***Big Questions: Looking to God’s Word for Answers
“…always being ready to make a defense…” I Peter 3:15***

**Can I Trust the Bible? Biblical Archeology – Some Compelling Examples**

**I. The Destruction of Jericho**

**The Biblical Event: Joshua 6 and Israel’s defeat of Jericho**

**The Archeological Find: Ancient ruins excavated by several archeologists over the last 100 years**

**II. The Standing Stone at Shechem**

**The Biblical Events: Joshua 24 and Joshua’s final address of the nation,
Judges 9 and the rule of Abimelech over Shechem**

 **The Archeological Find: The Standing Stone at the Shechem Temple**

**III. The Black Obelisk and Jehu’s Tribute**

**The Biblical Events: II Kings 9-10, Jehu paid tribute to the Assyrian King Shalmaneser III around 841 BC**

**The Archeological Find: Found in 1846 by British archeologist Sir Austen Henry Layard and is now in the British Museum**

**IV. The Tell Dan Stele**

**The Biblical Events: II Kings 8-10 and Hazael defeat of the kings of Israel and Judah around 733 BC**

**The Archeological Find: Stele found in 1993 near the Israelite place of worship at the town of Dan. It is the oldest inscription referring to King David**

**V. Hezekiah’s Tunnel and the Siloam Inscription and the Pool of Siloam**

**The Biblical Event: II Kings 20, Hezekiah’s plan to provide water for the city while cutting off water to his enemies during the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrian King Sennacherib**

**The Archeological Find: Hand dug tunnel over 500 yards long and a few feet wide along with an inscription in the middle of the tunnel marking its completion. The Pool of Siloam was discovered in 2004.**

**Next Week: Can I Trust the Resurrection?**

**Psalm 19**

    **1**The heavens are telling of the glory of God;
         And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.
    **2**Day to day pours forth speech,
         And night to night reveals knowledge.
    **3**There is no speech, nor are there words;
         Their voice is not heard.
    **4**Their line has gone out through all the earth,
         And their utterances to the end of the world
         In them He has placed a tent for the sun,
    **5**Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber;
         It rejoices as a strong man to run his course.
    **6**Its rising is from one end of the heavens,
         And its circuit to the other end of them;
         And there is nothing hidden from its heat.
    **7**The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul;
         The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.
    **8**The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
         The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.
    **9**The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;
         The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.
    **10**They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold;
         Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.
    **11**Moreover, by them Your servant is warned;
         In keeping them there is great reward.
    **12**Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults.
    **13**Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins;
         Let them not rule over me;
         Then I will be blameless,
         And I shall be acquitted of great transgression.
    **14**Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
         Be acceptable in Your sight,
         O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.

**Scripture Reading**

* **Read Psalm 19 (Slides)**

**Can I Trust the Bible? Biblical Archeology – Some Compelling Examples (Header Slide)**

* Five quick examples of archeological evidence which gives credibility to the historical claims of the bible
* There are many other examples that span all the way back to Joseph and Jacob’s travels to Egypt
* There are examples from closer to the time of Christ
* Today, the five examples span about 700 years of biblical history
* Taught a class on this for about a year and a half on biblical backgrounds

**I. The Destruction of Jericho**

* Biblical archeology first emerged during Constantine in the 300s
* Constantine’s mom was a Christian and went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, identify historic sites significant to Christianity
* Some of these sites still have their connections all the way back to Constantine’s mom
* More recently, during the 1800s, archeologist were mainly treasure hunters
* During the mid 1900s along came a couple of very effective archeologists, William Albright and Kathleen Kenyon
* These two, Albright first and then Kenyon, independent of one another with very different worldviews, developed the modern archeological movement
* Albright grew up on the mission field, early childhood illnesses, studied much
* Received a PhD from MIT and then taught – so difficult they sent him off to the Holy Land, while there he uncovered and discovered some of the greatest finds of all ancient history
* Albright was a Christian man and believed the bible to be a good source of historical material for the pursuit of archeology
* One of the most debated archeological finds in the ancient world is Jericho
* **The Biblical Event: Joshua 6 and Israel’s defeat of Jericho**
* **Read Joshua 6:20 (Slide 2)**
* **The Archeological Find: Ancient ruins excavated by several archeologists over the last 100 years**
* **Picture of Ancient Jericho (Slide 3)**
* Walls fell out flat, in the walls, bushels of grain, city was burned after the walls fell – all three of these are quite striking given the biblical account
* Read from Walter Kaiser’s A History of Israel, quoting Kathleen Kenyon

**II. The Standing Stone at Shechem**

* **The Biblical Events: Joshua 24 and Joshua’s final address of the nation,
Judges 9 and the rule of Abimelech over Shechem**
* **Read Judges 9:46-49 (Slides 4-5)**
* **Picture of the El Berith temple (Slide 6)**
* This fortress-temple was destroyed by fire around 1200 BC and never rebuilt
* **The Archeological Find: The Standing Stone at the Shechem Temple**
* **Read Joshua 24:25-27 (Slides 7-8)**
* **Picture of Standing Stone in front of El Berith temple (Slide 9)**
* Ironic, if it is the same standing stone in from of a pagan temple to a Canaanite deity

**III. The Black Obelisk and Jehu’s Tribute**

* **The Biblical Events: II Kings 9-10, Jehu paid tribute to the Assyrian King Shalmaneser III around 841 BC**
* **Read II Kings 10:36 (Slide 10)**
* **The Archeological Find: Found in 1846 by British archeologist Sir Austen Henry Layard and is now in the British Museum**
* **Picture of the Obelisk (Slide 11)**
* **Picture of the particular relief with Jehu (Slide 12)**
* **Inscription reads** *The tribute of* [*Jehu*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehu)*, son of* [*Omri*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omri)*: I received from him silver, gold, a golden bowl, a golden vase with pointed bottom, golden tumblers, golden buckets, tin, a staff for a king [and] spears."*

**IV. The Tell Dan Stele**

* **The Biblical Events: II Kings 8-10 and Hazael defeat of the kings of Israel and Judah around 733 BC**
* **Read I Kings 12:36-29 (Slide 13)**
* **Picture of the high places at Tell Dan (Slide 14)**
* **Read II Kings 8:12 (Slide 15)**
* **Elisha’s discussion with Hazael about the future of the Syrian king**
* **Picture of Tell Dan Inscription (Slide 16)**
* **The Archeological Find: Stele found in 1993 near the Israelite place of worship at the town of Dan. It is the oldest inscription referring to King David**
* [I killed Jeho]ram son of [Ahab]
8'. king of Israel, and I killed [Ahaz]iahu son of [Jehoram kin]g
9'. of the House of David. And I set [their towns into ruins and turned]
10'. their land into [desolation........................]

**V. Hezekiah’s Tunnel and the Siloam Inscription and the Pool of Siloam**

* **The Biblical Event: II Kings 20, Hezekiah’s plan to provide water for the city while cutting off water to his enemies during the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrian King Sennacherib**
* **Read II Kings 20:20 (Slide 17)**
* **Picture of Hezekiah’s tunnel (Slide 18)**
* **The Archeological Find: Hand dug tunnel over 500 yards long and a few feet wide along with an inscription in the middle of the tunnel marking its completion. The Pool of Siloam was discovered in 2004.**
* **Picture of Siloam Inscription (Slide 19)**
* *... the tunnel ... and this is the story of the tunnel while ...*
* *the axes were against each other and while three cubits were left to cut? ... the voice of a man ...*
* *called to his counterpart, (for) there was ZADA in the rock, on the right ... and on the day of the*
* *tunnel (being finished) the stonecutters struck each man towards his counterpart, ax against ax and flowed*
* *water from the source to the pool for 1200 cubits. and 100?*
* *cubits was the height over the head of the stonecutters ...***.**

**Conclusion: (blank slide) Archeology cannot prove that God authored the Bible. However, biblical archeology does provide some compelling examples that support the historicity of biblical claims. Many archeologists are unbelievers and skeptics. However, there are many archeologists that are believers and their work in the layers of dirt throughout the ancient world increased their sense of confidence in the Bible**