

A TOUR OF BIBLE RELATED ITEMS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM



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Galleries are open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Friday until 8:30. The Great Court (shops and information in the center of the building) is open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and until 8:30 on Fridays.

Either of these tube stops is about four blocks away: Holborn or Tottenham Court Road (Exit 3). Look for signs to the Museum as you leave the Underground Station for the street outside. The British Museum is on Great Russell Street.

The British Museum is sometimes working in certain galleries. You can call at +44 (0) 20 7323 8000 for information. Most Bible related items are connected with the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities. On the Internet, the British Museum homepage is at www.britishmuseum.org. This site provides a great amount of useful information such as special exhibits, hours the museum is open, a map on getting to the museum, and explanations of some of the items on exhibit. It also provides color-coded floor plans of each of the three floors. For these look under "visit" and then under "floor plans."

The British Museum is truly one of the world's great collections of artifacts. It contains remains dating back over four thousand years. The Bible, likewise, is

one of the world's great books of history. Unlike the foundation book of any other of the world's great religions, the Bible relates the history of mankind from human beginnings through the times of the great world empires to the establishing of God's great kingdom which, the Bible says, will outlast and outshine all earthly kingdoms.

The Bible stakes its veracity on its historical accuracy. If it is inaccurate in describing ancient peoples, ancient customs, ancient cities, then it cannot be what it claims: a message to man from the mind of God. Whether it is accurate, then, is vital to Christianity.

Archaeologists have discovered not only many ancient objects but have learned how to use them to draw important conclusions. Scholars can now read ancient languages and decipher information from ancient objects through their location, shape or decoration. In short, objects from the past have revealed much about the cities and peoples of ancient times.

The question naturally arises as to what light archaeology has thrown upon the statements in the Bible. Do the objects from the ancient world match or contradict related statements in the Bible? Is one led to trust the accuracy of the scriptures or to doubt?

The British Museum is a great place to come to answer such a question because it has many artifacts that relate to the stories in the Bible almost from beginning to end. We are going to take a simultaneous trip through the Bible and the British Museum. We are going to review many places and events described in the Bible as we look at a wide variety of objects in the British Museum. We cannot, of course, take our trip through the objects in the Museum in chronological order since they are not arranged that way.

A book now available in the British Museum entitled *The Bible in the British Museum* by T. C. Mitchell has very useful information. Page numbers in this book are given when the items mentioned on this tour are in his book. For more detailed information on some items, purchase his book and read its comments as you make the rounds. In preparing this material, we have also used a book, formerly available in the British Museum, by R. D. Barnett titled Illustrations of Old Testament History. Brian Edwards and Clive Anderson have published in 2008 a guide titled *Through The British Museum with the Bible*. While it takes a different track through the museum than I am recommending, it has much helpful information. Also helpful have been some notes on the British Museum from V. M. Whitesell.

The tour outlined here will take about two to three hours depending on how many other objects you view as you go. Be sure to wear comfortable walking

shoes. There is no charge to enter the Museum but a donation of three British pounds (about \$7) is requested. There is also a Cloak Room where you can leave bags so you don't have to carry them during your tour. The cost is one British pound per bag so consolidate all you can into one bag. The Cloak Room is just to the left as you enter the main entrance. You must pick up all items left by 4:45 p.m. Any type of photography is permitted except the use of tripods. There is a snack bar and a nice restaurant. The snack bar has sandwiches and drinks and is less expensive. There are also different bookshops with gifts and some replicas of artifacts. The Great Court, an outdoor courtyard in the center of the building, contains shops and a beautiful reading room.

The floor plan of the British Museum, at the end of this guide, is marked with the route which will most efficiently enable you to cover the items in the Museum related to the scriptures. The larger numbers on the map represent the numbered items in the remainder of this guide. Of course, the Museum has objects on many other topics and many works of art. If you are interested in these, you can see those as you are seeing the nearby Bible related items. The purpose of this plan, however, is to guide you to those things most related to the scriptures.

As you go through the museum, use this guide so you can follow the track suggested, use the pictures to find the items, then read the text about that item. If a group is going, one can spot the items and another can read the text to the group about that item.

1. As soon as you enter the front doors from Great Russell Street, make a hard left and walk down the corridor to Room 6. Turn right into that room and look to your right. There you will see the famous **Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III**.



A. H. Layard discovered this record, a 6-ft. high black stone, in 1846. On the stone are five panels of carved "pictures" on each of its four sides. Inscriptions tell what is in each panel. Of great interest is the second panel from the top on all four sides. These picture Jehu, son of Omri bringing tribute to Shalmaneser III. In one of the panels, Jehu is shown bowing on his face while the other panels show those with him bearing the gifts. The stone indicates this would have happened in 841 B.C. The inscription directly above the picture says, "Tribute of Jehu the Israelite--silver, gold, a golden bowl, a golden vase, golden tumblers, golden buckets, tin, a staff for a king [and] hunting spears I received."

Jehu is pictured with a short, rounded beard, a sleeveless jacket, a long fringed shirt, a girdle, and a soft cap.

This is the earliest "picture" of an Israelite. The Bible records that Jehu was a successor to, but not actually the son of Omri, and that he began his reign in 842 B.C., a time that would correspond to the record on the Black Obelisk. That Jehu paid tribute to Shalmaneser is not mentioned in the Bible but Israelite kings often did pay tribute to neighboring kings who were more powerful (See Mitchell, pp. 46-49). The stone also mentions the defeat of Ben-Hadad and Hazael of Damascus. See 2 Kings 8:7-15.



2. Behind the Black Obelisk are three tall monuments. The one on the left is **the stela of Shalmaneser III** (also called the Kurkh Stela).



This is from the same Assyrian king as the one on the Black Obelisk. He ruled Assyria from 859 to 824 B.C. One of the records he left is a monolith with his likeness saluting his gods. In the cuneiform text, he records the results of his first six campaigns. On the back of the stela is a report of a campaign from 853 B.C. in which he tells how he advanced against a king who had organized a coalition of 12 other kings with over 50,000 men, 3,900 chariots, 14,000 cavalry, and 1,000 camels. Of these, he says that 2,000 chariots and 10,000 foot soldiers came from Ahab, the Israelite. The Bible does not mention this battle but the time corresponds to the Bible's account of Ahab as king. This stela is probably the earliest artifact to contain the name of an Israelite king. (See Mitchell, pp. 44-45.)

3. To the left of the Shalmaneser III stela, is a **wall relief of Jewish prisoners** being taken into exile at the time of Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 BC) from the city of Ashtaroth. See Deut. 1:4 and 1 Chron. 6:71. Their dress identifies them as Israelites and they were part of the ten tribes of Israel being taken into exile about 721 BC. Tiglath-Pileser III, known in the Bible as Pul, is seen in his chariot. 2 Kings 15:19-30 tells about his deporting Israelites to Assyria.



4. As you move on into Room 4, into the Egyptian area, you will find a black **statue of Amenhotep III** who ruled Egypt from 1399 to 1352 BC. He was the grandfather of Tutankhamun to whom many of the Armana Letters, which we will see later, were addressed.



5. Now note on the wall to the right, the **list of cartouches** giving a list of kings. While some are omitted, this is a very useful place to see how the name of a king was represented in the oval with hieroglyphic pictures inside.

6. Move down the center of the room and on the left, see the three similar **statues of Sesostris III** (1874-1855 BC) who could have been the pharaoh who promoted Joseph to prime minister.



7. Move again down center of the room and again on the left see the **statue of Tutmoses III** who died in 1446 BC and could, therefore, have been the pharaoh of the exodus. We may never know for sure an exact date for the exodus but seeing statues from pharaohs of that general time show us the advanced nature of the Egyptian civilization.



8. Now move forward and to the left toward the middle of Room 4 to see, in a cabinet, the famous **Rosetta Stone** which led to deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics. The top portion in hieroglyphics has a message honoring Ptolemy V, who lived about 200 B.C. The middle portion is in Egyptian script called Demotic. The bottom portion is in Greek. It was found at the Egyptian village of Rosetta in 1798 by an officer in Napoleon's army and was later translated by starting with the Greek, which was known, and from that translation he deciphered the other two languages, since the message was the same in all three. The first clue came from the hieroglyphics within oblong circles. They found these to be names of kings, called a cartouche, and with this information he deciphered the rest. This stone, then, provided the very important key to being able to read Egyptian inscriptions in hieroglyphics, and that helped immensely in understanding Egyptian life during the time of the Bible (See Mitchell, p. 87-88.)



9. Look down further into Room 4 (without walking there if you need to save time) and you will see the dominant, very large **statue of Pharaoh Ramses II**, who reigned in Egypt from 1279 to 1212. Some date the exodus of the Israelites during his reign. In this statue he is pictured wearing a headdress showing that he is king of both Upper and Lower Egypt. There are many enormous statues of Ramses II still in Egypt. (See Mitchell, p. 39.)



Turn to your left and enter Room 8.



10. To the right on the wall of Room 8 are two white wall panels about **Tiglath Pileser III**, 745-726 B.C. In the panel on the right, he is standing with his foot on the neck of a captive. The Bible sometimes calls him Pul. 2 Kings 15:19 says that a Menahem, king of Israel, paid him tribute and 1 Chron. 5:26 says he led the tribes on the east of the Jordan in captivity. He was an Assyrian king who reigned after Shalmaneser III. The order of the Assyrian

kings was Shalmaneser III, Tiglath Pileser III, Sargon, and Sennacherib. You can find more from the Assyrians in Rooms 7 and 9, but these items have no direct Bible connection.

11. Walk now into Room 23. This will be our base for several excursions in three directions. First, go to the right to Room 10. On the right, by the stairs is a **large wall relief of Sargon**. The Bible says Shalmaneser (V) was unhappy with Hoshea, King of Israel, because he turned to Egypt for help and quit paying tribute. So the king of Assyria besieged Samaria, his capital, for three years. After this, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria and placed the captives in far away cities (2 Kings 17:3).



Assyrian inscriptions record that Shalmaneser V (727-722) did come against Samaria but that Shalmaneser V died about that time. Sargon, his successor, claims to have captured the city and, in an inscription about it, Sargon says he deported 27,290 prisoners to Assyria, restored the city, brought in other people to live there, and set an official over it (Numrud Prism IV.25-41.) So, though not

mentioned by name in the Bible's account of the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Sargon was the king who finished its destruction.

Sargon is only mentioned by name in the Bible in Isaiah 20:1 where he is said to have captured Ashdod of the Philistines. For years, however, there was no record outside of the Bible of any king by that name. In 1843, however, Frenchman Emile Botta discovered Sargon's ancient palace in Khorsabad, near Nineveh, and in it were immense records. Among the finds was this relief of Sargon greeting a one of his high officials possibly Sennacarib his prince. . We have here, then, a picture of King Sargon who, indeed, did exist, and whose own records correspond to the Bible record. (See Mitchell, p. 53). Most of the remains from Sargon are in the Louvre.

12. Note on the opposite wall, a **large panel inscription about Hezekiah**. This was taken from the area beneath a large winged bull in Sennacherib's palace in Nineveh. It tells that King Hezekiah of Judah paid tribute to Sennacherib. The



Bible tells about the payment of this this tribute in II Kings 18:13-15. Hezekiah paid this early in his reign, but later in his reign he rebelled against Assyria. The amount of the tribute mentioned in the Bible is exactly the same amount as mentioned in the inscription although the two different countries had different ways of recording amounts.

13. Also in Room 10 are **two huge winged bulls**, with attendant genies, from Khorsabad, the Palace of Sargon discovered in 1843.

These finds about Sargon are very significant because they attest to the accuracy of the Bible story since the Bible presents information on Sargon when he, otherwise, was not known. Since his palace would have been covered over by about 600 B.C., no one living between then and 1843, when the palace was found, could have known of Sargon from historical sources. Either the writer, Isaiah, lived when and where he said he did, in the 8th century B.C., or God gave some person knowledge about Sargon. The point here is that this find from Sargon confirms not only that the Bible was correct, but that Isaiah, who wrote about Sargon, lived when and where he says he did, thus lending integrity to his writing.



If some of the rooms in this area are closed, inquire at the Information Desk in the Great Court to see if they will be open later in the day.

14. Now walk between the winged bulls and bear to your left to enter the south end of room 10b. Here we find **wall reliefs about Lachish from Sennacherib**, another Assyrian king mentioned by the Bible. A. H. Layard discovered these panels in 1847 from a site in Sennacherib's palace in Nineveh. This is the most significant Bible-related display in the museum. Don't miss it. In 2 Kings 18 and 19, a long account is given of what happened in 701 B.C. when Hezekiah was king of Judah. (See also 2 Chronicles 32 and Isaiah 36-37.) The Bible says Sennacherib, King of Assyria, came against Judah, conquering many cities because Hezekiah had made an alliance with Egypt and Ashdod. The Bible says that when Sennacherib came to the Judean city of Lachish, Sennacherib sent envoys to Hezekiah in Jerusalem and that Hezekiah even gave him gold and silver from the temple of Solomon. Sennacherib, however, wanted total surrender yet upon advice from God through Isaiah, Hezekiah refused. Hezekiah built more walls around the city of Jerusalem (2 Chron. 32:5) and built a tunnel to carry the water supply from the Gihon Spring to a pool within the city so it could not be cut off by the enemy. (1 Kings 20:20; 2 Chron. 32:4, 30. (This quarter-mile long tunnel has been found beneath Jerusalem.) The Bible tells of how Sennacherib then brought his main force of more than 185,000 men to camp near Jerusalem. In one night, however, God slew them and Sennacherib left without taking the city.

This account occupies five chapters in the Bible, the most detailed account of any battle the Bible records (2 Kings 18-19, Isaiah 36-37, 2 Chronicles 32). And here in the British Museum are two significant independent records which not only are in total agreement with the biblical record of this event, but which give additional details to help us in understanding the scriptural account. These two records are the Sennacherib cylinder (in Room 55) and these wall reliefs from the palace of Sennacherib.

As you enter Room 10b begin by reading the information on the wall to your right as you enter. Then look in the wall cabinet at some objects from Lachish. In the case are sling stones found at Lachish. A slingshot has been provided to show how the stone could be thrown. (Think of David using a stone like this on Goliath.) When you come to the wall reliefs, you will see slingers as part of the Assyrian army. Also note in the case, arrowheads found at Lachish. Again, the wall reliefs show archers at Lachish.

In this same case is a copy of the six-sided Sennacherib cylinder on which he left a record, in cuneiform, of his campaign against Judah. On this prism he says he conquered 46 cities in Judah and shut up Hezekiah in Jerusalem "like a bird in a cage." He makes no claim, however, to have taken Jerusalem. Again, very strong independent confirmation of the Bible story. The actual Sennacherib cylinder is in Room 55, which we will see later.

Now look on the wall that was to your left as you entered this end of the room. Skip the first panel. Moving from left to right along this wall, across the end wall and part of the way along the right wall, you can see the story of the battle. We begin at the rear of Sennacherib's army with the rows of slingers.

In front of them are rows of archers. Then come rows of soldiers with spears and shields made of wicker. Then you will notice several ramps at about a 45-degree angle. The Assyrian troops have raised these against the walls of Lachish to attack the wall of the city. Above the ramps lie the walls of the city with guard towers spaced along the wall. The defenders on the wall are throwing flaming torches and rocks (the square objects in the sky) down on the Assyrians. As the Assyrian soldiers come up the ramps they are aided by siege engines (wheeled vehicles with long arms to pick holes in the walls). Soldiers are within these and one of them is pouring water on the front of the vehicle to keep the torches from burning it. Note that the city is being attacked from two directions. The ramps are probably exaggerated in angle as part of the compression of this scene into the wall relief.



Now note the prisoners already coming out of one of the gates of the city. These are representations of Israelites of 701 B.C. Note the dress and hair styles. To the right of these first prisoners, other prisoners are shown already dead, hanging on posts. Further to the right are soldiers with camels and carts carrying away the booty. Some prisoners are riding on ox carts, others are walking. Note one cart has two children in it with the father, mother, and two other children walking just ahead of it. Another cart has a mother with small children. Pictures of Israelites from seven hundred years before Christ! Above all of this, are representations of vines with grapes and what appear to be date palms, significant features of the land of Israel.

Near the corner of the room, note the prisoners stretched horizontal, apparently being flayed. With the skin gone, the muscles of the legs are evident. Around the corner, still more prisoners. A soldier is about to cut one's head off. Others are bowing.

Then see King Sennacherib himself on the throne (being fanned) receiving his



booty and prisoners. His advisors stand before him. As the Bible says, he was on the scene at Lachish. Behind him appears to be his tent. The inscription nearby says, "Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, on a seat he sat and the booty of Lachish passed before him."

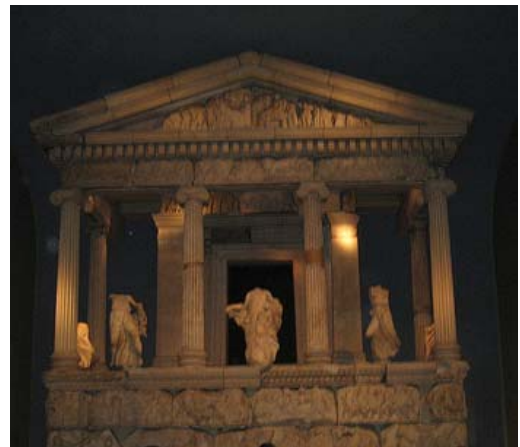
Next are Assyrian horsemen and around the corner a representation of their camp. Note the elongated circle with fortifications around it. A road passes through the center. Inside are tents where soldiers are staying. Also in the camp, priests are making offers to their gods. This same camp was soon moved to Jerusalem where these same soldiers thought they could conquer Jerusalem, but God intervened and slew 185,000 (Isaiah 37:36-37).

This story, to which the Bible devotes five chapters, is told from his view by the very king the Bible says came, and every detail precisely matches the Bible account. From this "newspaper" record of the Battle of Lachish we get strong confirmation of the accuracy of the Bible story. It is of interest that the battle to which the Bible gives more space than any other ancient battle, is also the ancient battle about which we have this lengthy pictorial record. (See Mitchell, pp. 60-64.) It is also interesting to note the prominence this pictorial account had in the palace. I was place where all could see the mighty conquest of the Isrealite city. If Sennacherib had conquered Jerusalem, this relief would have been of that victory. More indication that Sennacherib did not conquer Jerusalem as the Bible records.

15. When you have finished in this area, walk through the door that was on your right as you entered the room--another part of Room 10. Here are more Assyrian objects but none with particular Bible significance. Then back into the northern end of Room 10 and walk between the winged bulls and back to Room 23.

Our second excursion from this room takes us into the rooms devoted to the Parthenon. The Parthenon is a very large temple to Athena on the Acropolis in Athens.

16. Go now into Room 17, the entrance area for the Parthenon sculptures. In this room is a **reconstruction of the Nereid Monument**. While this is a tomb, note how it shows the standard parts of the Greek temple: the columns, which are ionic; the pediment, the triangular section at the very top which has sculpted figures in it; and, beneath the pediment, against the outer walls of the



building, is the frieze. Hold the view of the pediment and the frieze in mind as we go through the glass doors into Room 18, the room of the Parthenon.

As you go through the doors, you will notice long, narrow rooms on each side. If you have time, these rooms are very good to visit prior to entering the larger room where the primary materials from the Parthenon are found. At the end of the room to the left is a very interesting video showing a computerized reproduction of the Parthenon as it was originally. Seeing this video will help you place the sculptures you will see in their proper place. Other interesting explanations are also in the opposite anteroom.

As you look at the information about the Parthenon, remember its connection with the Bible. Acts 17:16-34, records Paul's visit to Athens. He went first to the agora or marketplace. From there, the Athenians took him up to Mars Hill or the Areopagus where he preached a sermon to them. This hill was directly across from the Acropolis and from it one could see both the agora below and the Acropolis above. So, the agora, Mars Hill and the Acropolis form a triangle. Paul makes reference to the many gods of the Athenians which were represented both in the agora and on the Acropolis. In his sermon, Paul contrasts with their view the belief in one, living God. His words about God's not being "served by men's hands as though he needed anything" are likely a reference to the frieze of the Parthenon which depicted a procession in which the Greeks brought gifts to Athena, the goddess of the Parthenon.

17. Room 18 holds many pieces from **the Parthenon of Athens**, finished in 438 BC. It was 228 feet long, 100 feet wide, and 60 feet high. While the building still stands in Athens in a somewhat ruined state, most of the sculptures from it were brought to England by Lord Elgin from 1803 to 1810 and are displayed here. At the ends of the room are sculptures from the east and west pediments. The representations of the birth of Athena (east) and the contest of Athena with Poseidon for the land of Attica (west) fall into the shape of a triangle. Also at each end are somewhat square pieces which come from sections around the outside wall of the Parthenon called metopes. These show centaurs fighting.



Of special interest to the Bible student, however, is the Parthenon's frieze. These remains show the procession to bring gifts to Athena, which took place every four years. About the middle of the room, on the side opposite from where you entered is Athena sitting with

Hephaestus. On the left, as you look at her, are other seated gods. From right to left, they are Zeus, Hera, Iris (standing), Ares, Demeter, Dionysos, and Hermes. After noting these gods, especially Athena, note that starting at the door where you entered, the procession moves both directions toward Athena. On the side where you entered are the horsemen in the procession. On the opposite side, near the right end are maidens bearing gifts on trays to Athena. Other maidens bring a tall incense burner and jugs with oblations to pour out. On the other end are heifers being brought for sacrifice. A great procession to bring to Athena what she needed!

Paul, standing within sight of this procession in sculpture, says the God he declares to the Athenians, does not need to be served by men's hands as though he needed anything. He seems to have made direct reference to this frieze for it surely showed "men's hands" bringing to a goddess the things they thought she needed.

18. Go back to Room 17, and walk behind the Nereid Monument into Room 19. There you will see, on your left, **columns in the form of maidens**. These caryatids are from the temple on the Acropolis called the Erechtheum which represents Athena defeating Poseidon. One of the special features of this small temple was a "porch of the maidens" in which four columns supported a decorative extension. The one in the British Museum is an original while those now on the Acropolis are reproductions. The originals were removed because they were deteriorating rapidly.



19. Also in Room 17, There is also a column from the Erechtheum. And then see the **Nike Frieze** which comes from a small temple to the victory goddess Nike. This temple was located just to the right of the steps leading into the Acropolis.



20. Now return to our base, Room 23. From this room now you will go in the to the left , into Room 22. Several steps into the room you will see in front of you a large, round marble sculpture. This is **the base of one of the columns in the temple of Diana or Artemis** of Paul's day. In Acts 19:23-41, we have a long account of a riot in Ephesus because the silversmiths, led by Demetrius, believed Paul was threatening their



livelihood. They made small, silver copies of the large statue of Artemis and Paul taught that such idols are nothing. This temple was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world and a very important part of the Ephesian economy. The base shows the beautiful work on the lower part of many of the columns. There were 127 columns in all but only 36 are thought to have been carved bases like this one. This base shows the beauty of the temple and why the Ephesians would be so fond of it.

To the right of this carved base on the wall is an exhibit about Alexander the Great you might want to see.

Continue through Room 22 and go to the back of Room 21.

If you can, go down the stairs to Room 77. Likely this area will be closed for remodeling. If you can see it, you will find several items of interest.

21. In the rear of this room are the most extensive **remains from the temple in Ephesus**. Walk down the left side of the room and you will see remains from the temple of Paul's day, built in the fourth century before Christ and destroyed in



263 A.D. by the Goths. Next are remains from the earlier one, built in the sixth century B.C. and destroyed in 356 B.C. To your right are more remains, a huge column base and three column capitals in the ionic style. The size of these is overwhelming. (See

Mitchell, p. 99.)

22. Now enter the room on your left, Room 78, and go to the right rear corner. Here is a Greek inscription from a gateway at Thessalonica which lists the officials of the town in the second century A.D. The first word in the inscription is "poleitarch." These were the first officials named. When Luke described an event in Acts 17:6-8, where Paul was brought to rulers of Thessalonica, he used this very word. Again an indication of the accuracy with which Bible writers worked. (See Mitchell, p. 98.) In this same area are additional pieces of columns of the temple of Diana.)

At the back of Room 21, you will find the West Stairs to take you to the second floor. The second floor landing is Room 59. (If you do not have access to Room 21, then you can find these stairs at the back of Room 4, the Egyptian area you saw before.)

If you have time, from Room 59, go to the right to see Greek and Roman antiquities. Most of these are not Bible related, but a few of them are.

23. From Room 73, go through 72 and 781 to Room 70. Along the way, you can see some Greek and Roman items. Notice a bronze head of **Augustus** (27 BC to 14 AD) with bright eyes. Remember that Augustus was the emperor who called for the census that caused Joseph to take Mary to Bethlehem where Jesus was born. As you move further into the room, you will not busts of **Tiberius** (14-37 AD). Also you can see a bust of **Vespasian** (69-79) who sent the Roman army against Jerusalem in 68 AD and his son **Titus**, who led the army that destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD and then became emperor from 79 to 81 AD.

24. Also in Room 70, in a case on the right, look for some **Roman glass** that was in use by Jews during the time of Jesus. Also see some 1st century **pottery and Herodian period lamps**. In that same case, look for **coins from Judea**. There is one from Herod the Great and another from Herod Phillip and one with the name of Pilate.

Now, return back to the top of the stairs at Room 59. From there go into Room 58.

25. From Room 59 now go into Room 58. You will move down this corridor to Room 55 and then return back to Room 59. In Room 58, you will see on your right remains from a **tomb in Jericho**. The pottery and other items suggest that this burial site is from about 2000 to 1500 B.C. The city of Jericho is one of the earliest known sites of human habitation dating back to 7,000 B.C. It would have been a few centuries after the time of this tomb that Joshua conquered the city.

26. Now go into Room 57. On the left side of the room are glass cases. Note the series of **lamps** that show different ages by their style. In Case 8, the case about Egyptian Art, are the **Armana letters**, written from Hazor, Lachish, Gezer, and Migeddo to an Egyptian Pharaoh from about 1400 B.C. which mention a group in Canaan called the Hiparu. Some have associated the Hiparu with Hebrew and say it could refer to the people of Israel.



Further down in Case 10 are remains from the **Philistines** so prominent in the Old Testament story during the time of the Judges and Kings.

Also in Case 10 note the **ivory pieces** that came from Ahab's palace in Samaria to which the Bible refers in 1 Kings 22:39. Also in Case 10, there are jar handles from Lachish that have stamps on them that say "for the King?" which were probably from supplies sent by Hezzichia to the city of Lachish before it was attacked by Sennacherib.



Note, too, in Case 10, the **Lachish letters**. These are notes written on broken pottery from a person outside the city of Lachish who was reporting to a leader inside the city on the advance of Nebuchadnezzar's army to destroy the country in 586 BC.

Still in Case 10, note the **Shebna Seal**. This is probably a seal from the same Shebna mentioned in the next paragraph of whom Isaiah spoke. The seal was found in Lachish and dates to the destruction of 701 BC. This seal would have been stuck on string which had been tied to around "paper" that contained a message. It is from Shebna the servant of the King."

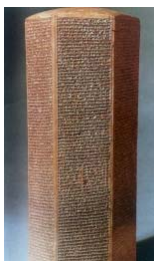
Now note another Shebna item. This is a **large lintel up high on the wall** which would have gone above a door. On it is the name of Shebna. This piece comes from a tomb in Silwan, just across the valley from Jerusalem. Isaiah 22:15-25 speaks rather harshly about a steward of King Hezekiah named Shebna who has built for himself an extravagant tomb in the rocky hillside. 2 Kings 19:2 also mentions an administrator of Hezekiah by that name. Many have associated this find with that passage in Isaiah and in 2 Kings.



27. Now go into Room 56. In this room, on both the left and the right, are remains taken from a **royal tomb in Ur** of Chaldees from about 2500 B.C. This would be the same place Abraham was from but about 500 years earlier. Notice the beautiful jewelry and other artifacts. Also in a case on the left is a beautiful decorative knife with its case. Note the restored headdress which shows the sophistication of that culture. Ur was clearly a city very advanced for that time. See the ram (goat) in the bushes, which might have been a table leg. Note the "standard of Ur" which was carried on a pole, and the game board of Ur. Further on, see the bust of a woman of that time, which might remind one of Sarah.



28. In Room 55, there are some very important remains related to the Bible. In Case 3 is the Taylor Prism or **Sennacherib Cylinder** discovered in 1830 by Goeffrey Taylor. A replica of this was in Room 10 where the Lachish wall reliefs are, but the one here is the actual clay cylinder on which Sennacherib recorded the events of his foray into Judah in 701 B.C. The record he left corresponds with the Bible account of this event given in 2 Kings 18-19, 2 Chron. 32, and Isa. 36-37. (Mitchell, 59.)



29. In Case 4 is information on Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon with whom Daniel worked. The **Babylonian Chronicle** covering from 605 to 595 BC tells how Nebuchadnezzar came against Israel in 597 when it had rebelled against him. 2 Kings 24:10-17 gives the biblical account of this same event. (Mitchell, 72.) Also in Case 4, look for a **clay tablet** (ME 114789) which mentions an officer of Nebuchadnezzar named Nabu-sharussu-ukin. In Jeremiah 39:3, this same official, called Nebe-Sarekim, takes charge in Jerusalem. Just another case of the name of a person mentioned in the Bible which appears in non-biblical sources.



30. In Case 7, look for the small **Nabonidus Cylinder**. In Daniel 5:1, Belshazzar is mentioned as king of Babylon. He sees the "handwriting on the wall." He offers



Daniel the third place in the kingdom of Daniel will interpret the writing. Daniel says the writing means he will lose his kingdom to the Medes and Persians and the Bible adds that Belshazzar was killed that night. Some had doubted there was such a king as Belshazzar because he was not included on existing lists of kings of Babylon. They thought the Bible in

error. This cylinder with cuneiform writing from the sixth century B.C. was found in Ur, a part of the Babylonian Empire. It is a record of King Nabonidus who calls Belshazzar his firstborn son. We know, then, that while Nabonidus was the prime king of the time, he had given to his son, Belshazzar, the rule of the city of Babylon, where Daniel was. Belshazzar offered "the third place in the kingdom to Daniel because he, himself, was in second place. (See Mitchell, pp. 80-81.). Also in Case 4, look for a **chronicle of Nabonidus** (WA 35380) which tells that he was absent in Arabia for most of his reign which explains why he left his son, Belshazzar, as king in Babylon. Also note in Case 7 a **stela showing Nabonidus**, King of Babylon, holding his staff and worshipping the moon god Sin, the sun god Shamash, and Ishtar, the god of war and love.

31. Also in Room 55, Case 8, you will find the **Gilgamesh Epic** (WAK 3375), a clay tablet from the seventh century B.C. found in Assyria. It is part of a story of a man named Gilgamesh who meets a man who tells him a story about one who gained immortality. In his early day, the gods became angry with men and decided to destroy them with a flood. They told the man, however, to build a boat and to bring his family, his treasure, and animals into the boat so he could be saved from the flood which would destroy everyone else. After seven days of rain, the boat comes to rest on a mountain and the man sends out a dove, a swallow, and a raven. Only the raven does not return. The man then emerges from the boat and offers a sacrifice



to the gods. The similarity of this story to the Biblical account of the flood is certainly remarkable and shows there was a legend among various civilizations of such an event. (See Mitchell, p. 70.)

32. Return through the rooms you have been viewing to back to Room 56 and go through the doors on the right into Room 63. (If you are interested in seeing all the rooms on Egypt, turn left and go back to Room 61. If, however, you start in Room 63, you will see most of the Egypt material except for several very impressive mummy cases.) Now into Rooms 63 through 65. These rooms contain material from Egypt.

Note especially the **wrapped mummies** and the different types of mummy cases. Genesis 50:2-3 mentions that Joseph commanded that Jacob be mummified and that it took 40 days, the standard length of time suggested by Egyptian sources to remove the body parts and replace them with the mummifying ingredients. Joseph was also embalmed in a similar way, according to Genesis 50:26.

Passing through these rooms note also the cases of **ancient Egyptian jewelry**. Relate these beautiful objects, whose dates are given, to the times of Bible characters in Egypt: Abraham about 1950 B.C., Joseph about 1700 B.C., and Moses about 1400 B.C.

35. In Room 64, on the right, notice the display of **Egyptian baskets**. Remembering that Moses was put in a basket on the Nile, we get some idea from these baskets made of palm leaves what such baskets might have been like. Also in this room are tools and implements of many kinds which will give you an indication of the level of the development of metal tools and weapons of the time of Joseph and Moses. Note the weapons: bows, arrows, throw sticks, and knives.



Also see the **fishhooks** made of bone. Isaiah 19:8 speaks of the Egyptians who cast the "angles" or hooks into the sea to catch the fish.

36. After you have seen all you wish in this area, move from Room 65 into stair landing 53. Notice above the staircase the relief of **Xerxes holding his scepter**. He was the husband of Esther and extended his scepter to her.



37. From there you will enter Room 52, the last area in which to find Bible related materials. As you enter this room you will see, in the center, **the Cyrus**



Cylinder, a 9-inch cylinder in which he claims to have taken Babylon without a battle and then to have allowed captives in Babylon to return to their home cities to rebuild their temples. Thus, Cyrus (559-530 BC) by his own record, corroborates the Bible story-- both as to the fall of Babylon without a battle as

Daniel 5:30 says and to his decree to allow the Jews to return as Jeremiah 29:10 had predicted and Ezra recorded. Also, according to Jeremiah 25:12 and Isaiah 44:28, after seventy years, God would raise up Cyrus, a Persian, to overthrow the Babylonians, to allow the Jews to return to their land to rebuild their temple. See also See Ezra 1:2-4 and 6:3-5 and 2 Chron. 36:23.

38. On the left, notice a beautiful example of **glazed bricks** from the palace of Darius (522-486 BC) in Susa. This same palace in the Bible is called Shushan and was also where Esther lived with her husband Xerxes (486-465 BC). This beautiful section of wall with the glazed brick relief of a palace guard indicates the beauty and splendor of the place in which Esther lived. Similar brickwork was also used in the city of Babylon at the time of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel, therefore, would have lived among similar work.



39. In that same area, notice a cabinet on the right. There you will find a tablet which tells how **Xerxes**, Esther's husband, was murdered by his own son. Also there you will find jewelry from Susa, where Esther lived, and silver plates with the name of **Artaxerxes** engraved on them. Nehemiah was cupbearer to Artaxerxes. He might have handled these plates or some like them.



Return to the stairs in Room 53 to return to the first floor. [Click here to view the map which correlates to this guide.](#)

THE BRITISH LIBRARY

In 1998, many historic manuscripts, which had been housed in the British Museum, were moved to the British Library on Euston Road--near the St. Pancras Station, a stop on the Underground. While it takes extra effort to get to these, many of them are very worth seeing. The Library is open at 9:30 a.m. on weekdays, and 11 a.m. on Sunday. It closes at 6 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays and at 8 p.m. on Tuesdays, and 5 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

The following items are now in the British Library in the section called Treasures of the British Library. Once inside the building, go to your left into a large room containing all of the items listed below. As you enter, you can pick up a small brochure which will guide you through the room. Starting generally toward the right and working down the room toward the right, you will find the items of special interest to Bible students then move back up the other side of the room.

1. In the area called "Sacred Texts" are ancient manuscripts of the Bible.
 - a. Codex Siniaticus--a fourth century manuscript containing almost all of the Bible.
 - b. Codex Alexandrinus--a fifth century manuscript containing almost all of the Bible.
 - c. Other early manuscripts of scripture
2. Also in "Sacred Texts" are copies of early translations such as Tyndale and 1st Edition of King James Bible.
3. "Illuminated Manuscripts"--early manuscripts with hand done decorations.
4. In "Printing" you will find a copy of the Guttenburg Bible--first book printed on Guttenburg's new press with movable type about 1455 and other early printed materials.
5. In "Historical Documents" will be a copy of the Magna Carta, written in 1215..
6. In "Science" are some things from Leonardo DiVinci.
7. In the final sections, "Literature" and "Music," are copies of such things as a First Folio (1623) from Shakespeare, writings of other authors and composers in their own hand including a manuscript from the Beatles.