

## CAN WE TRUST THE BIBLE? Part 12

### “The Witness of Archaeology”

**INTRO:** We are building our confidence in the trustworthiness of the Bible. Most of the testimony given has been internal in nature (God Himself, OT writers, Jesus, Gospel writers, fulfilled prophecy, miracles). Other more external like, preservation in transmission, science (also internal). Today is also an external witness to the accuracy of Scripture as we examine HISTORY and ARCHAEOLOGY. G&N “yet, while archaeology itself . . .” Archaeology only confirms the inspiration and accuracy of the Bible. Wherever archaeology has been able to check on the historicity of the Bible, it has supported the Bible, only increasing the credibility and authority of Scripture (saw some of this in fulfilled prophecy).

**I. OLD TESTAMENT** - History and archaeology, when possible, have confirmed some of the prophecies we discussed relative to some individuals, rulers, cities, and nations.

- A. *Sodom and Gomorrah* (Gen. 13, 18, 19; Lk. 11:26-32; Matt. 10:15) – Image
- B. *Tel Dan Inscription* (2 images) – Some insist the story of David is a myth because no proof existed. In 1993 excavation in Northern Israel uncovered an inscription that mentions the “House of David” (from the lineage of David), which is a biblical term. It is firmly dated 733/722 BC about 200 years after David’ reign (1000-961 BC), providing the first historical evidence of King David.
- C. *Good King Josiah* reigned 640-609 in SK (Judah). (Image) See 1 Kings 13:2; 2 Kings 21-23; 2 Chron. 35:1. A few years ago in Jerusalem “City of David” dig site unearthed a 2600-year-old stone with Nathan-Melech on it, an official in King Josiah’s court (2 Kings. 23:11).
- D. *Ketef Hinnom Scrolls* (2 images) – in 1979 excavating a cave in southwest Jerusalem, a tomb from the late Iron Age (late 7<sup>th</sup> century BC). In the box with the bones, they found two small silver scrolls. It took 3 years to unroll those 3” scrolls! It contained etched characters in Hebrew of “Yahweh” and it included the priestly benediction from Num. 6:24-26. These predate the Dead Sea Scrolls by over 400 years (500 BC). It was probably written after Babylonian exile (586-436BC).
- E. *Dead Sea Scrolls* (2 images) – In 1947 a shepherd boy searching for lost sheep tossed a rock into a cave of Dead Sea. He heard a sound like a broken pottery. Over the next 9 years in 11 caves discovered over 900 manuscripts (mostly fragments) mostly in Hebrew. About 250 were OT

scrolls, representing every OT book, except Esther and a scroll with the entire book of Isaiah.

## **II. NEW TESTAMENT**

- A. *Pilate Stone* in Caesarea (1961) – (2 images) ... words were dedication to “Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea” the fifth governor of Judea, and key player in trials and death of Jesus.
- B. *Jesus Boat* – (image) – Jesus and His disciples spent much time on the Sea of Galilee. In the mid-1980s during a severe drought the remains of a 2000 yr.-old was found buried in the mud. The boat was big enough to hold 15 men, perfectly matching the NT descriptions.
- C. Jerusalem area (map)
  1. *Hezekiah’s Tunnel* (1867) (image) was constructed by King Hezekiah (715-686 BC). It provided water to the city from the Gihon Spring outside the city walls. It was originally built by the Jebusites and later captured by David (2 Sam. 5:6-8). Hezekiah upgraded near end of 8<sup>th</sup> century (2 Chron. 37:2-4; 2 Ki. 20:20). Water was able to flow from Gihon Springs outside the walls to the Pond of Siloam inside
  2. *City of David* (2 maps) – In 2005 a stepped stone structure was unearthed on east side of Mount Zion. The remarkable 65 ft. high foundation stone is from the Iron Age during the reign of King David and is believed to be part of King David’s palace.
  3. *Pool of Bethesda* (Jn. 5) 2 images .. Jesus healed an invalid there. Pool was near the Sheep Gate (map) surrounded by five colonnades. Sick people needed help to get into the water. Archaeologists discovered a double pool with four porticoes, and more.
  4. *Siloam Pool* (2004) image. located at southern tip of the City of David; fed by Gihon Springs through Hezekiah tunnel. It was largest ritual pool in Jesus’ day (Jn. 9).
  5. *Southern Temple Steps* (map) image ... Began to be unearthed in the 1970’s it led to the Temple Mount. It was part of the road from the Pool of Siloam to the Temple. Built by Herod the Great, originally 30 steps were 200 feet wide. Jesus walked these steps many times. Engaged the crowds from these steps. Also, in Acts (2:14-40).
  6. *Caiaphas ossuary* (1990) – image – S. Jerusalem cave – Sadducee High Priest (Matt. 26:57-68)
  7. *The Empty Tomb* (Matt. 28:11-15) – 2 images ... “Ready Defense” (pp. 115-6) – Claudius “decree” ...

ILLUS: Nelson Glueck . . .

**CONC:** And so much more. Regularly making new discoveries only to confirm the Bible is historically and biblically accurate.