

23 Be sure

Archaeology confirms the Bible

Where or what?	What has been found	Bible references	What does this show?
Ur of the Chaldees		Genesis 11:28 Genesis 12:1	
The practice of infant sacrifice		Leviticus 18:21 2 Kings 21:6 2 Kings 23:10	
The burning of Hazor		Joshua 11:11	
Solomon's royal cities		1 Kings 9:15	
The rebellion of a Moabite king		2 Kings 3:4 – 5 1 Kings 16:23-27 1 Kings 11:7 Exodus 3:15	
The tunnel built by a King of Judah		2 Chronicles 32:30 2 Kings 20:20	
The failure of the attack on Jerusalem by an Assyrian king		2 Kings 18:13 2 Kings 19:35	
Latest news from the archaeologists		Jeremiah 39:3	

2000 BC

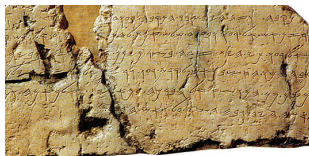
1000 BC

BC|AD



Life in Ur

Once some people thought Ur never existed, but they were wrong. Excavations like the ziggurat (it's been restored a bit for the tourists) have shown that it was a rich and prosperous city. The picture of the chariot comes from a mosaic known as 'The Standard of Ur' (British Museum).



Hezekiah's tunnel

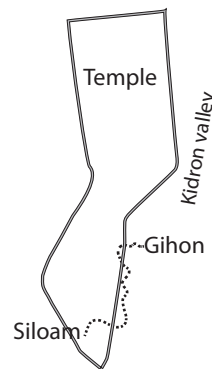
The Siloam inscription is in the Istanbul museum. Translated, it reads, 'The tunnelling was completed.. While the hewers wielded the axe, each man toward his fellow... there was heard a man's voice calling to his fellow... the hewers hacked each toward the other, axe against axe, and the water flowed from the spring to the pool, a distance of 1,200 cubits...'

The Assyrians had taken the northern kingdom of Israel into captivity, and Hezekiah, king of Judah, was afraid that the same would happen to him.

So he devised a way of bringing water into the city of Jerusalem by making a tunnel from a spring (called Gihon) just outside the wall on the east side of the city, right into the city, ending at the Pool of Siloam.

Now the people would not run out of water in a siege.

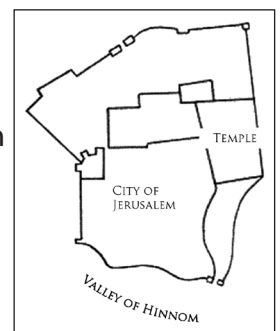
2 Chronicles 32:30 explains how he blocked off the spring of Gihon and diverted it into the city itself, and 2 Kings 20:20 mentions how he made a conduit (tunnel) and brought water into the city.



The Tophet in Carthage in North Africa. Between 400 BC and 200 BC about 20,000 urns were deposited here. They contained the charred bones of little children.

Child sacrifice ...

is a terrible thing, but it used to happen. In the remains of Carthage in North Africa (pictured here) there is a cemetery called a Tophet where children were buried who had been burned as an offering to heathen gods. This practice is condemned in many places in the Bible - for instance, in Leviticus 18:21. Nevertheless, 2 Kings 21:6 describes how the evil king Manasseh made his own son 'pass through the fire'. There was a Tophet just outside the walls of Jerusalem. Look at 2 Kings 23:10, Jeremiah 7:31.



1000 AD

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The Taylor Prism, which is in the British Museum in London.

The Taylor Prism ...

is a clay prism written in 691 BC. It is inscribed with the annals of the Assyrian king Sennacherib. It describes his siege of Jerusalem in 701 BC during the reign of king Hezekiah, which is recorded in Isaiah 36, 2 Kings 19 and 2 Chronicles 32:9-22.

The prism says that the Assyrians conquered 46 walled cities and many smaller settlements, and that they deported 200,150 people. It also says that the siege resulted in Hezekiah being shut up in Jerusalem 'like a caged bird'. Read 2 Kings 18:13-17 and decide for yourself whether the prism supports the Bible account.

The Bible goes on to say that an angel of the Lord destroyed the Assyrian army. Not surprisingly, Sennacherib keeps quiet about that, but he doesn't claim to have captured Jerusalem either.

A Greek historian called Herodotus wrote many years later that during the night Sennacherib's army 'were overrun by a horde of field mice that gnawed quivers and bows and the handles of shields, with the result that many were killed fleeing unarmed the next day.' It seems an unlikely explanation, but he obviously got the point - Sennacherib was miraculously defeated.

The Mesha Stele ...

is commonly known as the 'Moabite Stone'. It is a black basalt stone bearing an inscription by King Mesha of Moab.

It was written about 840 BC as a memorial of Mesha's victories over Omri king of Israel and his son (probably his grandson Jehoram). It says that Omri had been oppressing Moab 'as the result of the anger of the Moabite god Chemosh'. It also bears the earliest archaeological reference to the Hebrew name of God - YHWH.

The events, names, and places mentioned in the Mesha Stele correspond precisely with the Bible. For example:

- Mesha is recorded as the King of Moab in 2 Kings 3:4;
- Kemosh is mentioned in numerous places in the Bible as the god of the Moabites (1 Kings 11:7, for instance).
- The reign of Omri, King of Israel, is chronicled in 1 Kings 16, and
- The inscription records many places and territories (Nebo, Gad, etc.) that also appear in the Bible.
- Finally, 2 Kings 3 recounts a revolt by Mesha against Israel.



The Mesha Stele, which is in the Louvre Museum in Paris.

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Hazor ...

was one of the cities that Joshua captured as he led the Israelites in the conquest of the land. There is a small detail in the record, mentioned just in passing - have a look at Joshua 11:11-13.

So it is interesting to know that archaeologists have found evidence that the city was destroyed by fire. The ash in some places was 3 feet deep. It also seems that Canaanite and Egyptian idols found at the site had been mutilated, which would support the Bible record that it was the Israelites who destroyed the city.

Just in passing, have a look at Jeremiah 49:33 and see if you think that prophecy has come true.



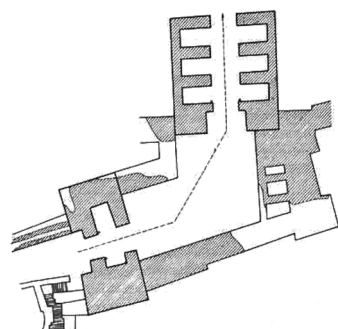
The ruins of Hazor, which are still being excavated.



One of the gates of Gezer

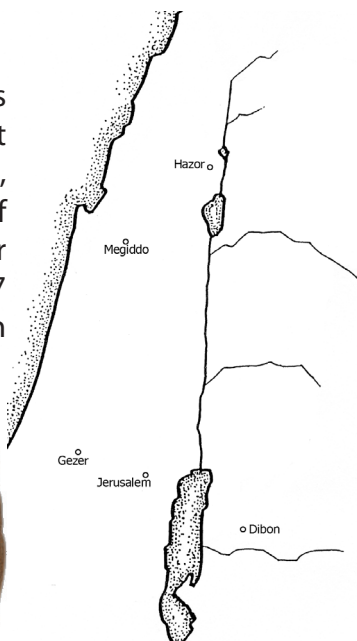
Solomon's gates

Look at 1 Kings 9:15 and find out something of Solomon's building projects. In three cities, Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer, excavations have shown that the design of the gates is the same. There were six side chambers which provided protection for soldiers who were defending the cities, and the passage bent to the right, which would have impeded attackers with weapons in their right hands. Compare the two photographs.



A recent discovery

This Babylonian clay tablet sheds new light on Jeremiah 39:3. It gives the name (Nebo-Sarsekim, as in the NIV) and title (chief eunuch) of a Babylonian officer at the siege of Jerusalem in 587 BC. It confirms that this man really existed.



Visit the British Museum

You can see things mentioned here:

- The Taylor Prism
- The Cyrus Cylinder
- The 'Standard of Ur'

And other things which confirm events that we read about in the Bible, like:

- The Lachish Letters - messages sent during a Babylonian attack.
- The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III
- The Nabonidus Cylinder and Nabonidus Chronicle
- The Politarch Inscription
- The Lachish reliefs

See what you can find out about them.

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