

THE BIBLE AS HISTORY



By the end of the 18th Century, "higher criticism" began to study the Bible disregarding any supernatural elements in it, and questioning the veracity of the people and the places mentioned in it.

Christians remained silent, so archaeology "spoke" during the 19th Century. Almost all the hypothesis of higher criticism were discredited by the new archaeological findings.

For example, the Moabite Stone is an account of events parallel to 2 Kings chapter 3. Several Biblical people and places are mentioned: "I am Mesha [...] king of Moab [...] Omri was king of Israel, and oppressed Moab [...] I took from it the vessels of Jehovah [...] while the house of David inhabited Horonaim."



★ A proven story:

- 🔄 The first kings
- 🔄 The Assyrian invasion
- 🔄 Babylon
- 🔄 Jesus

★ A reliable story

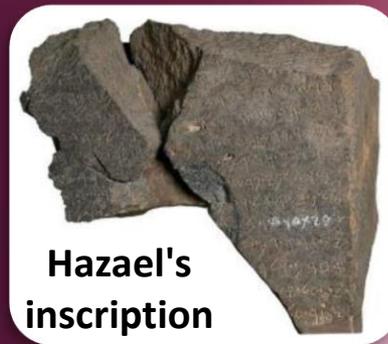
THE FIRST KINGS

"Now the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle, and were gathered at Sochoh, which belongs to Judah; they encamped between Sochoh and Azekah, in Ephes Dammim." (1 Samuel 17:1)

Kings David and Solomon were considered mythical for some time. Later, the location of Ephes Dammim (current Khirbet Qeiyafa), Socoh, Azekah and Elah (Saul's camp) was found.



In Saul's time, Khirbet Qeiyafa was a fortified garrison. This means that the fight between David and Goliath took place in a real place between real armies.



The name of one of Saul's sons (Esh-Baal, 1Chr. 8:33) was found written on a pot made around 1000 BC. The house of David is mentioned in an inscription of Hazael, king of Damascus.



THE ASSYRIAN INVASION

"Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them."

(Isaiah 36:1)

Sennacherib's Annals

In 701 BC, Sennacherib invaded Judah. He destroyed Lachish and besieged Jerusalem. This was proved when his palace in Nineveh was unearthed. An account of the destruction of Lachish was found. Besides, the ruins of Lachish are also proof of this event.

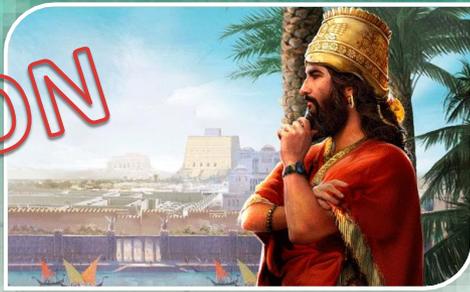
The "Sennacherib's Annals" tell how he couldn't conquer Jerusalem, but "as for Hezekiah the Judean, I shut him in his city like a bird in a cage." Of course they don't mention how his army was destroyed by the angel of the Lord (Isaiah 37:36).

They also confirm the Bible's account of his death. Sennacherib was killed by two of his sons (Isaiah 37:38).



Engraving showing the destruction of Lachish

BABYLON



"The king spoke, saying, 'Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?'" (Daniel 4:30)

The Greek historian Herodotus (5th Century BC) thought that Sammuamat was the queen of Babylon, and that she rebuilt it and made it great. He didn't know about Nebuchadnezzar or Belshazzar.

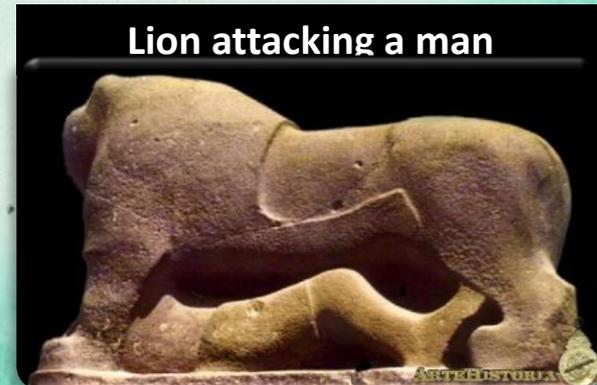
Today we know that Sammuamat was the queen of Assyria, Nebuchadnezzar rebuilt Babylon, and Belshazzar was coreigned with his father Nabonidus.



The Ishtar Gate was one of the gates to the inner city of Babylon. It's currently displayed in the Pergamon Museum in Germany.



Objects were found in archaeological excavations in Babylon that show lions as a symbol of the city (Daniel 7:4).



JESUS

"And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor." (Matthew 27:2)

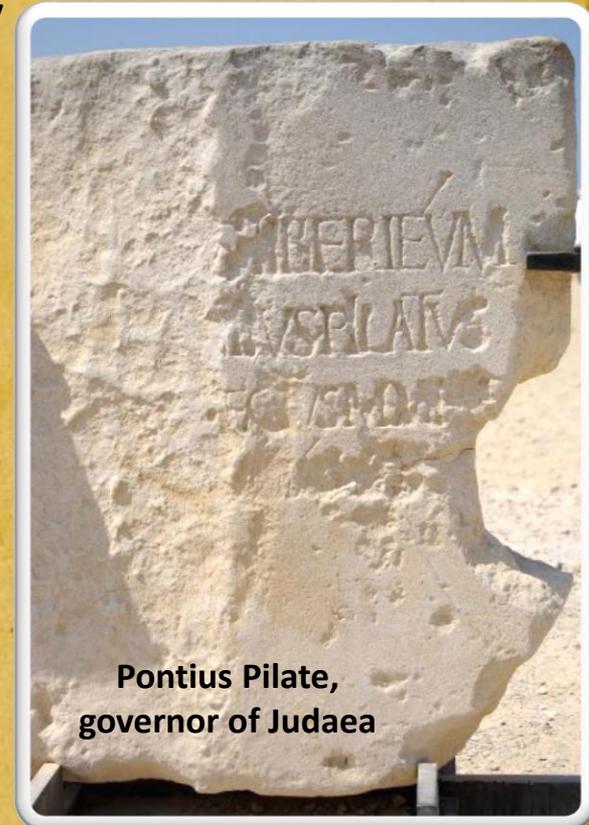


Higher criticism also questioned the existence of Jesus. They alleged a lack of historical records of Him or His contemporaries (Pontius Pilate, Caiaphas, etc.).

Later, a monument from the 1st Century showing the next inscription was found: "Pontius Pilate, governor of Judaea."

The funerary box of Caiaphas and his family has also been found. These findings corroborate the story in the gospels, and in the account of historian Flavius Josephus.

Some letters have also been found that confirm the historicity of Jesus and Christianity in the first Century. For example, Tacitus' and Pliny the Younger's.



Pontius Pilate,
governor of Judaea

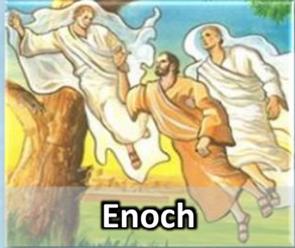
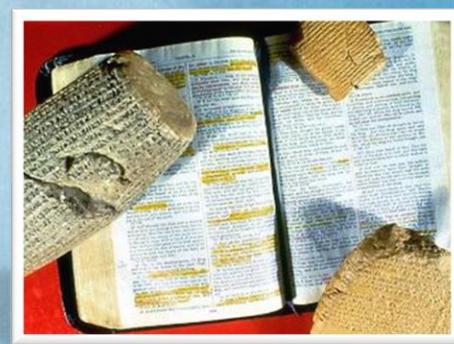


Caiaphas'
ossuary

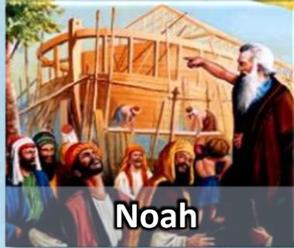
Again, the Bible is proven to be historically reliable.

A RELIABLE STORY

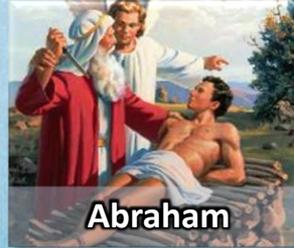
“And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets.” (Hebrews 11:32)



Enoch



Noah



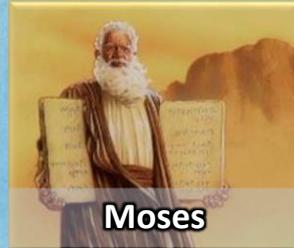
Abraham



Sarah



Joshua



Moses



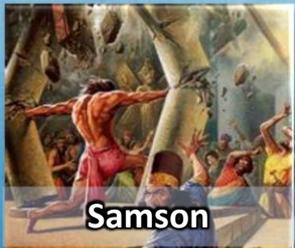
Rahab



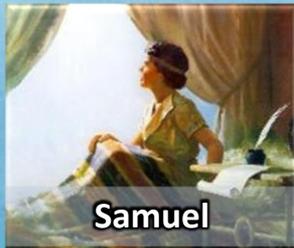
Gideon



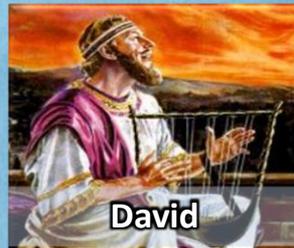
Jephthah



Samson



Samuel



David

Most of the Bible contains the account of historical events. True and reliable events, as we saw in the previous sections.

There is archaeological evidence that support the reliability of the Bible, but they cannot be the base of our faith.

The Bible is more than just history. It contains the stories of men and women of faith who believed in God and followed His instructions.

Their acts of faith and trust motivates us to follow their example (Hebrews 11).

The Bible can transform our lives with the help of the Holy Spirit.

THERE IS MORE!



In 1935, a seal belonging to Gedaliah the son of Pashhur was found (Jeremiah 38:1)

In 1984, another seal belonging to Milkomur servant of the Ammonite king Baalis (Jeremiah 40:14)

In 1996, an amphora was found showing the inscription "*regi Herodi Iudaico*" (to Herod, king of Judaea)

In 2009, a seal belonging to king Hezekiah was found in Jerusalem, although the inscription was not understood until 2015

In that same year, an engraving made with a seal that said "Isaiah the prophet" was found, just 10 feet (3 m.) from where Hezekiah's seal had been found

“God has permitted a flood of light to be poured upon the world in discoveries in science and art; but when professedly scientific men lecture and write upon these subjects from a merely human standpoint, they will assuredly come to wrong conclusions. [...] Those who doubt the reliability of the records of the Old and New Testaments, will be led to go a step farther, and doubt the existence of God; and then, having let go their anchor, they are left to beat about upon the rocks of infidelity.”

E.G.W. (Selected Messages, vol. 3, cp. 38, p. 307)