



Input and Images

God creates the world to be a beautiful, marvelous place.

God creates mankind in His image, giving man the ability to choose what he does and how he responds to input from others, from nature, from God.

Man blows it and chooses to disobey God, breaking the world and allowing evil, in the form of God's enemy, to dominate ever after. Thus man now has to deal with disease, natural disasters, and his own misbehavior (aka "sin").

Man blows it so badly that God must wipe him out except for one family who somehow manages to resist participating in the evil and who is righteous in God's eyes (Noah).

Man starts over again but still blows it, so God chooses another righteous man (Abraham) to father a people (the Jews) whom God will use to spread the knowledge of Him and shine the light of His Spirit to the mess of the world. These people sorta do that, but they themselves blow it, so that their history over the millennia is checkered with periods of revival and obedience, and then rebellion and punishment.

Finally God introduces the ultimate solution for mankind, sending His Son, the human incarnation of Himself, to give up His own life to satisfy God's demand that justice be served for humanity's rebellion. God then commissions His early followers to spread the great News that ANYone and EVERYone can claim this gift of restoration and eternal life with God by surrendering his/her will and committing his/her life to God!

Unfortunately, very soon God's enemy creates a parallel message among other descendants of Abraham (Ishmael's descendants, or Arabs) that is dedicated to hatred of God's chosen people. (The Jews and Arabs are actually cousins.) This message, called Islam, spreads hatred, violence, murder, and death; it imitates, copies and corrupts many things of God; it creates violence and wars against God's people, both the Jews and and non-Jews who accept the message of God's Son.

A whole civilization based on the message of God's Son grows and flourishes, Western Civilization, covering Europe and later North America, but it, too becomes corrupt and rebels against God.

So here we are, creatures of Western Civilization, our input from birth being the basics of the message of God's Son, growing up with the idea that our culture and faith are intertwined, and in fact, much the same thing.

Other non-Western cultures have not had the input of 2000 years of religion based on the teachings of God's Son, so that when they hear the Gospel, the message, it's often or usually greatly foreign to their natural way of thinking, a whole new thing.

Are we, who have absorbed this input of 2000 years of the Gospel, at an advantage over those who haven't been saturated with this religious tradition called Christianity?

Or are we victims of human-created images passed down and distorted through the centuries, taking us farther and farther away from the pure message preached by God's Son? We've been taught who God is – various images of Him. We've been told who Jesus is – more images. Are we worshipping the true God or an image-in-ary God? Are we following the true Jesus, along with His pure message, or is the input we've received creating a fake Jesus to make things easier?

More and more images are pouring out from those who teach and preach to us, images about heaven, about the End Times, about the Rapture or the Millennium or the

Tribulation. Images about what it means to be a follower of God – do this or think that or you're not really a true Believer.

What is God's reality? Who is He real-ly? What does Jesus require of us, real-ly? Must we live by some denomination's rules and practices, and if so, which one? Who has Truth?

Aaaargh! Enter the Holy Spirit! He is all we have that we KNOW is of God! He is mostly exempt from images. He whispers in our ears, sits on our shoulders, wraps us in His protection, imparts to us His wisdom and truth. He gives us eyes to see and ears to hear; He reads the Bible with us and gives us understanding.

Bottom line: we ARE the Chosen, but we choose by our free will to be Chosen, and God knows beforehand which of us will choose Him. What happens with those who haven't heard His message directly is His problem.

Linda Gammel

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 1:11-14

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

John 14:15-17

Archaeologists found (another) ancient seal that validates the Bible's claims. Here's what it means for you.

by Peter Heck, NOT THE BEE



In a world of changing narratives and modern skepticism, archaeology continues to whisper: the Bible got it right.

This time the whisper comes from the heart of Jerusalem, where archaeologists recently unearthed a 2,600-year-old clay seal bearing the name of a biblical figure from the court of King Josiah. As if that alone wasn't a remarkable find, the seal still bears the ancient fingerprint of the man who may have pressed it with his own hands.

Credit for the find goes to the Temple Mount Sifting Project, an ambitious team that is dedicated to the recovery of artifacts leftover from an illegal excavation on that hotly contested part of the holy city. Inscribed on the discovered seal, or "bullā," are the words: "Belonging to Yeda'yah (son of) Asayahu"

In the 22nd chapter of the Old Testament of 2 Kings, a passage recounting King Josiah's temple reforms can be found. Concerned about a prophecy discovered in, "The Book of the Law," Josiah dispatched a team of trusted officials to consult a prophetess:



Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Akbor, Shaphan and Asayahu went to speak to the prophet Huldah, who was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem, in the New Quarter. (2 Kings 22:14)

It's a singular name from two millennia ago, otherwise ordinary, benign, and forgotten but to serious Bible students. But now, dug from the dirt, a clay seal and dusty fingerprint may be the latest piece of tangible evidence that validates the historicity of God's Word to man.

When skeptics call the Bible a book of myth, they're increasingly forced to reckon with the evidence being pulled from the ground ... sometimes, with ancient fingerprints still pressed into it.

These kinds of discoveries do much more than thrill and fascinate nerdy archaeologists. They reinforce the credibility of the Bible for modern readers. Every time an artifact like this seal surfaces, confirming a biblical name, event, or place, the narrative that Scripture is merely allegorical is punctured by hard evidence.

To be fair, it is possible that this isn't the same Asayahu found in 2 Kings. But archaeologist Zachi Dvira noted that seals like these were reserved for high-ranking officials, and similar ones that have been discovered across Jerusalem have repeatedly matched names found in Scripture. The coincidence is becoming hard to dismiss, particularly in an era where we are getting really good at digging in dirt, and much of what we're finding corroborates the

Bible's claims.

- ✓ Hezekiah's Tunnel (also known as the Siloam Tunnel), mentioned in 2 Kings 20, was discovered with an inscription describing the construction project to redirect Jerusalem's water supply in the face of Assyrian siege.
- ✓ The Tel Dan Stele, a 9th-century BC stone inscription found in northern Israel, includes the phrase "House of David." That's a direct, historic confirmation that King David was not just a legendary figure as Bible skeptics have routinely argued, but a known king of Judah.
- ✓ Just outside the Temple Mount, archaeologists found a seal bearing the name "Hezekiah [son of] Ahaz king of Judah," and another possibly referring to Isaiah the prophet. The two men are mentioned together in Isaiah 38 and 2 Kings 19 - 20.

These finds don't just confirm identities; they confirm the entire historical framework in which the biblical drama unfolds.

Christian faith is ultimately rooted not in any artifact, but in the person of Jesus Christ. But discoveries like these matter because they remind us that Scripture didn't emerge from a vacuum of myth, but from a lived reality of kings, wars, reforms, prophets, and politics. The biblical authors weren't writing fairy tales, they were recording history that carried with it profound spiritual meaning.

That's precisely what C.S. Lewis meant when he observed, "The Bible has the ring of truth, not just in what it claims, but in the world it describes."

If Scripture stands up to scrutiny in its historical details, perhaps we should listen more carefully to its spiritual claims as well.

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The Babylon Bee

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"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Isaiah 55:9

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From The Babylon Bee

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A rock in bad hands murdered Abel. A rock in good hands killed Goliath.

IT'S DEFINITELY NOT ABOUT THE ROCK, FOLKS.

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