

Does Archaeology Disprove The Bible?

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Many teach that the study of archaeology disproves the Bible, yet as we will see, the opposite is the case. One archaeologist, Titus Kennedy, has written:

“Because the Bible contains stories from the ancient world, written in a style different than the method of modern historians and paired with theology, many have assumed that the narratives in the Bible are myth, legend, and propaganda instead of accurate history. In fact, the majority of scholars, most media and educational sources, and many in the general public regard the Bible as a fairy tale and frequently portray it as unimportant or irrelevant beyond literary and religious studies. For years, the Bible has been routinely attacked and disregarded on the basis of history or archaeology. And yet when people look into what archaeologists have unearthed, a different story comes to light, showing that instead of fiction and fairy tales, archaeology indicates that the Bible preserves an accurate recounting of the history addressed in its pages. Specifically, hundreds of artifacts from the distant past have demonstrated the events, people, and places in the Bible to be historical.” (Titus M. Kennedy, *Unearthing the Bible: 101 Archaeological Discoveries That Bring the Bible to Life*, 9(Kindle Edition); Eugene, Oregon; Harvest House Publishers)

Kennedy provides numerous evidences from archaeology which confirm the Bible’s authenticity. Consider a couple of examples.

Jacob In The Bible Lands

The Bible teaches that the Hebrews were in the lands of both Egypt and Canaan before the time of Christ, specifically around 1800 B.C. While many skeptics have denied this truth, the findings of archaeology unashamedly confirm the teaching of God's Word.

“Many scarab seals discovered in both Egypt and Canaan contain the names of rulers mentioned in the Bible, and in one case a personal name of one of the patriarchs known from the narratives in Genesis. At present, 27 scarab seals bearing the name “Yaqob” (Jacob) and the element “El” (perhaps meaning “protected by God”) have been discovered in Egypt, Canaan, and Nubia dating to around 1800–1600 BC. 21 While the scarabs may not be referring to Jacob the patriarch and father of the 12 tribes, these inscriptions do attest to the usage of the name Yaqob/ Jacob in Canaan and Egypt during the time of the Jacob known from Genesis around the 18th century BC. Further, it is significant that the name does not appear to be common either before or after that period, demonstrating that the name Jacob was primarily used at the time of the patriarchs and therefore the narratives in Genesis accurately reflect the historical usage of this name.” (Titus M. Kennedy, *Unearthing the Bible: 101 Archaeological Discoveries That Bring the Bible to Life*, 38-39 (Kindle Edition); Eugene, Oregon; Harvest House Publishers)

Slaves In Egypt

The Scriptures are clear that the Hebrews were slaves in the land of Egypt during the time of the events of the Exodus. This is something which has been very offensive to the enemies of Scripture, however; and so they have often viciously declared that the Bible lies on these matters. However, archaeology has certainly spoken on the matter.

“An Egyptian list of domestic servants recorded on a papyrus²⁶ from about the 17th century BC contains not only Semitic names but even Hebrew names. This period came just after the life of Joseph and preceded the Exodus, which was the time that the Hebrews lived in Egypt as settlers and then as slaves. A section of this papyrus contains a list of 95 servants, many of whom are specified as Asiatic or coming from western Asia (primarily

Canaan). 27 The servants with foreign names are given Egyptian names, just as Joseph was after he was promoted from a household servant under Potiphar to the role of vizier over all Egypt. The majority of the names are feminine because domestic servants were typically female....“Approximately 30 of the servants have names identified as Semitic, but more relevant to the Exodus story is that 9 of these servants appear to have specifically Hebrew names. The Hebrew names found on the list include: Menahema, a feminine form of Menahem (2 Kings 15: 14); Ashera, a feminine form of Asher, the name of one of the sons of Jacob (Genesis 30: 13); Shiphrah, the name of one of the Hebrew midwives prior to the Exodus (Exodus 1: 15); ‘Aqoba, a name appearing to be a feminine form of Jacob or Yaqob (Genesis 25: 26); Sekera, which is either a feminine name similar to Issachar, a name of one of the sons of Jacob, or simply the feminine form of Issachar (Genesis 30: 18); Dawidihuat, a compound name utilizing the name David (1 Samuel 16: 13); Esebtw, a name derived from the Hebrew word eseb meaning “herb” (Deuteronomy 32: 2); Hayah-wr, another compound name composed of Hayah or Eve (Genesis 3: 20); and finally the name Hy’b’rw, which appears to be an Egyptian transcription of “Hebrew” (Genesis 39: 14). Therefore, this list is a clear attestation of Hebrews living in Egypt prior to the Exodus under Moses, in their earlier period of residence in the country prior to their total enslavement, and perhaps shows that a group may have migrated south or was taken south for work.” (Titus M. Kennedy, *Unearthing the Bible: 101 Archaeological Discoveries That Bring the Bible to Life*, 48-49 (Kindle Edition); Eugene, Oregon; Harvest House Publishers)

Wandering In The Wilderness

According to the Bible, the Jewish people were condemned by Jehovah to wander in the wilderness for forty years because of their refusal to attack the land of Canaan.

Numbers 14:34-35-According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. 35 I the LORD have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.' "

Archaeologists have discovered excavations which confirm these truths of the Word of God.

“Hieroglyphic inscriptions mentioning the “land of the nomads of YHWH” were discovered on the walls of two New Kingdom Egyptian temples and a temple pillar in Sudan. Currently, these are the earliest known texts that contain the name YHWH (Yahweh), the name of God in the Hebrew Bible. The first of these to be discovered, found on a topographical list at the Amara West temple, dates no earlier than ca. 1300 BC during the reign of Seti I in the 19th Dynasty, and is probably a copy of the inscription on the wall of the Soleb temple from ca. 1400 BC in the 18th Dynasty. The Temple of Amun at Soleb was built on the left bank of the Nile, north of the Third Cataract, around 1400 BC by the 18th Dynasty pharaoh, Amenhotep III. This temple was dedicated to Amun and to Amenhotep III as a deity. When first noted by explorers, the magnificent hypostyle hall was in ruins, toppled, and partly covered by sand, but many inscriptions that had been carved into the pillars and walls had survived the millennia. Among these inscriptions was an extensive list of conquered or subdued places and people, several of whom were described as nomads. Eighteenth Dynasty Egyptian texts repeatedly mention nomadic people living in the wilderness east of Egypt and in Canaan during the Late Bronze Age, even specifying that some were tent dwellers. The Soleb inscriptions further identify these different areas and people by associating them with a location or a deity, and at least two of the inscriptions claim defeat or subjugation of a nomadic group that worshipped Yahweh, specifically noting the “land of the nomads of YHWH” located somewhere in the Edom, Moab, and Canaan area....“Yet, the only known military campaign of Amenhotep III was to suppress a rebellion in Kush, so the claims of conquest were probably propaganda and reflect Egyptian influence from the time of Thutmose III. One of the inscriptions was on an interior wall of the temple, following an Egyptian practice of showcasing a list naming conquered places and people. The relief on a pillar is the best preserved and shows a fragmentary bound “shasu” (nomad) prisoner with the name “land of the nomads of Yahweh” in the cartouche. Spelled phonetically, using hieroglyphs to represent the sounds Y-H-HW-W-A/ E, not only do the letters match an Egyptian transliteration, but there is no “land” or “city” determinative, indicating that it must be a personal name rather than a place. Since the only ancient people known to have worshipped Yahweh were the Israelites or Hebrews, it logically follows that these nomads were the

Israelites before they settled in Canaan. This inscription is the earliest yet discovered reference to Yahweh, the personal name of God in the Hebrew Bible. In the 15th and 14th centuries BC, the people of Yahweh, the Israelites, wandered in the wilderness like nomads and continued to live a nomadic lifestyle for many years while conquering and settling Canaan. That the name Yahweh and the nomads of Yahweh, descriptive of the Israelites, would be found on an Egyptian temple from around 1400 BC demonstrates that the Egyptians of the 18th Dynasty and the pharaoh himself were familiar with the Israelites and the God they worshipped, suggesting contact and dialogue around the time of Moses, the Exodus, and the wandering in the 15th century BC.” (Titus M. Kennedy, *Unearthing the Bible: 101 Archaeological Discoveries That Bring the Bible to Life*, 60-61 (Kindle Edition); Eugene, Oregon; Harvest House Publishers)

The Conclusion Of The Whole Matter

From what Kennedy has learned in years of studying biblical archaeology, do the facts confirm or contradict the Bible?

“Artifacts related to the Bible specifically have illuminated or confirmed events, chronologies, practices, terminology, locations, and individuals that would otherwise have remained a mystery. As an example, there are currently about 70 individuals mentioned in the Old Testament who have been confirmed by archaeological artifacts, and about 32 individuals in the New Testament so far confirmed by archaeology, with several more people from the Bible tentatively identified by archaeological artifacts....Although 101 objects were presented, there might have been around 500 artifacts noted if there were no space restrictions and the scope was more comprehensive! Further, every year new and significant discoveries connected to the Bible are being made, suggesting that the amount of archaeological evidence will increase as time goes on and as ancient sites are found and excavated..” (Titus M. Kennedy, *Unearthing the Bible: 101 Archaeological Discoveries That Bring the Bible to Life*, 238-239 (Kindle Edition); Eugene, Oregon; Harvest House Publishers)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.