

Archaeology is the study of human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and the analysis of artefacts and other physical remains.

The consensus of ancient historians is that Nabonidus (556-539 BC) was the last king of Babylon. However, according to Daniel, Belshazzar was the king in Babylon when it fell, and he was killed that night, Daniel 5:1 states:

Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords and drank wine before the thousand..

5:30: In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.

Belshazzar is also mentioned in Daniel 5:2, 9, 22, 29, 30; 7:1; 8:1.

Bible sceptics loved Belshazzar — he obviously didn't exist they said. In 1850, Ferdinand Hitzig called Belshazzar “a figment of the writer's imagination.” The historians all agreed; the last king was Nabonidus, not Belshazzar. He was captured, not killed. Daniel was obviously all wrong. It was written centuries later and totally inaccurate.

Daniel's account of Belshazzar was powerful evidence that sounded the death knell for the Bible's credibility.

What more could a sceptic want?

And why did this mythical Belshazzar offer Daniel only the third highest place in his kingdom and not the second after himself?

*...now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the **third** ruler in the kingdom.* (Daniel 5:16)

Evidence 1 The Nabonidus Cylinder, British Museum reference number, WA 91128
which says:

*As for me, Nabonidus, king of Babylon, save me from sinning against your great godhead and grant me as a present a lifelong of days, and as for **Belshazzar, the eldest son – my offspring** – instill reverence for your great godhead in his heart and may he not commit any cultic mistake, may he sated with a life of plenitude.*



Evidence 2

Excavations at the temple of Shamash in Sippar (southern Iraq) led by Hormuzd Rassan (1826-1910) recovered a mid-sixth century BC cylinder that describes Nabonidus' reconstruction of pagan temples in Harran.

It proceeds to state that he (Nabonidus) was away from Babylon on various expeditions and temple reconstructions projects. This **ten-year departure from Babylon** provides the reason as to why he left his son Belshazzar king and co-regent during his absence. And it explains why Belshazzar could offer Daniel only third highest ruler of the land.



Evidence 3

The Nabonidus Cylinder found at Sippar, above, told of the things that Nabonidus did while he was away from Babylon, but the *Verse Accounts of Nabonidus* (British Museum number 38229, pictured), state clearly, that he appointed his son Belshazzar, king and co-regent during his absence.

Column II line 18 of the tablet, States:

The king entrusted the royal power to his son Bēl-šaru-ušur (Belshazzar).

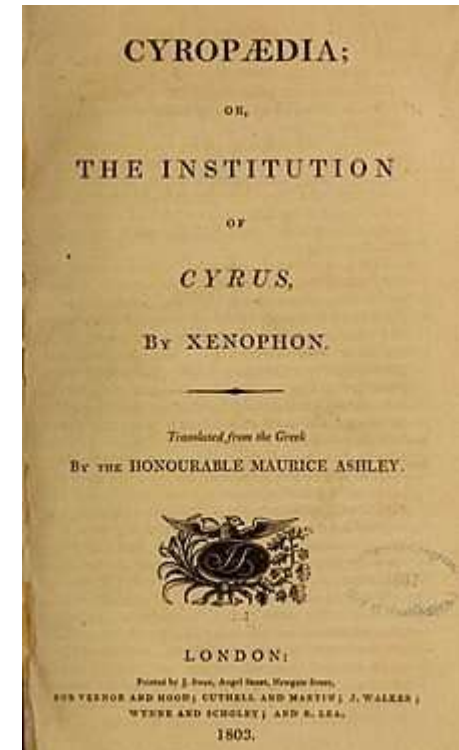
His son Belshazzar is mentioned in lines 5, 10, 19 and 23.



Evidence 4

Further support for the Bible's claim that Belshazzar was king of Babylon when the city fell to the Medes and the Persians comes from a Greek historian by the name of Xenophon. He was an Athenian-born military leader, philosopher, and historian. At the age of 30, Xenophon was elected a commander of one of the biggest Greek mercenary armies, the Ten Thousand, that marched on and came close to capturing Babylon in 401 BC.

In his *Cyropaedia* (pictured), **The Encyclopaedia Britannica** states that **Xenophon** named **Belshazzar** as king of Babylon when the city fell to **Cyrus the Great**.



Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem

2 Kings 18:17 to 19:37

When the Assyrian king, Sennacherib surrounded Jerusalem and made demands on king Hezekiah and Hezekiah went into the temple with Isaiah and prayed, in the morning there were 185,000 Assyrian soldiers lay dead.

The Bible goes on to tell us in 2 Kings 19:36-37:

So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son succeeded him as king.

The Bible makes three points:

1. Sennacherib was murdered by his sons while he was praying to his gods.
2. After his sons had killed him they escaped to the land of Armenia.
3. His son Esarhaddon succeeded him as king of Assyria.

The Assyrian tablets (British Museum 1880,0719.28) were discovered by Hormuzd Rassam in the Southwest palace in the ruins of Nineveh. The broken clay tablets comprise a letter concerning Arda-Mulisha's (Adrammelech in Hebrew) conspiracy to murder his father Sennacherib.



An Assyrian inscription of Esserhaddon alludes to his father's violent death at the hands of his brothers: *I am my older brothers' youngest brother (and) by the command of the gods Aššur, Sîn, Šamaš, Bēl, and Nabû, Ištar of Nineveh, (and) Ištar of Arbela, (my) father, who engendered me, elevated me firmly in the assembly of my brothers, saying: 'This is the son who will succeed me.'*



The inscription goes on to say: *‘Thereafter my brothers went mad and whatever was wicked against gods and men they did and plotted evil: they drew the sword in the midst of Nineveh godlessly: to exercise the kingship against each other they rushed like young steers.’*

Essarhadon proceeds to relate how, when he heard the news of his father’s murder, cried, *‘Woe and rent his princely robe. He then chased the “usurpers.”’* and records how, *‘those rebels, the ones engaged in revolt and rebellion, when they heard of the advance of my campaign, they deserted the army they relied on and fled to an unknown land.’*

The third piece of archaeological evidence is the Chronicle of Nabonassar

(Pictured. This tablet is exhibited in the British Museum ANE 92502

(84_2_11,356) gives a very concise statement:

on the 20th day of the month Tebetu, Sennacherib king of Assyria, his son killed him in a rebellion.



There are three complete prisms of the annals of Sennacherib.



They confirm scripture in the following way:

1. That Sennacherib was king of Assyria. 2 Chronicles 32:10:
This is what Sennacherib king of Assyria says.
2. Hezekiah was king of Judah. 2 Kings 18:1: *In the third year of Hosea son of Elah king of Israel, Hezekiah son of Ahaz, king of Judah began to reign.*
3. Sennacherib captured all the cities of Judah. 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.

The Assyrian siege ramp at Lachish

The attack on Lachish by Sennacherib is mentioned several times in the Bible: 2 Kings 18:9-19:37; 2 Chronicles 32 and Isaiah 36-37.

A recent issue of the *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* announced the identification of an Assyrian **siege ramp** used in the attack of Lachish in 701 BC.



The identification of biblical characters of Samaria

In the Black Obelisk, we have confirmation of the biblical characters, Jehu king of Israel, Omni, and the powerful Assyrian king Shalmaneser III all in the correct place and time period as they are mentioned in the Bible. It resides in the British Museum



Brick making in Egypt by Hebrew slaves

The Bible tells us that while the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, they had to make bricks for the Pharaoh's building projects. Exodus 1:8-11 states:

8 Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.

9 And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we:

10 Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.

*11 Therefore they did set over them **taskmasters to afflict them** with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.*

Exodus 5:6-9 states:

*6 And Pharaoh commanded the same day the **taskmasters** of the people, and their officers, saying,*

*7 Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and **gather straw for themselves**.*

*8 And the tale of the **bricks**, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God.*

9 Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words.

We know from the Papyrus of Anastasi III (3.1–2) (shown) that the **Egyptians set quotas for brickmakers**: Likewise, people are making bricks ... they are making their **quota of bricks daily**.



Rekhmire was an ancient Egyptian noble and official of the 18th dynasty who served as “Governor of the Town” (Thebes) and Vizier during the reigns of Thutmosis III and Amenhotep II. A relief in his tomb shows **Semitic and Nubian slaves making bricks. Egyptian supervisors monitor them as they gather mud and water, mix the materials, form mudbricks, carry dried bricks, and measure a mudbrick wall.**

Semitic people are the Jews, hence the term antisemitic. They were the descendants of Noah’s son, Shem.



David's capture of Jerusalem

1 Chronicles 11:6. And David said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zeruah went first up and was chief.

2 Samuel 5:8. And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind that are hated of David's soul, he shall be chief and captain.

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





Judean king Hezekiah

Hezekiah was the son of Ahaz and the 13th successor of David as king of Judah, who ruled from Jerusalem. The dates of his reign are often given as 715 to about 686 BC, a period of 29 years on the throne. The Bible describes Hezekiah so: *There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him.*

The archaeological evidence that exists of his reign, his projects and the events that occurred during his time, is very strong.

Hezekiah's Tunnel was constructed to bring water into Jerusalem from the Gihon Spring, which was outside its wall and accessible to the rampaging Assyrian army. As well, he had its source blocked. Today, people can view the tunnel and if they have the desire, walk through its 533 metres. Hezekiah's Tunnel is mentioned in 2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chronicles 32:2-4.



Hezekiah's Seal (Bulla), bearing his winged scarab (dung beetle) has been unearthed in an official archaeological dig in 2015.



© Eilat Mazar, Photo: Oren Tadmor

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.

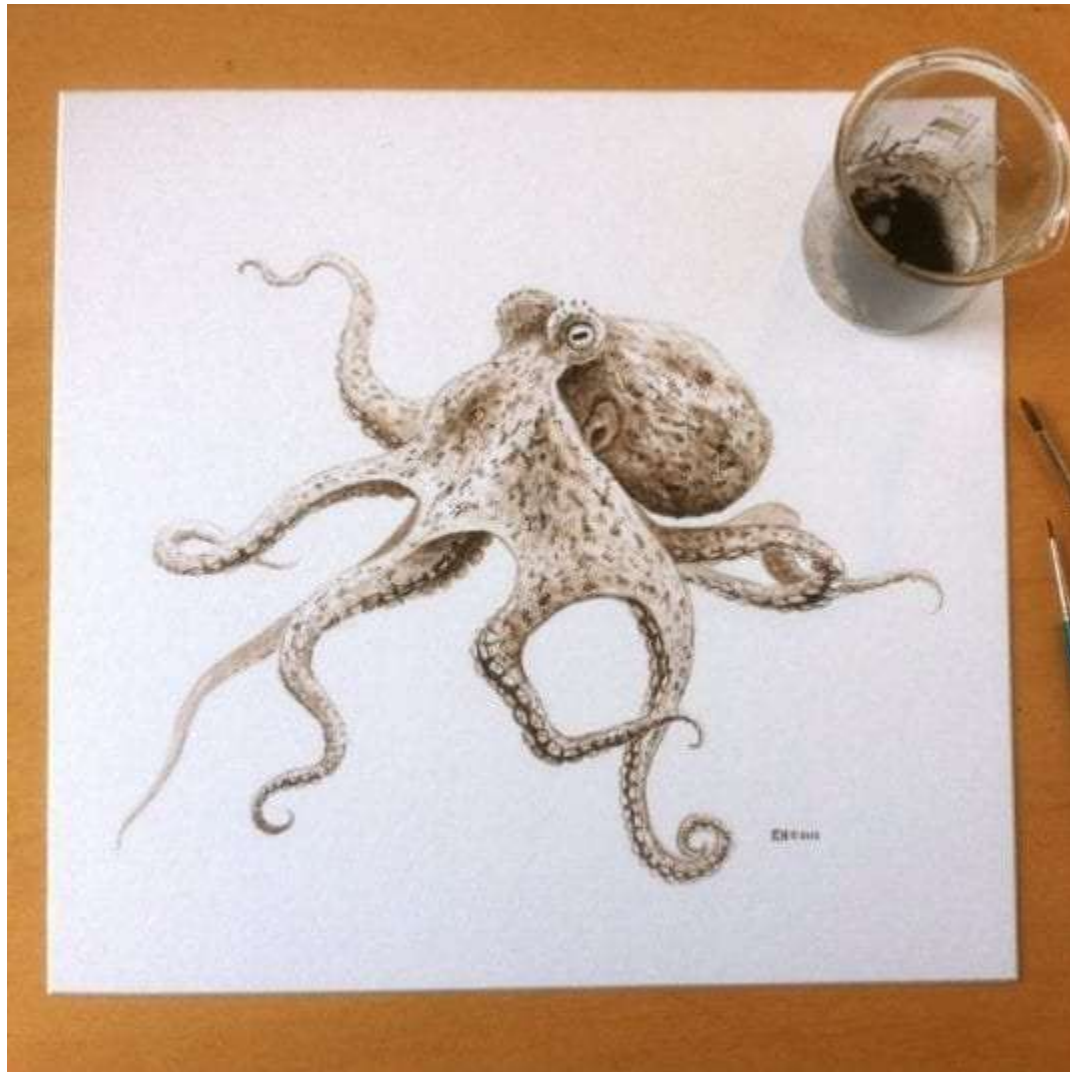
The wall was unearthed in
the 1970s by Israeli
archaeologist Nahman
Avigad and dated to the
reign of King Hezekiah.



Support for Noah's Flood

In December 2008, palaeontologist Dr Dirk Fuchs and co-workers, published their remarkable find in limestone deposits in Lebanon; the intact remains of an ancient octopus not only with its tentacles and suckers complete, but also its ink sack still full of ink as shown in the accompanying image.





Again, we find archaeology either confirming or, as in this case, showing that Noah's Flood is a more viable explanation of how octopuses became encased in limestone rock, which is claimed to be 150 million years old, and preserved so well with tentacles, suckers and even their ink sacks all intact, than the evolution story with its multiple tens of millions of years.

In the case of the ink pouches, all that was needed was the addition of water and the ink could be used for writing and drawing.

It did not have time to reach its use by date.

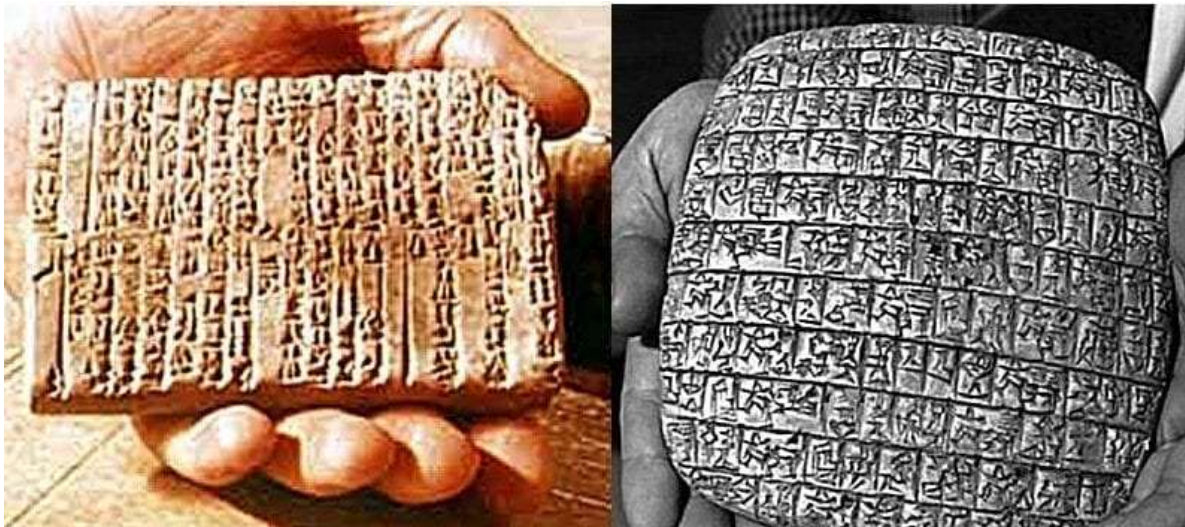
Ebla Tablets

In 1968 Italian archaeologists unearthed almost 2,000 clay tablets in the very ancient city of Ebla. The city was a trading hub as it lay at the intersection of major trading routes. It was active during the time of the patriarchs.

What is of interest is that amongst the cities named as its major trading partners are the biblical cities of Hazor, Lachish, Megiddo, Gaza, Dor, Sinai, Ashtaroth and Joppa as well as Sodom and Gomorrah, but not just them, the whole five Cities of the Plain; Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar

Here, we are transported back to about 2,300 BC, and find that these towns were visited regularly being on the route of the King's Highway.

Also, the Ebla tablets support the Bible with the biblical cities it names providing confirmation that they really existed. Sodom and Gomorrah stand out because many liberal Bible scholars say that these cities never really existed but are only named in an allegorical way.



Shishak I founded the twenty-second dynasty and ruled Egypt from 945 to 924 BC and he is the first pharaoh referred to specifically, in the Bible. The Bible tells us that Solomon took one of Shishak's predecessors' daughter for his wife (1 Kings 3:1).

Israel fell in influence towards the end of Solomon's reign and even further under the reign of Solomon's son Rehoboam. Shishak would have been aware of the wealth that was contained in Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 12:1-2):

And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him.

2 And it came to pass, that in the fifth year of king Rehoboam Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the Lord,

Shishak recorded his successful raid in a huge relief at the Karnak Temple in Luxor. Shown

The relief depicts the god Amun and the goddess presenting ten lines of Asiatic captives to Shishak. Each of the 156 captives bear the name of a site captured by Shishak.



From these names the size of the campaign is revealed which went as far as the Sea of Galilee. Thus, he claimed to have plundered the Northern kingdom as well. Only about half the names are legible and these include the biblical cities of Taanach, Beth Shan, Gibeon, Beth Horon, Aijalon and Socoh. There is little doubt that Jerusalem was included in the list as well and most likely it is among the names which are not legible.



Jewish Synagogues in Jesus' time

The Bible mentions Jesus preaching in Jewish synagogues and particularly in Galilee:

*And when he departed, he went into their **synagogue**, Matthew 12:9*

*Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their **synagogue**.
Matthew 13:54*

*They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the **synagogue** and began to teach. Mark 1:21*

*Another time he went into the **synagogue**. Mark 3:1*

*He was teaching in their **synagogues**, and everyone praised him. Luke 4:15-16*

*On another Sabbath, he went into the **synagogue** and was teaching. Luke 6:6*

*He said this while teaching in the **synagogue** in Capernaum. John 6:59*

In all, there are over **70 references to synagogues** recorded in the New Testament

The problem is that there had been no first century synagogues found.

The remains of many synagogues exist throughout Judea, Samaria and Galilee. There is the one at Capernaum which many tourists have visited, but this was a third or fourth century building



Journalist, Greg Sheridan writes; *Before 2008, some scholars held that there had been no synagogues in the Galilee area during Jesus' time. As so often, scholars were mistaking the absence of evidence for the evidence of absence.*

A synagogue was discovered in 2009 during a salvage dig conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) at the location of a new hotel at Migdal Beach, the site of ancient Magdala in Galilee. The IAA reported that the synagogue was used from 50 BC to AD 100. It was clearly a first century Synagogue.

On December 12, 2021, the IAA announced the discovery of a second, first century synagogue in Magdala, and it was only 100 metres from the first discovery.

The latest edition of the *Biblical Archaeology Review* states that 16 first century synagogues have been found.



Paul's Missionary Journeys

The apostle Paul, stayed in Corinth for a year and a half teaching about the Lord Jesus. His practice would be to go into the synagogue and preach. Although the synagogue ruler Sosthenes believed, many of the Jews did not, and they brought Paul before the Roman proconsul Gallio as stated in Acts 18:12-13;

And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

The existence of Gallio and his position is confirmed by an archaeological discovery made at Delphi in 1908. It consisted of nine stone fragments; one is shown.

In the inscription, Claudius ordered the **proconsul Gallio** to use incentives to persuade people to move to Delphi because it was becoming de-populated. But importantly for Bible scholars, the text states that **Gallio is named as imperator for the twenty sixth time, thereby dating it to late April to early May AD 52, during Paul's stay in Corinth**



The Pool of Siloam was built by King Hezekiah (he reigned from 715- 686 BC) and it is mentioned three times in the Bible; Nehemiah 3:15, Isaiah 8:6 and John 9:6-7. The Hebrew word Siloam means “sent.” John’s gospel records Jesus healing the blind man by rubbing mud in his eyes and telling him to wash his eyes in the Pool of Siloam, which he did and after which, he could see. In a way, Jesus “sent” the man to the pool.

Liberal scholars have 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 2004, when a repair team, excavating a damaged sewer, uncovered two rows of stone steps.



As the stone steps were uncovered, there was revealed three groups of five stairs, each about 60 meters long, leading down to a pool. The find was formally announced on August 9, 2005



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.

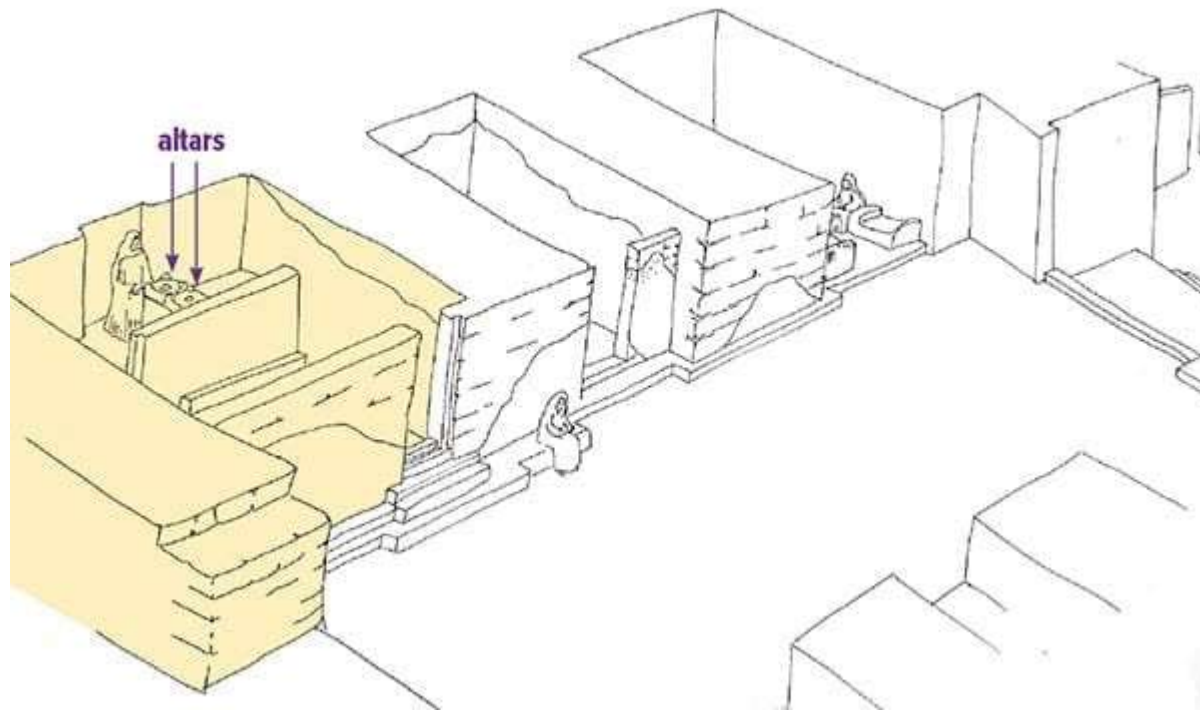


The Lachish Latrine

Lachish was a very important Jewish city located 40 Km (30 Miles) south west of Jerusalem. It fell in 701 BC to the Assyrians. Lachish was re-built only to be laid waste again by the Babylonians in 586 BC. Now its ruins, known as Tel Lachish, comprising 18 acres, making it the largest archaeological site in Israel. David Ussishkin excavated the northern side of the large main entrance gate complex, where they revealed that the gatehouse contained six rooms and is dated to the First Temple Period. The size of the gate is not surprising as the Bible tells us that the city's judges and elders sat at the Gate, Genesis 19:1 and Proverbs 31:23. Ussishkin excavated the three northern rooms of the gatehouse, attributing the gate to the eighth or ninth centuries BC. He then decided to leave the southern side of the gatehouse to future generations to explore. See image below.



Almost forty years later, archaeologists from the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) excavated the remaining three rooms 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, 2 Kings 23:8.



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; **And they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught house (toilet) unto this day.**

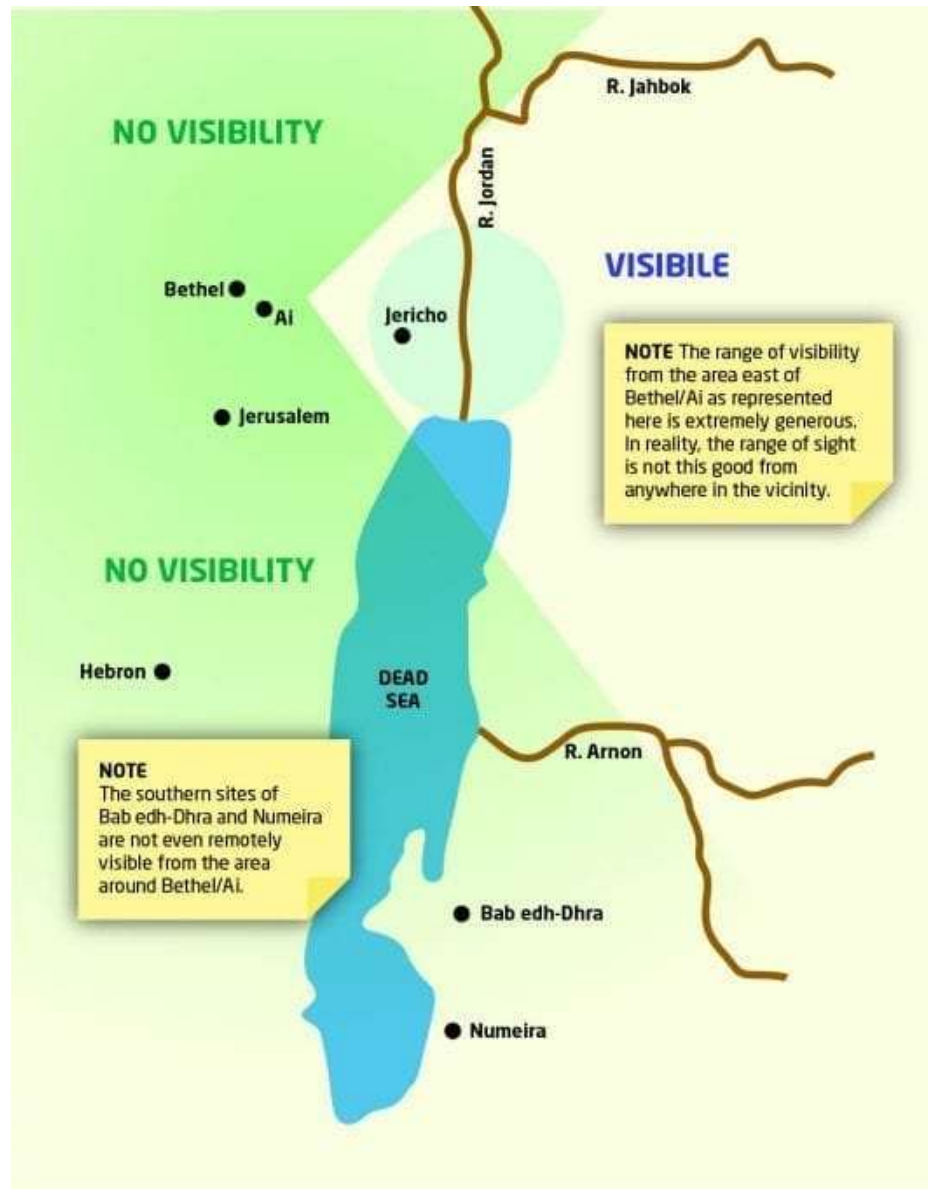


Sodom found Scripture confirmed

The Bible tells us about the separation of Abram and Lot: From the Negev he (Abram) went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between **Bethel and Ai**.....Genesis 13:10-11:

*And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the **plain of Jordan**, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.*

*11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed **east**: and they separated themselves the one from the other.*



There is a very large tell in exactly this area and it fits what the Bible says about Sodom. From its top are captivating views of the surrounding country. It is by far the largest tell in the whole area both north and south of the Dead Sea being approximately 40 hectares (100 acres). Dr Steven Collins has led a team in the excavation of this tell for thirteen years and he is convinced that this is the remains of Sodom for the following reasons:

- The Bible implies that Sodom was the largest of the cities of the plain. It is always mentioned first when other cities are cited. It is the only one of the cities mentioned by itself.
- It is located on the major east- west trade route and the Ebla Tablets confirms this location for Sodom.
- It was enclosed by a very large and for the time, impenetrable wall.
- We are told that Lot sat in the gate. Diggings have revealed an extremely large and impressive gate.
- The patriarchs lived in a period which is described in archaeological terms as being the Middle Bronze age (2,000 – 1,540 BC). Sodom was dated as being Middle Bronze (MB).
- Sodom was violently destroyed during Abraham's life time. Tall el-Hammam was totally obliterated during the Middle Bronze age 2 (MB2, 1,800-1540 BC). This was achieved by the dating of its pottery, the city's fortifications, ramparts and walls on both the upper and lower tells. And carbon 14.

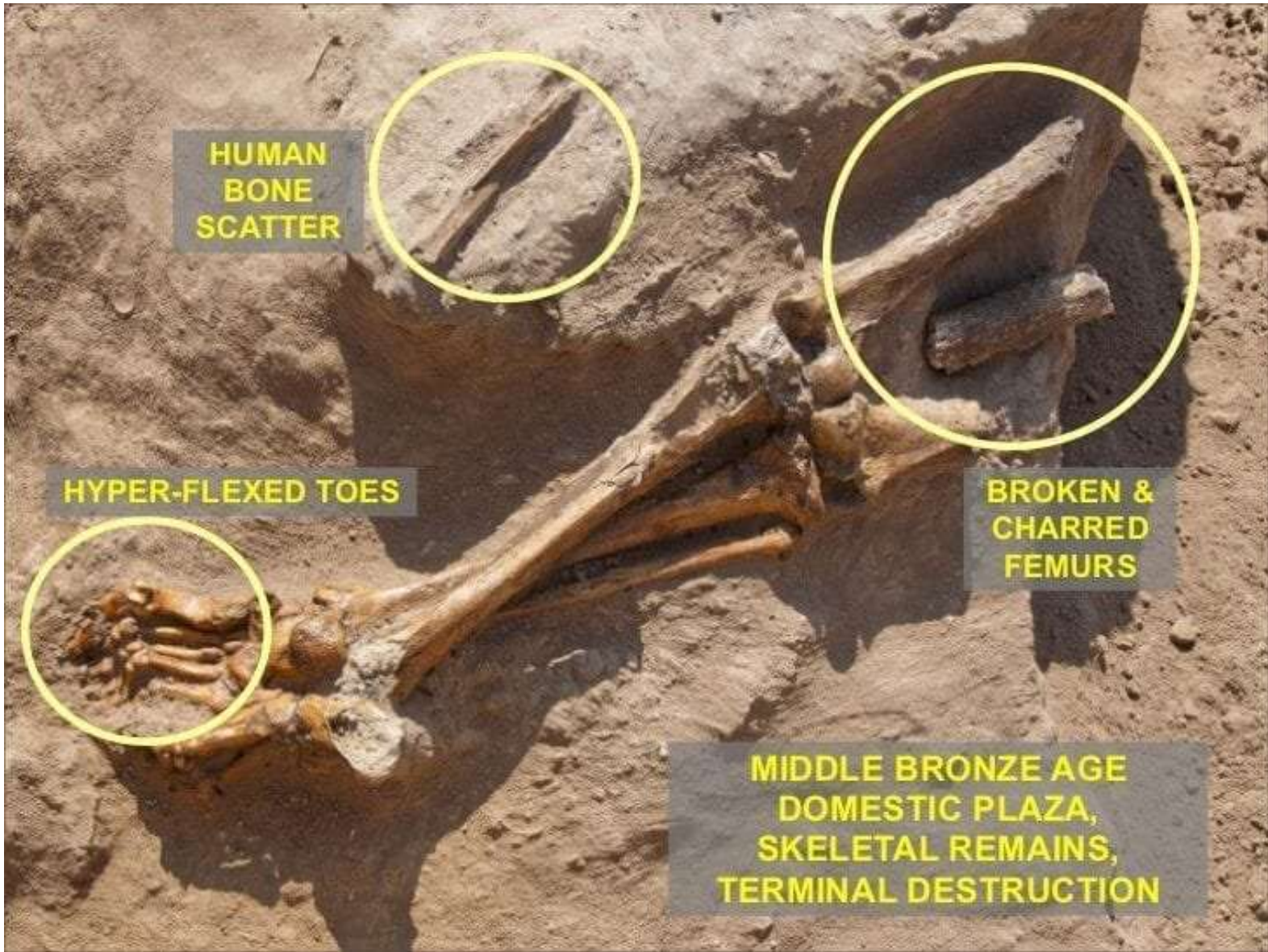


RIGHT STUFF

**TALELHAMMAM
STRATUM MB2**

**A FULL METER OF ASH AND
DESTRUCTION DEBRIS**





**HUMAN
BONE
SCATTER**

HYPER-FLEXED TOES

**BROKEN &
CHARRED
FEMURS**

**MIDDLE BRONZE AGE
DOMESTIC PLAZA,
SKELETAL REMAINS,
TERMINAL DESTRUCTION**

Collins has associated other tells in the area with the cities of the plain as shown in the accompanying map. Image courtesy of Tall en-Hammam excavation project. Excavation has shown that they suffered a similar fate to Sodom.



Joseph Holden who has excavated on Tall en-Hammam, concludes in his book:

Many existing biblical sites have been confirmed based on less geographical evidence than that of Tall en-Hammam. Indeed, after reviewing the still increasing archaeological, biblical and geographical evidence, if one denies that Tall en-Hammam is the biblical city of Sodom, every biblical city that has been confirmed on less epigraphical evidence must be called into question.

During one of the digs, an unusual piece of ceramic was found. It was easily identified as a part of a MB2 large storage jar called pithoi, but on one surface, it was glazed to a glass-like finish. Glazing requires temperatures in excess of 1,200 degrees C, a temperature impossible to reach by any furnace at the time. The piece was identified as trinitite. The name comes from the glazing of sand found at the site where the first atomic bombs were tested, called Trinity Site.



Further research has been carried out by the Tall el-Hammam Excavation Project which involves scientists from New Mexico Tech, Northern Arizona University, North Carolina State University, Elizabeth City (NC) State University, DePaul University, Trinity Southwest University and Los Alamos National University. A scenario that fits their results is for a meteor to have exploded about one kilometre above the northeast corner of the dead sea reigning down a fireball of between 4,000 to 12,000 degrees C. Such an event would have obliterated all life, the mud brick walls in the area would have disappeared leaving only stone foundations, the area would have been stripped of its topsoil and Dead Sea salt would have been spread over the area rendering it infertile. This would explain why the area was unoccupied for hundreds of years. The scientists estimated that 40,000-60,000 people living in the area were killed and the whole area of the kikkar rendered uninhabitable.

All this is consistent with scripture. Genesis 19:25 states:

And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

Jude 7 compares that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah with the fires of hell:

Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah, and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

