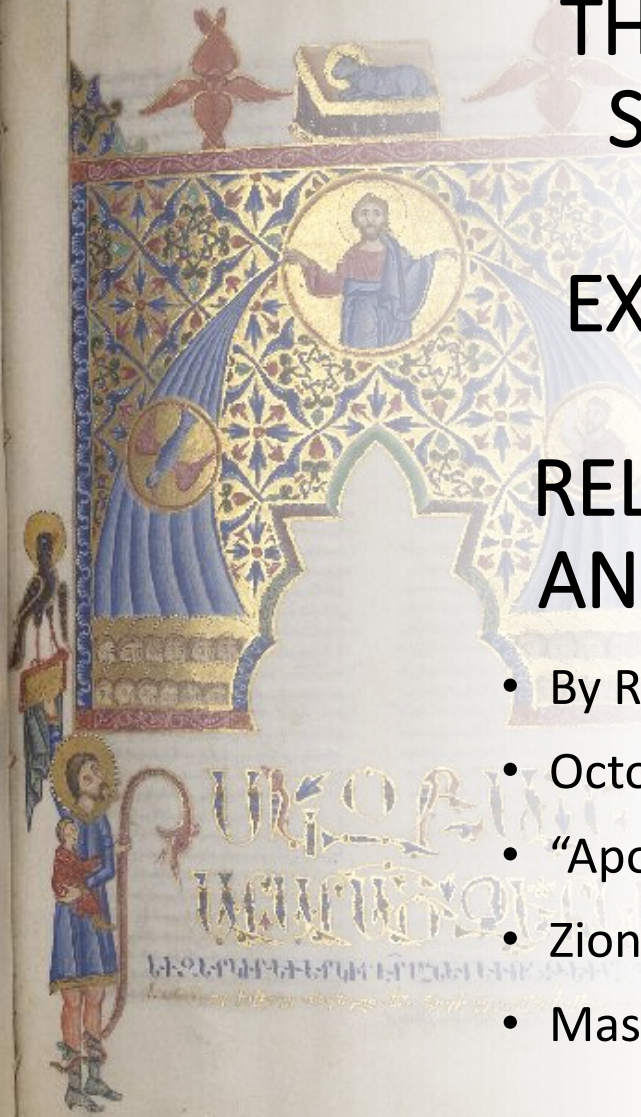




**THE WORD THEY STILL
SHALL LET REMAIN:
AN APOLOGETIC
EXAMINATION OF THE
ACCURACY AND
RELIABILITY OF THE OLD
AND NEW TESTAMENTS**

- By Rev. Dr. Kirk M. Clayton
- October 7, 2023
- “Apologetics 101” Workshop
- Zion Lutheran Church
- Mascoutah IL



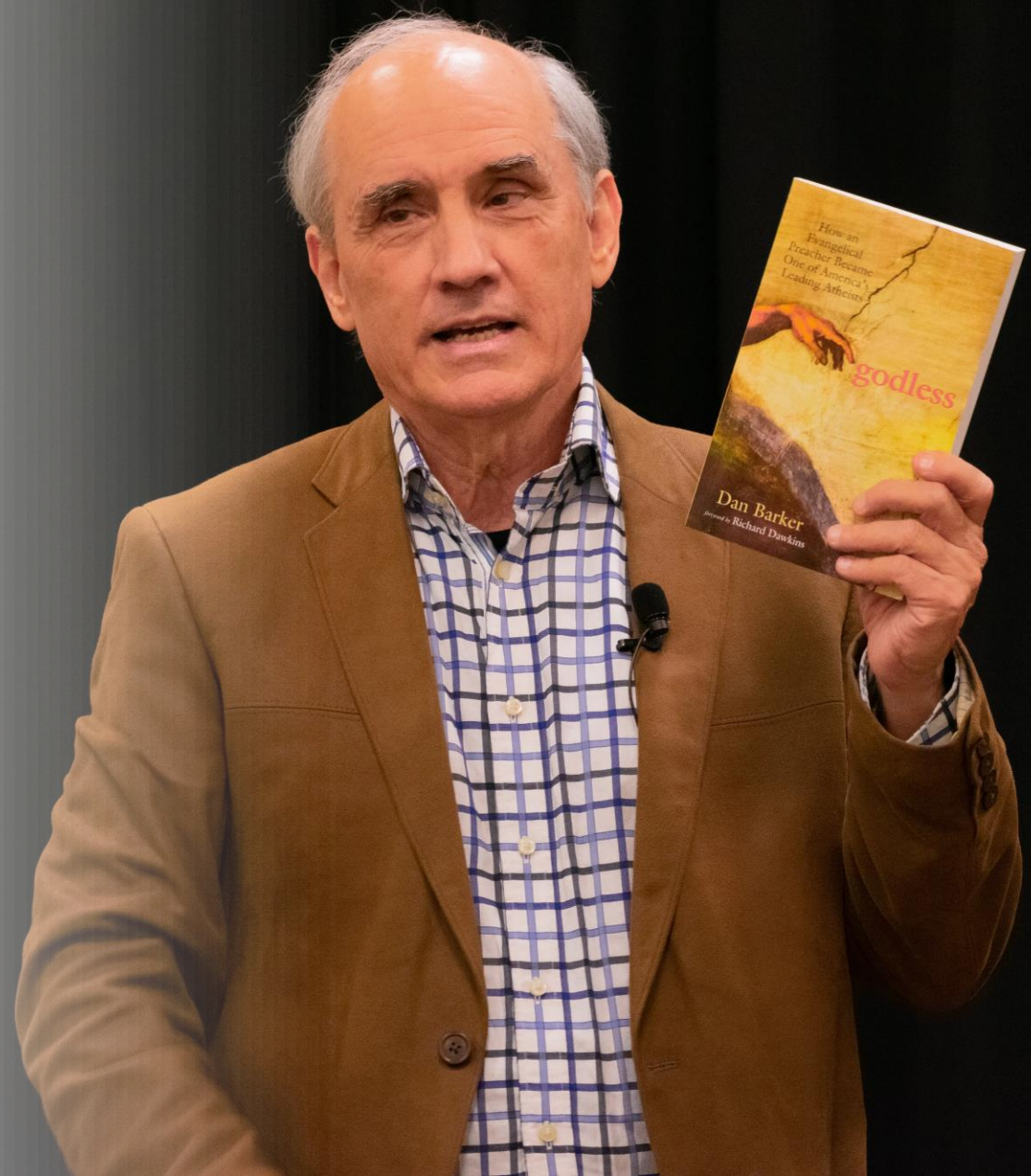
Is the Bible True? Can Its Content Be Trusted?

Many voices say "No!"

Dan Barker:

- “I was forced to admit that the bible is not a reliable source of truth: it is unscientific, irrational, contradictory, absurd, unhistorical, uninspiring, and morally unsatisfying.”

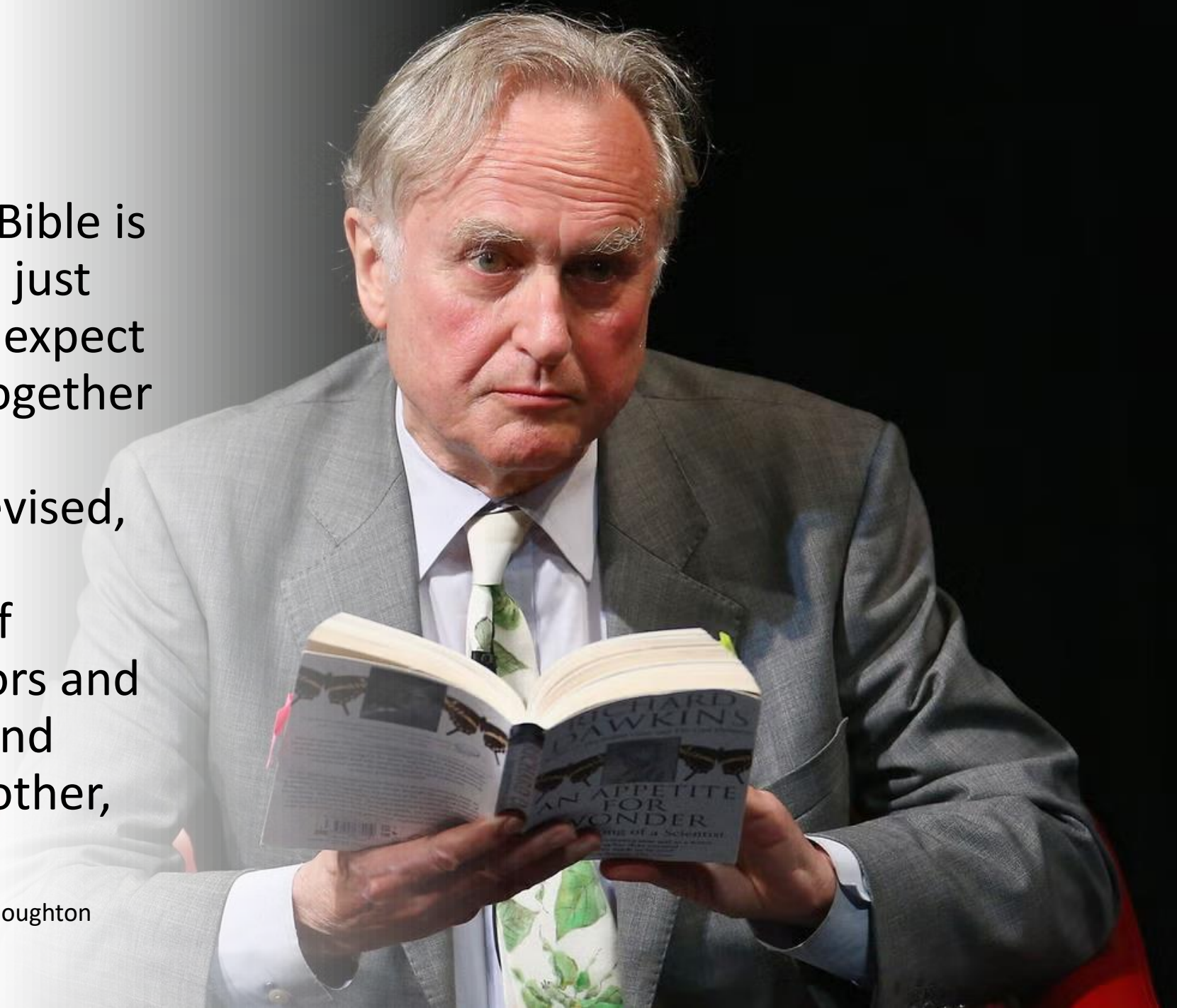
- Dan Barker, *Godless: How an Evangelical Preacher Became One of America's Leading Atheists* (Berkeley: Ulysses Press, 2008), 40.



Richard Dawkins:

- “To be fair, much of the Bible is not systematically evil but just plain weird, as you would expect of a chaotically cobbled-together anthology of disjointed documents, composed, revised, translated, distorted and ‘improved’ by hundreds of anonymous authors, editors and copyists, unknown to us and mostly unknown to each other, spanning nine centuries.”

- Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 235.



How Do We Answer the Question?

Examine the evidence, see
where it leads.



How Do We Answer the Question?

- Three Central Approaches:



How Do We Answer the Question?

- Three Central Approaches:
 - The Bibliographic Test



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 - The Internal Evidence Test



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How Do We Answer the Question?

- Three Central Approaches:
 - The Bibliographic Test
 - The Internal Evidence Test
 - The External Evidence Test
- We will look at the Old Testament in each of these approaches, because it is more challenging than the New Testament in each area.





The Bibliographic Test

. “By the bibliographical test, we mean the analysis of the textual tradition by which the given document reaches us...Are the printed texts as we have them today essentially the same as when they were originally written, or have they been significantly corrupted in transmission?”

- John Warwick Montgomery, *Tractatus Logico-Theologicus* (Bonn, Germany: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft, 2009), 74.

The Bibliographic Test

Author	Date Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	Copies
Caesar (<i>Gallic Wars</i>)	58-50 B.C.	900 A.D.	1000 yrs.	10
Thucydides (<i>Histories</i>)	480-425 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs.	8
Catallus (<i>Poetics</i>)	84-54 B.C.	1400 A.D.	1500 yrs.	3
Plato (<i>Tetralogies</i>)	427-347 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs.	7
Tacitus (<i>Annals</i>)	100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1000 yrs.	10
Pliny the Younger (<i>Letters</i>)	61-113 A.D.	850 A.D.	800 yrs.	7
Seutonium (<i>Life of Caesar</i>)	75-160 A.D.	950 A.D.	800 yrs.	8
Homer (<i>Illiad</i>)	850 B.C.	400 B.C.	450 yrs.	643



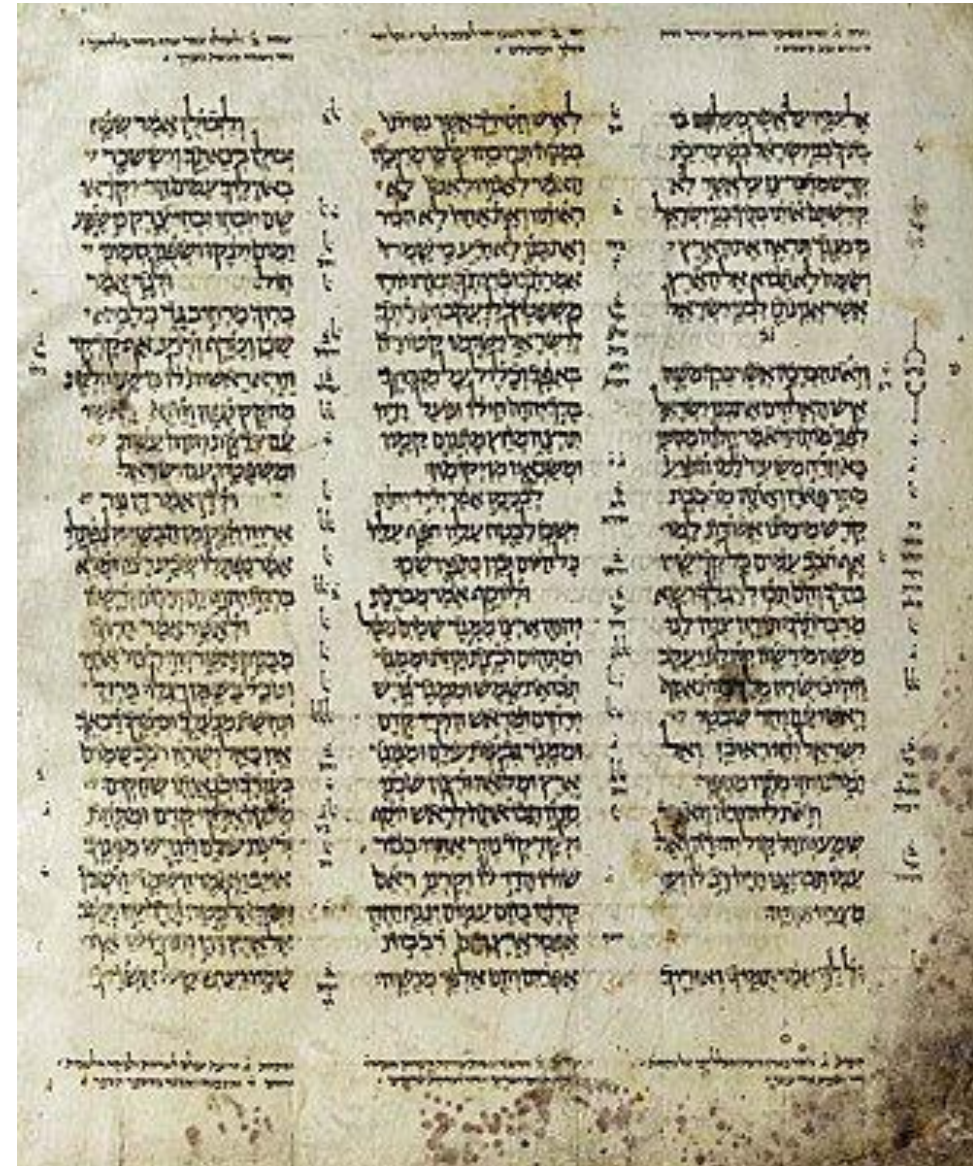
The Bibliographic Test

- The Challenge with the Old Testament:
 - The oldest full **Hebrew** manuscript extant is from about 1000 AD.
 - This is a gap of 1500–2500 years from when the various books were written.
 - Reason: In Jewish tradition, old and damaged manuscripts were destroyed.



The Bibliographic Test

- The Masorah
 - Masorah parva (side margins)
 - Masorah magna (top and bottom margins)
 - Masorah finalis (end of the book)
 - Seen as transmitting a perfect copy of its source document (which is why the damaged source was then destroyed)
 - Masoretes' work prominent 500–1000 AD
 - Still leaves a prominent gap



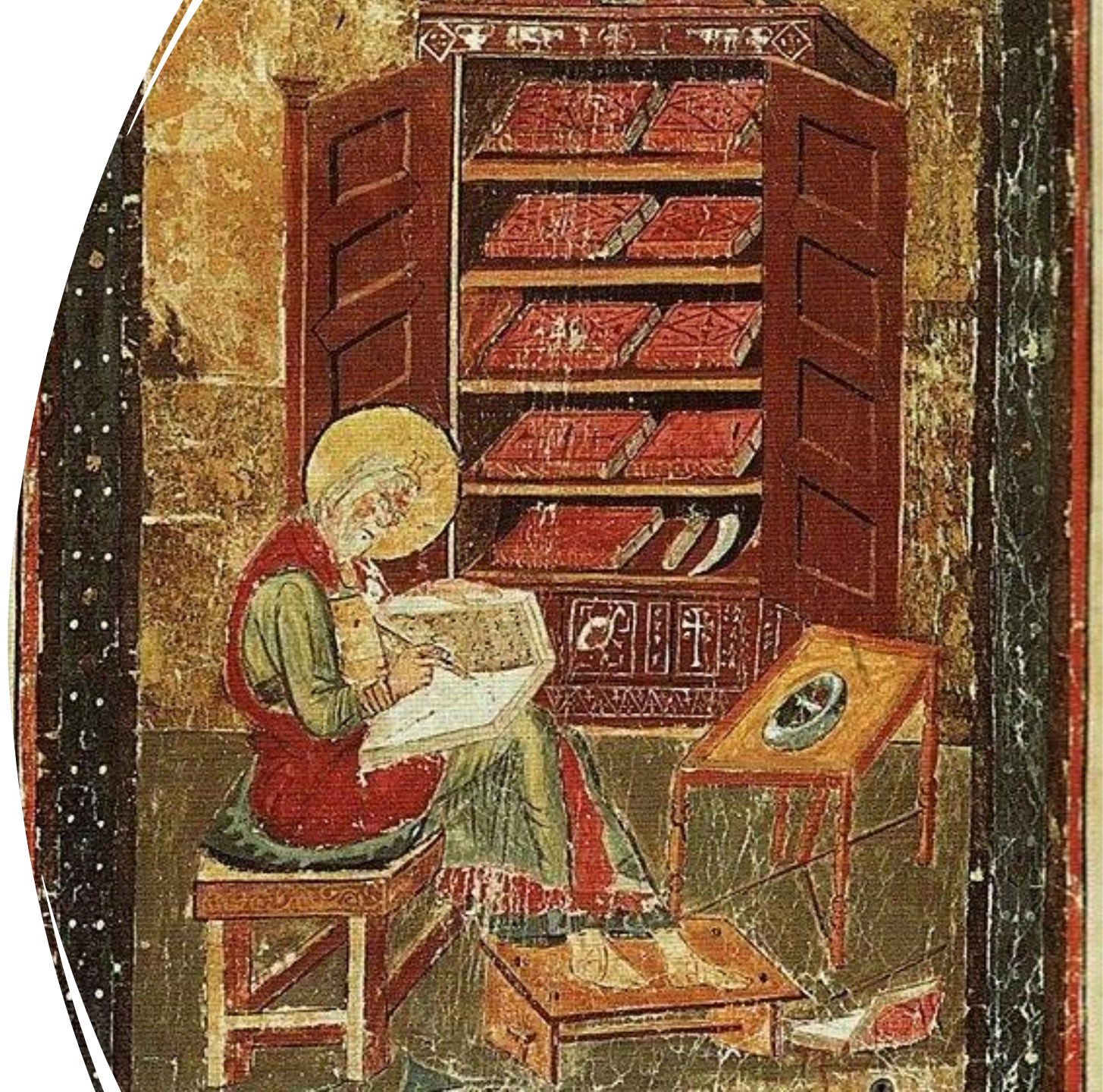
The Bibliographic Test

- The Dead Sea Scrolls
 - Most date to 100 BC to 50 AD
 - Masoretic texts from 500 –1000 years later were virtually identical
 - Cuts gap by 1000 years, but still leaves a prominent gap



The Bibliographic Test

- The “Sopherim”
 - Translated as “Scribe”
 - Literally means “Counter”
 - Masoretes continued a tradition from the time of Ezra (440 BC), “an expert scribe” (Ezra 7:6).
 - “The ancients were called soferim because they counted every letter in the Torah.”
- Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 66.



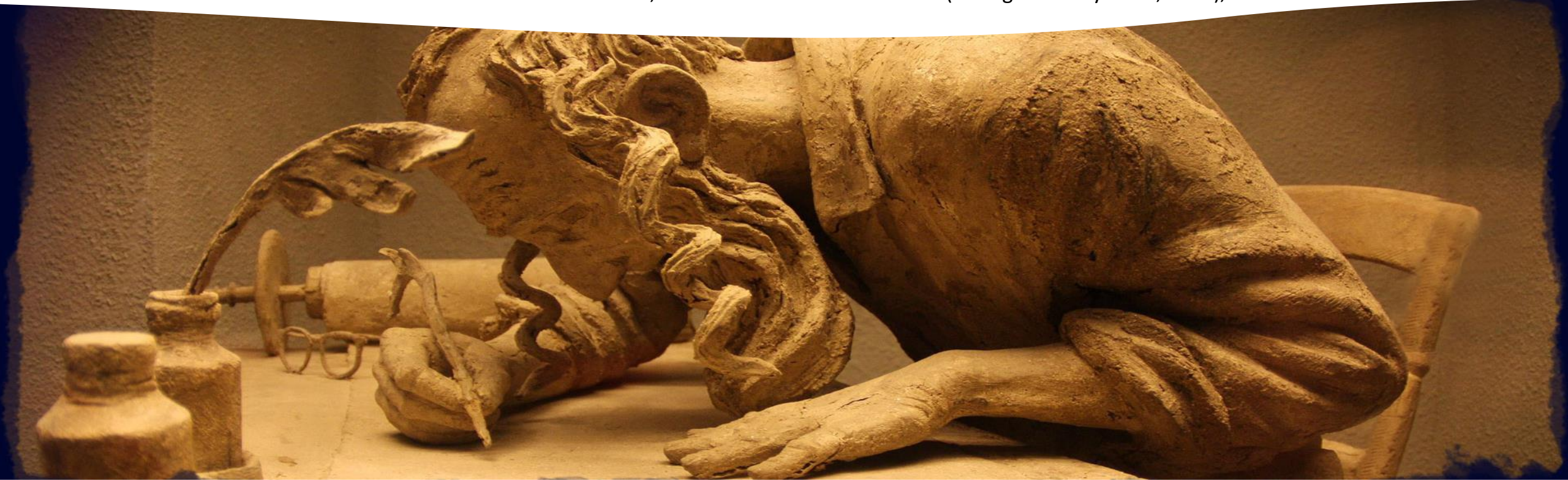
The Bibliographic Test

- Ezra himself was continuing an earlier line of scribal training and accuracy
- This moves our timeline back to contemporaneous with later books of the Old Testament, and within 1000 years of the earlier books of the Old Testament
- No worse than other ancient manuscripts



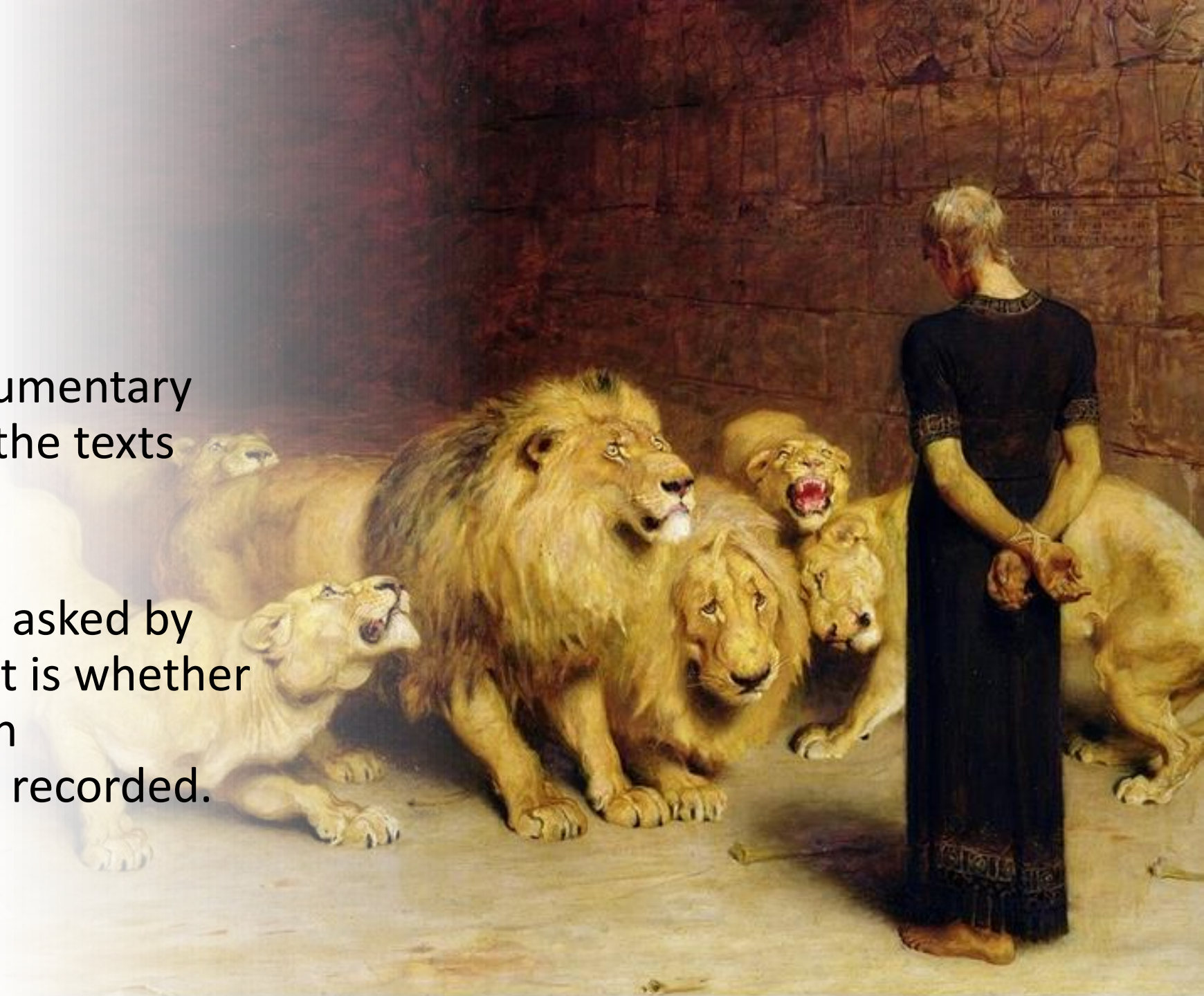
The Bibliographic Test

- “Jews preserved it [the text of the Old Testament] as no other manuscript has ever been preserved. With their massora (parva, magna, and finalis) they kept tabs on every letter, syllable, word, and paragraph. They had special classes of men within their culture whose sole duty was to preserve and transmit these documents with practically perfect fidelity—scribes, lawyers, massorettes. Whoever counted the letters and syllables and words of Plato or Aristotle?”
- Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Christian Evidences* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953), 230–31.



The Internal Evidence Test

- “The internal test of documentary reliability asks: What do the texts claim for themselves?”
- Montgomery, *Tractatus Logico-Theologicus*, 77.
- One of the key questions asked by the Internal Evidence Test is whether the author of a book is an eyewitness to the events recorded.
- Parton, *Religion on Trial*, 44.



The Internal Evidence Test

- Daniel claims to be an eyewitness of the things he records in the Book of Daniel, including the downfall of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, and the reign of Darius the Mede.



The Internal Evidence Test

- “Many modern scholars are convinced that the Book of Daniel was not written by an eyewitness of the events, but by an author who lived centuries later.”

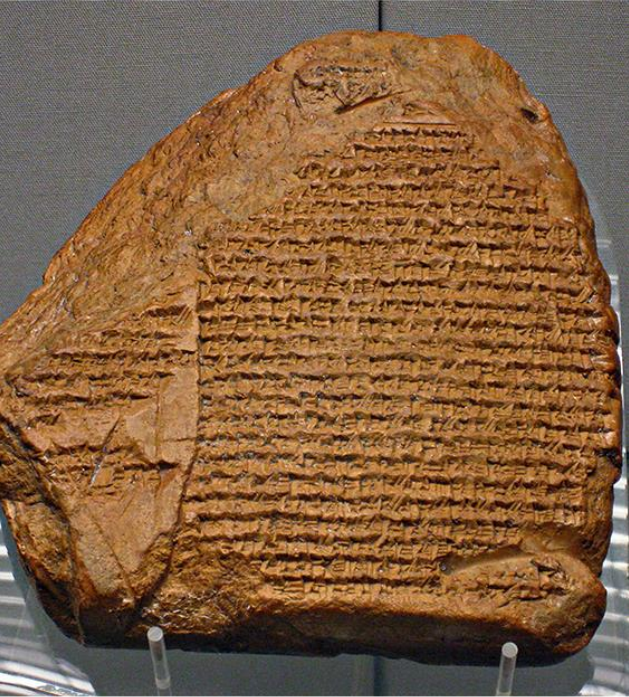
- William Arndt, *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987), 66.



The Internal Evidence Test

- The Challenge with Belshazzar
 - Other historical records claim that Nabonidus was the last king of Babylon
 - Herodotus makes no mention of Belshazzar

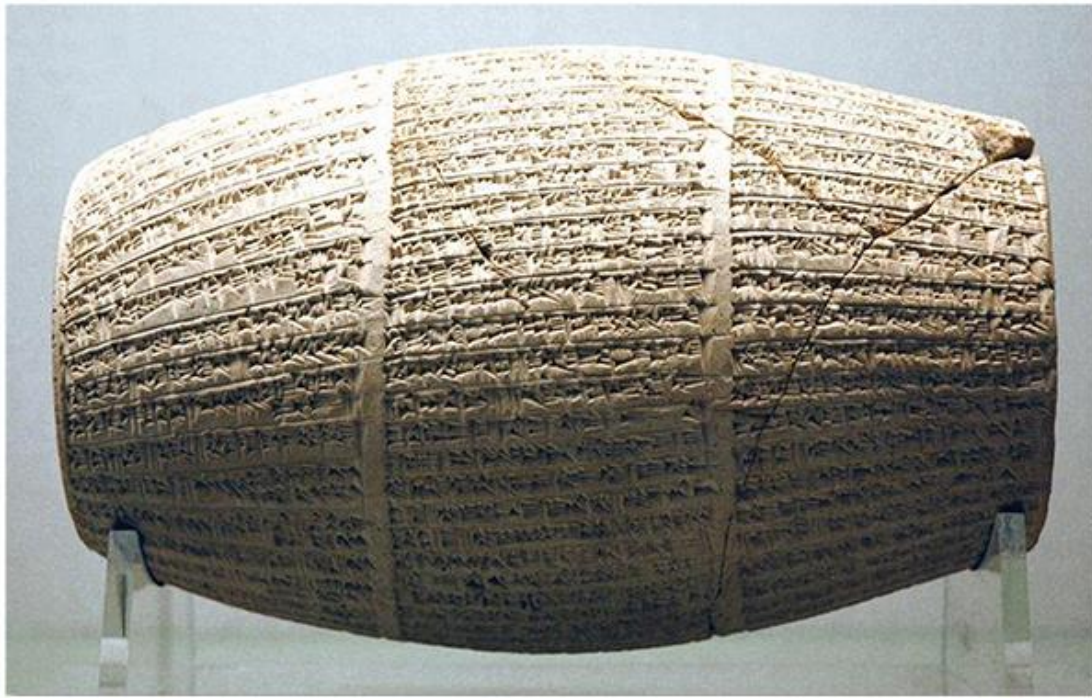




The Internal Evidence Test

Responses to Challenges

- Recent discoveries have proved that Nabonidus left Babylon to “reign” from Tema in Arabia, and left his son, Belshazzar, as co-regent in Babylon.
- Nabonidus was the last king *of* Babylon, but Belshazzar was the last king *in* Babylon.
- Hint from Daniel 5:29 where Belshazzar makes Daniel the third ruler in the kingdom (because he himself was only the second ruler.)





Amazing Evidence at the British Museum!



The Nabonidus Stela

Here Nabonidus (556–539 BC) wears the traditional dress of a king of Babylon, holding objects symbolising justice and power. Before him are the star of Ishtar, the winged disc of Shamash and the crescent of the moon god Sin, to whom Nabonidus was personally devoted.

Reign of Nabonidus, 555–539 BC, probably from Babylon, southern Iraq, ME 90837



The last Babylonian ruler

By granting the god Sin, Nabonidus led out of the priesthood of Marduk, chief god of Babylon. His apparent absence for 10 years at Tema in Arabia left his son Belshazzar as regent. The absence of the king was held to be the cause of New Year Festival, held at the time of the king's absence, could not be celebrated.

When Nabonidus finally returned to Babylon his reign was doomed. In 539 BC the city was conquered by Cyrus the Great and it became incorporated into the Persian Empire. This ended the rule of the last native king of Mesopotamia.

The Nabonidus Stela

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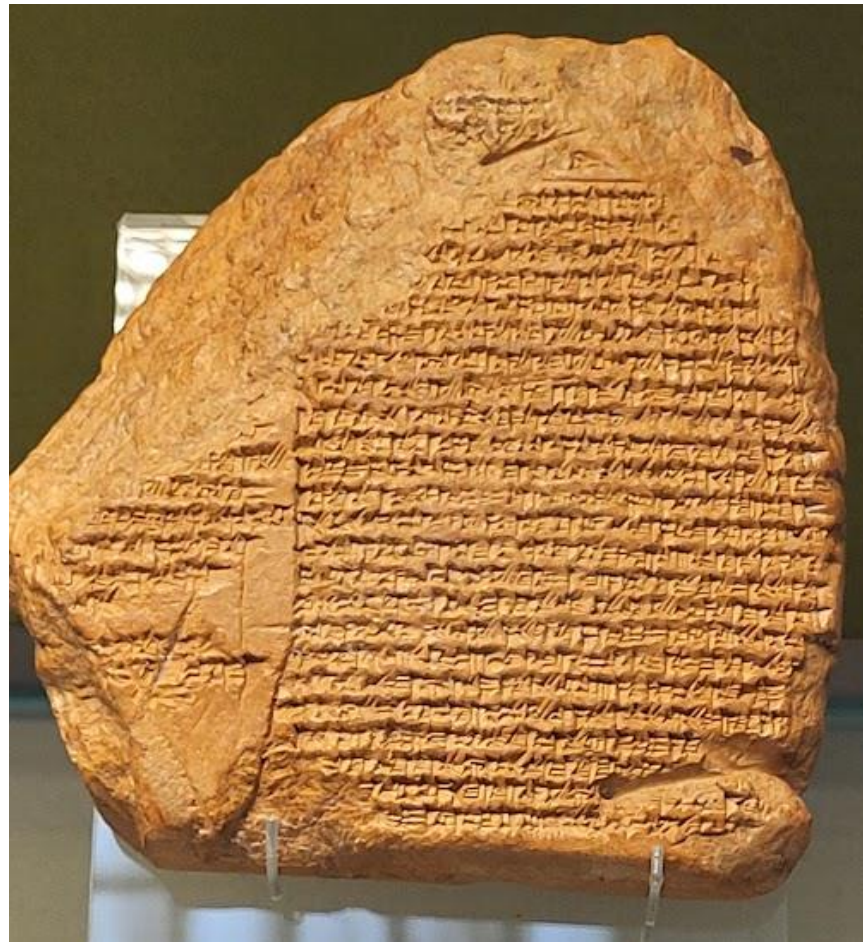


Nabonidus and sacred buildings

Nabonidus' preoccupation with the moon god Sin led to building work outside Babylon. This clay cylinder records the restoration of Sin's ziggurat at Ur and also asks him to protect Nabonidus and his son, Belshazzar.

*Reign of Nabonidus, 556–539 BC
From Ur, southern Iraq*

ME 91125



The fall of a dynasty

*About 530–400 BC
From Babylon, southern Iraq*

ME 35382

Nabonidus' faults and absence were recorded alongside events of his reign. By the autumn of 539 BC Babylon had surrendered to the army of King Cyrus to become part of the growing Achaemenid Empire.



Belshazzar and the Bible

This administrative document is dated to the '24th day of Kislimu in the 11th year of Nabonidus, King of Babylon'. It mentions a 'slave of Bel-sharra-usur (Belshazzar), son of the king'. Although Belshazzar is acting as regent, the formal date shows that Nabonidus is still the reigning king.

545 BC

From Borsippa, southern Iraq

ME 26740

The Internal Evidence Test

The Challenge With Darius the Mede

- The Challenge With Darius the Mede
- “No person mentioned in the book of Daniel is more obscure and controversial than Darius the Mede. No person by this name is known from extrabiblical records as having taken over the rule of Babylon following the fall of Nabonidus and Belshazzar.”
- Andrew Steinman, *Daniel*, Concordia Commentary Series (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2008), 290.



The Internal Evidence Test

Responses to Challenges

- Berossus' *Babyloniaca*, "Cyrus at first treated him [Nabonidus] kindly, and, giving a residence to him in Carmania, sent him out of Babylon. (But) Darius the king took away some of his province for himself."
- "Berossus seems to have believed that there was a King Darius who reigned concurrently with Cyrus and who had greater authority than Cyrus within the Medo-Persian Empire."
- Steven Anderson and Rodger Young, "The Remembrance of Daniel's Darius the Mede in Berossus and Harpocration" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 173 (July–September 2016): 318–19.



The Internal Evidence Test

Responses to Challenges

- The Daric, the Persian coin, is thought to be named for the later Darius the Great, but evidence shows it is not.
- Harpocraton states, “But darics are not named, as most suppose, after Darius the father of Xerxes, but after a certain other, more ancient king.”
- Anderson and Young, “The Remembrance of Daniel’s Darius the Mede,” 319.

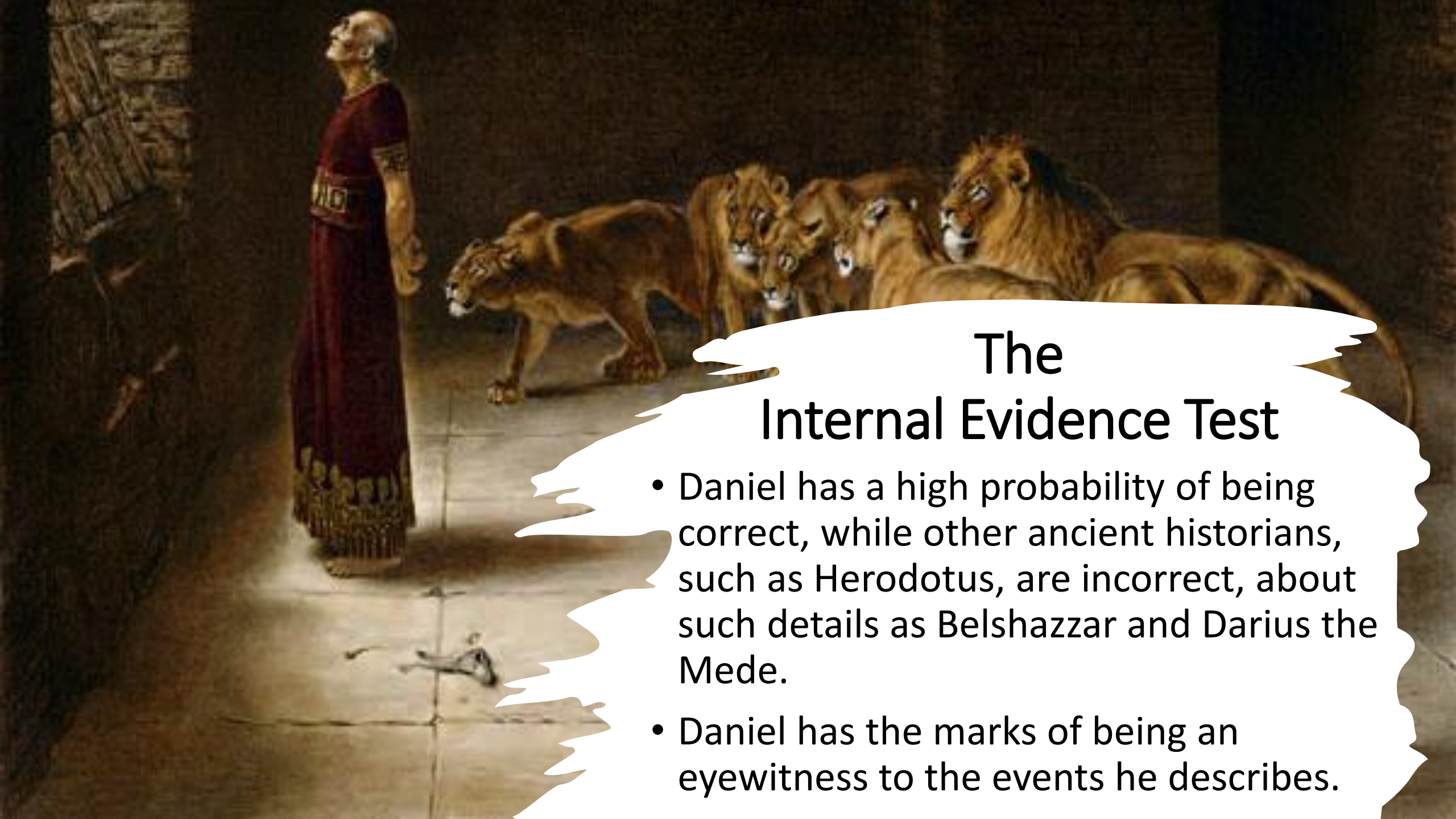


The Internal Evidence Test

Responses to Challenges

- Xenophon, in his *Cyropaedia*, lists a king named Cyaxares II, as the king of the Medes at the time of Cyrus' conquest of Babylon, while Herodotus claims that Cyrus had overthrown the line of Median kings earlier.
- "Recent analysis of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* indicates that Darius the Mede was the throne name of the sixth-century BC Median king Cyaxares II, who headed the Medo-Persian Empire at Babylon's fall in 539 BC."
- Kirk R. MacGregor, "A Contemporary Defense of the Authenticity of Daniel," *Journal of the International Society of Christian Apologetics* 9, no. 1 (April 2016): 63.





The Internal Evidence Test

- Daniel has a high probability of being correct, while other ancient historians, such as Herodotus, are incorrect, about such details as Belshazzar and Darius the Mede.
- Daniel has the marks of being an eyewitness to the events he describes.

The External Evidence Test

- The External Evidence Test looks to sources outside and removed from the text in order to see if what is written in the text corresponds with what is known about the era and subject from other sources.



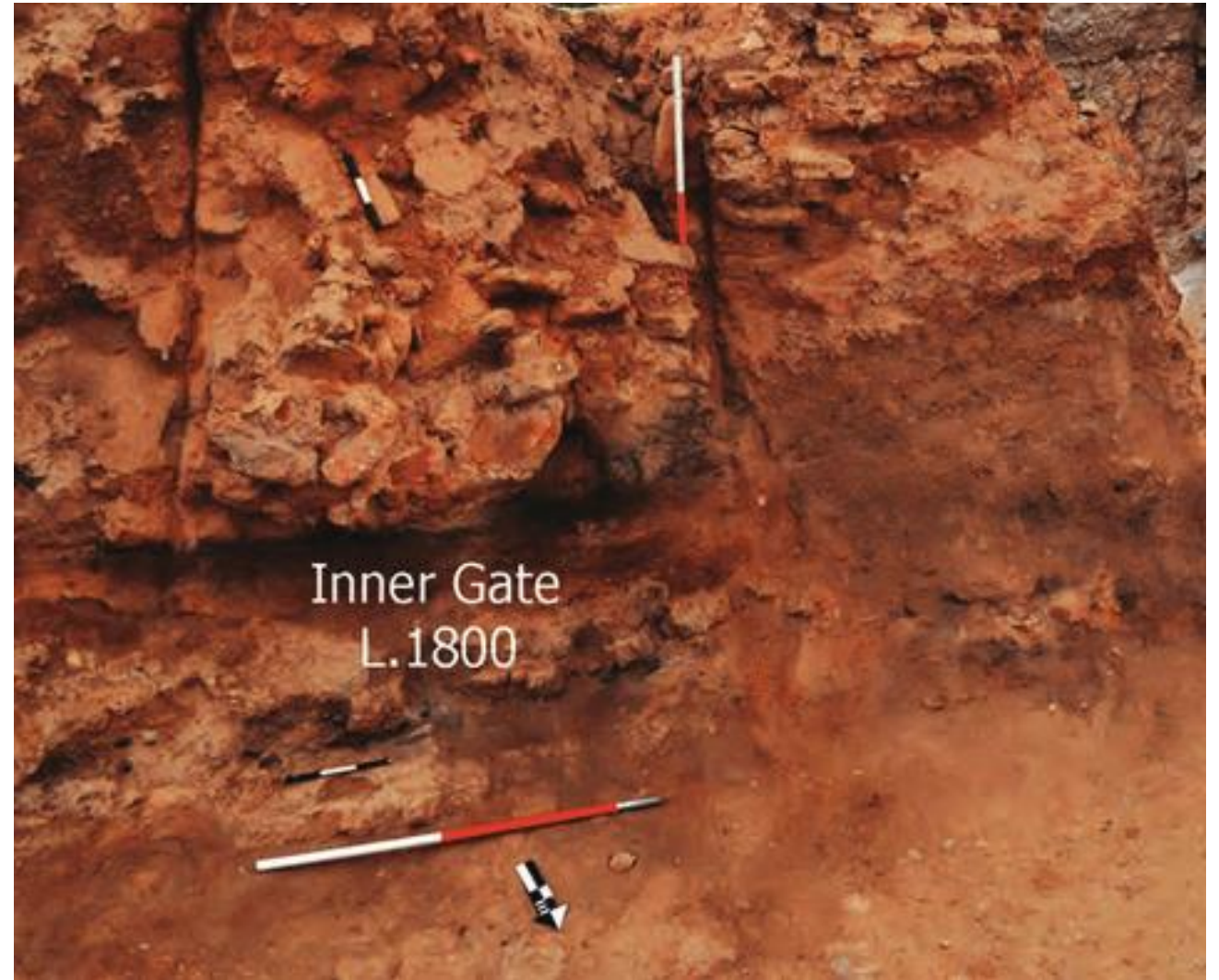
The External Evidence Test

- The Challenge of Joshua's Conquest of Jericho and the Date of the Exodus
 - Most scholars claim a late date for the Exodus and conquest of Jericho, about 1250 BC.
 - Jericho was abandoned at that date, and there is no evidence of conquest in Canaan at that date.



The External Evidence Test

- No question that Jericho was violently destroyed and burned, the question is when and by whom.
- Excavations at Jericho reveal a meter-thick destruction layer and a distinct burn layer, showing evidence of massive devastation.



The External Evidence Test



- Examine the Bible's own date for the Exodus and see what evidence is found.
 - "In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of the Lord" (1 Kings 6:1 ESV).
 - The fourth year in Solomon's reign is known to be 966 BC.
 - That places the Exodus at 1446 BC and the fall of Jericho at 1406 BC.

The External Evidence Test

- Pottery sherds are one of the best way of dating excavations.
- “Cypriot Bichrome Pottery” is the marker for the Late Bronze Age, about 1400 BC.





The External Evidence Test

- John Garstang, excavating in the 1930s, found Cypriot bichrome pottery in the appropriate layer at Jericho, but pottery dating was not yet established, so he didn't recognize what he found.
- Kathleen Kenyon, excavating in the 1950s, knew the importance of Cypriot bichrome pottery, but dug in the wrong place to find it, and didn't know of Garstang's findings!

The External Evidence Test

- Another dating approach: Scarabs
- About 170 scarabs found at Jericho, ending with the reign of Pharaoh Amenhotep III (1411–1375).
- This suggests a destruction date of about 1400 BC.
- Sir Frederic Kenyon asserts that Jericho “was violently destroyed and burned at a date somewhere about 1400.”
- Frederic Kenyon, *The Bible and Archaeology* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1940), 188.



IS THE BIBLE RELIABLE?

When we examine the evidence, we can “deduce” that the answer is “elementary.”





YES, THE BIBLE IS TRUE!

It is accurate and reliable. Its
contents can be trusted.

The Word they still shall let remain
Nor any thanks have for it;
He's by our side upon the plain
With His good gifts and Spirit.
And take they our life,
Goods, fame, child, and wife,
Though these all be gone,
Our vict'ry has been won;
The Kingdom ours remaineth.

Martin Luther, "A Mighty Fortress"

LSB 656, Stanza 4.

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