

**RUBBLE DECLARES THE GLORY OF GOD:
THE CASE FOR FAITH (3)**

BreakPoint with Charles Colson
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For years, sceptics have assailed the Bible as a book of pious pronouncements, and scientists like Carl Sagan claimed science would prove the Bible to be unreliable.

This question of the historical reliability of the Bible was a major stumbling block for journalist Lee Strobel before his conversion. So, like any good journalist, he decided to investigate. He turned to theologian Norman Geisler, an expert on the historicity of the Bible. Their conversation is recorded in Strobel's excellent new book, *The Case for Faith*.

First, Geisler said, the accuracy of the Bible is backed up by thousands of archaeological finds. For instance, the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were once considered legends -- but archaeological evidence has done much to corroborate them.

The same goes for the Genesis account of Sodom and Gomorrah. The tale of how God destroyed these two cities for their sexual sin was once dismissed as a myth. But "evidence has been uncovered proving that all five of the cities mentioned in Genesis were, in fact, situated just as the Old Testament said," Geisler said. And archaeologist Clifford Wilson says there is "permanent evidence of the great conflagration that took place in the long distant past."

Archaeology has corroborated many other Biblical details, as well. There's evidence confirming the Jewish captivity. Every Old Testament reference to an Assyrian king has been proven correct. During the 1960's, an excavation confirmed that the Israelites could indeed have entered Jerusalem by way of a tunnel during the reign of King David.

And then there's the evidence that the world had a single language at one time, just as Genesis teaches. Biblical accounts of the burial of Saul -- once thought to be in error -- have also held up under secular scrutiny.

Critics used to say there was no evidence that the Hittites existed. But now, Geisler says, "archaeologists digging in modern Turkey have discovered the records of the Hittites."

New Testament details are documented just as solidly. As Geisler put it, "archaeology has confirmed not dozens, but hundreds and hundreds of details from the biblical account of the early church. Even small details have been corroborated, like which way the wind blows, how deep the water is a

certain distance from shore, what kind of disease a particular island had, [and] the names of local officials."

The evidence is now so overwhelming that Sir William Albright, one of the world's most prominent historians, concludes that critics of New Testament accuracy hold "antiquated views" that are "pre- archaeological."

Another authority puts it even stronger. Oxford University historian A.N. Sherwin-White says the evidence confirming details in the Book of Acts alone is so staggering that "any attempt to reject its basic historicity must now appear absurd."

This leaves Christians with an exciting apologetic argument: If archaeology proves the Bible's accuracy in thousands of historical details, why would it be any less accurate in its other claims?

Lee Strobel's book, *The Case for Faith*, answers this and other questions, taking a closer look at some of the toughest questions the world throws at believers.

The Bible's historical accuracy is a reminder that while "the heavens declare the glory of God," there's also plenty of evidence among the rubble and ruins.

For further reference:

Strobel, Lee. *The Case for Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.

Lee Strobel's *The Case for Faith*, this week's BreakPoint series feature, is a Christian response to eight of the most hard-hitting objections to Christianity -- including doubt about the historical accuracy of the Bible. To order a copy of this thoughtful book, call 1-800-995-8777 or visit BreakPoint Online at <www.BreakPoint.org>.

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