

Archaeology's Contribution

John 18:28-32



Dear Friends in Christ,

Our meditation this morning continues in the theme, "The Bible on Trial." During the first theme we learned of the need we have to read the Bible. Then on the second we learned the Bible has so many critics and that we are to respond to them based on what God does with us through Jesus Christ. And last Sunday we learned that we are to "Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls." Jeremiah 6:1a, 16, as God through the prophet Jeremiah, asks us to do. Those paths are proven by ancient sources that will override the "what if" what if the Bible wasn't what we have believed so far.

Today we will focus on the importance of archaeology to the veracity of the Scriptures. And for our meditation I would like to share a reading from the Gospel of John chapter 18 verses 28-32:

"Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover. ²⁹ So Pilate went outside to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" ³⁰ They answered him, "If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you." ³¹ Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." The Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death." ³² This was to fulfil the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die."

We all know this story don't we, the passion of Christ. Pilate the governor and what transpired at his headquarters, all so that "the Word that Jesus had spoken" can be fulfilled for the sake, of our sake, for salvation's sake.

But what if what critics say is true that Jesus story is a manmade story? Well external sources will help us debunk the lie. Archaeology will help us to pinpoint the locations, physical locations that the Bible refers to.

The Scriptures don't really need any external support or evidence, other than the work of the Holy Spirit, but so that our knowledge, certainty and understanding of God's Word there are external sources, geographical, cultural, social and even psychological, that can be understood through excavations, archaeological excavations, that give weight to Biblical claims, that in turn can enhance our faith.

Today, I would like to show you another video, but this one a little longer but that highlights some of the discoveries of Archaeology and the Bible... (let's watch)

Interesting isn't it! But how important is archaeology to our faith? After all isn't faith what counts? And isn't the work of the Holy Spirit to clarify and illuminate God's words to us? To be sure, faith is a key element to understanding the Scriptures and so is the Holy Spirit. No question about it.

But when we talk about faith, what do we mean? “Faith” the writer to Hebrews says, “is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”² For by it the people of old received their commendation.³ By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. (Heb. 11:1-3)

Following these verses the Author gives examples of faith in people and what they got. Then the Author says: “These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.” (Hebrews 11:13)

Notice the text says: “having seen them and greeted them from afar.” As you see faith is not as the world defines it, as wishful thinking, and that if you think it, it will happen, or as other think faith is, the clinging to something none existent.

Rather faith is clinging onto what is real, that we can see and even greet from afar. Faith is based on what we can trust, hear from, see and even **dig up**. Is based on what is real and what has happened. For example, we do have faith in the fact that Christ has risen, we do so because of God’s Word and because we know that the tomb is empty.

Faith is the trust in God’s work that has taken place in places, and thanks to archaeology we can see not forward but backwards as if traveling through time and verify the Scriptures claims. God’s work takes place in real places, from places to places. And as search the Scriptures and with the help of archaeology we will see that there is no such a thing as made up places. Sometimes it is difficult to pinpoint a place, but that’ doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist, and sooner or later it will be uncovered.

Faith is also based on what happened in those places. How people were directed to places, how they were either destroyed or redeemed.

Our God is so good, that not only His word tells us but even the historical facts and archaeology show us that yes God that redeems and recreates for His glory and for our Salvation, through His Son Jesus Christ.

After all that’s what Jesus Christ came to accomplish, to die on the cross of Calvary for each one of us. When the time was right He came to be the ransom price for each one of us who were trapped under the condemnation of sin and death. And when we were unable to free ourselves from the curse of our sin, He came to free us.

He came to a real place in Bethlehem, lived in real places then died in another real place Jerusalem.

But there is more, for it also means that as He came to people, to their own places, so even today He comes to each one us in our own small worlds, in our own places. There, where you are at, God is with you as He was with His people of Old and archaeology gives as an insight of how God worked in the lives of people.

For He was the one who died in our place, he was the one taken to “the governor’s headquarters.” There outside Pilate said: “What accusation do you bring against this man?” His enemies answered: “If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you.”³¹ Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.” The Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.”³² This was to fulfil the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die.”

Then He was crucified, dead, buried, but on the third day He rose again for you
and for me, that's our faith.
In His name amen.