

EXPLORATION: BIBLE

By Chip Thompson

Important Archaeological Finds of the Bible #2— Kings of Judah

In about 1,000 B.C. Yahweh, the God of Israel, told King David, “Your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever” (2 Samuel 7:16). Some earthly dynasties lasted a long time, but NO dynasty lasts forever, EXCEPT FOR ONE, the dynasty of King David.

Jesus was born about 1,000 years after the time of King David. Matthew chapter 1 starts this way, “The book of the **genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David.**” Jesus is called “the Son of David” twenty times in the New Testament. The question is, can we use the archeology of the Middle East to affirm that Jesus is indeed in the direct lineage of King David?

FIRST, THE BIBLE IS ARCHEOLOGY. The Aaronic blessing, Numbers 6:22-27, was found on a silver amulet that dates to 600 B.C. And, ALL the books of the Old Testament are in the Dead Sea Scrolls, most of which are at least 2,000 years old. In the ancient biblical text, a detailed chronology of David’s dynasty lists 21 Kings. Of these, 10 Davidic Kings are identified in ancient artifacts outside of the Bible.

Artifact #1 “The Tel Dan Inscription” – In this earliest inscription, dating to the 9th century B.C., three Davidic Kings are mentioned. **King #1 is David himself. King #7 in the Davidic Dynasty is Jehoram and #8 is his son Ahaziah.** In this inscription a King of Aram-Damascus wrote, “[I killed]... [Ahaz]iah son of [Jehoram] king the of house of David and I made (their towns into ruins)...”

#1. The Tel Dan Inscription



#2. The Uzziah Inscription



Photos taken by Chip Thompson, Israel Museum

Artifact #2 is the Uzziah Inscription – Uzziah is king #11 in the Davidic dynasty. Uzziah is known as the King who died of leprosy and was buried in a tomb separated from the other kings of Judah. This inscription states, “**Hither were brought the bones of Uzziah King of Judah. Do not open!**”

Artifact #3 is the Ahaz bulla – Davidic Kings #12 Jotham & #13 Ahaz are found in the Ahaz seal. It reads, “**Belonging to Ahaz (son of) Jotham, king of Judah.**”

#3. The Ahaz bulla



#4. The Hezekiah bulla



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Artifact #4 is the Hezekiah bulla – This seal contains the name of Davidic King #13 Hezekiah along with his father Ahaz. Hezekiah and his sons were miraculously spared when the Angel of Yahweh himself destroyed the mighty Assyrian army in 701 B.C. and ended the siege of Jerusalem (Isaiah chapters 36-37). The Hezekiah seal says, “**Belonging to Hezekiah [son of] Ahaz king of Judah.**”

Artifacts #5 & #6 are Assyrian Prisms, both of which mention Davidic King #14, Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah – Manasseh was the longest reigning king of Judah, and he is mentioned by two Assyrian kings, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. Both prisms mention “**Manasseh, King of Judah**” by name, along with other kings who paid taxes to Assyria.

#5. The Esarhaddon Prism



#6. The Ashurbanipal Prism



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Davidic King #21, Zedekiah, was the final Old Testament king of Judah. In 586 B.C., King Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem. He then, “**Killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon... He put him in prison till the day of his death**” (2 Kings 25:7 & Jeremiah 52:11). This is alarming, because Zedekiah, a descendant of King David, and ALL his

sons were put to death, thus ending the line of King Zedekiah. This appears to be the end of the Davidic Dynasty, but was it?

Artifact #7 – ELEVEN YEARS EARLIER - Davidic King #20 - In 597 B.C., a boy named Jehoiachin (also called Jeconiah) became king of Judah. Jehoiachin was only 18 years old, and he only ruled Judah for 3 months. When King Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem, Jehoiachin surrendered. Nebuchadnezzar then placed his uncle Zedekiah on the throne and Jehoiachin was carried to Babylon, placed in prison, and forgotten (2 Kings 24:8-20).

Artifact #7 records the appointment of King Zedekiah

Artifact #8 is “The Jehoiachin Rations Tablet”



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Artifact #8 confirms God’s AMAZING FAITHFULNESS, “In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah... Evil-Merodach king of Babylon... graciously freed Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him out of prison. And he spoke kindly to him... So Jehoiachin put off his prison garments. And every day of his life he dined regularly at the king’s table, and... a regular allowance was given him by the king... as long as he lived” (2 Kings 25:27-30).

The Jehoiachin Rations Tablet says, “**7.2 liters for Jehoiachin, king of the land of Judah.**” A second ration tablet said this, “**1/5 liter for each of the five sons of the king of Judah.**” Did you see that??? **The SONS of the King of Judah** also received rations. The lineage of King David did not end with Zedekiah. 2 Chronicles 3:17-18 confirms that Jehoiachin/Jeconiah gave birth to sons in Babylon. And, Jehoiachin’s son Shealtiel and his grandson Zerubbabel are in both the genealogy of Joseph and Mary, the parents of Jesus Christ (see Matthew 1 and Luke 3).

Although there are gaps in the archeological record, it is absolutely amazing that 10 Davidic Kings have been confirmed in archeology. And the Bible, which is also archeology, directly connects Jesus with these Davidic Kings. YES, Jesus is indeed the Son of David. And, even though Jesus died on a cruel cross as punishment for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2 & 4:10). He rose from the dead three days later and lives forever as the Davidic King of Kings (Revelation 19:16). “**He [God] made Him [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him**” (2 Corinthians 5:21).