



Digging up truth

Archaeologists working in the Middle East have discovered a great deal of evidence to support the biblical narrative. Their work shows that the Bible is reliable and trustworthy, giving us confidence in its message of hope for the future.

A Bible fingerprint!

In Bible times, when letters and official documents were sent to someone, they were normally sealed with a wax or clay seal bearing the writer's name and title. Some of the clay seals have survived and been found (although the documents to which they were once attached have long since crumbled away). The seals of more than a dozen Bible characters have been discovered including two kings from Jerusalem—King Hezekiah and his father King Ahaz. Another seal has been found belonging to the prophet Jeremiah's scribe Baruch, complete with his fingerprint!

Bible bones!

In 1990, workers were building a park in Jerusalem and accidentally uncovered an ancient burial cave in which were some limestone boxes containing the bones of people who died nearly 2000 years ago. On the side of the most elaborately decorated box found in this cave was the name "Caiaphas". Inside the box were the bones of a man about 60 years old. Caiaphas was the high priest during the time of Jesus' ministry and the gospels record that he took a leading part in Jesus' trial and subsequent crucifixion. Could it be his bones that have now been discovered? It seems highly likely.

The house that Jesus lived in?

The Bible tells us that Jesus lived in the fishing village of Capernaum by the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 4:13). It also tells us that he had no house of his own, so he must have

lived with a friend. The most likely person would be Peter.

Now Peter's house in Capernaum may have been discovered. About 400 years after the time of Peter, an octagonal church (or basilica) was built on the site to mark the spot. But beneath this church is the remains of an ordinary house that is thought to have belonged to Peter himself. There were two courtyards with a collection of buildings around them. Possibly, Jesus had the use of one of these rooms. The roof appears to have been made of straw or mud, which explains how some people could let a man through the roof while Jesus was teaching inside (Mark 2:1-12)

The Dead Sea Scrolls

Some people have asserted that that the biblical text must have been badly corrupted after centuries of copying. However, these assertions were shown to be wrong with the discovery of the famous Isaiah scroll found in a cave near the Dead Sea in 1947. The scroll is 2000 years old, and is almost identical to the book of Isaiah in our Bible today. This shows how accurately the text has been copied over the centuries.

Evidence for the Bible

Archaeology provides abundant evidence that the Bible is historically accurate, describing real people and real places. Sometimes it can add details to the Bible stories to help us understand them better. But best of all, archaeology gives us confidence that the Bible is trustworthy and reliable.

This leaflet has been produced by the *Dandenong Bible Education Centre*. Check out our website at www.dandenongbec.org.au. If you would like a free booklet on this subject, or information about the beliefs and activities of the Christadelphians, write to us at ask@dandenongbec.org.au or to PO Box 2076, Dandenong East VIC 3175.