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In recent years, many new archaeology discoveries have been made that directly relate to people and events in the Bible. Many "scholars" have declared that the stories in the Bible are little more than mythology. After all, few of the Kings of Israel or Judah are mentioned any place other than the Bible. Their reasoning is that if the kingdom of Saul, David, and Solomon were as great as the Bible says, why are they not mentioned in the writings of other great kings of the day? As Christians, we take the Bible on faith and that is as it should be. However, there have been some significant discoveries in archaeology recently that Bible believers should celebrate.

It is the purpose of this page to present some of those discoveries to church lay persons. Do not become addicted to "proofs" as the basis for your faith, but, take joy in the fact that many people and events in the Bible can be substantiated by scientific study.

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Who has never heard of King David? There are probably not too many Christians who have not heard of King David. What many Christians probably do not realize is that, until recently, other than David's occurrence in the Bible, there has never been actual proof that he ever existed. Over the years this has given fuel to certain groups wishing to view the Bible as a huge trip into the allegorical. However, all of this changed in 1993. Recently, your author learned for the first time what I am going to attempt to tell about here. You might think that given your faith, it doesn't really matter whether there is proof of David or not. But think for a moment of the implications of our Bible being definitively proven by actual physical evidence. It would be like having your cake, and someone putting icing on it!!!

In 1993 (as told in the March/April 1994 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*), Avraham Biran and his team of archaeologists unearthed a piece of stone with fragments of writing on it. In the writings was the words "House of David" It was the first mention of David in ancient inscription outside the Bible. The fragment was found at Tel Dan which lies by the head waters of the Jordan River, near Israel's northern border. The large piece of basalt was part of what must have been a large monumental inscription. It contains 13 lines, but no single line is complete. The surviving letters are clear, however. Line 9 contains the words "House of David". After the complete translation, it was determined that the fragment was part of a victory stela erected in Dan by an Aramean boasting a military victory over the House of David. Many questions are raised as well as many possibilities upon comparing the fragment with the Biblical history. For instance the victory of the Aramean would conflict with the episode in the Bible. However as BAR points out, there were probably many battles and not all were recorded in the Bible. We do know that Israel must have regained control of Dan. This find would perhaps seem simple and to the point, but that is far from the truth. The find began a debate in earnest.

Immediately following the find, many came forward to state that the stone did not actually mention the "House of David." Along with this claim came the accusation that those believing that it did mention David were "Biblical Maximizers." The arguing was fast and furious. The debate inspired letters to the editors displaying the anger, emotion, and dismay from Christians. How could this new proof be denied? While the verbal debate raged, researchers and scientists quietly built a case on the very evidence the naysayers demanded. Another scholar, Andre' Lemaire wrote an article in BAR stating that there was another mention of David in an earlier find. It was called the Mesha Stela proclaiming victory for the Moabite king Mesha over the Israelites.

Then in the Impact section of our own *The State* in December of last year, an article appeared proclaiming that scientists have found that the Bible is built on facts as well as faith. Many fragments have been found in the same area, all mentioning David. Finally, scholars have reached the consensus that David was real, something many of us have never doubted, even before the stelas were found. Although scholars are not ready to admit the Bible is historically true across the board, they are willing to concede that the "Bible has a sound historical core." One thing is certain, these finds don't only have repercussions in a religious sense, they reach into many domains--political, personal faith, historical. I can't say in learning about these finds that my faith has grown any stronger, I can say that I have a new appreciation for the Bible as an accurate historical record as well as a basis of faith.