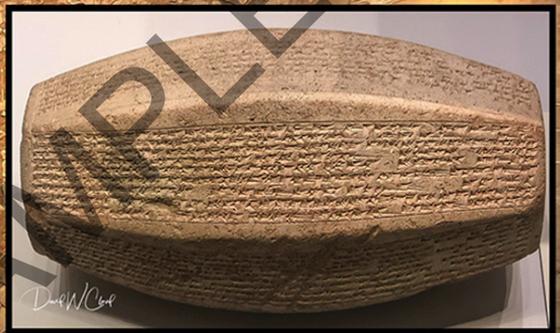
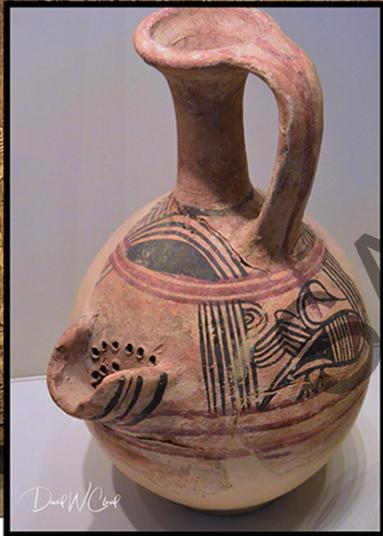


BIBLICAL TREASURES in the



ISRAEL MUSEUM

David W. Cloud

Biblical Treasures in the Israel Museum

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PO Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061
866-295-4143 (toll free) - fbns@wayoflife.org
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Canada: Bethel Baptist Church
4212 Campbell St. N., London Ont. N6P 1A6
519-652-2619

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David W. Cloud

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Introduction

The Israel Museum was founded in 1965 and is one of the world's premier archaeological museums for European and Middle Eastern artifacts. Following a major renovation in 2010, the facilities are world class.

The museum is packed with invaluable artifacts pertaining to ancient Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Persia, Rome, Greece, and other places, and all of these provide background for biblical history.

In this report we focus largely on some of the treasures that cannot be seen in other museums.

Museums such as the Israel Museum, the British Library, the Louvre in Paris, the Pergamum in Berlin, the Oriental Institute in Chicago, the National Museum in Istanbul, and the Egypt Museum, are invaluable for biblical historical research.

The artifacts in these museums were unearthed at great expense and labor. They were meticulously cleaned and preserved. They are housed in a controlled environment. They are labeled with helpful explanatory information, including place and date and historical background. Inscriptions are meticulously translated from ancient languages. Of course, the interpretation of the artifacts is not always accurate, being viewed through a humanistic, evolutionary bias, but the items themselves are historical treasures.

The field of modern archaeology has provided great treasures for biblical research. In the late 1700s, no one could read ancient Babylonian or Egyptian. In 1784, German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder wrote: "In the Near East and neighboring Egypt everything from the ancient times appears to us as ruins or as a dream which has disappeared ... The archives of Babylon, Phoenicia and

Carthage are no more; Egypt had withered practically before the Greeks saw its interior; thus, **everything shrinks to a few faded leaves which contain stories about stories, fragments of history, a dream of the world before us**" (Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Ideas for the Philosophy of History of Humanity*, 1784-91, cited from M. Larsen, "Orientalism and the Ancient Near East," *Culture and History* 2, 1987, p. 96).

This is no longer the case. Today we know a great deal about ancient nations and kingdoms described in the Bible's earliest pages. We don't have just "a few faded leaves"; we have museums full of historical information. Entire ancient cities and major ancient libraries have been earthed.

And since the Jews began to return to their land in increasing numbers in the 20th century, archaeology has located and unearthed hundreds of towns and cities mentioned by name in the Bible. They have found Megiddo, Jezreel, Shiloh, Ai, Herodium, Bethsaida, Magdala, Hazor, Ashkeon, Gath, Hezekiah's tunnel. They have unearthed Herod's palaces, the Titus Stones, the Southern Steps, the pool of Siloam, Ahab's palace, David's palace, Galilee's ancient ports, Roman theaters, cardos, aqueducts, and bathhouses, Philistine temples, Canaanite gates, olive and grape presses, honey industries, Crusader fortresses.

Tips on Taking Photos in Museums for Teaching Purposes

Take a photo of the front of the museum and a shot or two of general scenes in the museum to use to introduce the museum.

When photographing artifacts, first take a photo of the information sign, then photograph the item. This way you will know what the item is and will have all of the information provided by the museum.

To avoid glare: put the camera to the glass if possible; don't use a flash; take photos from various angles; stand in front of

the display to put a shadow on the glass. In editing, use high contrast to remove glare.

Watch for shadows of yourself and other people. Try to position yourself so that shadows don't appear in the shot.

For important items, be patient and wait until there are no people in the scene, if possible, including people standing on the other side of a glass case.

Model of First Century Jerusalem

The Israel Museum features a 1:50 scale outdoor model of first century Jerusalem. The 43,000-square-foot model was commissioned in 1966 by Hans Kroch, owner of the Holyland Hotel, in memory of his son, Yaakov, an IDF soldier killed in Israel's War of Independence in 1948. It was designed by historian and geographer Michael Avi-Yonah and the construction was supervised by Yoram Tsafrir. Many historians and architects contributed to the project. It



Model of First Century Jerusalem

was constructed between 1964-1967 with Jerusalem stone and other authentic materials.

In 2006, it was relocated to the Israel Museum at a cost of \$3.5 million. The model was cut into 1,000 pieces and reassembled. It is displayed very effectively to facilitate views from above as well as closer views.

The model isn't perfect in every detail. It is described as "a hypothesis, a vision of the city as it might have been, and not all elements carry the same guarantee." But it is a great treasure, nonetheless. It features detailed models of Herod's temple and Herod's palace. It depicts the Southern Steps, Robinson's Arch, and Wilson's Arch. It locates the pools of Siloam and the pools of Bethesda in the right locations. The model of the large Roman theater is accurate, though the actual location of the theater is not known.



Roman Game Board

The model brings to life the details of Christ's "trial," crucifixion, and resurrection. Herod's palace was where Jesus was tried before Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, and where He was mocked by the soldiers and arrayed in a robe (Lu. 23:6-7). He probably

appeared before Pilate in the Antonia Fortress in the north of the Temple Mount. (The place of the pavement mentioned in John 19:13 can be seen today. One stone, carved with a game board, is where Roman soldiers gambled while keeping watch on prisoners.) Christ was crucified and buried and resurrected outside the wall southwest of the Antonia Fortress, and the place is accurately shown on the model.