

# A TOUR OF BIBLE RELATED ITEMS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

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Galleries are open from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturday through Wednesday; 10 a.m. through 8:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday. The Great Court (shops and information in the center of the building) is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday through Wednesday and from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Thursday through Saturday.

Either of these tube stops is about four blocks away: Holborn or Tottenham Court Road. Look for signs to the Museum as you leave the Underground Station for the street outside. The British Museum is on Great Russell Street.

The British Museum is sometimes working in certain galleries. Call 0207-323-8299/8000 for information on what is open when. Educational groups may call 0171-325-8521 for special information and assistance. Most Bible related items are connected with the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities. On the Internet, the British Museum Homepage is at <http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk>. This site provides a great amount of useful information such as special exhibits, hours the museum is open, a map on getting to the museum, and explanations of some of the items on exhibit. It also provides color-coded floor plans of each of the three floors. For these look under "visit" and then under "floor plans."

The British Museum is truly one of the world's great collection of artifacts. It contains remains dating back over four thousand years. The Bible, likewise, is one of the world's great books of history. Unlike the foundation book of any other of the world's great religions, the Bible relates the history of mankind from human beginnings through the times of the great world empires to the establishment of God's great kingdom which, the Bible says, will outlast and outshine all earthly kingdoms.

The Bible stakes its veracity on its historical accuracy. If it is inaccurate in describing ancient peoples, ancient customs, ancient cities, then it cannot be what it claims: a message to man from the mind of God. Whether it is accurate, then, is vital to Christianity.

Archaeologists have discovered not only many ancient objects but have learned how to use them to draw important conclusions. Scholars can now read ancient

languages and decipher information from ancient objects through their location, shape or decoration. In short, objects from the past have revealed much about the cities and peoples of ancient times.

The question naturally arises as to what light archaeology has thrown upon the statements in the Bible. Do the objects from the ancient world match or contradict related statements in the Bible? Is one led to trust the accuracy of the scriptures or to doubt?

The British Museum is a great place to come to answer such a question because it has many artifacts that relate to the stories in the Bible almost from beginning to end. We are going to take a simultaneous trip through the Bible and the British Museum. Starting with the temptation of Eve, described in Genesis 3, we are going to review many places and events described in the Bible as we look at a wide variety of objects in the British Museum. We cannot, of course, take our trip through the objects in the Museum in chronological order since they are not arranged that way.

A book now available in the British Museum entitled The Bible in the British Museum by T. C. Mitchell has very useful information. Page numbers in this book are given when the items mentioned on this tour are in his book. For more detailed information on some items, then, purchase his book and read its comments as you make the rounds. In preparing this material, we have also used a book, formerly available in the British Museum, by R. D. Barnett titled Illustrations of Old Testament History. Also helpful have been some notes on the British Museum from V. M. Whitesell.

The tour outlined here will take about two to three hours depending on how many other objects you view as you go. Be sure to wear comfortable walking shoes. There is no charge to enter the Museum but a donation of three British pounds (about \$6) is requested. There is also a Cloak Room where you can leave bags so you don't have to carry them during your tour. The cost is one British pound per bag so consolidate all you can into one bag. The Cloak Room is just across from Room 6, to the left as you enter the main entrance. You must pick up all items left by 4:45 p.m. Any type of photography is permitted except the use of tripods. There is a snack bar and a nice restaurant. The snack bar has sandwiches and drinks and is less expensive. There are also different bookshops with gifts and some replicas of artifacts. The Great Court, an outdoor courtyard in the center of the building, contains shops and a beautiful reading room.

The attached map of the British Museum, at the end of this guide, is marked with the route which will most efficiently enable you to cover the items in the Museum related to the scriptures. The larger numbers on the map represent the

numbered items in the remainder of this guide. Of course, the Museum has objects on many other topics and many works of art. If you are interested in these, you can see those as you are seeing the nearby Bible related items. The purpose of this plan, however, is to guide you to those things most related to the scriptures.

We have a thirty-minute videotape available that tracks this journey through the Museum. It is very helpful to watch the video while looking at the map. Since some items have been moved since the videotape was made, the written text is more accurate. The video still is useful, however, to help visualize what you will see. The video just shows how to find the objects and what they look like. The text below provides detailed information not included on the video. Thus, get the plan in mind from the map and video. Then have the text below with you to read as you come to each of the objects described. If you are going with a group, one person can lead the group to each item and read the information as the group gathers at each location.

1. As soon as you enter the front doors from Great Russell Street, make a hard left and walk down the corridor to Room 6. Turn right into that room and look to your right. There you will see the famous Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III.



A. H. Layard discovered this record, a 6-ft. high black stone, in 1846. On the stone are five panels of carved "pictures" on each of its four sides. Inscriptions tell what is in each panel. Of great interest in the second panel from the top on the back side as you enter Room 8, where Jehu, son of Omri, is pictured bowing before Shalmaneser III bringing to him tribute. Behind Jehu are his servants bearing the gifts. The stone indicates this would have happened in 841 B.C. The inscription directly above the picture says, "Tribute of Jehu the Israelite--silver, gold, a golden bowl, a golden vase, golden tumblers, golden buckets, tin, a staff for a king [and] hunting spears I received."

Jehu is pictured with a short, rounded beard, a sleeveless jacket, a long fringed shirt, a girdle, and a soft cap. This is the earliest "picture" of an Israelite. The Bible records that Jehu was a successor to, but not actually the son of Omri, and that he began his reign in 842 B.C., a time that would correspond to the record on the Black Obelisk. That Jehu paid tribute to Shalmaneser is not mentioned in the Bible but Israelite kings often did pay tribute to neighboring kings who were more powerful (See Mitchell, pp. 46-49). On the opposite side of the obelisk is another panel about the Israelites.



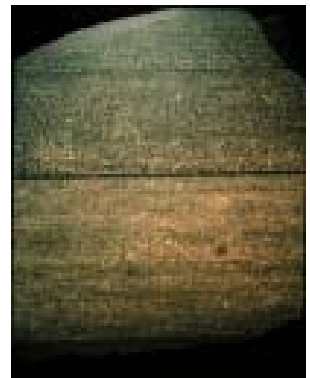
2. Behind the Black Obelisk are three tall monuments. The one on the left is the



stela of Shalmaneser III, the same as the ruler of the Black Obelisk. Shalmaneser III was ruler of Assyria from 859 to 824 B.C. One of the records he left is a monolith with his likeness saluting his gods. In the cuneiform text, he records the results of his first six campaigns. On the back of the stela is a report of a campaign from 853 B.C. in which he tells how he advanced against a king who had organized a coalition of 12 kings with over 50,000 men, 3,900 chariots, 14,000 cavalry, and 1,000 camels. Of these, he says that 2,000 chariots and 10,000 foot soldiers came from Ahab, the Israelite. The Bible does not mention this battle but the time corresponds to the Bible's account of Ahab as king. This stela is probably the earliest artifact to contain the name of an Israelite king. (See Mitchell, pp. 44-45).

3. Now move forward and to the left toward the middle of Room 6 to see the famous Rosetta Stone which led to deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics.

The top portion in hieroglyphics, has a message honoring Ptolemy V, who lived about 200 B.C. The middle portion is in Egyptian script called Demotic. The bottom portion is in Greek. It was found at the Egyptian village of Rosetta in 1798 by an officer in Napoleon's army and was later translated by starting with the Greek, which was known, and from that translation he deciphered the other two languages. This stone, then, provided the very important key to being able to read Egyptian inscriptions in hieroglyphics. (See Mitchell, p. 87-88.)



4. A little further into Room 4 in into the Egyptian area, find in the middle a



statue of Pharaoh Ramses II, who reigned in Egypt from 1279 to 1212. Some date the exodus of the Israelites during his reign. In this statue he is pictured wearing a headdress showing that he is king of both Upper and Lower Egypt. There are many enormous statues of Ramses II still in Egypt. (See Mitchell, p. 39.)

Go back to the middle of the long Egyptian room (Room 4) to the opening on the right, and enter Room 8.

5. To the right on the wall of Room 8 is a large white panel picturing Tiglath Pileser III, 745-722 B.C. The Bible sometimes calls him Pul. He was an



Assyrian king who reigned after Shalmaneser III. The order of the Assyrian kings was Shalmaneser III, Tiglath Pileser III, Sargon, and Sennacherib. You can find more from the Assyrians

in Rooms 19 and 21, but these items have no direct Bible connection.

6. Walk now into Room 23. This will be our base for several excursions in three directions from this room. First, go to Room 10. On the right by the stairs is a large wall relief of Sargon. The Bible says Shalmaneser (V) was unhappy with Hoshea, King of Israel, because he turned to Egypt for help and quit paying tribute. So the king of Assyria besieged Samaria, his capital, for three years. After this, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria and placed the captives in far away cities (2 Kings 17:3).



Assyrian inscriptions record that Shalmaneser V (727-722) did come against Samaria but that Shalmaneser died about that time. Sargon, his successor, claims to have captured the city and in an inscription about it, Sargon says he deported 27,290 prisoners to Assyria, restored the city, brought in other people to live there, and set an official over it (Numrud Prism IV.25-41.) So, though not mentioned by name in the Bible's account of the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Sargon was the king who finished its destruction.

Sargon is only mentioned by name in the Bible in Isaiah 20:1 where he is said to have captured Ashdod of the Philistines. For years, however, there were no records outside of the Bible of any such king. But in 1843, Emile Botta discovered Sargon's ancient palace near Nineveh and in it were immense records. Among the finds was this relief of Sargon greeting two of his advisors (note the panel on the adjoining wall). We have here, then, a picture of King Sargon who, indeed, did exist, and whose own records correspond to the Bible record. (See Mitchell, p. 53). The major portion of the remains from Sargon is in a large area in the Louvre.



Also in Room 10 are two huge winged bulls, with attendant genies, from Khorsabad, the Palace of Sargon discovered in 1843. An inscription from the stomach of this bull says that King Hezekiah of Judah paid tribute to Sargon. While the Bible does not mention this,

it does mention that Hezekiah's father paid such tribute and Hezekiah may have continued that early in his reign. Later, however, he rebelled against Assyria.



These finds about Sargon are very significant because they attest to the accuracy of the Bible story since the Bible

presents information on Sargon when he, otherwise, was not known. Since his palace would have been covered over by about 600 B.C., no one living between then and 1843, when the palace was found, could have known of Sargon from historical sources. Either the writer, Isaiah, lived when and where he said he did, in the 8th century B.C., or God gave some person knowledge about Sargon. The point here, is that this find from Sargon confirms not only that the Bible was correct, but that Isaiah, who wrote about Sargon, lived when and where he says he did, thus lending integrity to his writing.

Note: Sometimes the rooms containing items 7, 8, 12, 13, and 14 are closed. Often they are open from 10 to 11 a.m. and from 3 to 5:30 p.m. You may wish to time your visit to be more likely to find these rooms open since these items are among the best to see. If you have a group and find these areas closed, you might try making a special request at the information desk in the Great Court.

7. Now walk between the winged bulls and bear to your left to enter the south end of room 10. Here we find wall reliefs from Sennacherib, another Assyrian king mentioned by the Bible. This is the most significant Bible-related display in the museum. Don't miss it. In 2 Kings 18 and 19, a long account is given of what happened in 701 B.C. when Hezekiah was king of Judah. (See also 2 Chronicles 32 and Isaiah 36-37.) The Bible says Sennacherib, King of Assyria, came against Judah, conquering many cities because Hezekiah had made an alliance with Egypt and Ashdod. The Bible says that when Sennacherib came to the Judean city of Lachish, Sennacherib sent envoys to Hezekiah and that Hezekiah even gave him gold and silver from the temple of Solomon. Sennacherib, however,



wanted total surrender but upon advice from God through Isaiah, Hezekiah refused. Hezekiah built more walls around the city and built a tunnel to carry the water supply from the Gihon Spring to a pool within the city so it could not be cut off by the enemy. (This quarter-mile long tunnel has been found beneath Jerusalem.) The

Bible tells of how Sennacherib then brought his main force of more than 185,000 men to camp near Jerusalem. In one night, however, God slew them and Sennacherib left without taking the city

This account occupies five chapters in the Bible, the most detailed account of any battle the Bible records (2 Kings 18-19, Isaiah 36-37, 2 Chronicles 32). And here in the British Museum are two significant independent records which not only are in total agreement with the biblical record of

this event, but which give additional details to help us in understanding the scriptural account. These two records are the Sennacherib cylinder and the wall reliefs from the palace of Sennacherib.

In the southern end of Room 10 begin by reading the information on the wall to your right as you enter. Then look in the wall cabinet at some objects from Lachish. In the case are sling stones found at Lachish. A slingshot has been provided to show how the stone could be thrown. (Think of David using a stone like this on Goliath.) When you come to the wall reliefs, you will see slingers as part of the Assyrian army. Also note in the case, arrowheads found at Lachish. Again, the wall reliefs show archers at Lachish.

In this same case is a copy of the six-sided Sennacherib cylinder on which he left a record, in cuneiform, of his campaign against Judah. On this prism he says he conquered 46 cities in Judah and shut up Hezekiah in Jerusalem "like a bird in a cage." He makes no claim, however, to have taken Jerusalem. Again, very strong independent confirmation of the Bible story. The actual Sennacherib cylinder is in Room 55, which we will see later.

Now look on the wall that was to your left as you entered this end of the room. Skip the first panel. Moving from left to right along this wall, across the end wall and part of the way along the right wall, you can see the story of the battle. We begin at the rear of Sennacherib's army with the rows of slingers. In front of them are rows of archers. Then come rows of soldiers with spears and shields made of wicker. Then you will notice several ramps at about a 45-degree angle. The Assyrian troops have raised these against the walls of Lachish to attack the wall of the city. Above the ramps lie the walls of the city with guard towers spaced along the wall. The defenders on the wall are throwing flaming torches and rocks (the square objects in the sky) down on the Assyrians. As the Assyrian soldiers come up the ramps they are aided by siege engines (wheeled vehicles with long arms to pick holes in the walls). Soldiers are within these and one of them is pouring water on the front of the vehicle to keep the torches from burning it. Note that the city is being attacked from two directions. The ramps are probably exaggerated in angle as part of the compression of this scene into the wall relief.

Now note the prisoners already coming out of one of the gates of the city. These are representations of Israelites of 701 B.C. Note the dress and hair styles. To the right of these first prisoners, other prisoners are shown already dead, hanging on posts. Further to the right are soldiers with camels and carts carrying away the booty. Some prisoners are riding on ox

carts, others are walking. Note one cart has two children in it with the father, mother, and two other children walking just ahead of it. Another cart has a mother with small children. Pictures of Israelites from seven hundred years before Christ! Above all of this, are representations of vines with grapes and what appear to be date palms, significant features of the land of Israel.

Near the corner of the room, note the prisoners stretched horizontal, apparently being flayed. With the skin gone, the muscles of the legs are evident. Around the corner, still more prisoners. A soldier is about to cut one's head off. Others are bowing.

Then see King Sennacherib himself on the throne (being fanned) receiving his booty and prisoners. His advisors stand before him. As the Bible says, he was on the scene at Lachish. Behind him appears to be his tent. The inscription nearby says, "Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, on a seat he sat and the booty of Lachish passed before him."

Next are Assyrian horsemen and around the corner a representation of their camp. Note the elongated circle with fortifications around it. A road passes through the center. Inside are tents where soldiers are staying. Also in the camp, priests are making offers to their gods. This same camp was soon moved to Jerusalem where these same soldiers thought they could conquer Jerusalem, but God intervened and slew 185,000.

This story, to which the Bible devotes five chapters, is told from his view by the very king the Bible says came, and every detail precisely matches the Bible account. From this "newspaper" record of the Battle of Lachish we get strong confirmation of the accuracy of the Bible story. It is of interest that the battle to which the Bible gives more space than any other ancient battle, is also the ancient battle about which we have this lengthy pictorial record. (See Mitchell, pp. 60-64.)

8. When you have finished in this area, walk through the door that was on your right as you entered the room--another part of Room 10. Here are more Assyrian objects but none with particular Bible significance. Then back



into the northern end of Room 10 and walk between the winged bulls to the stairs by the picture of Sargon. Go down these stairs to Room 88. In this room you will see a small exhibit on the Dead Sea Scrolls showing a jar in which scrolls were found and a photo of one of the scrolls. Across from the entrance (right under the sign saying New



Testament Archaeology) is a model of King Herod's palace called the Herodium. This was one of five palaces which Herod the Great built. The Herodium, between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, was built into a hill so that the steep incline all around the palace (fortress) gave protection. Much of the lower part of this palace remains today and can be visited.

Back on the opposite side of the room is a model of the Jewish temple built by Herod, thus showing how it looked in the time of Jesus. Note the temple itself in the center, the colonnade around the temple area, and the large fortress Antonia at the northwest corner. Jesus often taught in these courtyards and colonnades. The apostles were likely in one of these colonnades when the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost. Jesus may have been tried by Pilate in the fortress Antonia. So getting the temple area in mind through this model can be helpful as you visualize Bible events.

On the wall opposite the entrance there are some ossuaries. These were boxes associated with burial practices in Israel at the time of Christ. They let the body decay in a tomb and then took the bones and placed them in an ossuary. The recently discovered "James ossuary" was this type of box.

9. As you leave Room 88, go through the connecting Room 87 and into Room 82. This room is devoted to the excavations of the city of Ephesus. Note on the left the large photograph of the ruins of Ephesus which have been excavated. See, in the picture, the now excavated large amphitheater, which was the site of the riot led by the silversmiths against Paul. It was in this city that Paul remained three years, the longest stay on any of his missionary tours. Across on the other wall are photographs of the ruins found of the temple of Diana (Artemis). The temple was some distance from the city itself. This temple was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world and it was the worship of Diana over which the riot occurred. Further into the room are some of the remains found from the temple of Diana. You will note references to the "archaic temple" which means the first temple to Diana built in the sixth century B.C. It was burned in 356 B.C. and rebuilt soon thereafter. This second one is the one Paul would have seen.

The most significant remains from the temple of Ephesus are in another area of the Museum, which we will see later, but these are good to see, particularly the photographs.

Now return through Room 87 and go back up the stairs into Room 10 and back to our base in Room 23. Our second excursion from this room takes us into the rooms devoted to the Parthenon.

10. Go now into Room 17, the entrance area for the Parthenon sculptures. In this room is a reconstruction of the Nereid Monument. While this is a tomb, note how it shows the standard parts of the Greek temple: the columns, which are ionic; the pediment, the triangular section at the very top which has sculpted figures in it; and, beneath the pediment, against the outer walls of the building, is the frieze. Hold the view of the pediment and the frieze in mind as we go through the glass doors into Room 18, the room of the Parthenon.

As you go through the doors, you will notice long, narrow rooms on each side. If you have time, these rooms are very good to visit prior to entering the larger room where the primary materials from the Parthenon are found. At the end of the room to the left is a very interesting video showing a computerized reproduction of the Parthenon as it was originally. Seeing this video will help you place the sculptures you will see in their proper place. Other interesting explanations are also in the opposite anteroom.



Remember, as you look at the information about the Parthenon its connection with the Bible. Acts 17:16-34, records Paul's visit to Athens. He went first to the agora or marketplace. From there, the Athenians took him up to Mars Hill or the Areopagus where he preached a sermon to them. This hill was directly across from the acropolis and from it one could see the agora below. So, the agora, Mars Hill and the acropolis generally form a triangle. Paul makes reference to the many gods of the Athenians and contrasts with their view the belief in one, living God. His words about God not being "served by men's hands as though he needed anything" is likely a reference to the frieze of the Parthenon which depicted a procession in which the Greeks brought gifts to Athena, the goddess of the Parthenon.

11. Room 18 holds many pieces from the Parthenon of Athens. While the building still stands in Athens in a somewhat ruined state, most of the sculptures from it were brought to England by Lord Elgin from 1803 to 1810 and are displayed here. At the ends of the room are sculptures from the east and west pediments. The representations of the birth of Athena

(east) and the contest of Athena with Poseidon for the land of Attica (west) fall into the shape of a triangle.

Of special interest to the Bible student, however, is the frieze. These remains from the Parthenon show the procession to bring gifts to Athena, which took place every four years, the Parthathenia. On the side where you entered are the horsemen in the procession. On the opposite side, near the right end are maidens bearing gifts on trays to Athena. Other maidens bring a tall incense burner and jugs with oblations to pour out. On the other end are heifers being brought for sacrifice. About the center, you can see a row of seated figures representing the Greek gods who will receive the procession. From left to right, these seated figures are Hermes, Dionysos, Demeter, Ares, Iris (standing), Hera and Zeus. Next are two girls carrying stools, the Archon Basileus, and a young girl holding the peplos, a garment brought to Athena. Finally, are Athena and her brother Hephaistos. What a beautiful procession to bring things she needed to Athena!

Paul, standing within sight of this procession in sculpture, says the God he declares to the Athenians, does not need to be served by men's hands as though he needed anything. He seems to have made direct reference to this frieze for it surely showed "men's hands" bringing to a goddess the things they thought she needed.

12. Now return to our base, Room 23. From this room now you will go in the third direction, into Room 22. Several steps into the room you will see a large, round marble sculpture. This is the base of one of the columns in the temple of Diana or Artemis of Paul's day. In Acts 19:23-41, we have a long account of a riot in Ephesus because the silversmiths, led by Demetrius, believed Paul was threatening their livelihood. They made small, silver copies of the large statute of Artemis and Paul taught that such idols are nothing. This temple was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world and a very important part of the Ephesian economy. The base shows the beautiful work on the lower part of many of the columns. There were 127 columns in all but only 36 are thought to have been carved bases like this one. This base shows the beauty of the temple and why the Ephesians would be so fond of it.



On the right of this carved base on the wall is an exhibit about Alexander the Great you might want to see.

13. Now go forward through Room 22 to the stairs at the back of that room. Descend these to enter Room 77. In the rear of



this room are the most extensive remains from the temple in Ephesus. Walk down the left side of the room and you will see remains from the temple of Paul's day, built in the fourth century before Christ and destroyed in 263 A.D. by the Goths. Next are remains from the earlier one, built in the sixth century B.C. and destroyed in 356 B.C. To your right are more remains. A huge column base and three column capitals in the ionic style. The size of these is overwhelming. (See Mitchell, p. 99.)

14. Now enter the room on your left, Room 78, and go to the right rear corner. Here is a Greek inscription from a gateway at Thessalonica which lists the officials of the town in the second century A.D. The first word in the inscription is "poleitarch." These were the first officials named. When Luke described an event in Acts 17:6-8, where Paul was brought to rulers of Thessalonica, he used this very word. Again an indication of the accuracy with which Bible writers worked. (See Mitchell, p. 98.)
15. Now go back to the stairs and ascend not only the small stairs you came down but turn right to go up the "west stairs" all the way to the second floor landing called Room 59. When you reach the top of the stairs, you may go to the right to see many items from the ancient Greeks and Romans. Of particular interest to Bible students will be the busts of the Roman Emperors related to the Bible story. Augustus (27 B.C. to 14 A.D.), Tiberius (14-37 A.D.), Claudius (37-41 A.D.), Nero (54-68 A.D.), Vespasian (69-79 A.D.) and Titus (70-81 A.D.) If you are tired or pressed for time, do not take this excursion into Rooms 73-69. If you do visit these rooms, return to the landing at the top of the stairs, Room 59, when you are ready to move on. (See Mitchell, pp. 91-94.)
16. From Room 59 now go into Room 58. You will move down this corridor to Room 55 and then return back to Room 59. In Room 58, you will see on your right remains from a tomb in Jericho. The pottery and other items suggest that this burial site is from about 2000 to 1500 B.C. The city of Jericho is one of the earliest known sites of human habitation dating back to 7,000 B.C. It would have been a few centuries after the time of this tomb that Joshua conquered the city.



17. Now go into Room 57. On the left side of the room are glass cases. In Case No. 7 are more remains from Lachish. In No. 8, the case about Egyptian Art, are the Armana letters, written by an Egyptian Pharaoh from about 1400 B.C. which mention a group in Canaan called the Hiparu. Some have associated the Hiparu with Hebrew and say it could refer to the people of Israel. Further down are remains from the Philistines so prominent in

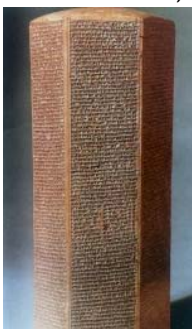


the Old Testament story during the time of the Judges and Kings. At the far end are materials from the Assyrians and Babalonians, both of which play a prominent part in the Bible story. In Case 8 are figurines from Lachish showing objects of worship. Also here are ivories taken from Samaria. 1 Kings 22:39 mentions that Ahab built an "ivory house." Of course it was not a whole house of ivory but the passage means that it was a house with ivory decorations. These items, found by J.W. Crowfoot in ancient Samaria, could well be pieces from Ahab's "ivory house." Note, too, the Lachish letters. These are notes written on broken pottery from a person inside the city when it was under siege by Sennacherib in 701 B.C.

18. Now go into Room 56. In this room, on both the left and the right, are remains taken from a royal tomb in Ur of Chaldees from about 2500 B.C. This would be the same place Abraham was from but about 500 years earlier. Notice the beautiful jewelry and artifacts. In the second half of the room on the back side of the first cabinet on the left, note the beautifully done knife. Ur was clearly a city which was very advanced for that time. See the goat in the bushes, which might have been a table leg, and, further on, the bust of a woman of that time, which might remind one of Sarah. Still in Room 56, on the right side of the room, note the toys and a cylinder seal which shows a legend of Mesopotamia about 2300 B.C. which included a god, a tree, a woman, and a snake. Maybe there is a connection to the story of Eve and the serpent seems apparent. (See Mitchell, p. 24).



19. In Room 55, there are some very important remains related to the Bible. In Case 11 is the Taylor Prism or Sennacherib Cylinder. A replica of this was in Room 17 where the Lachish wall reliefs are but the one here is the actual clay cylinder on which Sennacherib recorded the events of his foray into Judah in 701 B.C. In Case 12 is information on Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon with whom Daniel worked. Note the glazed brick for which Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon was famous. Daniel would have lived among such beautiful materials.



In Case 13/14, look for the small Nabonidus cylinder. In Daniel 5:1, Belshazzar is mentioned as king of Babylon. He sees the "handwriting on the wall." He offers Daniel the third place in the kingdom of Daniel will interpret the writing. Daniel says the writing means he will lose his kingdom to the Medes and Persians and the Bible adds



that Belshazzar was killed that night. Some had doubted there was such a king as Belshazzar because he was not included on existing lists of kings of Babylon. They thought the Bible in error. This cylinder with cuneiform writing from the sixth century B.C. was found in Ur, a part of the Babylonian Empire. It is a record of King Nabonidus who calls Belshazzar his firstborn son. We know, then, that while Nabonidus was the prime king of the time, he had given to his son, Belshazzar, the rule of the city of Babylon, where Daniel was. Belshazzar offered "the third place" in the kingdom to Daniel because he, himself, was in second place. (See Mitchell, p. 80-81).

Another item to note in Room 55 is a clay tablet of the Babylonian Chronicle (Case 15, Item 24). This small document in cuneiform writing, records the date of the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem. It says the fall of the city came the 2nd of Adar (March 16/16, 597 B.C.) The tablet says Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city of Judah and on the second day of Adar he seized it and captured the king. The Bible tells this story in 2 Kings 24:10-17 and the records match perfectly. Note also the stela of Nebuchadnezzar on the end wall of the room.



Also in Room 55, Case 10, you will find the Gilgamesh Epic, a clay tablet from the seventh century B.C. found in Assyria. It is part of a story of a man named Gilgamesh who meets a man who tells him a story about one who gained immortality. In his early day, the gods became angry with men and decided to destroy them with a flood. They told the man, however, to build a boat and to bring his family, his treasure, and animals into the boat so he could be saved from the flood which would destroy everyone else. After seven days of rain, the boat comes to rest on a mountain and the man sends out a dove, a swallow, and a raven. Only the raven does not return. The man then emerges from the boat and offers a sacrifice to the gods. The similarity of this story to the Biblical account of the flood is certainly remarkable and shows there was a legend among various civilizations of such an event. (See Mitchell, p. 70.)

20. Now return through the rooms you have been viewing to the stair landing at Room 59. From there you will enter Room 61 and the Egyptian corridor. Turn right and go into room 62. In this room, look just to the right center of the room, at Cabinet 35, Item 6, a brick, which contains the cartouche of Ramses III. This brick would be from about the time the Israelites were being forced to make bricks for building purposes in Egypt. Note the straw as it is used to help bind the brick together and remember the story that the Israelites were forced to gather their own straw. In Cabinet 36, note the Egyptian jewelry.

21. Now into Rooms 63 through 65. These rooms contain more from Egypt, particularly about Egyptian burials.

Note especially the wrapped mummies and the different types of mummy cases. Genesis 50:2-3 mentions that Joseph commanded that Jacob be mummified and that it took 40 days, the standard length of time suggested by Egyptian sources to remove the body parts and replace them with the mummifying ingredients. Joseph was also embalmed in a similar way, according to Genesis 50:26.

Passing through these rooms note also the cases of ancient Egyptian jewelry. Relate these beautiful objects, whose dates are given, to the times of Bible characters in Egypt: Abraham about 1950 B.C., Joseph about 1700 B.C., and Moses about 1400 B.C.

Notice the display of Egyptian baskets. Remembering that Moses was put in a basket on the Nile, we get some idea from these baskets made of palm leaves what such baskets might have been like. Near these are cosmetics from Ramses II. Moses, while in the palace, might have used such items. See also the sandals. Note particularly the ones with the turned up toes. These are also woven. Moses' sandals might have been like this or made of skins. Also in this room are tools and implements of many kinds which will give you an indication of the level of the development of metal tools and weapons of the time of Joseph and Moses. Note the weapons: bows, arrows, throw sticks, and knives. Also see the fishhooks. Isaiah 19:8 speaks of the Egyptians who cast the "angles" or hooks into the sea to catch the fish.

22. After you have seen all you wish in this area, move from Room 65 into stair



landing 53. From there you will enter Room 52, the last area in which to find Bible related materials. (Room 52 is closed for refurbishing as of July 2006 and may be different when it re-opens.) As you enter this room you will see in the center a beautiful example of glazed bricks from the palace of Darius in Susa. This same palace in the Bible is called Shushan and was also where Esther lived with her husband Xerxes about 500 B.C. So this beautiful section of wall with the glazed brick relief of a palace guard indicates the beauty and splendor of the place in which Esther lived. Similar brickwork was also used in the city

of Babylon at the time of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel, therefore, would have lived among similar work.

Also in Room 52 is another object relating to the Persians, one of the most significant confirmations of the Bible story. In Daniel, chapter 5, the Bible states that the city of Babylon fell in one night to Darius the Mede. Ezra 1:1-3 tells that Cyrus, King of Persia, in coalition with Darius, fulfilled the prediction of Jeremiah about the return of the Israelites to their own land. According to Jeremiah 25:12 and Isaiah 44:28, after seventy years, God would raise up Cyrus, a Persian, to overthrow the Babylonians, to allow the Jews to return to their land to rebuild their temple.

In Room 52, Case 6, Item 7, on the left side of the room, is a clay cylinder. Now go into Room 57. On the der,of Cyrus himself. He claims to have taken Babylon without a battle and then to have allowed captives in Babylon to return to their home cities to rebuild their temples. Thus, Cyrus, by his own records, corroborates the Bible story--both as to the fall of Babylon without a battle as Daniel says and to his decree to allow the Jews to return as Jeremiah had predicted and Ezra recorded.



You may proceed on through this corridor to its end and then turn right to the stairs that lead back to the main lobby and the exit. There are many interesting items, some relating to the Roman occupation of Britain. But there are no more items with direct Bible connection.

[Click here to view the map which correlates to this guide](#)

## THE BRITISH LIBRARY

In 1998, many historic manuscripts, which had been housed in the British Museum, were moved to the British Library on Euston Road--near the St. Pancras Station, a stop on the Underground. While it takes extra effort to get to these, many of them are very worth seeing. The Library is open at 9:30 a.m. on weekdays, and 11 a.m. on Sunday. It closes at 6 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays and at 8 p.m. on Tuesdays, and 5 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

The following items are now in the British Library in the section called Treasures of the British Library. Once inside the building, go to your left into a large room containing all of the items listed below. As you enter, you can pick up a small brochure which will guide you through the room. Starting generally toward the left and working toward the right, you will find the items of special interest to Bible students.

1. In the area called "Sacred Texts" are ancient manuscripts of the Bible.
  - a. Codex Siniaticus--a fourth century manuscript containing almost all of the Bible.
  - b. Codex Alexandrinus--a fifth century manuscript containing almost all of the Bible.
  - c. Other early manuscripts of scripture
2. Also in "Sacred Texts" are copies of early translations such as Tyndale and 1<sup>st</sup> Edition of King James Bible.
3. "Illuminated Manuscripts"--early manuscripts with hand done decorations.
4. In "Printing" you will find a copy of the Guttenburg Bible--first book printed on Guttenburg's new press with movable type about 1455 and other early printed materials.
5. In "Historical Documents" will be a copy of the Magna Carta, written in 1215..
6. In "Science" are some things from Leonardo DiVinci.
7. In the final sections, "Literature" and "Music," are copies of such things as a First Folio (1623) from Shakespeare, writings of other authors and composers in their own hand including a manuscript from the Beatles.