

II.2. Lambs to Rams: Through Archeology, History and Outside Accounts/Witnesses

Archeology: Old Testament

Because of the abundance of archeological proof to the Bible's authenticity, for space we will only deal with a few of these facts found to establish the truth of both Old and New Testaments. Recent discoveries are popping up all over that testify of the places and people that have been hidden for centuries that non-believers have scoffed at as non-existent.

The city of Babylon has long been recognized as having existed by secular historians but not as written in the Bible since many deny its accuracy. So what about prophecies of Isaiah, who lived over a century before the events, concerning Babylon which occurred as written in Ezra and Nehemiah? And what about Daniel's prophecy in which he revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, concerning his dream of the statue which represented the kingdoms that would follow his? (*Dan 2*) From the Babylonian to the Medo-Persian to the Greek to the Roman and finally to the kingdom that would outlast all others, the church (*2:44*); a look at the history of world nations will show the prophecy of Daniel to be not only correct but accurate to the tee.

Isaiah predicted, using "prophetic perfect" as if it had already occurred*, that Babylon would fall (*21:9*) to the Medes (*and Persians- 13:7*) and concerning Cyrus (*539 BC*), who would release the captive Israelites and allow them to return and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple (*44:26; 45:1*). And all this, well over a century before these things would have occurred. The remains of this great city can be found in Iraq, about 53 miles south of Bagdad.**

* "Three Good Reasons to Believe the Bible is From God"
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**wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylon

Archeology: New Testament

Within the four Gospel accounts of the crucifixion of Christ, one person stands out in importance as having the authority to either sentence Jesus to death on a cruel cross or to set Him free sensing he was sure of His innocence. But that authority was decided long before he said to Jesus, “Speakest Thou not unto me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee?” (*Jn 19:10-11*). That person was Pontius Pilate. One would think that such a person of stature would have had monuments erected to his honor or at least had something that survived the last two millennia that bore his inscription.

“Critics were silenced when, in 1961, an Italian archaeological team working in Caesarea found a stone tablet that measured 32 inches high, by 27 inches wide, by 8 inches thick. On this slab, now known as the ‘Pilate Inscription’, were the remains of this simple title: ‘Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea’- almost the exact same title as the one given to him in Luke 3:1.”

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History: 70 A.D.

In Matthew 24, Jesus spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Mosaic sacrificial system being observed. Jesus began His preaching when He was “about thirty years of age” (*Lk 3:23*). When He stated that “this generation” would see the fall of Jerusalem, one generation being the equivalent of forty years, He was foretelling the city’s fall in 70 AD. In vivid detail of that event, Jesus prophesied concerning the city, a.k.a., Babylon the Great, as was revealed to John through His angel (*Rev 17:5; 18:2*). History records this event even though Jesus foretold of it some forty years before it had occurred.

History: Acts

If there was any book of the New Testament that would get the greatest scrutiny it would be the book of Acts. In it are lists of people, places and events that verify its accuracy. The physician Luke, who also authored the book bearing his name, gives accounts of political authorities, cities, missionary routes and occasions where the apostles, especially Paul, had visited and the events that were held during that time frame. Many have written this book off without even a notion of investigation while some theological scholars “thought the wisest plan of defense for the New Testament as a whole was to say as little as possible about the Acts”. And un-believers had such prejudice “about the supposed inaccuracy for the New Testament as a whole (specifically the book of Acts).”

One such person who became convinced of its accuracy was Sir William Ramsay. He dared to “explore the Bible lands themselves with an archaeologist’s pick in one hand and an open Bible in the other” and “after years of literally digging through the evidence in Asia Minor, [he] concluded that Luke was an exemplary historian”.

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Outside Accounts/Witnesses

How often would we go to those who oppose the Bible and its focus on Jesus Christ as the Son of God for information concerning proof of its accuracy? One would think, never. But sometimes we find such evidence in remarkable places where we would never think to look. And there is ample proof of biblical evidence to be found by those who opposed Jesus as the Christ in both Jewish and Pagan historical writings.

A Jewish historian named Josephus Flavius (*“The Jewish War”* and *“Antiquities of the Jews”*), born in 37 or 38 AD, attempted to better the relationship between the Jews and Romans. He

was so liked by the Romans that he accompanied Titus on his campaign to destroy Jerusalem in 70 AD. But he did not believe in Jesus as “a messenger of God”. He wrote that Jesus was “a wise man, if He may be called a man; for He performed many wonderful works”. He stated “This was the Christ” and after being sentenced to be crucified “on the third day He appeared to them alive again, the divine prophets having foretold these and many other wonderful things concerning Him. And the sect of the Christians, so called for Him, subsists at this time.”

Another writer who “had a strong dislike for the Christians” was Carius Cornelius Tacitus. He verified the existence of Christ by referencing Nero and his blaming Christians for the burning of Rome. He stated how “their denomination” was from Christ and how He “was put to death as a criminal by procurator Pontius Pilate”. In his writings he confirms that “as early as 30 years after the death of Christ” Christians were scattered all over the empire (*Act 8:1-4*).

Suetonius, born around 88 AD, wrote “The Twelve Caesars”. He also had such abhorrence for Christians so writing of such only proves “that the Christian religion did arise in the time and place set forth in the New Testament”.

“Pliny the younger, born in 61, was sent by the Emperor Trajan to Bithynia in 112 as proprietor. Finding many Christians there he wrote back to Trajan to get information on how to deal with them.” After deciding on how to deal with them and seeing that those who professed their faith without wavering, he stated “For I do not doubt that, whatever crime it may be to which they have confessed, their pertinacity and inflexible obstinacy should certainly be punished”. This only confirms what Jesus said in John 15:20, “If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you”.

F.W. Mattox: “The Eternal Kingdom- A History of the Church”
“Historical Evidence Concerning Jesus”

II.2. Questions

1. How long after Isaiah's prophecies concerning Babylon did they occur? a) within a year; b) over 100 years; c) within a half century
2. What do the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, Roman and church represent? a) kingdoms in Nebuchadnezzar's dream; b) empires of the first century. c) South African nations.
3. What is the term used in prophesy as if an event has already occurred? a) prophetic-present; b) prophetic-perfect; c) prophetic-past
4. Who was the Persian king that allowed the Jews to return to rebuild Jerusalem in around 539 BC? a) Nebuchadnezzar; b) Isaiah; c) Cyrus
5. Who is the one person, besides Jesus, who stands out in the four Gospel accounts on the crucifixion? a) Paul; b) Peter; c) Pontius Pilate
6. Which book of the New Testament gets the most scrutiny for accuracy? a) Matthew; b) Luke; c) Acts
7. True or false: We can refer to writings of non-believers to verify the events of the N.T. a) true; b) false; c) the text does not say.
8. Who was the Jewish historian that accompanied Titus on his campaign in 70 AD? a) Luke; b) Jonathan; c) Josephus

