

Is there external evidence of the
validity of the Bible?

Tell Dan Stele,
found in
1993/1994, in
northern Israel.
Now on display
in the Israel
Museum,
Jerusalem

Photo
Wikipedia



Tell Dan Stele – a triumphal inscription in Aramaic, left most probably by Hazael of Aram-Damascus, an important regional figure in the late 9th-century BCE. Hazael (or more accurately, the unnamed king) boasts of his victories over the king of Israel and his ally the king of the "House of David", the first time the name David had been found outside the Bible. -

- Wikipedia

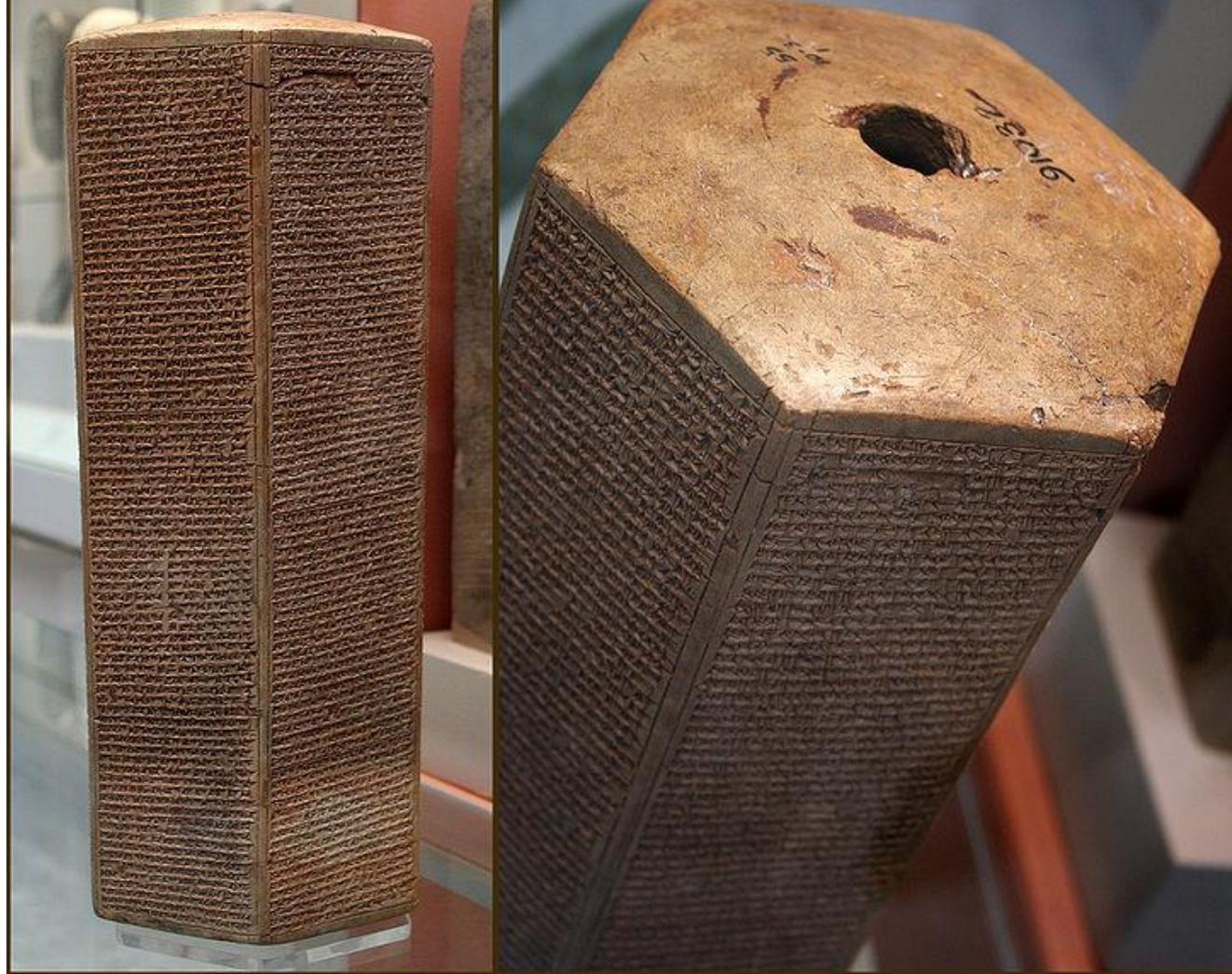
The "Black
Obelisk of
Shalmaneser
III discovered by
archaeologist Sir
Austen Henry
Layard in 1846
and is now in the
British Museum –
Wikipedia



The "Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III" is a black limestone bas-relief sculpture from Nimrud (ancient Kalhu), in northern Iraq, commemorating the deeds of King Shalmaneser III (reigned 858-824 BC). It displays the earliest ancient depiction of an Israelite. The obelisk features twenty reliefs, five on each side. They depict five different subdued kings, bringing tribute and prostrating before the Assyrian king. Second from the top is "Jehu of Bit Omri" (Jehu of the House of Omri), Biblical Jehu (2K 9, 10), king of Israel. It describes how Jehu sent his tribute around 841 BCE. Jehu severed Israel's alliances with Phoenicia and Judah, and became subject to Assyria. – Wikipedia

The Sennacherib Prism is in the Oriental Institute of Chicago; the Taylor Prism is in the British Museum.

Another Sennacherib Prism is in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

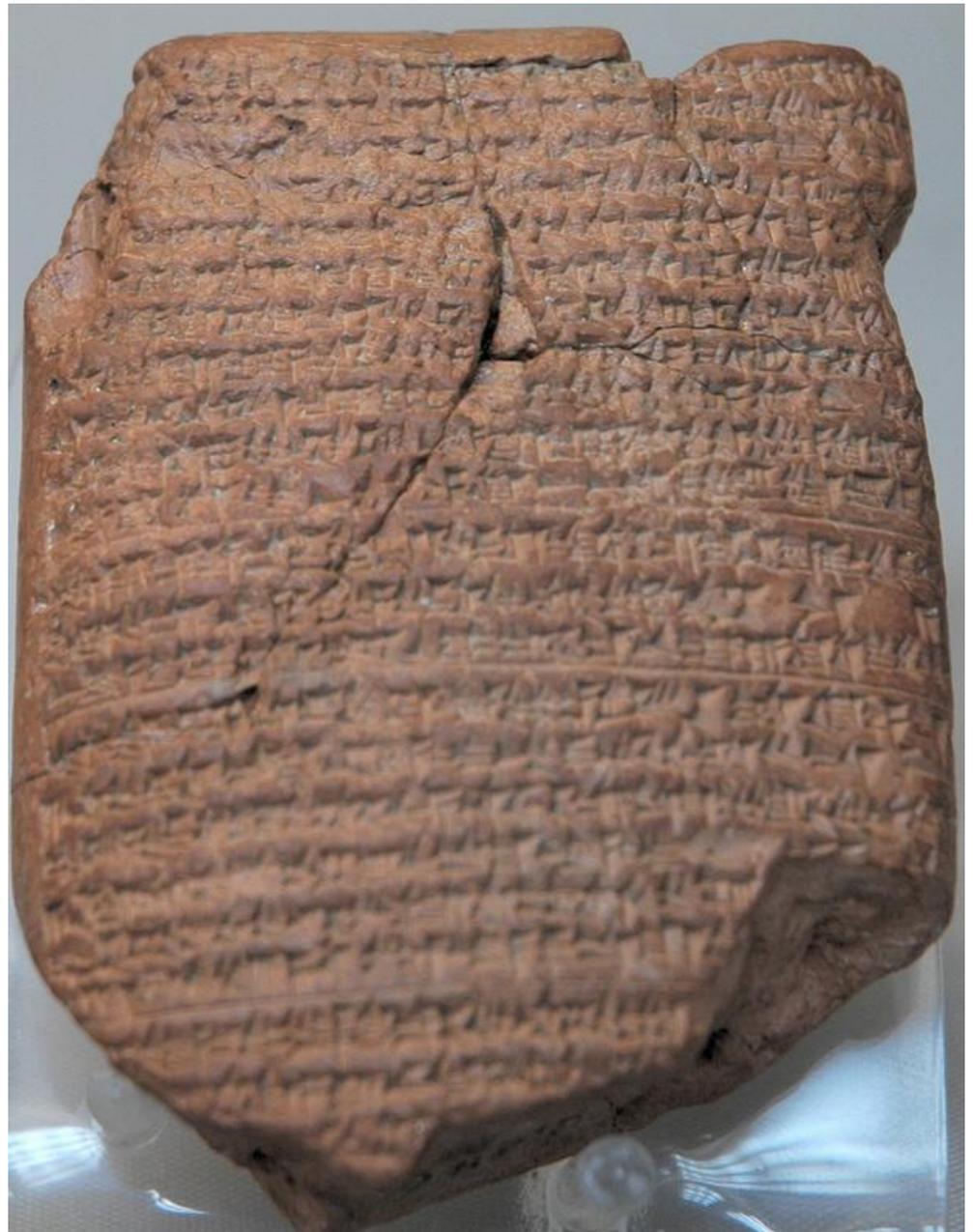


The Taylor Prism and Sennacherib Prism are clay prisms inscribed with the same text, the annals of the Assyrian king Sennacherib notable for describing his siege of Jerusalem during the reign of king Hezekiah. This event is recorded in several books contained in Bible including Isaiah chapters 33 and 36; 2 Kings 18:17; 2 Chronicles 32:9. This event is also recorded by Herodotus.

The Babylonian Chronicles are many series of tablets recording major events in Babylonian history. They are thus one of the first steps in the development of ancient historiography. The Babylonian Chronicles were written from the reign of Nabonassar up to the Parthian Period, by Babylonian astronomers ("Chaldaeans"), who probably used the Astronomical Diaries as their source. Almost all of the tablets are currently in the possession of the British Museum. –

Wikipedia

First years
of Nebuchadnezzar
Chronicle, also
known as Jerusalem
Chronicle – A
cuneiform tablet
mentioning the
capture of
Jerusalem in 597
(British Museum) –
Ancient Warfare
Magazine



Cyrus cylinder It dates from the 6th century BC and was discovered in the ruins of Babylon in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) in 1879. It is currently in the possession of the British Museum,



The Bible records that some Jews (who were exiled by the Babylonians), returned to their homeland from Babylon, where they had been settled by Nebuchadnezzar, to rebuild the temple following an edict from Cyrus. The Book of Ezra (1–4:5) provides a narrative account of the rebuilding project. – Wikipedia

Translation from cylinder -- From [?] to Aššur and [from] Susa, Agade, Ešnunna, Zamban, Me-Turnu, Der, as far as the region of Gutium, the sacred centers on the other side of the Tigris, whose sanctuaries had been abandoned for a long time, I returned the images of the gods, who had resided there [i.e., in Babylon], to their places and I let them dwell in eternal abodes. I gathered all their inhabitants and returned to them their dwellings. Wikipedia

The Pilate Stone -- An inscription bearing the name of Pontius Pilate, Procurator of Judea, in the time of Jesus of Nazareth



The translation from Latin to English for the inscription reads:
To the Divine Augusti [this] Tiberieum...Pontius Pilate...prefect of Judea...has dedicated [this]

Currently located in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. The Pilate Stone is the name given to a block of limestone with a carved inscription attributed to Pontius Pilate, a prefect of the Roman-controlled province of Judaea from 26–36. The stone is significant because it is the only universally accepted archaeological find with an inscription mentioning the name "Pontius Pilatus". The Pilate Stone is currently located at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem – Wikipedia

The limestone block was discovered in June 1961 by Italian archaeologists led by Dr. Antonio Frova while excavating an ancient theater (built by decree of Herod the Great c. 30 BC). The stone had been reused in the 4th century as part of a set of stairs leading up to the seating and was discovered in situ.[8] The theatre is located in a town that was called Caesarea Maritima in the present-day city of Caesarea-on-the-Sea (also called Maritima). – Wikipedia

The extant manuscripts of the writings of the 1st century Romano-Jewish historian Flavius Josephus include references to Jesus and the origins of Christianity. Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews, written around 93–94 AD, includes two references to Jesus in Books 18 and 20 and a reference to John the Baptist in Book 18.



Modern scholarship has almost universally acknowledged the authenticity of the reference in Book 20, Chapter 9, 1 of the Antiquities to "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James" and considers it as having the highest level of authenticity among the references of Josephus to Christianity.

Almost all modern scholars consider the reference in Book 18, Chapter 5, 2 of the Antiquities to the imprisonment and death of John the Baptist to also be authentic.

And now Caesar, upon hearing the death of Festus, sent Albinus into Judea (62-64 AD), as procurator. But the king deprived Joseph of the high priesthood, and bestowed the succession to that dignity on the son of Ananus, who was also himself called Ananus... Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned

In the Antiquities of the Jews (Book 18, Chapter 5, 2) Josephus refers to the imprisonment and death of John the Baptist by order of Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee and Perea. The context of this reference is the 36 AD defeat of Herod Antipas in his conflict with Aretas IV of Nabatea, which the Jews of the time attributed to misfortune brought about by Herod's unjust execution of John.

“Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day” (Book 18, Chapter 3, 3 of the Antiquities) – Wikipedia

The earliest secure reference to this passage is found in the writings of the fourth-century Christian apologist and historian Eusebius, who used Josephus' works extensively as a source for his own *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Writing no later than 324 AD, Eusebius quotes the passage in essentially the same form as that preserved in extant manuscripts. –

Wikipedia

