

PROVING THE BIBLE

Lesson Three

Archeological Evidence:

Archeological Evidence: Ancient discoveries made by archeologists (those that dig and find things in the ground that were really old) that show the Bible is accurate in historical facts.

The role of archaeology is to dig, identify, and determine the ancient records of the past. Some archeological evidence that is discovered relates to the Bible.

It may come as a surprise to find out that the Bible is the most historically accurate book in the world. There has never been a single valid mistake found in it. To those in the field of archaeology, the Bible's accuracy is no surprise. In fact, over the centuries, thousands of discoveries support biblical stories and statements.

Archeology can answer such questions such as: Did the things in the Bible actually happen? Now we might not have archeological evidence for everything – like did Jesus walk on water? We won't find footprints in the water... but archeology can answer did the people, places and things mentioned in the Bible, really exist and occur?

When we look at archeological evidence, we see the Bible is always correct in every detail it ever gives. It is beyond human ability to make a book that is a hundred percent accurate. In fact, in universities, the text books need to be rewritten every few years as new information is determined. Textbooks are constantly in need of revision. But the Bible is always, and has always been, perfectly accurate with no need to ever change. It has never needed a revision or second edition.

Let's look at a few archeological pieces of evidence now.

King David

Question:

What are some things you remember from the Bible, if any, about king David?

King David Stone



Since there was no physical evidence of David, other than the stories in the Bible, some people doubted David was real, even up until 1987. In 1993 in a city called Tel Dan, archeologists found a stone that said “the King of Israel from the house of David”. (Shown above in white letters). This was the first physical proof that there was a kingdom of David from Israel. King David existed historically, just as the Bible stated.

Archeological evidence helped prove the Bible is correct.

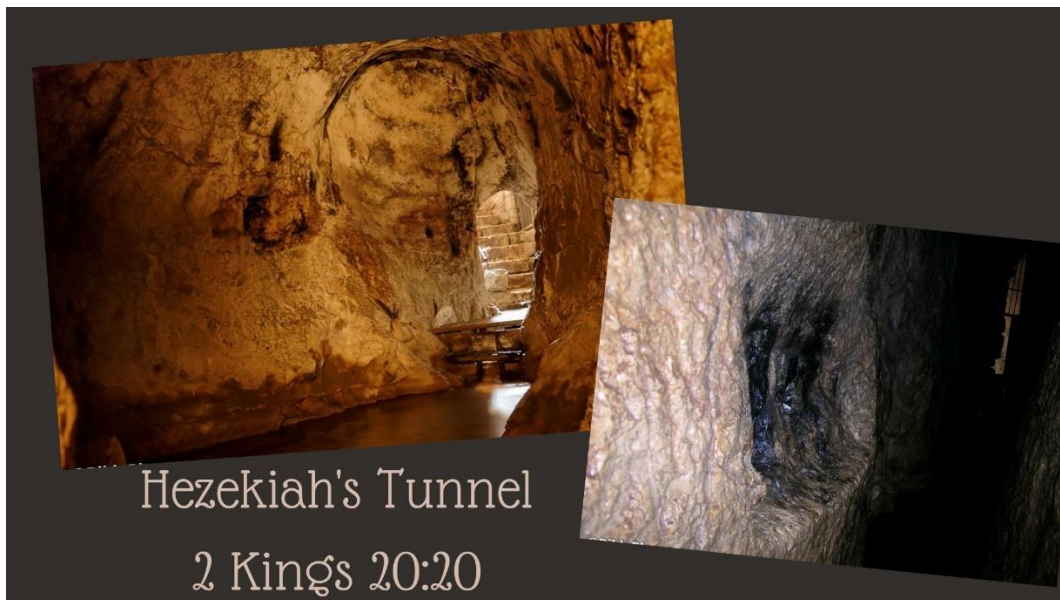
Hezekiah’s Tunnel

The Bible mentions that King Hezekiah built a tunnel to bring water to the city.

2 Kings 20:20

As for the other events of Hezekiah’s reign, all his achievements and how he made the pool and the tunnel by which he brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah?

Hezekiah built the tunnel and brought the water that was outside the city underground to the inside of the city. This was wise. It made sure that the city always had a supply of water, even if enemies tried to attack.



Hezekiah's Tunnel

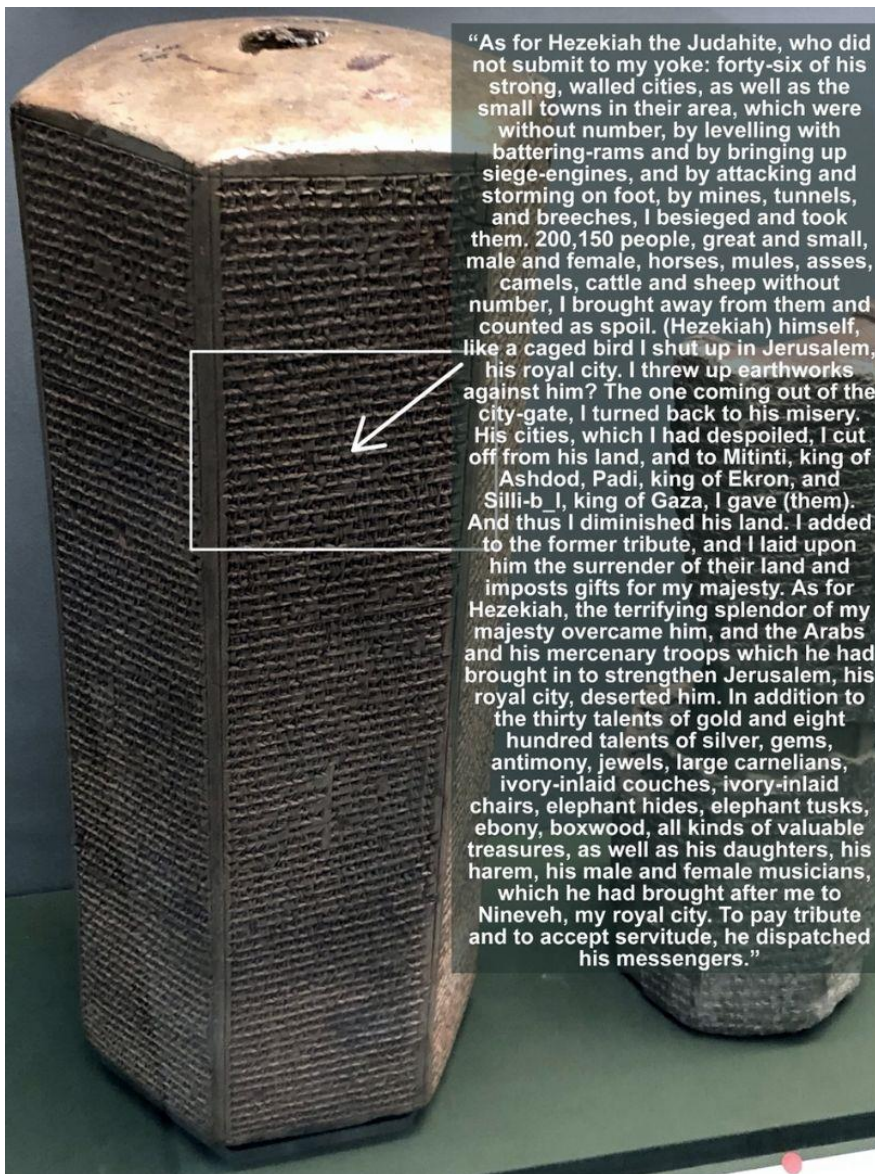
2 Kings 20:20

Archeologists discovered this tunnel under Jerusalem. In fact, if you go there, you can tour the tunnel yourself. On the end of the tunnel, before it was vandalized, it told of the construction. (See the picture above). They started from two ends and worked toward the middle to connect the tunnel. This was very difficult to do. The tunnel is another piece of evidence that proves what the Bible had written was correct.

What about Hezekiah? There is more evidence.

Taylor Prism

This clay prism has writing on it from King Sennacherib. King Sennacherib was an Assyrian who fought against the Israelites. This prism that he wrote on says what he did to Hezekiah.



“As for Hezekiah the Judahite, who did not submit to my yoke: forty-six of his strong, walled cities, as well as the small towns in their area, which were without number, by levelling with battering-rams and by bringing up siege-engines, and by attacking and storming on foot, by mines, tunnels, and breaches, I besieged and took them. 200,150 people, great and small, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, cattle and sheep without number, I brought away from them and counted as spoil. (Hezekiah) himself, like a caged bird I shut up in Jerusalem, his royal city. I threw up earthworks against him? The one coming out of the city-gate, I turned back to his misery. His cities, which I had despoiled, I cut off from his land, and to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Silli-b I, king of Gaza, I gave (them). And thus I diminished his land. I added to the former tribute, and I laid upon him the surrender of their land and imposts gifts for my majesty. As for Hezekiah, the terrifying splendor of my majesty overcame him, and the Arabs and his mercenary troops which he had brought in to strengthen Jerusalem, his royal city, deserted him. In addition to the thirty talents of gold and eight hundred talents of silver, gems, antimony, jewels, large carnelians, ivory-inlaid couches, ivory-inlaid chairs, elephant hides, elephant tusks, ebony, boxwood, all kinds of valuable treasures, as well as his daughters, his harem, his male and female musicians, which he had brought after me to Nineveh, my royal city. To pay tribute and to accept servitude, he dispatched his messengers.”

King Sennacherib says he laid siege (set up weapons to fight) against 46 of King Hezekiah’s cities and other small villages. He says he surrounded Jerusalem.

What does the Bible say about what happened? Let’s read to see.

2 Kings 18:13

In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah’s reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them.

2 Chronicles 32:1

After all that Hezekiah had so faithfully done, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah. He laid siege to the fortified cities, thinking to conquer them for himself.

Question: What do these verses tell us?

One of the cities was the city of Lachish. To celebrate his victory, Sennacherib put a 17-foot-long (5 meters) picture of the fight in his palace. Yet when the Taylor Prism talks of Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, there is no mention of victory. No large picture. Nothing. Why? Let's read on to see.

2 Kings 19:32-36

“Therefore this is what the LORD says concerning the king of Assyria:

“He will not enter this city or shoot an arrow here.

He will not come before it with shield or build a siege ramp against it.

By the way that he came he will return; he will not enter this city, declares the LORD.

I will defend this city and save it, for my sake and for the sake of David my servant.”

That night the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies! So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there.

Question:

What happened to Sennacherib's army according to the Bible?

Let's see what happened to King Sennacherib after he left Jerusalem.

2 Kings 19:37

One day, while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisrok, his sons Adrammelek and Sharezer killed him with the sword, and they escaped to the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son succeeded him as king.

Sennacherib was murdered by his sons.

In Esarhaddon's Chronicles, another piece of archeological evidence, written by another of Sennacherib's sons it says that some of Sennacherib's sons killed their father.

So what do we learn from this? Sennacherib mentions nothing about Jerusalem even though he was bragging for smaller victories to the point of having a large picture in his palace.

The Bible is accurate again. Sennacherib did not have victory in Jerusalem and that soon after he was killed by his own children.

There are so many pieces of archeological evidences showing the Bible is one hundred percent accurate. If the Bible was not trying to be accurate or if the writers were not inspired, they could just leave out all these specific details so that people could not check them. But the Bible is extremely detailed because God is the author, not man.

The Pilate Inscription

Pontius Pilate was a Roman official who governed the area of Judea at the time of Christ's death. Pilate was the one who had the authority to put Christ to death—even though Pilate knew he was innocent.

Although the Bible names Pilate, his name could not be found in archaeological evidence. For hundreds of years, no evidence could be found to prove a man named Pilate had anything to do with either Christ or Judea. Because of this, many made fun of the Bible and claimed that the Bible writers made Pilate up. After all, if Pilate was a leader, wouldn't there be evidence to prove it?



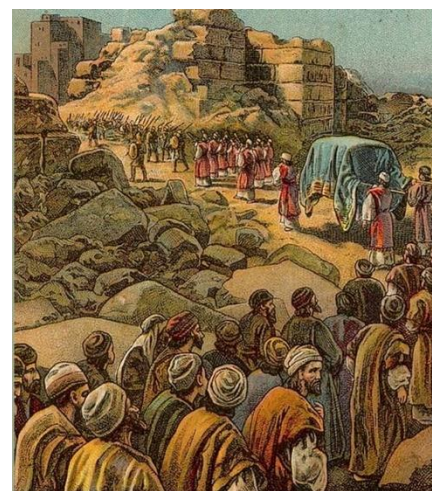
In 1961, an Italian archaeological team working at Caesarea found a stone tablet that measured 32 inches high, by 27 inches wide, by 8 inches thick. On the stone, pictured above, it said “Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea” – almost the exact same title as the one given to him in Luke 3:1. Another proof that the Bible is really the word of God.

The famous archaeologist Nelson Glueck wrote: “...no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference.”

Let's look at two more examples of archeological evidence.

The Walls of Jericho

The Bible says that when the people of Israel went to fight Jericho, in Joshua 6:20, that the walls fell flat and the people went straight up and took the city. In 1930-1936, the archaeologist Garstang, found this to be true. This was amazing because normally a city's walls were pushed in during a fight, not the other way around. The Bible claims the walls of Jericho fell outward “*down flat*” Joshua 6:20. John Garstang's archaeological digs between 1930-1936 found bricks from the wall lying outward from the city. Kathleen Kenyon's digs in the 1950's found the same thing. The fallen bricks formed a ramp for the attacking army to use to climb up into the city. They also found remains of houses built against the inside of the wall. (Rahab's house Joshua 2:15 is mentioned as being part of the wall.)



Archaeologists found a layer of ash and burned debris 1 meter thick, keeping with Joshua 6:24 that said, “*they burned the whole city and everything in it, but they put the*

silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasure of the Lord's house.” (Joshua 6:24).

Garstang and Kenyon found large clay jars filled with harvested grain. (Joshua 3:15 says the conquest of Jericho happened during the harvest season, not before the harvest as was usual to do at that time when fighting a city. Grain was valuable and would normally have been taken by the victorious army. Joshua 6:17-18 says the Israelites did not plunder the city.

The Bible also records that the battle took place after all the food from the fields had been brought in. This was not normal because there would be no food in the fields for the invading Israelites to eat. Yet, the archaeologists found many jars at Jericho filled with grain. This proves they truly did fight after the harvest was finished. Once again, more evidence showing the Bible is true. Walls of Jericho falling flat out; Rahab's house built against the wall; Jericho being attacked after harvest; Jericho being burnt and not plundered by Israel. All are examples of Biblical accuracy.

The Hittite Nation

In Genesis 15 it says there was people called the Hittites, but there was no archeological evidence. Finally, in 1906 old ruins and remains were found in Turkey that proved there really was a Hittite nation written of thousands of years before.

What does this show? That the Bible writers were inspired and didn't come up with this information on their own.

Conclusion

We've seen many, many examples of scientific foreknowledge and archeological evidence and there is so much more you could study as well. For archeological evidence we saw proof that:

there was a king David of Israel, that Hezekiah was a king, Hezekiah's tunnel, the Taylor's prism proves the Bible's statements about Sennacherib and Hezekiah's wars, the existence of Pontus Pilate, the Walls of Jericho, and the existence of the Hittites.

No other books have compared to the Bible. The Bible had 40 men who wrote different parts to make the best-selling, perfectly unified book ever made. There is no way that people could have made a book so perfect. Every text book needs to be changed as new information becomes known, but the Bible has never needed to be changed.

The only reasonable conclusion is that the Bible is from God. The Bible says, "*we can know the truth.*" We can believe, trust and know for fact that the Bible is real, true, and is the perfect word of God.

Question:

What was your favorite fact that we studied today? Why?

Any questions?

Proving the Bible – Archeological Evidence

Find the Words Below

Archaeology Word Search



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|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| CHRONOLOGY | PREHISTORIC | FEATURE |
| ARCHAEOLOGY | ARTIFACT | SURVEY |
| POT SHERD | TEST PIT | EROSION |
| EXCAVATE | CONTEXT | CERAMICS |
| CULTURE | MIDDEN | FRAGMENTS |

