

# BIBLE AND ARCHEOLOGY

by Dr Phil Smith



## **Major Contributors:**

**Argubright J. – Bible and Archaeology**

**Barton, G. – Archaeology and the Bible**

**Holden & Geiser – Popular Handbook of Archaeology & the Bible**

**Zondervan Archaeological Study Bible**

## Bible and Archaeology

There are now books and books and Bibles of all kinds written merging the discoveries brought about by Archaeology, relating those discoveries directly to the Bible. See my list of references at the end of this essay.



### Part I

Volumes are now written on the information found in archaeological digs throughout the Middle East that support Biblical stories and points mentioned in the Bible. One such book that I will quote heavily from is Bible and Archaeology, a book published by John Argubright in 1997 providing historical evidence to show proof of the Bible. Another book which will stand out in this essay is the NIV Archaeological Bible along with Holden and Geisler's Popular Handbook of Archaeology and the bible. In some way this essay is more of a book report of these books. However, I have entertained quite a few other sources for this essay, Argubright being by far the most notable and widely covered. He reveals recent discovered artefacts throughout the Middle East pertaining both to the New Testament and Old Testament. The book covered the following topics: The Messiah, Quirinius and the Census, John the Baptist, The Miracles of Jesus, The Pool of Siloam, Jesus' prophecies about the Temple and Jerusalem. It discusses Annas and Caiaphas, and the Crucifixion darkness. The Resurrection, James - the brother of Jesus, the Book of Acts, Herod Agrippa, Erastus, Moses and Pharaoh, Balaam - A prophet gone bad, King David, The House of David, King Jeroboam, King Ahab & Jezebel, King Hoshea, King Hezekiah, King Josiah, Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe, The book of Daniel and Daniel's three friends, Nebuchadnezzar's pride, King Jehoiachin, Gedaliah Governor of Judea, Belshazzar and Darius the Mede, Sanballat, Nehemiah's enemy and Jeremiah the Prophet also are listed topics from the book. I highly recommend this book for reading and studying. It provides the Christian with apologetical evidence you can use to discuss Christianity with your unbelieving friends and simply information by which to refute comments that are being said mostly by non-believers and sometimes even Christians. Argubright provides convincing evidence for anyone who questions these passages. I don't deal exclusively with Argubright but touch on other points that relate to the Bible and points of Archaeology.

First, Titus Flavius Josephus must be introduced. His works are often quoted throughout Christendom as a reliable outside source. He was a first-century Jewish historian and apologist of priestly and royal ancestry who recorded and survived the destruction of

Jerusalem in AD 70. Not only does his works give support for Judaism but also provides insight into what happened during the time of Jesus. His two greatest works are *The Jewish War and the antiquities of the Jews*. The Jewish War recounts the Jewish revolt against Rome in 66-70 AD and the Antiquities of the Jews looks at the history of the world from a Jewish perspective. These works were written in Rome where Josephus ended up serving Rome.

The statements made by Josephus confirm the following Christian truths found in the Bible, that Jesus was the Messiah as spoken of by the prophets. Jesus performed many miracles as witnessed by people that Josephus knew himself. Jesus was indeed crucified under Pontius Pilate and arose from the dead three days later and appeared to his disciples. This is all from the writings of Josephus, the Jewish historian. After the Jewish wars where Rome sacked Jerusalem, of which Josephus was a Jewish general fighting against the Roman army. Afterwards, he was taking on to write a history of the Jews. Much of his stuff is really factual and informative but some of it wasn't. Nevertheless it is certainly recognized as a good resource to refer to.



Next this essay looks at the census and the governing governor, Quirinius. We all know the story of it for it was the census that caused Mary and her husband to travel to Bethlehem and thus the consequent birth of Jesus Christ came about. As stated in Luke 2:1-2: 'and it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the entire world should be registered.' Since the Bible states that Jesus was born before the death of Herod the Great, who died in the spring of 4 B.C., critics claimed that the Bible was in error, since history records that Quirinius was not appointed governor of Syria until 6 A.D. Actually, the Bible never calls him the governor. It says that he was governing in Syria. Records prove that Quirinius was indeed governing in some capacity in this region at this time. Records also indicate that Quirinius was no minor figure in Roman politics. His name is mentioned in 'Res Gestae - The Deeds of Augustus by Augustus' placing him as consul as early as 12 B.C. well before the second census of 6 A.D. Now Augustus sent Caius to administer Syria in 1 A.D., but he was wounded in nearby Armenia in 3 A.D. Evidently, Augustus wanted someone who was experienced in previously administering the region to advise his son. Who better than Quirinius. As far as the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, it was stated that if anyone doubted this, they should go and check the Roman census records. There is also other points about Jesus being born in Bethlehem. It was already an ancient place spelled out in the Genesis 35:19 and 48:7 by the name of Ephrathah.

It related to a prophecy mentioned in Micah 5:2 and it was the setting for the book of Ruth, Ruth being the great-grandmother of King David, as well as the home of David. The Christian population declined during the Muslim invasion and conquest.

Then, there came John the Baptist. Josephus stated that John the Baptist encouraged the people to lead righteous lives. Matthew 3:8 says that John told the people to produce good fruit in keeping with a repentant life. Josephus also states the Baptist told the people to practice justice toward their neighbours. Luke 3:11-18 states that John told a crowd of people: 'The man who has two tunics should share with the one who has none, and the one who has food should do the same.' . . . To the tax collectors he said 'Don't collect any more taxes than you are required to.' . . . And to a group of soldiers he said: 'Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely.' Josephus said that 'John taught that baptism should not be used to obtain pardon for sins committed, but to consecrate the body'. This statement first appeared to be contrary to Luke 3:3 which says: 'He went into all the country along the Jordan preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.' But with careful reading, it says a 'baptism of repentance' for the forgiveness of sins. John's emphasis was on people trusting in God while turning away from sin and asking for God's forgiveness.



Baptism wasn't something that was new with John. During this time, water functioned as a primary means by which ritual impurity was removed with Pharisaic Judaism. It traces its history back to the Old Testament where immersion was associated with ritual purity. It was practiced by the Essenes at Qumran. You should know that water immersion was a purification rite that was required for all Jews. So water baptism was defined as a symbolic act for renewal of ones heart actions

John was arrest by Herod as told in Matthew 14:3-10: 'For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. Because John had said to him, 'It is not lawful for you to have her.' Josephus wrote that: 'Herod had fallen in love with the wife of his half-brother and he promised to marry her and divorce Areta's daughter, which he did. John was brought in chains to the Machaerus and was put to death.'

And concerning the high priest Caiaphas, Josephus mentions that his full name was Joseph Caiaphas. Argubright says that Archaeologists in 1990 discovered a burial cave on the outskirts of Jerusalem which contained a collection of bone boxes. During the first century, bodies of the dead were laid in caves. After the flesh had decomposed, the bones were

gathered and put into boxes, indicating a belief in the resurrection. One of the casket-like boxes found in the cave was elaborately carved and is inscribed with the words: 'Joseph, son of Caiaphas.' The box contains the actual remains of the Biblical figure Caiaphas. Caiaphas is mentioned here: 'Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he went into the entire region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.' All the men mentioned in the previous Bible passage including the high priests Annas and Caiaphas are mentioned by the Jewish historian Josephus in his work entitled *Jewish Antiquities*. So we have what the Bible says and what Josephus says. He states in the following passages: 'Annas, the son of Seth was installed as high priest by Quirinius. During this time, Herod Antipas and Philip were administering their tetrarchies . . . The third Caesar was Tiberius who appointed Valerius Gratus to succeed Rufus as procurator over the Jews. Gratus removed Annas from the high priesthood and then appointed Joseph Caiaphas to the office. Gratus retired to Rome after being in Judea for eleven years. He was succeeded by Pontius Pilate.' . . . 'Herod Agrippa became king and the Emperor Claudius added Judea and Samaria to his rule as well as all lands formerly ruled by Herod the Great, as well as Abilene, which had been governed by Lysanias.' And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all,' nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.' Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.' John 11:47-52

Let's look at the miracles of Jesus Christ. An early mention of the miracles was made by Julian the Apostate (Roman Emperor from 361-363 A.D.) who was an enemy of Christianity, he wrote: 'Jesus . . . has now been honoured for about three hundred years; having done nothing throughout his lifetime that was worthy of fame, unless anyone thinks it a very great work to heal the lame and the blind and to cast out demons in the towns of Bethsaida and Bethany.' This was an incredible statement. The fact is that it was commonly accepted that Jesus performed miracles in the villages of Bethsaida and Bethany as recorded in the Bible. I am using the NIV Archaeological Study Bible here. If you don't have a copy, you should get one, for it is full of archaeological comments and references to historical discoveries. Now, we see with Mark 8:22 stating that Jesus healed a man who had been blind

since birth in Bethsaida, and John 12:1 records that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead in Bethany. Interestingly a Jewish Rabbis from the first century, Tosefta, Hullin 2.22-23 didn't deny that Jesus performed miracles, but he tried to attribute them to acts of sorcery done by Jesus! The Sanhedrin wrote in 95-110 A.D. states that: 'During the time of Passover they executed Yeshu (of Nazareth). An announcement was made for forty days before this saying (Yeshu of Nazareth) will be stoned in that he has practiced sorcery and deceived and led Israel astray. Let everyone who knows contrary, come and plead for his defence. But they found nothing in his defence and crucified him.' Luke 11:14-20 states: 'and He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke; and the multitudes marvelled. But some of them said, 'He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.'

Before going on with the apologetics here, New Testament documents are ancient documents that have been preserved down through centuries. Any other non-Christian documents would be readily accepted and referenced and accepted but it seems that there has to be additional references and archaeological proof to New Testament documents. Know that for the Old Testament, we now have an original copy of the Old Testament dating back to around 200 BC! People can no longer argue about this.

So, John 9 says: 'Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And He said to him, 'Go, and wash in the pool of Siloam.' So he went and washed, and came back seeing. But the Jews questioned the man. He answered and said to them, 'Why, this is a marvellous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! 'Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. 'Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. 'If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.'



Josephus witnessed first hand the destruction of the Jewish Temple by the Romans in 70 A.D. The city and the temple were then levelled to the ground by the command of Caesar. ' Jesus prophesied the same thing in Luke 19:41-44: 'As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said: 'If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you



peace - but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and your children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.' In Matthew 23:37-24:2, Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Destruction of Jerusalem was also prophesized by Daniel who lived around 600 B.C.: 'The Anointed One will be cut off and have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.' Daniel 9:26

At the cross: 'Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land . . . And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit . . . So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that happened, they feared greatly, saying, 'Truly this was the Son of God!' from Matthew 27:45-54. The first reference that has been found, outside of the Bible mentioning this darkness comes from a Samaritan historian named Thallus, who wrote around 52 A.D. Thallus was quoted by another early writer by the name of Julius Africanus who researched the topic of this darkness and wrote the following: 'Upon the whole world there came a most fearful darkness. Many rocks were split in two by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down.

Another first century historian who also mentions this darkness was Phlegon, who wrote a history entitled the 'Olympiads.' Julius Africanus mentioned a quote taken from the Olympiads which said: 'Phlegon records that, in the time of Tiberius Caesar, at full moon, there was a full eclipse of the sun from the sixth hour to the ninth . . . It is evident that he did not know of any such events in previous years.' Phlegon is also mentioned by Origen in his work 'Against Celsus', 'The darkening of the sun took place at the time of Tiberius Caesar, in whose reign Jesus was crucified, and the great earthquakes which then took place, Phlegon, I believe, has written an account in the thirteenth or fourteenth book of his Chronicles.

We follow Jesus' death on the cross with a seemingly strange Roman Proclamation saying: 'Proclamation of Caesar: It is my desire that graves and tombs remain sealed for the benefit of those who have made them and for their children, family members, and their religion. If, however, anyone accuses that another has either destroyed them, removed the buried, or with ill intent has taken them to other places in order to wrong them, or has removed the sealing on other stones, I order that person be brought to trial. The inscription is obvious from the Jewish leaders to prevent grave robbing and the removing of seals placed on burial stones. The edict was placed in Nazareth, the hometown of Jesus! 'On the next day,

which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate (Roman procurator of Judea), saying, 'Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' 'Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first.' Pilate said to them, 'You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.' So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

Now let us discuss James, the brother of Jesus and see what is said about him. Both inside and outside the Bible: 'But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.' Then Josephus in book 20 chapter 9 of his Antiquities where he mentions James the brother of Jesus and Annas the High priest: 'Upon the death of Festus (62 A.D.), Emperor Nero sent Albinus to be procurator of Judea. But before he arrived, King Agrippa appointed Annas to be High priest. He was the son of the elder Annas. Annas the younger, however, was a brute who observed the ways of the Sadducees who are known as being cold-hearted when they sit in judgement. With Festus dead and Albinus still travelling, Annas thought he could have his own way. Calling forth the members of the Sanhedrin, he brought before them a man named James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ and others with him. He accused them of violating the law, and ordered that they should be put to death by stoning.' Although the Bible doesn't mention it, Josephus states that James was martyred by the Sanhedrin. Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, 'And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; 'but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it; lest you even be found to fight against God.' Acts 5:29-39 An early passage from the Talmud states: 'Since Rabbi Gamaliel died, the glory of the law has ceased.' Writings found in the Mishnah states: 'Since Rabbi Gamaliel the elder died, there has been no more respect for the law. And purity and abstinence died out at the same time.' Another quote from Acts 22:3: 'I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.'

Flavius Josephus wrote the following account of Herod Agrippa's death which matches the account found in the Bible: 'After Agrippa had ruled in Judea for three full years, he travelled to the city of Caesarea, which in the past was called Strato's Tower. There he put on an exhibition in honour of Caesar, declaring this to be a festival for the Emperor. And there came a large number of officials and those of a high-ranking status. At sunrise on the following day he put on a robe made of all silver and walked into the theatre. Then the silver



shown brightly as the sun's first rays fell upon it and he sparkled in the sunlight, dazzling the crowd and causing a sort of fear and trembling in those who were viewing the spectacle. The crowds then began to shout from various parts of the theatre, words which in truth were not for his best, addressing him as a god, and crying out, 'We have in the past honoured you as a man, but now we honour you as one with a nature greater than any mortal being.' The Bible gives an identical account in Acts chapter 12:19-23: (After Herod had the apostle James put to death with the sword, and put Peter in prison. Peter was broken out of jail by an angel of the Lord.) . . .

One such man was Erastus, an early disciple of Jesus Christ. He is mentioned briefly in the Bible in Romans 16:23 which say: 'Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, who is the city's director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings.' And again in 2 Timothy 4:20: 'Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.' Archaeologists working on an excavation of a first century road uncovered a stone with the inscription: 'Erastus, Commissioner of Public Works' Acts 19:22 records: 'So he (Paul) sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus'.

Now this essay turns to some Old Testament characters. First, let's deal with the question of Ramesses being the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Argubright does a good job in sorting this problem out with a little help from Josephus: As the Jews built Pharaoh Supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. The Bible says that the Israelites also built Raamses, and since Ramesses the second, who ruled between 1290 and 1224 B.C., built a royal city named Pi-Ramesse, many just assume him to be the pharaoh of the Exodus. However recent excavations at this site indicate that this city was occupied much earlier by the Egyptians. The name Raamses itself has also been found inscribed on a burial tomb painting from Pharaoh Amenhotep III; who ruled nearly 100 years before Ramesses II. Although the Bible never specifically identifies the pharaoh of the Exodus by name, it does tell us the exact date of the Exodus. 1Kings 6:1 states that Solomon began building the Temple in the fourth year of his reign, 480 years after the Exodus. Most Bible scholars agree that the fourth year of Solomon's reign was 967 B.C. So the date of the Exodus can be calculated:  $967 + 480 = 1447$  B.C. And according to history, Pharaoh Ramesses did not begin his reign until around 1290 B.C., so he couldn't have been the Exodus pharaoh. The first is pharaoh Amenhotep II who may have ruled from (1450-1425 B.C.). He was the son of Thutmose III, who ruled from either (1490-1450) or (1490-1436 B.C.), the other possible candidate. The first place we will start is with the date of his birth. Exodus 7:7 states the following: 'Moses was eighty years old and Aaron

eighty three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.’ Adding 80 years to the date of the Exodus in 1447 B.C. equals 1527 B.C.; the approximate year in which Moses was born. The ruler of Egypt at this time was Pharaoh Thutmose I (1540-1504 B.C.) The fascinating thing about his name is that if you remove Thut from his name you are left with Mose. Although the Bible never records her name, the Jewish historian Josephus writing in the first century states: ‘Pharaoh’s daughter, Thermuthis, was walking along the river bank. Seeing a basket floating by, she called to her swimmers to retrieve it for her. When her servants came back with the basket, she was overjoyed to see the beautiful little infant inside . . . Thermuthis gave him the name Moses, which in Egyptian means ‘saved from the water’ . . . Having no children of her own, she adopted him as her own son.’ The next significant event which occurs in the life of Moses is when he flees the land of Egypt after killing an Egyptian. Moses was 40 years old at this time according to Acts 7:23-30. If Thutmose II was the Pharaoh from whom Moses fled, Thutmose III may have been the Pharaoh of the Exodus. The Jewish historian Josephus wrote the following: ‘The Pharaoh, from whom Moses had fled, died, and a new Pharaoh had become ruler.’ After the death of Thutmose II, his son, not by Hatshepsut, became pharaoh. Thutmose III co-reigned with Queen Hatshepsut until her death in 1482 B.C. He then ruled alone until approximately 1450 B.C. It is also known that Thutmose III was so jealous of the acts done by Queen Hatshepsut that one of his first acts, after her death, was to purge her name off of all monuments in Egypt. Another interesting thing recorded in history about Thutmose III was that he was the greatest conqueror in Egyptian history, . . . Moses then became the commander of a great army . . . In a surprise attack against the Ethiopians; Moses led his troops to victory.’ It may be that Thutmose III, being jealous, took credit for victories over the Ethiopians, even though Moses achieved them. ‘Because of the bravery of Moses, The daughter of the king of Ethiopia, Tharbis, saw Moses and fell madly in love with him. She sent to him a delegation of her most trusted servants to propose marriage. He accepted, on the condition that she would surrender the city over to him . . . After Moses had punished the Ethiopians, he praised God and then celebrated his marriage.’ The Bible also mentions his Ethiopian wife in Numbers 12:1: ‘Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman.’ ‘So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them . . . And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord . . . Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the armies of Pharaoh that came into the sea after

them. Not so much as one of them remained.’ Exodus 14:23-28 The Bible says in Psalm 136:13-15: ‘To him who divided the Red Sea asunder, and brought Israel in the midst of it, but swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea.’ This passage indicates that Pharaoh was killed in the incident. If so, the date of the Exodus in 1447 B.C., as calculated from the Bible, is synonymous with Pharaoh Thutmose III death which most historians approximate at 1450 B.C. Some people don't believe that the Pharaoh perished in the waters of the Red Sea because the tombs of both Pharaoh Thutmose III and his successor, Amenhotep II, have been found. But if one reads Exodus 14:30 carefully it Thutmoses III states the following: ‘So the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.’ This passage indicates that the dead bodies of the Egyptians were deposited on the shore of the Red Sea. This would have allowed the Egyptians access to his body for burial.

But Argubright presents another scenario: If Moses fled from Thutmose III, the Exodus pharaoh would have been his son, Amenhotep II. One amazing fact about Amenhotep II was that his successor was not his firstborn son or his heir. This would confirm the Biblical passage in Exodus 4:22-23 which states: ‘Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘thus says the Lord: ‘Israel is my son, my firstborn. ‘So I say to you, let my son go that he may serve me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn.’ ‘By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ‘Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth (Numbers 12:3).’

Let’s turn next to Balaam. In the country of Jordan, at an excavation site known as Deir 'Alla, a fragment of a text from the prophet Balaam was found which dates to at least 800 years before Christ. This discovery consists of 119 broken plaster fragments inscribed with an ancient text written in the Aramaic language. One of the fragments is inscribed with the words ‘Warnings given by Balaam, the son of Beor, and ‘a seer of the gods.’ Also included in the text is the Aramaic word ‘Shadday,’ which translated into English, ‘the Almighty.’ This is consistent with Balaam’s oracles given in the Old Testament. The Bible in Numbers 24:3-4 says: ‘The utterance of Balaam the son of Beor, whose eyes are opened, the utterance of him who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, who falls down with eyes wide open.’ Jordan where the inscription was found was known as Moab at the time of Balaam. This backs up the Biblical account found in Numbers 22-24, in which the King of Moab sends the elders of Midian before Balaam and offered him money to curse the

children of Israel. Instead of cursing the children of Israel, the spirit of God came upon Balaam and he blessed them. But later Numbers 31:16 says that Balaam was the one who devised the plan to cause Israel to sin in exchange for money from the Midianites: 'Look, these women caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the Lord in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord.' The reason for God's great anger against Israel is recorded in Psalm 106:28: 'They joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and ate sacrifices made to the dead.' Not only were they worshiping another god, but they were committing deeds of sexual immorality. (Numbers 25:1) Though it is only speculation, their sins may have also involved child sacrifice for both Jeremiah 19:5 and Jeremiah 32:35 mention that this was a common practice in Baal worship and we know from Deuteronomy 12:30-31 that it was performed by the pagan nations at this time. God thus commanded Moses to battle the Midianites as vengeance for such abominations caused by the plan of Balaam. 'But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.' Revelation 2:14 adds to this by saying: 'A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult.' Then Numbers 24:17-19 says in regard to this, 'Out of Jacob One shall have dominion.'

Now after Joshua entered Canaan, he went to war with the peoples who occupied the land. A letter has been found, written by a man named Abdi-Hiba, Governor of Jerusalem, to Pharaoh Akhenaten who reigned between 1387 and 1366 B.C., requesting aid from Egypt in fighting the approaching Hebrews. The letter states the following: 'Why do you not hear my call for help? All the governors are lost; the king, my lord, does not have a single governor left! Let my lord, the king, send troops of archers, or the king will have no lands left.' 'All the lands of the king are being plundered by the Habiru (Hebrews). If archers are here by the end of the year, then the lands of my lord, the king, will continue to exist; but if the archers are not sent, then the lands of the king, my lord, will be surrendered.' 'Now it came to pass when Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it; . . . Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying, 'Come up to me and help me, that we may attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel.' Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, gathered together and went up, they and all their armies, and camped before Gibeon and made war against it.'

The Bible states in Joshua 10:26 that Joshua defeated these kings captured them and killed them. This included the king of Jerusalem, Adoni-Zedek. The letter written by Abdi-Hiba was probably written after the Biblical event by the successor of Adoni-Zedek, Abdi-Hiba, as a last ditch effort to stop the advancing Hebrews. Joshua 24:29 states that he lived to be 110 years old, which means he would have died around 1352 B.C. And according to historians, the Abdi-Hiba letter was written between 1387 and 1366 B.C., right in the middle of Joshua's conquest of Canaan. Other letters requesting aid from Egypt have also been discovered that were written during this same time frame. These letters are part of what are known as the Amarna tablets. The following letter is from a man named Shuwardata, governor of Gath: 'May the king, my lord, know that the chief of the Apiru (Hebrew) has besieged the lands which your god has given me; but I have attacked him. Also let the king, my lord, know that none of my allies have come to my aid, it is only I and Abdu-Heba who fight against the 'Apiru (Hebrew) chief.' There are numerous letters and written evidence regarding this.

Let me pause again for an update on the Pentateuch from which most of this was taken. According to Holden, there has been a backwash of anti-Moses authorship for the Pentateuch. This has included circular reasoning, different names for God, there not being other literature that relates to the Pentateuch; these are made with assumptions of Israel's religion being of human origin instead of from God. A double standard has eventuated by those who claim this toward the Hebrew Bible. Remember, the Hebrew Bible as we have it is 2,200 years old. Other Semitic sources describe various entities in differing style of language, yet their authorship, authenticity and antiquity is not even questioned! These scholars think they know what happened back then, three and a half thousand years ago. But, Scripture itself says that Moses wrote the Pentateuch several times: Exodus 17:14, 24:4,7; 34:27; Numbers 33:1-2 and Deuteronomy 31:9,11. Other books throughout the Old Testament agree with this! Books like Genesis and Exodus relate to the very culture and happenings of the time even with names and customs. Even for Adam and Eve, both the Old Testament and New Testament refer back to them. Even the creation is referred to countless times throughout the Old and New Testaments. Even Jesus spoke of it. I will deal more about this creation issues in other articles.

Argubright continues with the story of the Syrian king's victories over Israel, a stone that was erected to pay tribute to a Syrian king, was uncovered during excavations in the Biblical city of Dan in 1993. Evidently, the tribe of Dan must have lost control of the city, and later on had to retake it, according to Judges 18:27-29. Then in 1994, two more fragments from the inscription were found at Tel-Dan. The text which was written in the

early Aramaic language was similar to the script found on pottery dating back to the ninth century B.C. (To find out more regarding the Arameans and their language download my article from [philsblog.online](http://philsblog.online). Although the text doesn't mention the name of the king who wrote the inscription, a little bit of detective work with the Bible seems to point to King Hazael of Syria. First of all, since the inscription was found at Dan, the city had to be under Syrian control at the time it was written. According to 1Kings 15:20, Ben- Hadad was the first Syrian king to take control of the city. The city also remained under Syrian control during the reign of Hazael, the one most likely to have written the inscription. Line 4 states that Hadad went before Him. Hazael may be giving credit to his god Hadad for victories against Israel. This is interesting because in 1King19:15; God tells Elijah the prophet to send Elisha to anoint Hazael as King over Syria, as punishment for Israel's sins. Since Hazael worshiped Hadad, he probably thought his pagan god was giving him victory over Israel. Ben-Hadad fled to Damascus after he thought he was being attacked by Egypt. He became sick after learning God had caused the defeat of his army and not the enemy . . . The prophet Elisha came and spoke to Hazael . . . Then Elisha began to weep, and Hazael asked him why? Elisha told him, 'I weep for Israel my people, and for the suffering they will endure at your hands. For you will destroy their best men and their strongest towns . . .' Hazael asked 'By whose authority will I be able to do these things?' Elisha answered 'God has declared that you will be king of Syria.' The next day Hazael spread a thick wet cloth over the king's face suffocating him. Hazael then came to power.' Lines 6,7,10 & 11 refer to King Jehu, and states that he killed Joram son of Ahab, king of Israel, and Ahaziah son of Jehoram, king of the House of David, during a time when Hazael was attacking Israel. This backs up the Bible completely in 2 Kings 9:14-27, in which the following events took place: 'So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had been defending Ramoth Gilead, he and all Israel, against Hazael king of Syria. But King Joram had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which the Syrians had inflicted on him when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) .

Argubright again says that in 1868, a stone was uncovered in the Biblical city of Dibon, on which recorded victories over the Israelites by Mesha, king of Moab. This stone contained over 33 references to events that were recorded in the Bible. It's not certain whether the victories on the stone were recorded before or after the kings of Israel and Judah fought against king Mesha, around 850 B.C. This doesn't affect the fact that this stone is an artefact that refers to so many events in the Old Testament. The following references are some of those mentioned: 2 King 3:4 where it verifies Mesha was the king of Moab during



their revolt against Israel. The Bible also states in Numbers 21:29-30; that Dibon was a city in the land of Moab. We get this information from 1 Kings 16:23 & 28, where it says that in the 31st year of Asa king of Judah, Omri became king over Israel. We have descriptions of Moab described as it was in Joshua 13:15-17 and then in 1 Kings 16:23 it says that in the thirty first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri became king over Israel. In 1 Kings 22:51 it says that Aha took over and ruled 22 years and then his son Ahaziah ruled for 2 years. In 2 Kings 10:32-33 shows that Hazael conquered them in all the territory of Israel from the Jordan eastward: all the land of Gilead; Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh; from Aroer, which is by the River Arnon, including Gilead and Bashan. The stone mentioned that Moses gave the children of the cities and Gad built Dibon and Ataroth in Numbers 32:33. As line 14 mentions the city of Nebo, the Bible says Nebo in Numbers 32:38 as the territory Moses gave to the tribe of Reuben and Gad. Jeremiah 48:20-22 also mentions Nebo as a town of Moab. Line 17 lists Ashtar-Kamosh another Moabite god as it does in Judges 10:6, then the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, and the gods of Moab. Line 19 mentions the city of Yahaz as Isaiah 15:4 states, 'Heshbon and Elealeh will cry out, their voice shall be heard as far as Jahaz; therefore, the armed soldiers of Moab will cry out.' Numbers 32:33-34 mentions that Gad built Dibon as in line 19 of the stone and again in Numbers 32:34, it says that, 'the children of Gad built Dibon and Ataroth and Aroer.' Line 31 says 'And the House of David inhabited Horonaim', one of the first references outside the bible to King David and his descendants.

Interestingly, in 1903, in the ruins of the Biblical city of Meggido, an archaeologist found a seal made of jasper, engraved with the following inscription: 'Shema servant of Jeroboam.' The seal belonged to a servant of one of the early kings of Israel, either Jeroboam I, who ruled shortly after the reign of king Solomon from 931-909 B.C., or Jeroboam II, who ruled from 782-745 B.C. at the time of Jonah the prophet. According to the Bible, because King Solomon began worshiping the foreign gods of his many wives, The Lord took away ten tribes of Israel from his son's rule and placed Jeroboam as king over them. This is recorded in 1 Kings 11:29-40. But later Jeroboam had to flee to Egypt, to Pharaoh Shishak who was in charge at the time. There has been an inscription which lists the cities he conquered during his invasion of Israel. This confirms the Bible in 1 Kings 14:25-26: 'It happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam (Solomon's son) that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. And he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord' Wow! All of the gold and treasures of Jerusalem was taken away. Shishak took it all to Egypt. Inscription mentioning Rehoboam's 'Kingdom of Judah' as subject to Pharaoh Shishak.

So, of course, Israel has had her share of good kings and bad kings. Some of those kings were really bad. We have King Ahab who was definitely not one of the good guys. In 1Kings 16:31-33 we read: ‘And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him. Of course, we have all heard of Jezebel. Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.’ Archaeologists from Harvard, digging in the ruins of Samaria, the ancient capital of Israel, also found a palace that Ahab built which contained within it a room where ivories were stored. This room, interestingly enough, is mentioned in the Bible in 1Kings 22:37-39 which says: ‘So the king died, and was brought to Samaria. And they buried the king in Samaria . . . Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, the ivory house which he built and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?’

In Hezekiah we have the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib, king of Assyria. These events are recorded on a clay prism now on display at the Oriental Institute Museum of Chicago. It is inscribed with the following words: ‘Fear of my greatness terrified Hezekiah. He sent to me tribute: 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, precious stones, ivory, and all sorts of gifts, including women from his palace.’ The Taylor Prism gives an account of Sennacherib’s invasion of Israel and mentions Hezekiah. This confirms the Biblical account given in 2Kings 18:13-15. As for Hezekiah, I shut him up like a caged bird in his royal city of Jerusalem. I then constructed a series of fortresses around him, and I did not allow anyone to come out of the city gates. His towns which I captured I gave to the kings of Ashod, Ekron, and Gaza.’ Amazingly in this account, Sennacherib admits he never captured Hezekiah or the city of Jerusalem. Why is it that the king of Assyria and his mighty army couldn't capture Jerusalem as he did with all the other cities of Israel? The answer is given in 2Kings 19:14: ‘And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord. Then Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said: ‘O Lord God of Israel, the one who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. ‘Incline your ear, O Lord, and hear; open your eyes, O Lord, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib which he has sent to reproach the living God. ‘Truly, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, ‘and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands; wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them.

‘Now therefore, O Lord our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you are the Lord God, You alone.’ Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard.’

Argubright says that a seal was uncovered by archaeologists bearing the name of one of Hilkiah's sons. The seal reads: ‘Azariah son of Hilkiah.’ He is mentioned in 1 Chronicles 6:13 & 9:11 When Hilkiah went into the temple to collect the money for the repairs, he found the Book of the Law of the Lord that had been given through Moses. Hilkiah gave the Book to Shaphan who read it to King Josiah. So in 2 Kings 22:3-5 when King Josiah was twenty-six years old, he ordered that the temple of the Lord be repaired. In order to pay for the work, he sent Shaphan, the son of Azaliah, son of Meshullam, his scribe to instruct Hilkiah the high priest to collect money from the temple to pay for the repairs.

According to the Bible, Jehoiachin became king of Judah after the death of his father King Jehoiakim: ‘Jehoiachin was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days.’ 2 Chronicles 36:9 A fantastic discovery that verifies Biblical events surrounding Jehoiachin’s life was found in the ancient city of Babylon. Tablets from the royal archives of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon were unearthed in the ruins of that ancient city that contain food rations paid to captives and craftsmen who lived in and around the city. On one of the tablets, ‘Yaukin, king of the land of Judah’ is mentioned along with his five sons listed as royal princes. The inscriptions found on the tablets matches precisely with the Biblical text found in II Kings 24:10-17 which says: ‘At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem and the city was besieged. And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, as his servants were besieging it. Then Jehoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his servants, his princes, and his officers went out to the king of Babylon; and the king of Babylon, in the eighth year of his reign, took him prisoner.

In 586 BC, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against Jerusalem and destroyed the city and captured Zedekiah king of Judah. He then appointed a man by the name of Gedaliah to be Governor over Judah. In 1935 during excavations at the Biblical city of Lachish, a clay seal was found in a layer of ashes left behind from Nebuchadnezzar's fire containing the following words: ‘Belonging to Gedaliah, who is over the House.’ This find is an amazing confirmation of the scriptural account of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion we read about in 2Kings 25:22-24: ‘Then he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, governor over the people who remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of

Babylon had left. Now when all the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah.’

In Daniel chapter 5, a Babylonian king by the name of Belshazzar mocks God by throwing a party with articles taken from the Jewish temple. As a result, God passes judgement on Belshazzar by taking away his kingdom and dividing it between the Medes and Persians. Bible critics love to use this story to point out apparent historical errors in the text, trying to disprove the accuracy of the Bible. The first thing they say is that the last king to rule the empire of Babylon before being captured by the Medes and Persians, was a man by the name of Nabonidus, not Bel-shazzar. Secondly, Belshazzar was never a king of Babylon. And third, the Bible refers to Nebuchadnezzar as the father of Belshazzar, which he wasn't. But these statements made by the Bible critics are full of half truths. First of all, Belshazzar's name is found in archaeology, and he just happens to be the son of King Nabonidus, making him a crown prince in the kingdom of Babylon. And although some translations of the Bible state that Nebuchadnezzar was his father, the Hebrew word for father can also be interpreted into English as meaning grandfather or ancestor. And in fact, Belshazzar was a blood line descendent of Nebuchadnezzar. The same goes for the fact that the Bible calls Belshazzar a king. Even though historical records do not mention he was a king, the Hebrew word for king can also be interpreted as governor or royal prince. And history records that he was both. Nabonidus, who ruled the empire of Babylon from 555-538 B.C., mentions his firstborn son Belshazzar on an inscription found in the city of Ur in 1853. The inscription reads: ‘May it be that I, Nabonidus, king of Babylon, never fail you. And may my firstborn, Bel-shazzar, worship you with all his heart.’ Another piece of evidence for Belshazzar's reign in the city of Babylon comes from an inscription where he is referred to as the son of Nabonidus and is given authority to rule. ‘Putting the camp under the rule of his oldest son, the firstborn,’ the army of the empire he placed under his command. His hands were now free; He entrusted the authority of the royal throne to him. ‘Yet even another piece of evidence comes from a tablet dating back to the seventh year of the rule of Nabonidus, where he is mentioned in the same light as his father: ‘In regards to the bright star which has appeared, I will undertake to interpret its meaning for the glory of my lord Nabonidus, Babylon's king, and also for the crown prince, Belshazzar’ This backs up the Bible completely: Belshazzar speaking to Daniel in chapter 5 verse 16 says: . . . ‘Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.’ (Here Belshazzar indicates he was the second highest ruler in Babylon and not the first.) We also know that at the time the Medes and

Persians captured the Babylon, Nabonidus was not living in the city of Babylon, but was staying in a place called Teima in the northern part of Arabia where he left him in charge of governing the city. The text from an artefact known as the Nabonidus chronicle states: 'Nabonidus, the king stayed in Tema; the crown prince, his officials and the troops were in Akkad.' King Cyrus of Persia also refers to Belshazzar when he conquered Babylon in his writings: 'A coward was put in charge as the king of this country . . . With evil intents he did away with the regular offerings to the gods . . . and desecrated the worship of the king of his gods, Marduk.' Cyrus's statement that Belshazzar desecrated the worship of his god Marduk matches very closely to the story in the book of Daniel. It wasn't that of Marduk whose handwriting appeared on the wall, but the one true God of Israel. 'That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.' Liberal Bible scholars say that according to history there was no such man as Darius the Mede and say that the writer of scripture must have gotten him mixed up with a later king named Darius of Persia. But this apparent error can also be explained. First of all, the 'Babylonian Chronicles' tell us the exact date which Babylon fell. October 13, 539 B.C. According to historical records a man named Gubaru, a Mede, was appointed by King Cyrus to be ruler in Babylon at this time. Gubaru was born in 601 B.C. which would make him 62 years old when he invaded Babylon. Exactly the age found Daniel 5:31. The Babylonian record of Darius the Mede's conquest of Babylon is given below: 'In the month of Tashritu, at the time when Cyrus battled the forces of Akkad in Opis on the Tigris river, the citizens of Akkad revolted against him, but Nabonidus scattered his opposition with a great slaughter. On the 14th day, Sippar was taken without a fight. Nabonidus then fled for his life. On the 16th day, Gubaru (Darius the Mede) the leader of Gutium along with the army of Cyrus entered Babylon without any opposition. Later they arrested Nabonidus when he returned to Babylon.' On the third day of the month of Arahshamnu, Cyrus marched into Babylon, and they laid down green branches in front of him. The city was no longer at war, Peace being restored. Cyrus then sent his best wishes to the residents living there. His governor, Gubaru, then installed leaders to govern over all Babylon.' This account says that Darius the Mede installed sub governors in Babylon. The Bible says the same thing, and the prophet Daniel was one of them: 'It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss. Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm. So

the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him.’ Daniel 6:1-4 As far as his name goes, historians believe that the name Darius was not a proper name at all, but a title of honor meaning ‘Holder of the Scepter.’ In other words ‘The Scepter Holder (King) of the Medes.’ The Jewish historian Josephus also recorded that: ‘Darius the Mede, who along with his relative, Cyrus the King of Persia, brought an end to the Babylonian empire. Darius was the son of Astyages.’

## Part II

There have always been some comments said about Jesus Christ both bad and good but in spite of all the good things that have been said and proved, people still question the validity of Jesus Christ and favour the bad things. One such source is from an early Church leader named Origen. He wrote that the actual cave where Jesus was born could be seen by anyone wanting to visit it. (*Should we take this as fact that Jesus was born in a cave. Was that the stable and manger Jesus was born in?*) He wrote the following in ‘Against Celsus’, Volume I, chapter 51: ‘In regards to the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, if anyone, after studying Micah’s prophecy and the history recorded in the sacred writings by the disciples of Jesus need to have additional evidence, go to the cave in Bethlehem where He was born and the manger where He was wrapped in swaddling-clothes. Even among the enemies of our faith it is said that this is the cave where Jesus was born, the One who is worshiped and revered by the Christians. Another such reference is Justin Martyr, who lived around 150 A.D., recorded that if anyone questioned the virgin birth of Jesus, they should go and refer to the official archives of Augustus Caesar. ‘Jesus Christ our God was . . . conceived in Mary's womb . . . according to the Holy Spirit. Mary's virginity and the One whom she brought forth . . . these are the mysteries which are commonly known throughout the entire world. Yet these things were done by God secretly.’ Then in 125 A.D. another early writer by the name of Aristides also mentioned the miraculous birth of the Saviour. ‘He, being the Son of God Most High, made known by the Holy Spirit, came down from above, and being born of a Hebrew virgin took on himself flesh . . .’ This event may have been alluded to by a non- Christian writer named Ambrosius Macrobius, who around 430 A.D. wrote the following in his work Saturnalia Volume II chapter 4:11: ‘While listening amongst the male children’s bones, who in Syria, Herod king of the Jews ordered killed, those fewer than two years old, his son likewise he slaughtered.’ He (Augustus Caesar) says: ‘It is better to live as Herod’s pig than to be his son’ Josephus recorded that Herod had a number of Torah scholars burned alive for



removing Rome's golden eagles from the Temple gates. Herod also had his wife and a few of his sons murdered simply for considering them a threat to his own throne. Argubright further say that Jesus was born in Bethlehem where all sacrificial lambs were born, and then He died in Jerusalem where all sacrificial lambs were killed.

So back to Quirinius again; the man that ordered the Census! Isn't it incredible to think about the number of actions God had to put in place in order to bring Mary and Joseph to stable? Well, Quirinius was somewhat of an important person to the Roman government and personal friend to Augustus himself, at least it seems that he was, according to Roman history. There is an inscription found in Antioch Pisidia known as Res Gestae . The inscription places him as council in 12 B.C. which was made by appointing two prominent Romans every year. They governed as the Roman heads of state. The inscription reads: 'A great crowd of people came together from all over Italy to my election, more then had ever gathered before in Rome, when Publius Sulpicius (Quirinius) and Gaius Valgius were consuls.' Quirinius was so respected by Tiberius Caesar that Caesar honoured him before the entire Senate at Quirinius' death. Further mention came when he was appointed to be an adviser to Caius Caesar in the government of Armenia. You see, Caius was Councul and was sent to Syria in 1 A.D. but he then wounded in nearby Armenia in 3 A.D. and later died in 4 A.D. Quirinius was as well an advisor to Tiberius when he was at Rhodes. The account by Tacitus proves that Quirinius was governing militarily in the area of Syria well before becoming the civilian governor of Syria and taking a second census of Judea in 6 A.D., as recorded by the Jewish historian Josephus. Two other inscriptions were found in the early 1900's in Pisidian Antioch, which served as a military command centre and eastern outpost for the Roman Empire. The two inscriptions read as follows: 'C. Caristianus C F Sergius Fronto Caesius Iulius, perfect of civil engineers, priest, perfect of P. Sulpicius Quirinius the Duumvir, Perfect of M. Servilius, from this man and with a public edict, a statue was erected with the blessings of the council. History also records that just before the birth of our Lord, Judea was being taxed highly under Herod the Great, who was appointed King of Judea by Caesar Augustus, and Herod was subservient to him. To show how much he taxed the people or should we say, 'stole from the people', when he died he left ten million pieces of silver to Augustus Caesar and five million to Caesar's wife Julia and others.(Jewish Antiquities XVII 190) It was then in the Gospel of Luke that Luke said: 'I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good to me to write an orderly account for you . . . In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire

Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governing in Syria.)

‘After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? We all know the story about them following the star that appeared in the East. Some say Iran while others say Afghanistan. Herod, being the kind of person he was called on the priests and scribes to tell what this was all about. They told him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet.’ The Roman historian Tacitus wrote: ‘[the Jews] firmly believed that their ancient scriptures, quoted by their priests, contained a prophecy of how at a certain time, when the East was powerful, a ruler would come forth from Judea and He would secure a universal empire.’ Another early historian, Suetonius, penned the following words: ‘An old and well established belief was held all over the Orient, that one would arise from Judea who would establish a government over all men.’ The ‘Testament of Judah’ reveals what type of Messiah the people were expecting and also foretold of a star that would arise in Israel which would accompany His coming. It states: ‘There shall appear for you a star arising from Jacob in peace. And a man shall come forth who is my heir, like the sun of righteousness, walking amongst the sons of men in gentleness and righteousness, and there will be no sin found in him. And the heavens will rain down upon him the spirit as a blessing from the Holy One. And he will pour out the spirit of grace upon you. This is the shoot of the most high God; the water of life for all humanity. He will shine his light upon the sceptre of my kingdom, and from your root will raise the shoot, and through it will stem forth the rod of righteousness for the nations, to judge and to save all who call upon the Lord.’ (Testament of Judah 24.1-6)

The story of Jesus in Jerusalem during the Passover has been referred to many times. It perhaps shows more of the human side of Jesus, I’m not sure but Jesus certainly got upset at those who were selling cattle and sheep and doves, and also the moneychangers who were doing business. He went into the temple and drove out the animals and the people selling them, scattered the money changers money. His disciples must have thought him crazy or a brave person but then they remember the Scriptures, ‘Zeal for Your house will consume me.’ John 2:13-17. The Talmud states the following: Beginning on the 1st of Adar (the month before Passover), a proclamation was made to the people that they should prepare . . . On the 15th day of Adar, moneychangers were sent out to collect the Half-Shekel for its donation . . . On the 25th day of Adar, moneychangers were installed in the Temple itself to help in the collecting of the Half-Shekel donation. (Megillah 29a-b) Even many of the high priests during the first century seemed to have given up their love of God for the love of money. The

High priest whom Jesus was brought before was Annas a wicked person. ‘The Marketplace of the family of Annas’ was the name given to the temple sacrifice. The historian Josephus says that Annas the younger, the man who had James had him stoned to death. Josephus states: ‘The high priest, Ananus, (after he had been relieved from his office) to some degree, was respected and feared by the citizens, but in a bad way; for he loved to hoard money. He became good friends with Albinus, and of the newly installed high priest. He did so by offering them bribes; he also had wicked servants who went to the thrashing-floors, and took the tithes by force. They beat anyone who would not give the money to them.

Now for Pontius Pilate, there was an inscription bearing his name unearthed at an Italian excavation in 1961. This was first physical evidence found outside of the Bible to confirm his existence. The huge block of limestone which carried the inscription was found at the city of Caesarea with the words Tiberieum – Pontius Pilate, Perfect Judea. Tiberieum, probably refers to a temple dedicated to the emperor Tiberius. Pilate’s name was also recorded by the well-known Roman historian, Cornelius Tacitus, who mentioned that Pilate crucified Christ just as recorded in the Bible (*I find what Tacitus said amazing in some ways; here is obvious documented proof outside the Bible and still how many millions and millions of Muslims say that Jesus wasn’t crucified. The devil has blinded them through their own religion*). Tacitus, who was born around 52 A.D. and became Governor of Asia in 112 A.D., wrote the following in his History: ‘Nothing which could be done by man, nor any amount of treasure that the prince could give, nor all the sacrifices which could be presented to the gods, could clear Nero from being believed to have ordered the burning, the fire of Rome. So to silence the rumour, he tortured and falsely charged those who were called the Christians, who were hated for their large following. Christus, the founder of the name, was executed by Pontius Pilate, the Judean procurator, during the rule of Tiberius.’ Some ancient writers also believed that Pilate sent a report back to Rome of the trial of Jesus. Around 150 A.D., Justin Martyr, writing in defence of Christianity wrote to the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius, directed him to Pilate's report which he believed existed somewhere in the imperial archives: ‘The statement, ‘They spiked my hands and my feet’ he says, are they not an accurate portrayal of the nails that were fixed in his hands and his feet on the cross, and after he was executed, those who crucified him cast lots and divided his clothing amongst themselves; these things did occur, and you may find them in the 'Acts' recorded under Pontius Pilate.’ According to other historians, Pilate is portrayed as being a very cruel man. Pilate feared Tiberius might rebuke him as he did for putting Wings on the Temple door so in John chapter 19 verses 6-14. So Pilate out of fear handed Jesus over, ‘You take Him and crucify Him, for I

find no fault in Him.’ The Jews answered him, ‘We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.’ ‘Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.’ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, ‘Behold your King!’ An example of the accuracy of this Gospel account can be shown in the customary practice of releasing one prisoner at the time of Passover as mentioned above and as well in Luke 23:17. Historical records confirm that this was indeed a yearly event performed during Passover. The following Jewish writings from the Mishna, Pesahim 8:6 states: ‘They may sacrifice (a Passover lamb) for mourning the loss of his family, or for one that clears away a ruin; as well as for the one who has been promised to be released from prison.’ The way in which Christ was treated and suffered during his trial was also not unusual for the culture during the times in which He walked the earth. History records that the surrounding nations mocked anyone who claimed they were a king of the Jews.

During the second century A.D., in one of his ancient works, a Greek writer by the name of Lucian wrote about Jesus. Although Lucian opposed Christ which is evident in his writing, he does acknowledge that Jesus was crucified, that Christians worship Him as God based on faith alone, and believe that they have eternal life through Him. Lucian writes: ‘As you are aware, the Christians worship the man to this very day - He being well known for establishing their unusual form of worship, and for that reason he was crucified . . . . You see, these men begin with the notion that they will be immortal for all eternity, which explains why they do not fear death and is why they give themselves over to his worship; and it was also taught by this lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the very second that they begin to follow him, and they turn their backs on the gods in Greece, and worship this crucified prophet, and live according to his commands. They believe all this purely by faith alone. As a result, worldly goods mean nothing to them and they treat it as property to be used among themselves for the common good.’

In 49 AD, the Roman Emperor Claudius Caesar expelled all Jews from the city of Rome. The author says that an account of this was recorded by Suetonius, a court official who served under the Emperor Hadrian. He wrote a history entitled ‘The Life of Claudius’ in which he stated the following: ‘Because the Jewish people were continually causing disorders, the catalyst being Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome’ (Note: Chrestus may be an alternate spelling for Christus commonly used by Gentiles and may refer to Christ.) Also, some think that the Book of Galatians was written to Jewish Christians in Rome around that

time who thought about turning their backs of Jesus and returning to the teaching of the Law. A small statement by the Roman historian confirms the Biblical passage found in Acts 18:1-2: 'After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome;' A letter written by Claudius in 41 A.D. also confirms his hostility towards the Jewish people.

Argubright says that another Biblical event confirmed the history regarding Claudius as being found in the book of Acts chapter 11 verses 27-28: 'And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch.' 'Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout the entire world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar.' The fifth century historian Orosius mentions this famine in Syria which occurred in 46 and 47 A.D. A translation of Orosius was later made by King Alfred of England during the middle ages and was quoted in what is known as 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle'. The Chronicle lists British history from 1 A.D. to 1154 A.D. and contains the following remarks: 'A.D. 46: In this year, Claudius, the second Roman emperor to invade Britain, put much of the island under his control and added the Orkneys to Rome's kingdom. This took place in the fourth year of his rule. In this same year, a great famine in Syria took place which Luke mentions in his book, 'The Acts of the Apostles.

When the apostle Paul went on his first missionary journey to Cyprus along with his companions Barnabas and John Mark, he came face to face with the Roman governor Sergius Paulus. A number of possible references to him have been found outside of the Bible. Two of these discoveries are from the Island of Cyprus and were found by a veteran of the Civil war by the name of General Louis di Cesnola. The first of these inscriptions was found at the city of Silo in 1877 just a short distance north of Paphos mentioned by Luke in the Book of Acts just before Paul's encounter with Sergius Paulus. The inscription mentions 'the proconsul Paulus' and dates to around 54 A.D. during the reign of Claudius. It reads as follows: 'Apollonius to his father ... consecrated this enclosure and monument according to his family's wishes ... having filled the offices of clerk of the market, prefect, town-clerk, high priest, and having been in charge as manager of the records office. The second inscription is from Kythraia (Chytri), located in northern Cyprus, and makes reference to a 'Quintus Sergius' whose last name Quintus Sergius Paulus is missing from the inscription but could possibly refer to Paulus. The inscription, found on a blue marble slab indicates that this man must have lived during the reign of Claudius, Gaius, or Tiberius Caesar. The story of Paul's first encounter with Sergius Paulus is found in Acts 13:6-12: 'Now when they had gone

through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God.

Throughout the world today, thousands of Christians are being persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ. The same was true of the early church. One of the earliest accounts of Christian persecution found outside of the Bible comes from two enemies of Christ: Pliny the Younger, the Roman governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor and the other, the Roman Emperor Trajan. Both men persecuted the early Christians for not worshiping the false gods of Rome. Let me also say that this persecution is coming closer and closer to the church in New Zealand and the west every day. We have in a letter dated to around 112 A.D., Pliny wrote the following to the Emperor Trajan: ‘It has always been my custom to ask my lord for instructions on all unclear issues. For no one can give me better advice and guidance on matters where I have had no previous experience. Since I have never taken part in the trials of Christians, I would like to know what crimes they should be punished for, should I investigate them, and to what extreme. It is also unclear to me as to whether or not I should treat the young and the old alike, or should I discriminate on the basis of age. Should I grant pardons to those who have recanted? Or should I punish him even though he has ceased to be a Christian, because of his past association with this name, or are only specific offenses to be punished. Currently, in cases brought before me of those who have been accused of being Christians, I have observed the following procedures: First, I interrogated them to find out whether or not they were Christians; those who confessed, I threatened to punish, as they endured a second and a third interrogation, after which; those who would not recant, I ordered executed. For there is no doubt in my mind, that regardless of the nature of their gospel, stubbornness and firm defiance surely deserve punishment. There were others who held the same nonsense; but because they were Roman citizens, I commanded that they should be transported to Rome.’ [Note: this statement confirms Rome’s great respect offered to its citizens such as found in the case of the apostle Paul in Acts 22:27- 29.]

During excavations of Jerusalem in 1871, two archaeologists, Clermont and Ganneau, discovered what is known as the Soreg Inscription. Written in Greek, the sign warns non-Jews to keep out of the temple area. It states: ‘No foreigner is to enter the barriers surrounding the sanctuary. He who is caught will have himself to blame for his death which will follow.’ The historian Josephus also mentions this inscription in chapter 15 of his work, *Antiquities of the Jews*: ‘The centre of the structure was the tallest, with the front wall being built with beams which sat upon interlocking pillars. Highly glossed stones made up this wall,



so finely polished that those who looked upon it for the first time marvelled at it in amazement. This was the description of the first structure. Located within it, and nearby, were steps which led up to the second structure, which was surrounded by a stone wall used as a barrier, engraved with an inscription not allowing foreigners to enter into it under the penalty of death.'

Jewish history records that it was a common practice to tie a red strip of cloth to the scapegoat. The red stripe represented the sin of the people which was atoned for by the red blood on the mercy seat. According to the Jewish Talmuds this red stripe would eventually turn white, signalling God's acceptance of the offering. There is an amazing reference in the Talmuds that verifies that after Jesus was crucified, God no longer accepted the sin offering and the scapegoat offered by the high priests. The Talmuds state: 'Forty years before the Temple was destroyed (30 A.D.) the chosen lot was not picked with the right hand, nor did the crimson stripe turn white, nor did the westernmost light burn; and the doors of the Temple's Holy Place swung open by themselves, until Rabbi Yochanon ben Zakkai spoke saying: 'O most Holy Place, why have you become disturbed? I know full well that your destiny will be destruction, for the prophet Zechariah ben Iddo has already spoken regarding you saying: 'Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour the cedars' (Zech. 11:1).'

This event from the Talmuds occurred 40 years before the destruction of the Temple, the same year that Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice on the cross. Jesus was the final sin offering and the scapegoat bearing the sins for all mankind.

So far, I have primarily dealt with the New Testament and happenings around the time of Christ. Before going on in that direction, I want to take some time in the Old Testament where we read about the first cities known to man after the global flood of Noah's day. These first cities lay in a land modern historians call ancient Mesopotamia.' This land would later be the staging ground for two of the world's most feared Empires, Assyria and Babylon. The city state of Akkad as well as the cities of Sumer was mentioned in Genesis 10:10-12 long ago. Interestingly, I have studied a great deal of Arabic, a Semitic language and Hebrew, another Semitic language and I have taken a course in the language of Akkad, also a Semitic language going back to 3000 BC. Know that Abraham had to have spoken this language coming from the city of Ur. These Semitic languages were all alike in terms of grammar and even many of their words. For example, the word for food, 'Akal' has come down through the ages into the Armenian, Hebrew and Arabic. The major Semitic languages of the time. That is five thousand years that such a word has existed in these Middle Eastern languages! It really is amazing. I have gotten a bit side-tracked here, but to continue. One of

the most amazing finds uncovered in Akkad was that of a seal which possibly shows that the Akkadians knew of the story of the temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. George Smith of the British Museum, who lived during the middle 1800's, wrote: 'One striking and important specimen of early type in the British Museum has two figures sitting one on each side of a tree, holding out their hands to the fruit, while at the back of one (the woman) is stretched a serpent, thus it is evident that a form of the story of the Fall, similar to that of Genesis, was known from early times in Babylonia.' The first city mentioned in the Bible as being among the cities of Nimrod is Babel. Fragments of an Assyrian tablet were discovered at Nineveh by Austen Henry Layard during the middle of the 18th century that closely parallel the Biblical Tower of Babel account. The artefacts now reside in the British Museum (registration number K.3657) and reads as follows: 'his heart was evil against the father of all the gods . . . Babylon was brought into subjection, small and great alike. He confounded their speech . . . their strong palace (tower) all the days they built; to their strong place in the night He completely made an end . . . In His anger His word was poured out . . . to scatter aboard He set his face, He gave this command, and their counsel was confused. .

One fascinating archaeological find at Ur is that of a temple tower which the Akkadians called a ziggurat. The tower that was found at UR was later rebuilt by king Nabonidus of Babylon who reigned between 555-539 B.C. Some inscriptions that were found at this ziggurat, Nabonidus states that he had rebuilt the structure which he learned was originally constructed by two kings who lived 1,500 years prior to himself. One inscription bears the name of another Biblical Babylonian prince by the name of Belshazzar who would live to see God's handwriting on the walls of Babylon as recorded in Daniel chapter 5. Other towers in Mesopotamia such as the one at Ur have been found at Calah (Nimrud), Assur, Akkad (Sippar), Uruk, Cush (Kish), Borsippa, Aqarquf, Khorabad and Eridu, a city near Ur . Inscriptions from various Babylonian kings also record the construction of these temple towers which they say reached to the sky with similar wording to that found in the Bible's tower of Babel account.

Archaeology in this region has also uncovered one of the earliest accounts of the flood. It is listed on an artefact known as the Sumerian Kings List dating back to 2,170 B.C. The inscription reads: 'The flood swept over (the earth). After the flood had swept over (the earth) (and) when the kingship was lowered (again) from heaven, kingship was (first) at Kish (Cush).' What is interesting about this statement is not only that the flood is the mentioned, but also a city founded by Cush who was the son of Ham, the son of Noah. The Bible in Genesis 10:8 states that Nimrod descended from Cush. The city of Kish (Cush) was located

in the area very close to Babylon. Another fascinating artefact was found at Nineveh, one of the cities of Asshur mentioned in Genesis 10:11. It gives an account of the flood somewhat similar to the Bible's account, showing they also had a knowledge of the great flood of Noah's day: '...build a ship, seek thou life . . . aboard the ship take thou the seed of all living things . . . All my family and kin I made go aboard the ship. The beasts of the field, the wild creatures of the field . . . I made go aboard . . .' Board thou ship and batten up thy entrance! That stated time had arrived: He who orders unease at night, showers down a rain of blight. I watched the appearance of the weather. The weather was awesome to behold. I boarded the ship and battened up the entrance. With the first glow of dawn, a black cloud rose up from the horizon. `

The Edomites, once a powerful nation, were the descendants of Jacob's brother Esau, as mentioned in Genesis 36:43, and they lived in the mountainous regions south of the Dead Sea. According to the Bible, Esau's hand was always against his brother. Because of their constant hostility against Israel, God declared their fate in Malachi 1:2-4: 'I have loved you,' says the LORD. 'Yet you say, 'In what way have you loved us?' Was not Esau Jacob's brother?' says the LORD. 'Yet Jacob I have loved; But Esau I have hated, And laid waste his mountains and his heritage For the jackals of the wilderness.' Even though Edom has said, 'We have been impoverished, But we will return and build the desolate places,' Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'They may build, but I will throw down; They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, And the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever.' Did the Lord lay waste this Edomite stronghold and give it to the jackals? Now, I refer the Book of Job to you here as far back as 2200 BC. If you want a taste of what life was like then, Job is of a people who knew God. I have researched this book and have written that research out to contain about seventy pages. God loved that nation but they eventually transgressed against Israel and the Lord. Sadly, they were a Godly people but they turned from the Lord after becoming the nation of Edom and then around 550 B.C. to 400 B.C. the Edomites were overrun by Nabatean Arabs who ransacked their territory. You can download my article from [philsblog.online](http://philsblog.online). In Ezekiel 25:14, God mentions that the nation of Israel would one day take out the Lord's vengeance on Edom, and history confirms that this prophecy has been fulfilled. The first century Jewish historian Josephus gives us one account of Israel's defeat of Edom: 'The Idumeans (formerly the Edomites) surrendered to Hycranus who allowed them to live as long as they agreed to circumcise their sons and to abide by Jewish customs. This they did, and from that point on they followed the practices of the Jews.'

So, after Lot fled the city of Sodom, which God destroyed with fire and brimstone because of their sins of homosexuality, he had a son named Ben Ammi and according to Genesis 19:38 Ben Ammi became the father of the Ammonites. Again, Argubright says that the Ammonites became one of Israel's most hated enemies. They were one of the nations that hired Balaam to curse Israel at the time of Moses, as recorded in Nehemiah 13:1-2. Because of that action, God declared in Deuteronomy 23:3 that no Ammonite could ever enter into the assembly of the Lord. Biblical archaeology has brought to light many artefacts from the kings of Ammon. One such seal is found impressed with the words: 'Milqom, the steward of Baalis.' Baalis is mentioned in the Bible as being the king who had Gedaliah the governor of Judah assassinated, as recorded in Jeremiah 40:13-14: A mention of the Ammonites was also found on a bronze bottle near Amman Jordan. The relic belonged to Amminadab the first, the king of the Ammonites (650 B.C.) It is engraved with the words 'The Sons of Ammon.' Yet, another famous artefact known as the monolith inscription, from Shalmaneser the third, mentions the leader of an Ammonite army along with Ahab the king of Israel. The inscription reads: 'To strengthen his forces he was assisted by Hadazer of Damascus who had 1,200 chariots and cavalrymen, along with 20,000 soldiers on foot . . . 2,000 chariots and 10,000 troops of Ahab from Israel . . . military forces of Basa, the son of Ruhubi, the Ammonite. Combined they numbered twelve kings.'

Ancient Assyrian records from the time of Shalmaneser III verify events and kings mentioned in the Bible during the time of the prophets Elijah and Elisha. The first Assyrian record mentions how Hazael, the king of Syria, seized the throne from Hadadezer. The ancient text reads: 'I was victorious over Hadadezer of Damascus along with his allies who numbered twelve kings. His warriors, numbering 20,900, lay slain upon the ground, while his remaining army was forced to withdraw to the Orontes River. There they retreated in order to spare their lives. Afterwards Hadadezer died and Hazael, the son of a worthless man, seized the throne. He formed a large army and waged war against me. I engaged him in battle and claimed the victory. He retreated in order to save his life.' Another inscription from Shalmaneser found on the Black Obelisk mentions the king of Israel, Jehu, who ruled during the time of Hazael. The Obelisk also shows a depiction of Jehu bowing down before the Assyrian king offering his tribute. The inscription reads: 'I received tribute from Jehu, from the house of Omri; I received from him silver, Page 79 gold, a golden bowl, a golden vase . . . and a staff for a king.'

There was an inscription discovered bearing the name of King Uzziah. It reads: 'To this place, the remains of Uzziah, King of Judah, were placed. Do not disturb' Another

inscription, from the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser, mentions 'Azariah (Uzziah) of Judah' multiple times. Uzziah and the story that led to his downfall are mentioned in 2Chronicles 26: 'But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the Lord; valiant men. And they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, 'It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You shall have no honour from the Lord God.' Then Uzziah became furious; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and there, on his forehead, he was leprous; so they thrust him out of that place. Indeed he also hurried to get out, because the LORD had struck him.

Ahaz, King of Judah was also a wicked ruler. Get this, the Bible even says that he sacrificed his own sons in the fire, not much unlike the practice of modern day abortionists who sacrifice the sons and daughters of many for mere profit. In New Zealand, a recent law allows abortion at birth! It is just not people who are killing babies but government laws. The wickedness of those times have now arrived in our own times. Do you not think that God is going to deal with New Zealand for this? So, the mention of Ahaz is found outside of the Bible, was taken from a clay building inscription of Tiglath-Pileser III. In accounts from his battles against Israel, between 744 and 727 B.C., he records the following: 'From these I received tribute . . . Ahaz, the king of Judah . . . including gold, silver, iron, fine cloth and many garments made from wool that was dyed in purple . . . as well as all kinds of lavish gifts from many nations and from the kings that rule over them.' This confirms 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 16:8 which states: 'And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasuries of the king's house, and sent it as a present to the king of Assyria.' The reason God sent Tiglath-Pileser III and his horde of Assyrians against Ahaz can be found in 2 Chronicles 28:19-21:

Isaiah the prophet, in one of God's prophecies regarding a judgement against the nations of Egypt and Ethiopia, mentions an Assyrian king by the name of Sargon. This posed a problem to archaeologists back in the earliest days of their field of study, because an obelisk stone with the names of all the Assyrian kings that had ruled that kingdom was uncovered which made no mention of Sargon. On its discovery the University of Chicago made a bold statement that they had found a glaring contradiction in the Bible. They assumed the scripture

was in error since Sargon's name wasn't found engraved on this stone. Eventually they found the royal palace of Sargon, where the bricks lining the palace walls were engraved with his name. Not only was his name found, but his capture of the city of Ashdod as mentioned in Isaiah 20, was engraved on the palace walls as well. Also digs from the city of Ashdod later turned up fragments from a monument which recorded this victory. One of the inscriptions read: 'Sargon, king of Assyria, who conquered Samaria and the entire region of Israel, he who made captives of Ashdod.'

Another artefact was found that bears witness to Manasseh, who was the son of King Hezekiah. Manasseh, who also became king of Judah, was mentioned by the Assyrian king Esarhaddon who reigned 680 to 664 years BC. The inscription lists kings who were under his submission as contributing materials to furnish his royal palace. It reads as follow: 'I commanded the kings from the region of Hatti as well as the areas on the other side of the Euphrates including Ba'lu, king of Tyre, Manasseh, king of Judah . . . ; a total of 22 kings from Hatti, the seashore and islands, all of them were given the difficult task of transporting building materials to my palace in Nineveh, the city over which I am king.' The story of King Manasseh is a story of a man who went from being one of the vilest and wicked sinners ever, to a saint. His story can be found in 2 Chronicles 33: And the Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. Therefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon. (Note: The reference to Manasseh's captivity to Babylon was once commonly held by liberals as a mistake on the part of the Bible, because Nineveh was the capital of Esarhaddon's Assyrian empire. However, inscriptions from Esarhaddon prove that he did indeed rebuild Babylon. One such inscription reads: 'Esarhaddon.... king of Assyria, governor of Babylon.') 'Now when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God.

Jeremiah prophesized doom upon the nation and I prophesize doom on New Zealand the west for turning against God in their unholy acts. Hearing this, leaders of Judah wanted to kill Jeremiah. One such man was named Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, a high-ranking prince who served under King Zedekiah. Another was Gedaliah the son of Pashhur. Seal impressions once made by both Jehucal and Gedaliah were recently uncovered in Jerusalem a few meters apart dating to a time shortly before the destruction of the city by the Babylonians. The first seal reads: 'Belonging to Jehucal, son of Shelemiah, son of Shovi.' His father,



Shelemiah, may also be the same man mentioned on another artefact known as Lachish letter IX which says: 'May Yahweh cause my lord to hear tidings of peace! . . . Return word to my servant through Shelemiah giving us instructions as to what action we shall take tomorrow!' The second seal reads: 'Gedalyahu son of Pashhur.' Jeremiah's dealings with Jehucal and Gedaliah are recounted in the following passages of Scripture: 'Now King Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah. But neither he nor his servants nor the people of the land gave heed to the words of the Lord which He spoke by the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah had spoken to all the people, saying, 'thus says the Lord: 'He who remains in this city (Jerusalem) shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; `but he who goes over to the Chaldeans shall live; his life shall be as a prize to him, and he shall live.' 'Thus says the Lord: 'This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.' ' So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the king's son, which was in the court of the prison, and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire. So Jeremiah sank in the mire. 'My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon, and he is likely to die from hunger in the place where he is. There is no bread in the city.' Then the king commanded Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, 'Take from here thirty men with you, and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon before he dies.'

Jeremiah 37:1-38:10

Throughout history people have had a fascination with finding the Ark of the Covenant. There are many theories behind where the Ark of the Covenant currently resides, one thing is certain, archaeology has already proven its existence, including the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies is the room where the Ark of the Covenant was kept. To this very day a rectangular depression, the same size as the Ark of the Covenant, can be seen marking where it once stood in the Jewish Temple. According to Hebrews 9:4, the two tablets of the Ten Commandments were housed in the ark along with a golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded. When Jesus was crucified, the veil that separated the Holy of Holies was torn in two, signifying that all people can now come freely into God's presence. Shall the Ark ever be found? Jeremiah 3:16-17: 'Then it shall come to pass, when you are multiplied and increased in the land in those days,' says the Lord, 'that they will say no more, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit it, nor shall it be made anymore. 'At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem. No

more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts.’ Revelation 11:19 says that the Ark of Covenant is now in His temple in heaven.

Even though the information in this book presents itself as a series of facts and figures; time and again, these facts and figures with Scripture pieces together ever so carefully the proof that backs up passage after passage of the Old and New Testament. This essay has covered issues regarding where The birth and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, Quirinius the governor, Jesus in Jerusalem, Pontius Pilate, Expelling the Jews from Rome, Syrian famine, Sergius Paulus, Christian Persecution, The court of Gentiles, The Red Stripe, Adam and Eve, The Tower of Babel, The Flood, the Edomites, the Ammonites, Jehu, King Uzziah, Ahaz – King of Judah, Sargon – King Assyria, Manasseh, Jeremiah and the Ark of the Covenant. The amount of fact presented with clear content is well supported..

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