

## The Path - Christian Apologetics

# Day 18: Archaeological Evidence

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Archaeology, according to Webster's new Collegiate Dictionary, is "the scientific study of material remains (as fossils, relics, artifacts and monuments) of past human life and activities."

Archaeology focuses much attention on the Middle East which is the birthplace of Judaism and Christianity. Archaeology cannot prove the Bible to be the Word of God or prove the Bible to be true, but it can support the accuracy and historicity of the Biblical text with its discoveries. There are many examples where modern day archaeology has done just that according to the testimony of various archaeologists.

An example of the accurate reporting of the Old Testament was unearthed during the excavations of Jericho (1930-1936). Archaeologist Garstang found something so startling that a statement of what he found was prepared and signed by him and two other members of his archaeological team. In reference to these findings, Garstang said: "As to the main fact, then, there remains no doubt: the wall fell outward so completely that the attackers would be able to clamber up and over the ruins into the city." Why is this so unusual? Walls of cities do not fall outwards, they fall inwards, and yet in Joshua 6:20 we read: "...that the walls fell down flat, so the people (Israelites) went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city."

Another example: Sir William Ramsey is regarded as one of the greatest archaeologists to have ever lived. He had been taught, and was firmly convinced that the book of Acts was a mid-second century document, and went about to prove this teaching. He was compelled, however, to completely reverse his beliefs due to overwhelming evidence uncovered in his research. He spoke of his change of mind when he stated: "I may fairly claim to have entered on this investigation without prejudice in favor of the conclusion which I now seek to justify to the reader. On the contrary, I began with a mind unfavorable to it... More recently I found myself brought into contact of the book of Acts as an authority for the topography, antiquities and society of Asia Minor. It gradually dawned upon me that in various details the narrative bore marvelous truth... I gradually came to find it a useful ally in some obscure and difficult investigating. Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy, he is possessed of the true historic sense..." I note that Luke wrote a larger portion of the New Testament than any other writer.

Nelson Glueck, an archaeologist of Jewish descent, whom we have referred to in a previous study (also a great archaeologist), said: "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological find has ever controverted a biblical reference."

William Ramsey, another well respected archaeologist stated: "Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of innumerable details, and has brought increased recognition to the Bible as a source of History."



Henry Morris, in *The Bible and Modern Science*, observes, “It must be extremely significant that, in view of the great mass of corroborative evidence regarding the Bible history of those periods, there exists today not one unquestionable find of archaeology that proves the Bible to be in error at any point.”

We don’t need Archaeology to prove the Bible true. We know that it is true because of the other “Christian evidences” some of which we have studied, and because when it has been followed it has changed our lives. We have also discovered a personal relationship with God that has been meaningful and changed us through obeying the scriptures.

In our next lesson we will study another evidence that likewise is not “proof that the Bible is true” but again lends itself to establishing the veracity of the Biblical text: the testimony of historians.

**Discussion:**

- 1. How do that discoveries of archaeology support the Biblical record?**
- 2. How did the discovery of Garstang support the Bible account of the fall of Jericho?**
- 3. How did Sir William Ramsey inadvertently come to the conclusion that Luke, the writer of a larger percent of the New Testament than any others, was trustworthy and accurate in his reporting?**
- 4. How do the statements of archaeologists Glueck, Ramsey and Morris support the Biblical record?**