

Archaeological Evidence and Jesus

We live in an age of uninformed scepticism about Jesus. This talk will show how the physical discoveries of archaeology undermine common misconceptions about the existence of Jesus, the historical reliability of the Gospels, the historical credentials of central Christian beliefs such as the crucifixion, burial, and empty tomb of Jesus, and the existence of people who believed Jesus was God long before the 4th century church council of Nicea.

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We have a very limited access to the past through the known chain of its effects.

- Only 35 of 142 books of Roman history written by Livy (c. 59/64 BC- – c. 12/17 AD) have survived (in c. 20 manuscripts, the oldest of which dates from the 4th century AD).
- Only four-and-a-half of Tacitus's 14 books of Roman history have survived (in 2 manuscripts dating to the 9th and 11th centuries).

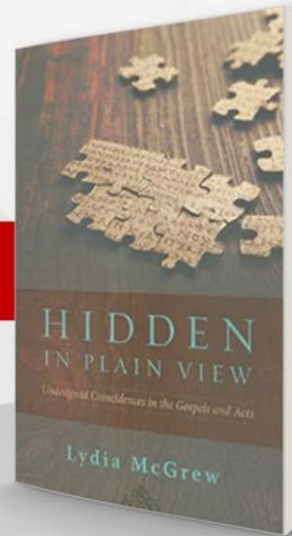
Atheist **Victor J. Stenger**: 'Absence of evidence is evidence of absence when the evidence should be there and is not.' - *The New Atheism*, 58.

Lydia McGrew:

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'If you sample a loaf of bread on both ends and at several points in the middle and find it good, it would be caviling to say that perhaps just the parts you haven't tasted happen to be the moldy ones.'

- *Hidden In Plain View*, 225.



Historical Places – Cities & Buildings

Bethlehem



Eli Shukron (2012): 'Here we can read [the word Bethlehem] in a clear Hebrew inscription from the First Temple period on a bulla found in Israel that arrived from Bethlehem to Jerusalem maybe to pay some tax. This is the Bethlehem next to Jerusalem referred to in the Bible.'

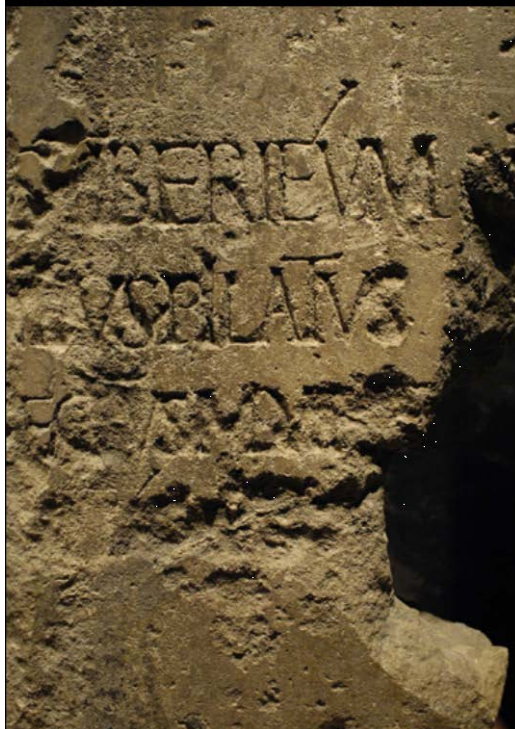
- Israeli archaeologists find seal that mentions Bethlehem' www.pcusa.org/news/2012/6/19/Israeli-archaeologists-find-ancient-seal-mentions/

2004, archaeologists stumbled upon the 1st century ritual Pool of Siloam (John 9:1-7) when engineers uncovered ancient steps during pipe maintenance near the mouth of Hezekiah's tunnel.



Historical People – General & specific Names, Titles & Relationships

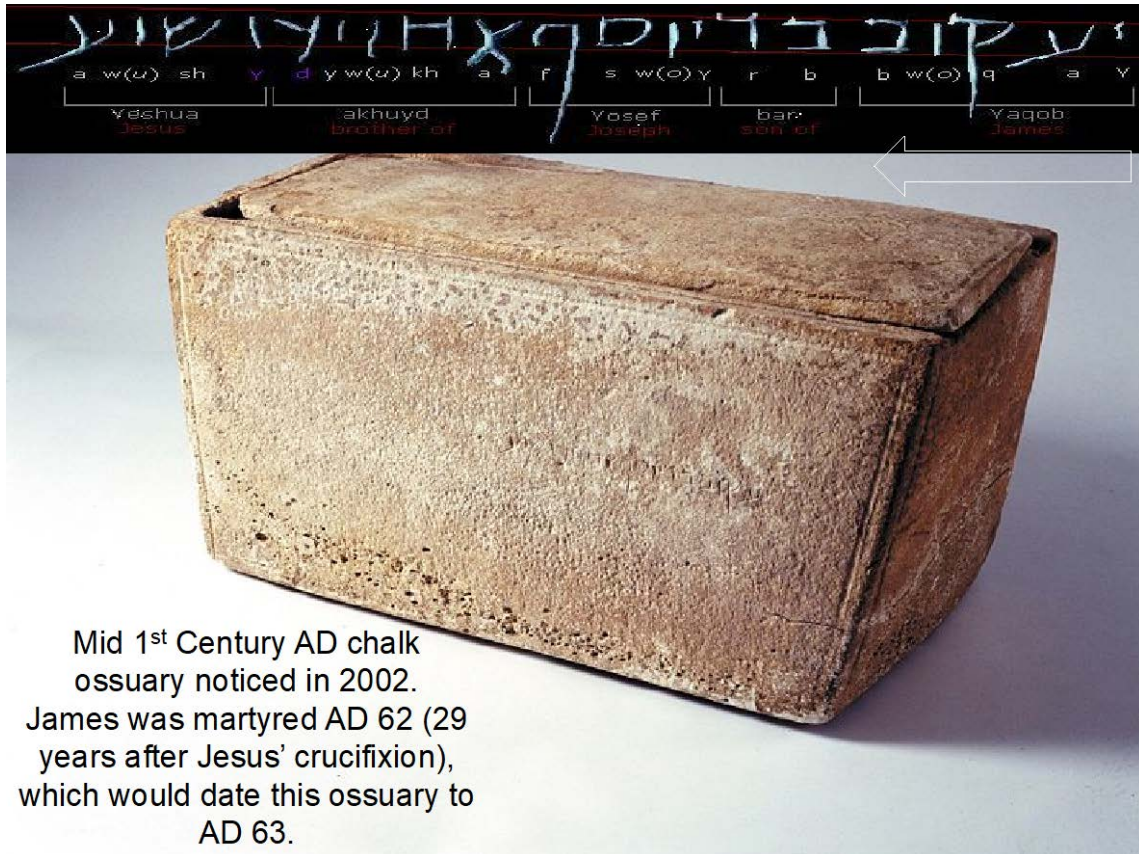
[2] The Pilate Inscription (disc. 1961)



....**TIBERIEUM**

[PON]TIUS PILATUS

[PRAEF]ECTUS



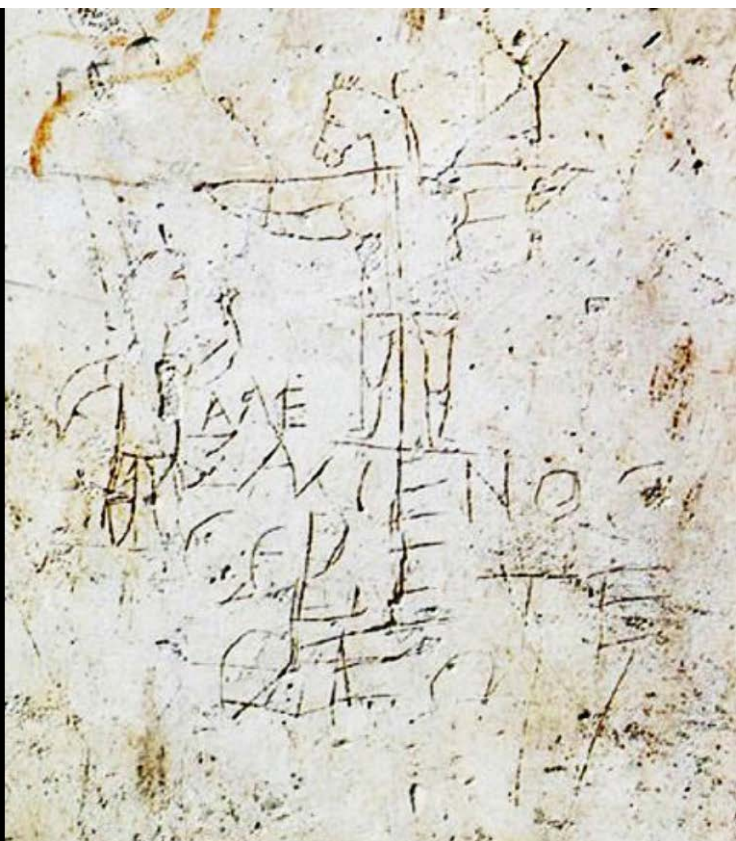
Mid 1st Century AD chalk ossuary noticed in 2002. James was martyred AD 62 (29 years after Jesus' crucifixion), which would date this ossuary to AD 63.

Historical Culture – Beliefs

The 'Alexamenos' graffito:

Wall graffiti near the Palatine hill, Rome, dated to **'c. AD 200'** - Richard Bauckham, *Jesus: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2011, p. 96)

'Alexamenos worships his god'



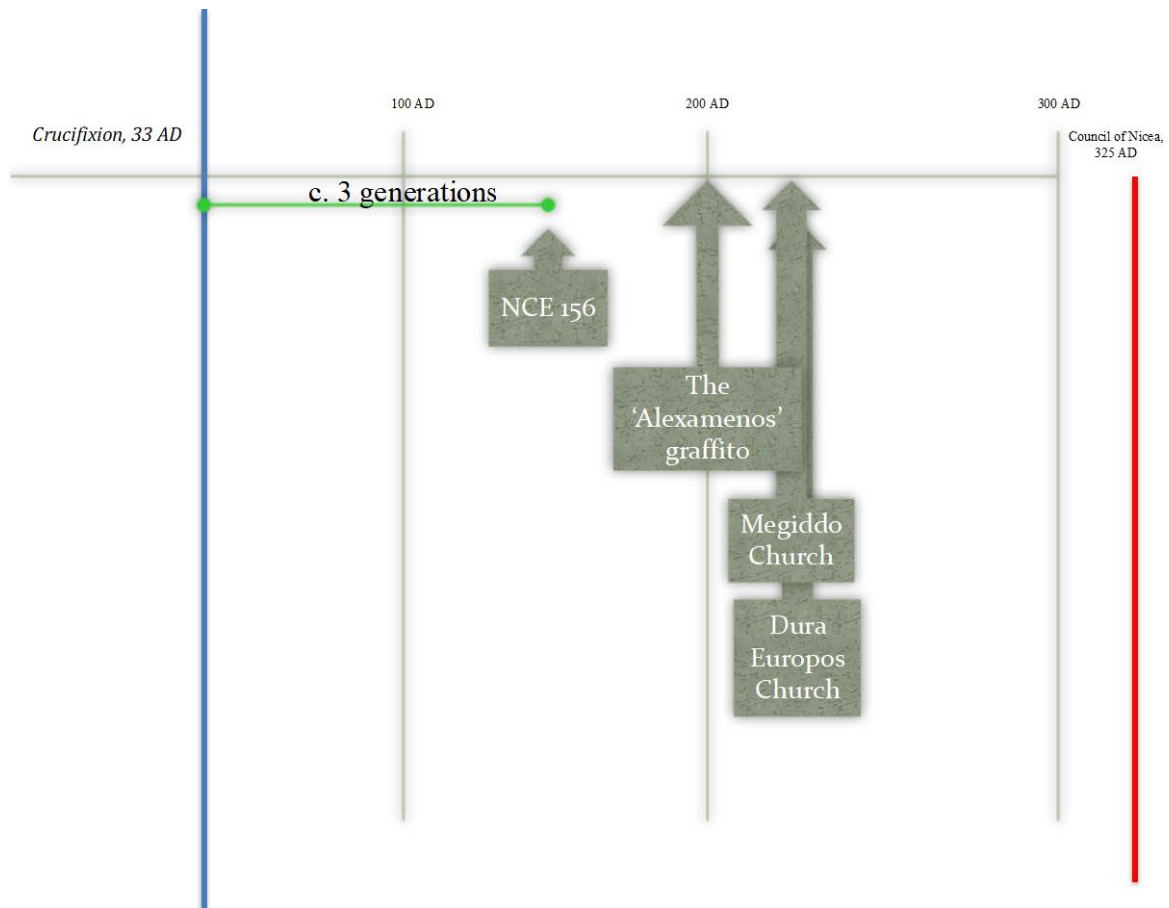
Christian 'prayer hall' (discovered 2005) near Megiddo, c. 230 AD:



Greek inscription:

'The God-loving
Akeptous has
offered the table
to God Jesus
Christ as a
memorial'

Belief in the divinity of Jesus:



The archaeological evidence we have examined *indicates* that:

- Jesus, son of Joseph and brother of James, *existed* in 1st century Israel
- Jesus was *crucified*
- Jesus was *buried* in a *now empty* Jerusalem tomb
- Grave robbery was an offence that may have been associated with Nazareth (where the NT says Jesus lived) by the early 2nd century
- Despite his crucifixion, Jesus was *considered divine* by some within a few generations (c. 120 yrs) of his death
- The 1st century biographies of Jesus in the NT have been *repeatedly verified* by archaeological discoveries, which should encourage us to trust them on matters we can't independently verify

Recommended Resources on Biblical Archaeology

Video

YouTube Playlist, 'Christianity & Archaeology' www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQhh3qcwVEWjh9aRRWF1kYZIVCPc5iCcw

YouTube Playlist, 'The Existence of Jesus' www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQhh3qcwVEWiCALtjBWyx078Dxxib4g8E

YouTube Playlist, 'The Historical Jesus' www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQhh3qcwVEWg0CpSQPAr5cy_InXpeQMNk

YouTube Playlist, 'The Resurrection of Jesus' www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQhh3qcwVEWjF0VbpO9sPUUivlyF5n0wB

YouTube Playlist, 'The Shroud of Turin' www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQhh3qcwVEWhYS-mMYnE2afo0pgODHWNS

Audio

Ben Witherington III, 'James Ossuary' <http://restitutio.org/2015/10/26/james-ossuary/>

Peter S Williams, 'Archaeological Evidence for New Testament Places, People and Beliefs' (March, 2018) <http://podcast.peterswilliams.com/e/archaeological-evidence-for-new-testament-places-people-and-beliefs/>

- 'Archaeology, Jesus and the New Testament' <http://podcast.peterswilliams.com/e/archaeology-jesus-and-the-new-testament-1415879310/>

- 'Archaeological Evidence for the Reliability of the New Testament' <http://podcast.peterswilliams.com/e/archaeological-evidence-for-the-reliability-of-the-new-testament-1413287411/>

Websites

Associates For Biblical Research www.biblearchaeology.org/

Biblical Archaeological Review www.bib-arch.org/

The Shroud of Turin Education Project www.shroud2000.com/

Shroud Story www.shroudstory.com/

Shroud of Turin Website www.shroud.com/menu.htm

On-Line Papers

Biblical Archaeology Review Staff, 'Tomb of Apostle Phillip Found' www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-sites-places/biblical-archaeology-sites/tomb-of-apostle-philip-found/

Oxford University, 'Dating evidence: Relics could be of John the Baptist' www.ox.ac.uk/media/news_stories/2012/120615.html

Mark Antonacci, 'An Unrealistic Approach and Analysis of the Blood Flows on the Shroud of Turin' https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/97f3f2_ec89de32d712410e9b6441838eaa66da.pdf

Gary Baxster, 'The James Ossuary' www.adeffenceofthebible.com/2016/08/01/the-james-ossuary/

Clyde E. Billington, 'The Nazareth Inscription' www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2009/07/22/The-Nazareth-Inscription-Proof-of-the-Resurrection-of-Christ.aspx

Tom Chivers, 'The Shroud of Turin: Forgery or Divine? A Scientist Writes' <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/tomchiversscience/100126480/the-shroud-of-turin-forgery-or-divine-a-scientist-writes/>

Francesco D'Andria, 'How I Discovered the Tomb of the Apostle Phillip' www.zenit.org/article-34705?l=english

Craig A. Evans, 'Archaeology and the Historical Jesus: Recent Developments' <http://216.12.134.73/publications/article.aspx?articleId=335>

H. Wayne House, 'Alexamenos Execution Graffito' www.hwhouse.com/images/8.ALEXAMENOS_CRUCIFIXION_GRAFFITI.pdf

Paul L. Maier, 'The James Ossuary' www.mt.io.com/articles/bissar95.htm

John McRay, 'Archaeology and the Book of Acts' http://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/Ted_Hildebrandt/NTeSources/NTArticles/CTR-NT/McRay-ArchaeologyActs-CTR.pdf

Ehud Netzer, 'In Search of Herod's Tomb' <http://members.bib-arch.org/publication.asp?PubID=BSBA&Volume=37&Issue=1&ArticleID=7>

Raymond N. Rogers & Anna Arnoldi, 'The Shroud of Turin: An Amino-Carbonyl Reaction (Maillard Reaction) May Explain The Image Formation', *Melanoidins* vol. 4, Ames J.M. (ed.), Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 2003, p.106-113 <http://shroud.com/pdfs/rogers7.pdf>

Amon Rosenfeld *et al.*, 'The Authenticity of the James Ossuary', *Open Journal of Geology* www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwivmbG48fbKAhUJwBQKHdi7A1UQFggjMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fdx.doi.org%2F10.4236%2Fojg.2014.43007&usq=AFQjCNH2gKfNlh3G8fS8iFO7GZJhpF5VAQ&bvm=bv.114195076.d.d24

Hershel Shanks, "'Brother of Jesus" Inscription is Authentic!' www.bib-arch.org/bar/article.asp?PubID=BSBA&Volume=38&Issue=4&ArticleID=2

- 'Supporters of James Ossuary Inscription's Authenticity Vindicated' www.bib-arch.org/news/forgery-trial-news.asp

Peter S. Williams, 'Digging for Evidence: Archaeology and the Historical Reliability of the New Testament' *Christian Evidence Society* (2016) http://christianevidence.org/docs/booklets/digging_for_evidence.pdf

- '9 archaeology finds that confirm the New Testament' *Premier Christianity Today* (2017) www.premierchristianity.com/Past-Issues/2017/March-2017/9-archaeology-finds-that-confirm-the-New-Testament

- 'The Shroud of Turin: A Cumulative Case for Authenticity' www.case.edu.au/images/uploads/03_pdfs/williams-shroud-turin.pdf

Ben Witherington III, 'Top Ten New Testament Archaeological Finds of the Past 150 Years' www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/septemberweb-only/9-22-21.0.html

H. Wayne House, 'Ossuary of James, son of Joseph and Brother of Jesus' www.hwhouse.com/images/Ossuary_of_James.pdf

Books

ESV Archaeology Study Bible (Crossway, 2017)

Craig A. Evans, *Jesus and the Remains of His Day: Studies in Jesus and the Evidence of Material Culture* (Hendrickson, 2015)

Craig A. Evans, *Jesus and His World: The Archaeological Evidence* (SPCK, 2012)

David E. Graves, *Biblical Archaeology* (David E. Graves, 2014)

Randall Price & H. Wayne House, *Zondervan Handbook of Biblical Archaeology* (Zondervan, 2017)

Charles L. Quarles, *Buried Hope or Risen Savior? The Search for the Jesus Tomb* (B&H Academic, 2008)

Hershel Shanks & Ben Witherington, *The Brother of Jesus: The Dramatic Story & Meaning of the First Archaeological Link to Jesus & His Family* (Continuum, 2003)

Ian Wilson, *The Shroud* (Bantum, 2011)