## **Historical Accuracy As Proof Of Bible Inspiration**

Michael P. Hughes

Michael is the evangelist for the church in Blue Springs, Missouri, having labored with them since February of 1998. He attended the Northside School of Preaching and has labored with churches in Louisiana and Missouri. He is a fellowlaborer in the International Bible Studies lectures and the Mid-West School of Biblical Studies. He and his wife Thelma have three children, all grown.

The Bible is not a book of History! This is a statement that I have heard throughout my life from individuals that have had trouble dealing with antagonists of the scriptures. We must realize however that Christianity is historical by nature. Consider the following statement by Joe Bertone:

Christianity is a religion that is historical in nature. God revealed himself through historical methods. One such method of His revelation was the Bible. Inspired by God through men, the Bible was revealed to men who lived within a certain time, culture, and region. Therefore the Bible, in some aspects is historical in nature. For us to accept the supernatural of the Bible (i.e., God parting the red sea) then we must see that the historical references made in the Bible are true. If they are true and accurate then we can easily believe that the supernatural of the Bible is true and accurate. (Bertone)

While I am not certain what other means of revelation Mr. Bertone may be referring to. I do agree wholeheartedly that those historical references which are made must be true and accurate. If they are not then the claim that the Bible is inspired and infallible is a false claim. If it can be proven that any historical event did not occur or occurred differently than the way the Bible records it then we have a fallible account that cannot have been revealed (inspired) by God.

Antagonists of the scriptures and of God have long known this and many have been the attempts to discredit the Word of God through questioning or bringing into doubt its historical accuracy. They have not yet managed to discredit the scriptures in this way. In fact, this statement by archaeologist Dr. Wood is quite interesting:

In every instance where the findings of archaeology pertain to the Biblical record, the archaeological evidence confirms, sometimes in detailed fashion, the historical accuracy of Scripture. (Wood)

Millar Burrows of Yale agrees when he states in his article "What mean these stones" from Howard F. Vos' book An Introduction to Bible archaeology, "On the whole, however, archaeological work has unquestionably strengthened confidence in the reliability of the scriptural record." And again, "Archaeology has in many cases refuted the views of modern critics."

Perhaps one of the most widely known and controverted historical incidents in the Bible is the flood of Genesis 6-9. It is recorded that there was a global flood that "prevailed exceedingly upon

the earth and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven, were covered." (Genesis 7:19). We are further told in verse 20-21

{20} Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. {21} And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: {22} All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. {23} And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. {24} And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

It is interesting to note that as Werner Keller states on page 22 of his book *The Bible As History*: "Among people of all races there is a variety of traditions of a gigantic and catastrophic flood." Why would it be that such a story existed in nearly every culture unless such a thing had occurred and was remembered through the story telling through which man transmitted their history.

It is not only the records and stories of various cultures that point to the veracity of the flood, but archaeological digs have also confirmed that a catastrophic flood occurred in ancient times. In 1929, at a dig at Tell al-muqayyar, dug down through tombs of what was dubbed by one archaeologist as "the graves of the kings of Ur." Yes, archaeology has confirmed the existence of Ur. In 1843 Paul-Emile Botta, the French vice-consul in Mosul, began a dig that uncovered evidence of Sargon, the ruler of Assyria mentioned in (Isaiah 20:1)"In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod, and took it;"

Two years after that, 1845, Nimrud, called Calah, (Genesis 10:10-11)"And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. {11} Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah," was uncovered by A. H. Layard. Nineveh was shortly after that uncovered by Henry Creswicke Rawlinson. In 1854 a somewhat unwilling gentleman named J. E. Taylor began a dig at a place called Tell al-Muqayyar. Being a novice he had no idea what he was doing and probably did great damage in the beginning of the dig. He did find some clay rolls which he sent to London. So much else was being discovered at this time that the scrolls were put away and pretty much forgotten. Finally in 1923 a joint American and British team began a serious concerted effort at this location that finally uncovered the ancient Ur of the Chaldees.

It is in this same location that they dug down and found a ten foot layer of clay after which breaking through they discovered a still more ancient civilization had flourished there. That clay deposit was determined to be from the cataclysmic flood of Genesis. At least for awhile. They soon realized that the flood evidence found there was not cataclysmic enough for the world-wide event described in the Bible.

Many have since argued for a local flood being what was talked about in Genesis and not literally an over the whole earth flood. Bert Thompson in an article in *Reason & Revelation*, lists several individuals as discrediting a universal flood and arguing for a local flood. Included among those that he cites he credits John Clayton as saying "There is no way geologically of supporting the idea that there was a worldwide flood..." (Thomson 57)

Is this true? Not at all. In the very next issue of *Reason & Revelation*, in part two of his article "In Defense of...The Genesis Flood," brother Thompson points out a number of geological evidences for a universal flood.

He cites examples of vast animal graveyards and rubble shifts worldwide, evidence of a sudden watery cataclysm followed by a deep freeze along the "great north." Fossilized trees and plants standing erect through successive bed ofr water-laid stone. Numerous rifts, fissures, and lave beds have been discovered on the ocean floor evidencing a cataclysmic upheaval of the floors of the oceans, such as would have occurred when all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, (Genesis 7:11). He also points out that worldwide fossilization have been found that occurred during, even would have required rapid burial and compaction.

While not every fossil, every striated water laid strata, animal graveyard or shift of the earths crust is evidence of a universal flood, there is enough of the evidence for us to know that the universal flood spoken of in the scriptures is upheld by the geological/historical evidence.

An interesting encounter that we have in the scriptures is the incident when Balak requested Balaam to curse Israel for him. Numbers 22-24 tell us of this event. Most of us are probably familiar with this story. It is the one where the donkey speaks to its master. The question is do we have any evidence that there ever truly was an "Balaam, son of Beor." The answer is yes we do.

In 1967 an ancient text found out Deir Alla, Jordan talks about the activities of a prophet named Balaam. Three times in this text he is referred to as "Balaam son of Beor" just as he is in the holy scriptures. This text is a great burden to those that would simply dismiss the account of Numbers 22-23. We can be assured that since archaeology shows us once again that the Bible is indeed historically correct, that knowing Balaam was indeed a historical character that went to curse the Israelites, we can also be sure that the Bible is correct when it tells us that his donkey spoke to him!

Space or time does not permit us to go through every bit of historical evidence that is available that show that the Bible is indeed historically correct, therefore inspired just as it claims (2 Timothy 3:16-17). I recommend that the reader get hold of Wayne Jackson's book *Biblical Studies in the Light of Archeology*. In this book he cites a passage from Time, December 30, 1974:

In 100 licensed sites in Israel, archaeological digging continues to turn up new evidence that the Bible is often surprisingly accurate in historical particulars, more so than earlier generations of scholars ever suspected. By establishing physical setting of scriptural accounts and certain details of corroboration (finding horned

alters like those mentioned in 1 Kings 1:5, for example) recent archaeology has enhanced the credibility of the Bible. (Jackson 1)

Brother Jackson then comments;

Such a statement is really but a nodding tribute to the vast number of discoveries that have been made of the past two and one half centuries—discoveries that continue to reaffirm our confidence in the divine origin of the Holy Book. (Ibid)

## **Works Cited**

- Bertone, Joe (nd), *Archeology and the Bible*. www.christiananswers.net/archaeology/home.html
- Jackson, Wayne (1982). *Biblical Studies in the Light of Archaeology*. Apologetics Press Montgomery AL
- Keller, Werner (1980), The Bible as History, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition revised, Bantam Books
- Thompson, Bert Ph.D. (August 1988). *Reason & Revelation*, Apologetics Press, Montgomery, AL
- Thompson, Bert Ph.D. (September 1998). *Reason & Revelation*, Apologetics Press, Montgomery AL
- Vos, Howard F. (nd), An Introduction to Bible Archaeology. Moody Press, Chicago, IL Wood, \_\_\_\_ (nd). www.christiananswers.net/archaeology/home.html