**History, Archaeology and Christianity:**

**Using Archaeology in Teaching and Preaching**

Jeremiah 29:10-14 God has plans for our lives.

Consider the context: Jerusalem is surrounded by Nebuchadnezzar’s army. 70 years of captivity about to ensue.

Does it appear that God is in control?

Do you believe God is in control in your life?

God works through history.

The Bible is immersed in history. The Bible story, indeed Christianity makes no sense outside of history.

Ex. Joshua Ch 1-3

29 cities

10 specific people

17 “peoples”

The point: these people cities and “peoples” either existed or they did not.

Many scholars and critics of the Bible:

This is historical fantasy. It was made up by Jewish teachers after 500 BC to justify their philosophy/religious teachings.

Q: What if Abraham never lived? (Romans 4: he is the father of us all….)

Q: What if Moses never lived and the Exodus is a legend?

(Jesus is our Passover Lamb, Law of Moses is from man) (1 Cor 10:2 they were baptized into Moses

1 Cor 10:11 These things occurred to them as example for us. Again, if this did not happen, how is it an example?

Q: Is the Bible accurate history?

Ex: Herodotus about 450 BC known as “the father of lies” He was a careful historian, but he also included myths, legends fables. He was also very biased.

ALL ancient histories were extremely biased. Never lost battles, never defeated

Q: Is that how the Bible is?

When will we begin to see actual physical remains which reflect the history in the Bible?

Genesis should reflect culture and language of Mesopotamia about 1800 BC Exodus-Deuteronomy should reflect culture and language of Egypt about 1400 BC

Joshua on should reflect culture and language of Palestine after about 1400 BC

Actual physical remains should be found after about 1000 BC

I Time of the Patriarchs

Genesis: Ur a large and prosperous city around 1900 BC The point: if Bible is an historical fantasy 500 BC, how did they know that?

Haran, a smaller, frontier city in NW Mesopotamia Note: Haran was abandoned about 1800 BC. How did Jews 500 BC know about this city?

Ebla Tablets 1975 peaked in importance about 2000 BC 17,000 clay tablets

Names mentioned include Isaac, Jacob, Abraham, Terah, Nahor and Serug

The point: these names were unknown 1000 years later. This story could not have been invented.

Ex: read a letter, supposedly written 1890, including names such as Skyler, Jamal, Brittany

Or letter, supposedly written 2004 with names such as Gertrude, Harold

Next:

Story of Laban chasing Jacob to retrieve the household gods (Genesis 31) Why was Laban more concerned with getting back his household gods than his own daughter?

Babylonian Laws: whoever possessed the household gods inherited the family property. Oh!

What about Sodom and Gomorrah? Bible: fairly well-watered, large cities

League of 5 cities: Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, Zoar (Genesis 14:2)

Today: SE corner of Dead Sea. Total wasteland.

Archaeologists discovered about 2000 BC Dead Sea twice as large, much wetter.

Guess how many wadis contain ruins of cities? Five!!

All destroyed about 2000 BC by fire

Largest city Bab ed Dhra (presumably Sodom) as thick as 7 ft. ashes.

The graveyard 0.5 km from the city: Burned from the top down!

Makes 2 Pet 2:6-10 come alive.

Also:

The Hittites. Skeptics in 19th century. This is all just a made up story. No such people ever existed.

Bible: A major power in Palestine about 1800 BC. Mentioned 47 Times

1906 Hugo Winkler discovered Hattusha. Large empire with many cities.

II The Conquest:

Papyrus Ipuwer: Papyrus from about 1200 BC Date of events unknown.

2:2—The river is blood = The river was turned to blood—Exod 7:20

• 2:6— Blood is everywhere = Blood is throughout all the land of Egypt— Exod 7:21

• 4:14—Trees are destroyed = And the hail… broke every tree in the field— Exod 9:25

• 9:11—The land is not light = And Moses stretched forth his hand… and there was a thick darkness— Exod 10:22

• 2:13—He who places his brother in the ground is everywhere = For there was not a house where there was not someone dead— Exod 12:30

A. Tel El Amarna Tablets

In the letter, Abdi-Hiba pleaded for military aid from Pharaoh Akhnaton;

‘The Habiru plunder all lands of the king. If archers

are here this year, then the lands of the king, the

lord, will remain; but if the archers are not here,

then the lands of the king, my lord, are lost.’

B. The ruins of Jericho and of Hazor

Archaeologists: Very little evidence of massive destruction in Canaan around 1400 BC

Bible. The Jews only destroyed Jericho Ai and Hazor.

Guess what cities archaeologists have discovered were burned at that time? (Ai site not known)

Hazor: up to 10 feet of ashes!! But Megiddo untouched.

Archaeologist Ben Tor: “There is evidence of massive destruction. I once called it the mother of all destructions. In Hazor, wherever you come to the end of the Canaanite, you come upon this destruction. It is an unbelievable destruction… it left behind a thick debris of ashes. There was a terrible fire in the palace. So much so, that the bricks vitrified and some of the clay vessels melted.

Jericho:

William Garstang and Kathleen Kenyon have studied Jericho carefully

Lately Brint Woods showed the thick layer of ashes C-14 about 1400 BC

Stele of Merneptah. Specifically mentions Israel in Canaan 1230 BC

III The time of the kings.

A. The Moabite Stone. 870 BC Mentions Ahab “Of the house of Omri.”

1 Kings 16:28

B. Black Obelisk of Shalmaneezer III 840 BC 2 Kings 17:3-6

First known carving of an individual Israelite. Jehu bows to Shalmanezer

C. The Tel Dan Inscription 820 BC

Hazael, king of Aram declares:

“I killed Jehoram, son of Ahab, King of Israel, and I killed Ahaziah, son of Jehoram, king of the House of David.”

Actually not true. 2 Kings 8:28-29 Joram (not Jehoram) was wounded, but did not die. He was killed by Jehu.

D. Sennacherib Cylinder Sennacherib attacks Jerusalem under Hezekiah 2 Kings 18:1-19:37 Isaiah36:18-21, 37:16-20

As to Hezekiah, the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke. I laid

siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts, and to the

countless small villages in their vicinity. I drove out of them

200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses,

mules, donkeys, camels, big and small cattle beyond counting

and considered [them] booty. Himself I made a prisoner in

Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a

cage. Clear evidence of a biblical miracle.

4. Siloam Inscription:

2 Kings 20:20-21

"Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah--all his might, and how he made a pool and a tunnel and brought water into the city--are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Hezekiah rested with his fathers."

It states "The boring through is completed." This is the beginning of an inscription that was originally written in ancient Hebrew and discovered at the tunnel that king Hezekiah had built.

"And this was the story of the boring through. While the workmen were hacking their way from opposite ends, and while there were still three cubits to be bored through, they heard voices calling from each side, for there was a crevice in the rock. And on the day when the boring was completed the stone-cutters hacked their way toward each other until they met. The water flowed from the spring to the pool twelve hundred cubits, and the height of the rock above the heads of the stone-cutters was a hundred cubits."

E. The Babylonian Chronicles 597 BC 2 Kings 24:10-17 2 Chronicles 36:5-7

[In] the seventh year, the month of Kislev, the king of

Babylonia mustered his forces and marched to Syria. He

camped against the city of Judah (Jerusalem) and on the

second day of the month of Adar he took the city and captured

the king. He appointed a king of his own choice there, took its

heavy tribute and brought them to Babylon.

The puppet king was Zedekiah.

In the ruins of Babylon a document was found which listed the provisions for Jehoachin.

“Day by day the king gave Jehoiachin a regular allowance as long as he lived.” (2 Kings 25:27-30).

F. The Lachish Letters 586 BC Jeremiah 52:1-28 6 letters on clay shards

Send an army of relief or the city will fall to Nebuchadnezzar

One: the light at the top of Azekah just went out, and we are next Jeremiah 34:6,7

Within two days, the author of this letter was killed. Two years later, Jerusalem fell.

8. The fate of Jehoiachin.

In the ruins of Babylon a document was found which listed the provisions for Jehoachin.

“Day by day the king gave Jehoiachin a regular allowance as long as he lived.” (2 Kings 25:27-30).

All this is confirmed by the discovery in Babylon of the order to take care of Jehoiachin.

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. Below are a few inscriptions found on the tablets: 10 (sila of oil) to the king of Judah, Yaukin.

2 1/2 sila (oil) to the offspring of Judah’s king,

4 sila to eight Judean men.

These tablets also indicate that Jehoiachin received twenty times as much food rations as others on the list which indicates that the Babylonians treated him more valuable then other captive kings on the list.

Archaeology thus indicates that Jehoiachin was treated well by the kings of Babylon whom provided daily food rations for him.

G. The Cyrus Cyllinder. Found in archives of Cyrus 538 BC almost identical to Ezra 1:2-4

…I returned to [these] sacred cities on the other side of the Tigris, the sanctuaries of which have been in ruins for a long time, the images which [used] to live therein and established for them permanent sanctuaries. I [also] gathered all their [former] inhabitants and returned [to them] their habitations. Furthermore, I resettled upon the command of Marduk the great lord, all the gods of Sumer and Akkad whom Nabonidus has brought into Babylon to the anger of the lord of the gods, unharmed, in their [former] chapels, the places which made them happy. May all the gods whom I have resettled in their sacred cities ask daily Bel and Nebo for long life for me and may they recommend me…to Marduk, my lord, may they say thus: Cyrus, the king who worships you and Cambyses, his son…all of them I settled in a peaceful place.

Ziggurat in Ur Mentions Belshazzar and Nabonidus. Belshazzar ruled as regent for Nabonidus for 17 years. This explains Daniel 5:7 I will give you the third place in the kingdom.

Note: Herodotus and other historians are unanimous that Nabonidus was the last ruler of Babylon. They were all wrong, and Daniel is right.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Luke a historian of the highest order.

A. Ex: Luke 2:1-3.

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 governor of Syria.)

And everyone went to his own town to register.

Almost every detail in this statement has been challenged by Bible critics

1. Augustus never issued such a decree.

2. It is ridiculous to think that everyone would have to travel to their own town.

3. Quirinius was not governor at that time.

Recent archaeological discoveries: Augustus: census every 14 years.

First: 23-22 BC. Second: 9-8 BC.

Mary and Joseph traveling from Galilee to Bethlehem?

A papyrus was found in Egypt:

“Because of the approaching census it is necessary that all those residing for any cause away from their homes should at once prepare to return to their own governments in order that they may complete the family registration of the enrollment and that the tilled lands may retain those belonging to them.”

This papyrus provides astounding confirmation of Luke’s account of the birth of Jesus. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the more reliable source (the New Testament) confirms the accuracy of the less reliable source (the papyrus found in Egypt).

Records: Quirinius governor of Syria 6AD Mistake!!!!! Not true.

He was legate 6-9 AD

Two tours: 12-6 BC governor

AD 6-9 imperial legate.

In 12 BCE he was named consul, a sign that he enjoyed the favour of Augustus.

He was in charge of Roman military matters in Syria, which placed him over the legions in Judea as well, on 2 different occasions: 6-4 BCE and 6-9 CE.(Zondervan KJV Study Bible p1448)

Some years later, he led a campaign against the Homonadenses, a tribe based in the mountainous region of Galatia and Cilicia, around 5 - 3 BCE, probably as legate of Galatia. He won by reducing their strongholds and starving out the defenders.[2] For this victory, he was awarded a triumph.[3]

B. Governorship of Pilate: No record, the critics say

1961 Caesarea Maritima The Pilate inscription.

Pilate’s title as “Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea.”

The critics will more around, but the Bible holds up just fine.

Go back to Jeremiah 29:10-14 Do you believe God has great plans for you…. Plans to prosper and not to harm you?