

The bones of Caiaphas

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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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Reach back to your early Sunday School days. Who was Caiaphas (kay' uh fuhs)? He was the High Priest, and head of the Sanhedrin (The Jewish Court) that condemned Jesus.

In 1990, bulldozers were clearing in the Peace Forest south of Jerusalem, to build a children's water park. Suddenly the blade hit part of an ancient tomb. As is the law in Jerusalem, work stopped and experts were called in to examine the tomb. Inside the tomb they found several ossuaries. Ossuaries are boxes, usually carved from limestone, which are designed to hold the bones of a body after death. After a person died, the body was placed on a special shelf in the tomb and was left there for a year to decompose. Then the tomb was reopened, and the bones would be placed in a bone box or "ossuary." As other family members died, their bones would be added to the ossuary.

It is thought that certain Bible verses refer to this practice such as "gathering to their fathers" (Judges 2:10); (Kings 22:20); or "buried with his fathers" (2 Kings 8:24) or "slept with his fathers" (2 Kings 13:13).

One of the many ossuaries in this ancient tomb was very ornate, every square inch filled with beautiful and detailed etching. Some of the original paint still remained-- a bright orange color. On the back of the ossuary is written the name "Caiaphas" two different times and with two different spellings. The Jewish Historian, Josephus also spells the name two different ways in his Greek writings.

The box believed to hold the bones of Caiaphas also holds the bones of six other individuals. Studies of the bones showed that the box contained bones of two boys, 13 and 18, an adult woman, 2 infants, a child between 2 and 5, and a 60 year old man! After the bones were studied they were reburied on the Mount of Olives.

The Bible endures-- and how!