

Adventures in Bible Study

The Spade Confirms the Book

Many children dream of finding buried treasure left behind by some pirate, locating a sunken ship, or discovering a long forgotten priceless artifact from the past. For Howard Carter the dream came true in 1922 when he discovered the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamen.

If you have a Bible you own the greatest treasure ever given to mankind. Consider the following:

- The Bible was written over a period of 1,600 years by 35 different authors who did not contradict each other.¹
- The Bible is the number one best selling book of all time.²
- The Bible is used at presidential inaugurations, weddings, funerals, and is read on a daily basis for inspiration and guidance by literally billions of people around the world in over 400 languages.³
- The Bible is responsible for saving lives, rescuing marriages, and restoring dignity to countless millions.

You can trust the Bible because it is historically accurate. In times past historians doubted the accuracy of the Bible because it spoke of people, places and events not known in secular historical accounts. However, today serious historians and archaeologists consider the Bible to be amazingly reliable. “The science of archaeology has convincingly established the reliability and the reality of Bible history.”⁴



Rosetta Stone

The discovery of the Rosetta Stone in Egypt in 1798 by Napoleon’s forces unlocked the writing of the hieroglyphs (picture writing) on the ancient Egyptian monuments and tombs. The Rosetta Stone recorded an ancient Egyptian decree in

three languages—hieroglyphic, cursive Egyptian, and Greek. The scholars easily translated the Greek, and they by comparing one language with another they were able to understand the hieroglyphs. As the scholars began to read the multitudes of messages carved into the Egyptian

walls they discovered many interesting things among which was the verification of a nation of people called the “Hittites”, previously known only in the Bible ([Genesis 15:20](#)).

From 1964 to 1976 an Italian archaeologist, Paolo Matthiae excavated the ancient city of Ebla in Syria and discovered a library of over 20,000 clay tablets recording official transactions and proceedings from the third millennium B.C. Among places named were Sodom, Gomorrah & Zoar. People’s names included Adam, Israel, Saul and David.⁵

In 1947 the now famous Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered by a shepherd boy looking for his lost goat. Over time 35,000 scroll fragments from 400 manuscripts including every book of the Old Testament except the book of Esther. Examination of these manuscripts, which were 1,000 years



Fragment of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

older than the manuscripts used to translate the Bible at that time, it was discovered that there was no significant difference between them. In other words, the Old Testament we have in our bibles today is the same Old Testament Jesus had! For more information there are a number of web sites devoted to the Dead Sea Scrolls such as, www.deadseascrolls.com/index1.htm.

Whenever the subject of biblical archaeology comes up people always want to know about the two arks mentioned in the Bible—Noah’s ark, and the ark of the covenant. Much searching has been done to find both of the arks, but as of this date neither has been found. For a great summary of all the information available about Noah’s ark visit: www.noahsarksearch.com/ There is much less information available regarding the ark of the covenant, but the History Channel has recently released a documentary that covers all the theories regarding the

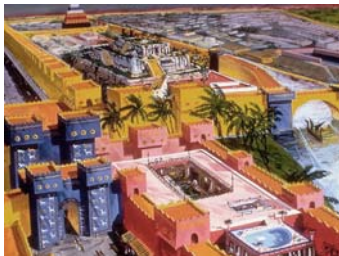


whereabouts of the ark of the covenant. Go to www.historychannel.com to find those resources.

Regarding the ark of the covenant an interesting quote is found in the Apocrypha, 2 Maccabees 2:4-5, "It was also in the same document that the prophet, having received an oracle, ordered that the tent and the ark should follow with him, and that he went out to the mountain where Moses had gone up and had seen the inheritance of God. Jeremiah came and found a cave-dwelling, and he brought there the tent and the ark and the altar of incense; then he sealed up the entrance."

You can trust the Bible because it is prophetically accurate. In the Bible the events of the future as they relate to God's work on earth are foretold. Sometimes the rise and fall of nations is predicted, or religious movements are revealed. But in every case the Bible has proven to be a reliable guide to prepare for the future, and this, God says, is one of the characteristics that sets Him apart from every other god or religion. "Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.'" **Isaiah 46:9-10.**

The ancient city of Babylon was one of the most extensive and beautiful cities ever built. We learn from ancient historians Herodotus and Ctesias that the city was built on both sides of the river in the form of a square, and enclosed within a double row of lofty walls to



An artist's conception of ancient Babylon.

which Ctesias adds a third. Ctesias makes the outermost wall 42 miles in circumference, while according to Herodotus it measured 56 miles, which would include an area of about approx. 200 square miles. According to Herodotus the width of the walls was 80 feet.⁶

Babylon was the largest city in ancient times, but God declared it would come to an end. "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation." **Isaiah 13:19-20.** "Babylon shall become a heap." **Jeremiah 51:37.** Today the ancient city of Babylon, once so beautiful, is just a heap of ruins in Iraq, uninhabited as God declared.

Through His prophets God predicted several powerful nations would become either completely extinct, or reduced to minor roles in the world: Moab (**Jeremiah 48:42**), Edom (**Jeremiah 49:17-18**), Assyria (**Zephaniah 2:13**) and Egypt (**Jeremiah 46:19-20**). As God predicted Moab and Edom are in ruins today and their people are completely gone, and the mighty nations of Assyria and

Egypt which ruled the world of their day are now reduced to relatively minor roles in the world.

Other predictions that show the Bible can be trusted regarding the future include the continuation of wars, disease and world hunger in spite of efforts for peace, advances in medicine and humanitarian efforts (**Matthew 24:7**). The amassing of great wealth in the last days is another prediction that has come true (**James 5:1-4**).

The Bible said there would be a great increase in knowledge at the end of time (**Daniel 12:4**). Jesus said lawlessness would increase and normal human love would decrease (**Matthew 24:12**). Paul said the last days of earth would be filled with violence, greed, injustice and pleasure seeking (**2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13**), and that evil men would grow worse and worse. Certainly these predictions have been fulfilled as well.

You can trust the Bible because in it is revealed the power of God to change lives for the better. As amazing as the accuracy of the Bible is regarding history and prophecy, the most amazing thing about the Bible is its power to change lives. People are healed, and renewed as they study and obey its teachings.

Here are four ways the Bible will change your life: 1) Live a guilt free life. God has promised He will forgive all your sins if you will only ask (**1 John 1:9**). 2) Hope for the future. God has promised to give you eternal life as a free gift when you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior. Even if we should die in this life we have hope because of the resurrection (**John 3:16 & John 11:25-26**). 3) Strength to live a better life. God has promised to enable you to overcome bad habits and live a completely new life (**2 Corinthians 5:17 & 2 Corinthians 3:17-18**). 4) Enjoy success in your work and your relationships. God has promised to heal your relationships and achieve higher levels of prosperity (**Psalms 128:1-4 & Joshua 1:6-9**). Perhaps now you will agree the Bible is the most amazing book ever written.

¹ Arthur Maxwell, Your Bible and You, pg. 29.

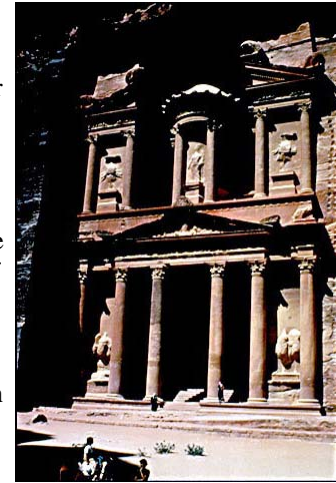
² <http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/>

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible_translations

⁴ Orley Berg, Treasures in the Sand, pg. 17.

⁵ Ibid, pg. 36-37.

⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylon>



The ruins of Petra, an ancient city of the Edomites