign rulers, other people, battles, various events, diggings such as Warren's shaft and Hezekiah's tunnel, mentioned in the Bible.
- It has solved biblical problems such as why Belshazzar could offer Daniel only the third highest position in the land. And The Dead Sea scrolls have shown the book of Isaiah had a single author.
- Pontius Pilate was Governor of Judea as the Bible states.

Archaeology has shown that the people mentioned in the Bible were real, the events actually happened and the places really existed.

The Bible is a book that contains actual history; it is true and can be relied upon.