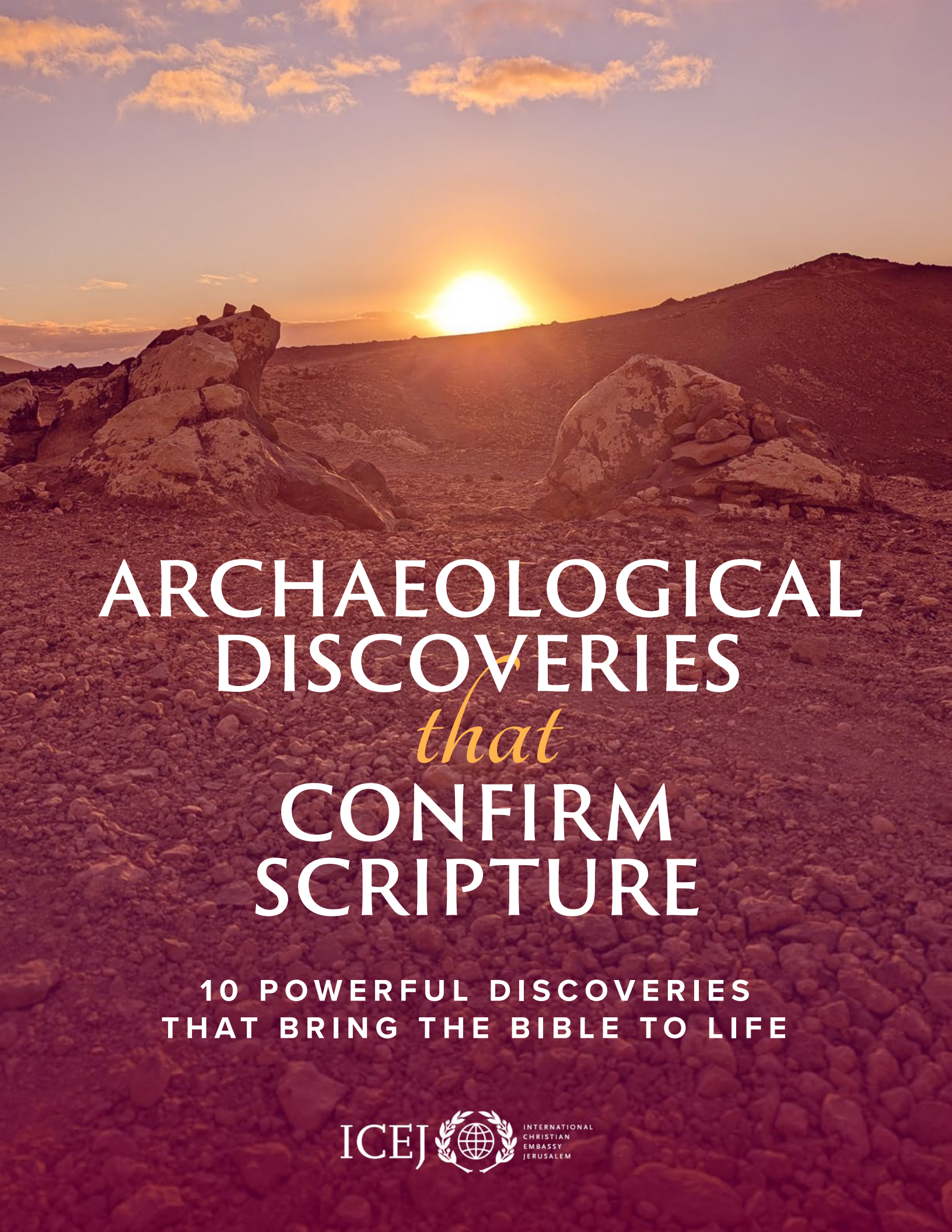


ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES *that* CONFIRM SCRIPTURE

10 POWERFUL DISCOVERIES THAT BRING THE BIBLE TO LIFE

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Abraham's Gate



Abraham's Gate, located in ancient Dan. The current opening of the gate is narrow, since it is supported by scaffolding to prevent its collapse. (Source: commons.wikimedia.org)

This 4,000-year-old gate was uncovered in 1979 at Tel Dan—the ancient Canaanite city of Laish—in northern Israel. The impressive triple-arch entrance is made of mud bricks on top of basalt standing stones. Since the gate was standing at the time Abraham possibly entered the city, authorities named it "Abraham's Gate." According to the Bible, four kings took Lot prisoner. Abraham pursued Lot's captors as far as Dan, attacked and routed them during the night, then pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. There he recovered all the stolen goods and captives, including Lot. Abraham would have passed through the ancient gate in Dan when he entered the city.

Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. (Genesis 14:14)

Melchizedek's Altar

In 2019 an Israeli archaeologist, Eli Shukran, uncovered the remains of an altar below the City of David, at the Canaanite level of ancient Jerusalem. The altar is believed to be 4,000 years old, from the time when Abraham met the high priest Melchizedek in Jerusalem. It includes everything necessary for animal sacrifice and worship, including a platform with a channel for funneling off blood. But most importantly, archaeologists found a pillar just like the one described in Genesis 28:10–22 when Jacob dreamed of a ladder going up to heaven. When he awoke, he declared: "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" (v. 17). The next morning Jacob took the stone under his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil over it. Archaeologists believe Melchizedek set up the stone pillar found under the City of David in Jerusalem just like Jacob did.





Top: Abraham y Melquisedec, Artist Juan Antonio Escalante; 1633 - 1669

Left: The stone discovered under the City of David that may have been the altar the high priest Melchizedek set up.

And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You. (Genesis 28:22)

Jericho

According to the Bible, Jericho was the first city the Israelites attacked after crossing the Jordan River and entering Canaan in around 1,400 BCE. (Jericho had already been destroyed and rebuilt several times.) It had robust defenses, including solid stone and brick walls. Joshua commanded his people to blow their trumpets made of rams' horns and shout at the walls until they finally collapsed—and then the Israelites set them on fire. Archaeologists debate the date of the conquest and archaeological remains. But they have discovered massive double city walls, houses built in-between the walls as in the story of Rahab, a section of the walls with homes intact while the rest were destroyed, and evidence of massive destruction by fire, aligning with the biblical account. Interestingly, the Bible indicates in Joshua 5:10–12 that Jericho was destroyed during the spring harvest season. Excavations at Jericho have shown significant amounts of harvested grain burnt to a crisp.



Excavated walls of Jericho (source: commons.wikimedia.org)

So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. . . . They burned the city and all that was in it with fire. (Joshua 6:20, 24)

City of David

150 years ago, British archaeologist Charles Warren discovered a water tunnel system that King David had used to capture the city—Warren had found the true City of David. Originally called Jebus, it became known as the City of David after David conquered and ruled it for 33 years. The ancient City of David rests on the southeast hill of modern Jerusalem. It is the ancient epicenter of the city and one of the most excavated archaeological sites in Israel. Significant discoveries include several water tunnels (one built by King Hezekiah), the remains of King David's palace, a 2,000-year-old market, and a stone called the Siloam inscription.



Excavations at the City of David (source: commons.wikimedia.org)

But the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, "You shall not come in here!" Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David). (1 Chronicles 11:5)

Hezekiah's Broad Wall



Remnants of the broad wall of biblical Jerusalem, built during Hezekiah's days against Sennacherib's siege (source: commons.wikimedia.org)

During Hezekiah's rule, the City of David underwent significant changes. In 721 BC, when the Assyrians defeated the Northern Kingdom of Israel under Sennacherib, thousands of refugees fled to Jerusalem and settled on the western hill. To protect that area—and the new inhabitants—King Hezekiah hastily built a massive wall seven meters wide. Unfortunately, he destroyed people's houses to build the wall in the best possible spot—a deed the prophet Isaiah did not speak well of. The discovery of the broad wall settled a debate over the size of Jerusalem, which was much larger than the narrow dimensions of the City of David.

You counted the buildings in Jerusalem and tore down houses to strengthen the wall. (Isaiah 22:10 NIV)

Seals of Jeremiah



The House of the Bullae in the City of David where 51 seals were discovered—several that connect with the book of Jeremiah (source: commons.wikimedia.org)

A seal discovered in the City of David dated to the First Temple period (source: commons.wikimedia.org)

Of the thousands of Hebrew bullae—miniature stamped clay seals—discovered at the City of David, many are from the time of the prophet Jeremiah in the late seventh to early sixth centuries. About a dozen relate directly to counterparts of the prophet. Recently in ancient Jerusalem, archaeologists found two different seals, each with a name of a minister to King Zedekiah. Amazingly, both names are mentioned in Jeremiah 38:1—one after the other: Gedaliah son of Pashhur and Jehukal son of Shelemiah. The Bible indicates Jehukal and Gedaliah disagreed with Jeremiah's prophetic message, and in response, imprisoned the prophet in a cistern to die (Jeremiah 38:1–6). Though small, these and other bullae provide a glimpse into the days preceding the destruction of the First Temple.

Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jehukal son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malkijah heard what Jeremiah was telling all the people when he said, "This is what the Lord says: 'Whoever stays in this city will die by the sword, famine or plague, but whoever goes over to the Babylonians will live. They will escape with their lives; they will live.'" (Jeremiah 38:1–2 NIV)

Priestly Blessing Amulets



Top: Ketef Hinnom, the archaeological site where the amulets were found (source: commons.wikimedia.org)

Right: The larger of the two silver scrolls with text from the book of Numbers (source: commons.wikimedia.org)

In 1979 archaeologists discovered two tiny silver scrolls in a burial cave southwest of the Old City Jerusalem where the Rephaim and Hinnom valleys meet, dating to the First Temple period between 650 and 587 BC. When unrolled, they revealed minuscule writing in ancient Hebrew. Researchers discovered the inscriptions included blessings similar to Numbers 6:24–26 (known as the Priestly Blessing), indicating they may be the oldest biblical texts from the Hebrew Bible ever found. They surmise the amulets were probably worn around the neck or kept close to the body to give the wearer a sense of intimacy. Amulet 1 uses the divine name YHWH (Yahweh) twice, as the One who shows graciousness to those who love Him and keep His commandments, a close parallel to several biblical texts—Deuteronomy 7:9, Nehemiah 1:5, and Daniel 9:4. Amulet 2 refers to YHWH as the deity who can expel evil.

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24–26)

Southern Steps

For many who visit Jerusalem, a trip to the 200-foot-wide Southern Steps is a highlight—because Jesus himself walked these ancient steps. Three times a year, as prescribed by Moses in Deuteronomy 16:16, faithful pilgrims would ascend these stairs to enter the temple after cleansing in one of the nearby ritual baths (*mikvot*). The Southern Steps were the main entrance for the common person to enter the temple, who would have ascended the steps and entered the temple area through two sets of Huldah Gates, both still visible today. Also known as the "Teaching Steps," they could be where Jesus taught the disciples and engaged in debates with other rabbis. Some suggest that the 15 long steps may have been one of the locations where pilgrims sang the 15 Psalms of Ascent (120–34) as they went up to Jerusalem to worship.



Southern Steps of the Temple Mount, Jerusalem (source: commons.wikimedia.org)

Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. (John 8:22)

St. Peter's House



A modern church that rests over the remains of a fifth-century Byzantine church built around a room believed to be part of St. Peter's house (source: commons.wikimedia.org)

In Jesus' hometown of Capernaum, archaeologists uncovered what may be the home of one of his first disciples, Peter—a first-century structure that remains under a fourth/fifth-century church. This humble structure is thought to be where Jesus called home while ministering in Capernaum. The residence faced the Sea of Galilee and formed the southeastern extremity of a large, inhabited area. Peter's house was simple, with rough walls and an earthen roof. Like most early Roman-period houses, it had small rooms clustered around two open courtyards. Over the years, the house appeared to have changed to a communal gathering place, perhaps the first home church in the world, with over 100 inscriptions on the walls that confirmed how Christianity began—including one that reads, "Lord Jesus Christ help your servant."

And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali. (Matthew 4:13)

Dead Sea Scrolls

The Dead Sea Scrolls were first discovered in a cave in Qumran near the Dead Sea by a teenage Bedouin shepherd in 1947. Tens of thousands of fragments have since been found in 11 different caves dating from the third century BC to AD 68, and they include every book of the Old Testament except Esther. Significantly, these fragments are a thousand years older than previous manuscripts upon which most of our Bible translations are based, confirming the text of our Bibles. It's not by chance that the scrolls were discovered right when modern Israel was being reborn—affirmation and confirmation of God's promises to His people Israel in the Bible.

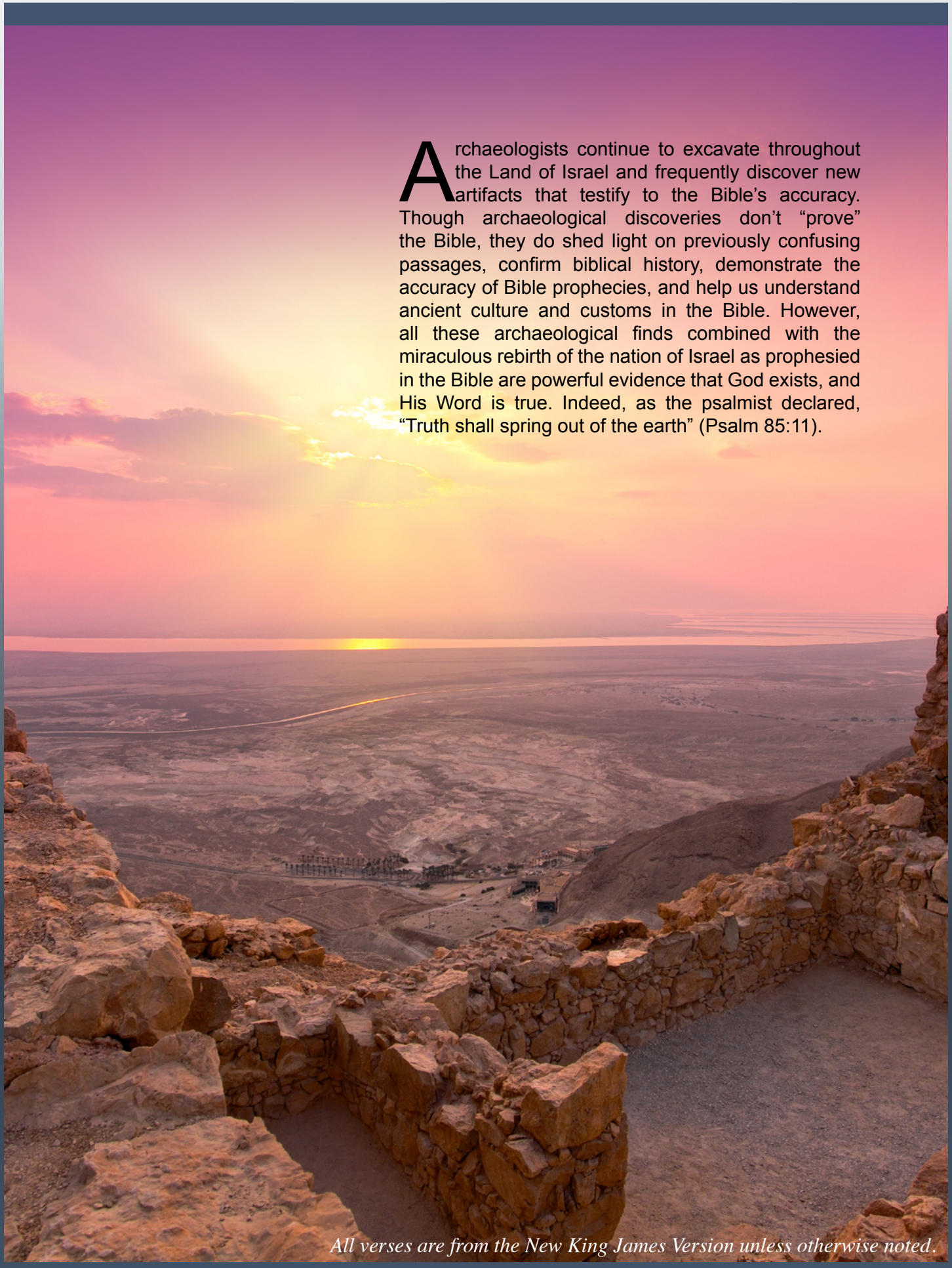




Top: Qumran cave 4, where 90 percent of the scrolls were discovered

Left: Part of a scroll from Qumran cave 1 (source: commons.wikimedia.org)

"'These are the things you shall do: speak each man the truth to his neighbor; give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace; let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbor; and do not love a false oath. For all these are things that I hate,' says the Lord." (Isaiah 8:16–17, from part of the discovered scroll)



Archaeologists continue to excavate throughout the Land of Israel and frequently discover new artifacts that testify to the Bible's accuracy. Though archaeological discoveries don't "prove" the Bible, they do shed light on previously confusing passages, confirm biblical history, demonstrate the accuracy of Bible prophecies, and help us understand ancient culture and customs in the Bible. However, all these archaeological finds combined with the miraculous rebirth of the nation of Israel as prophesied in the Bible are powerful evidence that God exists, and His Word is true. Indeed, as the psalmist declared, "Truth shall spring out of the earth" (Psalm 85:11).

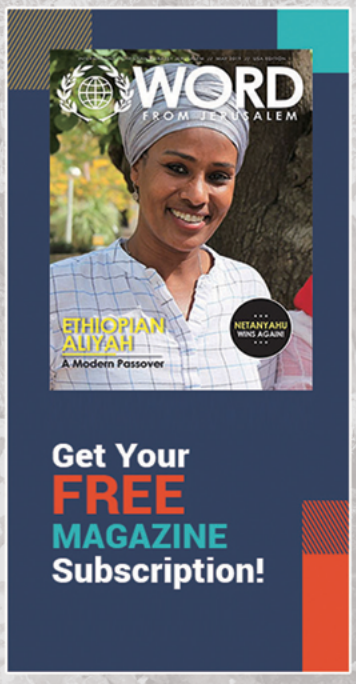
All verses are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

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