

The Top Five Archaeological Finds Related to the Old Testament

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Introduction

An archaeologist is a scholar whose career leads to _____ .

The mystery novelist Agatha Christie, who was married to an archaeologist, was once asked what it was like to be married to such a person. She replied, “Oh, it is wonderful. The older I get, the more he takes an interest in me!!”

My choice of the top 5 archaeological finds is determined by the way in which these discoveries help to confirm the text of the _____ by being consistent with what it declares.

While archaeology does not _____ the Bible, it confirms what the Bible teaches in a number of ways.

Number Five: The Dan _____

Tel Dan is the site of an ancient city at the northern tip of Israel. It was originally named Laish, but was renamed Dan when it was conquered by some warriors from that tribe who had left their own assigned portion on the shore of the Mediterranean near modern Tel Aviv (see Judges 18:1-31).

Archaeologist discovered an inscription near the city gate of Dan that mentions the House of _____ .

This is important because many modern scholars deny that such a person as David ever even existed, but was an invention of later Israelite generations.

The inscription also confirms the events recorded in 2 Kings _____ .

Number Four: Hezekiah's _____

Hezekiah was a King of Judah who encountered the Assyrian invasion around 721 BC. The story is told in 2 Kings 18-20 and Isaiah 37 – 39. To help prepare for that invasion, his engineers dug a tunnel from the Spring Gihon on the east side of the city to bring water to the west side. The tunnel is 1750 feet long and empties into a pool that was later called the Pool of Siloam (John 9:7-11).

There are two brief references to the construction of the tunnel in 2 Chron. __: __ and 2 Kings __: __.

In the 1870's an inscription was found near the end of the tunnel that described how this amazing engineering feat was accomplished. The tunnelers worked from opposite ends and met _____. Despite all the study that has been done on this subject, there are still a number of questions that remain on exactly HOW it was done. What is exciting to Bible readers is the confirmation of the Biblical account by information outside the Bible.

Number Three: Merneptah _____

Merneptah was _____ of Egypt roughly 1250 – 1200 BC. On the monument (stela) he boasted that he had defeated a number of Canaanite kings and also Israel in battle. As was the custom of his day, he was probably boasting beyond his actual accomplishments. What is significant is that he mentions “Israel” as existing as a nation in its own land in the 13th century BC. The Bible states that the conquest of Canaan took place around 1400 BC (see 2 Kings 6:1). Many liberal scholars deny this and place the conquest much later – if there was even such a thing as a conquest! Both the Bible and the Merneptah Stela contradict these higher-critical ideas.

Number Two: The Silver _____

During the OT period, burials were done in rock-hewn tombs outside the city. Oftentimes, objects were buried with the deceased. In the latter period of the OT, 9th-7th century BC. Bodies were placed on a shelf within the family tomb with space for other bodies to be lain. After decomposition, the bones were re-located in a space under the rock shelf along with the objects. In just such a tomb complex southeast of the Old City of Jerusalem, Gabriel Barkay discovered among the objects two silver amulets with Numbers 6:24-26 inscribed on them. These are the oldest objects ever found containing the sacred name of God – YHWH. Referred to as the *tetragrammaton* (4 letter name), it is sometimes pronounced as “_____” but more accurately as “Yahweh.”

The value of this find is that it puts to death forever the old critical idea that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses but was composed after the return from the Babylonian exile in the fifth century BC. Such an idea is impossible in light of this find which is securely dated as early as 850 BC.

Number One: The Walls of _____

The destruction of Jericho is one of the most familiar miracle accounts in the Bible (_____). While archaeology cannot _____ a miracle, it can illustrate the _____ of a miracle. Archaeological evidence has done this with Jericho.

There have been two main archaeological excavations of this ancient tel. John Garstang (1930's) believed that he found evidence of Jericho's walls that had fallen outward instead of inward (cf. Joshua 6:20, Hebrew). Kathleen Kenyon (1950's) believed that no trace of Joshua's city could be found. Recent work by Bryant Wood has uncovered some of the evidence discovered by Garstang that has been ignored.

Evidence of mud bricks having fallen down the hill from Jericho's walls can be seen. Also evidence of charred grain in jars can still be seen, indicating a fire in the city that burned in the Spring of the year and was not pillaged. These are consistent with the Biblical account.

Also, one can also discern that part of the brick wall in the northern part of Jericho can still be seen. Could this be the site of Rahab's house?

Conclusion:

Jesus said that if the children were silent even the stones would cry out that He is the Messiah (Luke 19:40). While He was not directly referring to the stones uncovered by archaeologists, it appears that these silent objects may yet be crying out about the accuracy of the Biblical record.

Are we listening?