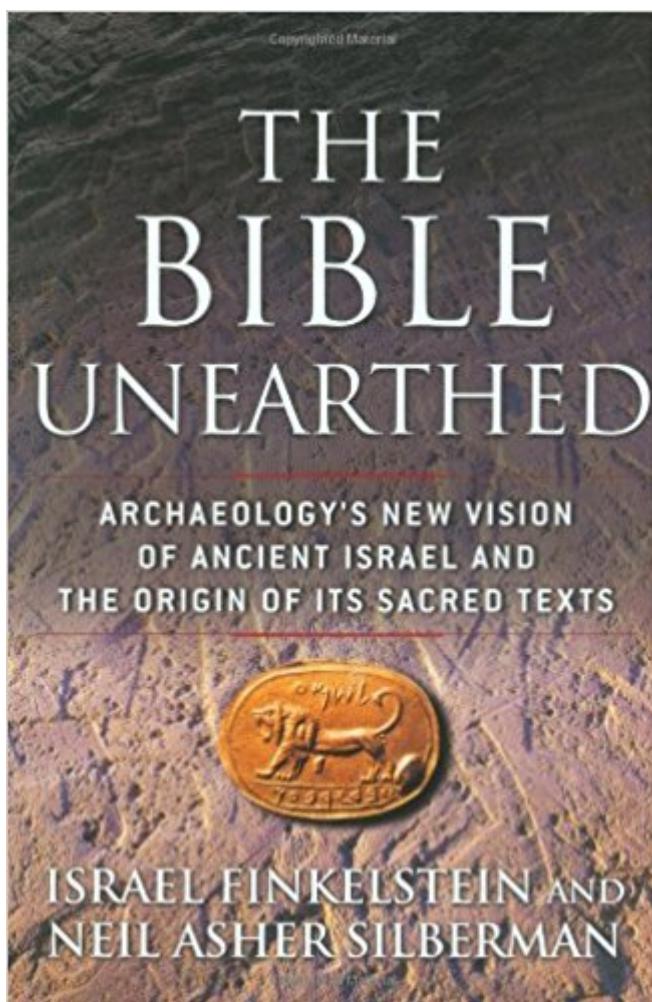


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The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision Of Ancient Israel And The Origin Of Its Sacred Texts



Synopsis

In this groundbreaking work that sets apart fact and legend, authors Finkelstein and Silberman use significant archeological discoveries to provide historical information about biblical Israel and its neighbors. In this iconoclastic and provocative work, leading scholars Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman draw on recent archaeological research to present a dramatically revised portrait of ancient Israel and its neighbors. They argue that crucial evidence (or a telling lack of evidence) at digs in Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon suggests that many of the most famous stories in the Bible—“the wanderings of the patriarchs, the Exodus from Egypt, Joshua’s conquest of Canaan, and David and Solomon’s vast empire”—reflect the world of the later authors rather than actual historical facts. Challenging the fundamentalist readings of the scriptures and marshaling the latest archaeological evidence to support its new vision of ancient Israel, *The Bible Unearthed* offers a fascinating and controversial perspective on when and why the Bible was written and why it possesses such great spiritual and emotional power today.

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Customer Reviews

The *Bible Unearthed* is a balanced, thoughtful, bold reconsideration of the historical period that produced the Hebrew Bible. The headline news in this book is easy to pick out: there is no evidence for the existence of Abraham, or any of the Patriarchs; ditto for Moses and the Exodus; and the same goes for the whole period of Judges and the united monarchy of David and Solomon. In fact, the authors argue that it is impossible to say much of anything about ancient Israel until the seventh century B.C., around the time of the reign of King Josiah. In that period, "the narrative of the Bible

was uniquely suited to further the religious reform and territorial ambitions of Judah." Yet the authors deny that their arguments should be construed as compromising the Bible's power. Only in the 18th century--"when the Hebrew Bible began to be dissected and studied in isolation from its powerful function in community life"--did readers begin to view the Bible as a source of empirically verifiable history. For most of its life, the Bible has been what Finkelstein and Silberman reveal it once more to be: an eloquent expression of "the deeply rooted sense of shared origins, experiences, and destiny that every human community needs in order to survive," written in such a way as to encompass "the men, women, and children, the rich, the poor, and the destitute of an entire community." --Michael Joseph Gross --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Finkelstein, director of Tel Aviv University's excavations at Megiddo (ancient Armageddon), and Silberman, author of a series of successful and intriguing books on the political and cultural dimensions of archeology, present for the first time to a general audience the results of recent research, which reveals more clearly that while the Bible may be the most important piece of Western literature--serving concrete political, cultural and religious purposes--many of the events recorded in the Old Testament are not historically accurate. Finkelstein and Silberman do not aim to undermine the Bible's import, but to demonstrate why it became the basic document for a distinct religious community under particular political circumstances. For example, they maintain that the Exodus was not a single dramatic event, as described in the second book of the Bible, but rather a series of occurrences over a long period of time. The Old Testament account is, according to the authors, neither historical truth nor literary fiction, but a powerful expression of memory and hope constructed to serve particular political purposes at the time it was composed. The authors claim quite convincingly that the kingdoms of Israel and Judah became radically different regions even before the time of King David; the northern lands were densely populated, with a booming agriculture-based economy, while the southern region was sparsely populated by migratory pastoral groups. Furthermore, they contend, "we still have no hard archaeological evidence--despite the unparalleled biblical description of its grandeur--that Jerusalem was anything more than a modest highland village in the time of David, Solomon, and Rehoboam." Fresh, stimulating and highly engaging, this book will hold greatest appeal for readers familiar with the Bible, in particular the Old Testament--unfortunately, a shrinking percentage of the population. 16 pages of b&w photos not seen by PW. Agent, Carol Mann. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

There are already plenty of reviews about the book's content, so I will just comment on the Kindle format -- it's really bad. As someone who has been involved in book production, I simply can't understand how publishers let this happen. If a high school student turned in this as an assignment, I would probably give him or her a D for sloppiness. For example, there are hundreds of extraneous spaces such as "(Figure 25)," "350 ,000," and frequently before periods and commas. Thus lines can begin with closing punctuation, e.g. ") Judah was..." and ", Jerusalem underwent..." and even ".] axe[s]" In other places, especially with the smaller fonts, spaces disappear so we have "for1,200cubits" and "whom theLorddrove out;" in fact, most occurrences of "the Lord x" in the block quotes are collapsed into "theLordx." The end note font is so much smaller than the body font that you'll have to change the font back and forth going from one to the other. Worst of all, though, the figures and tables have been reduced to tiny images with unreadable text. Just zoom in, right? No, there is no larger image behind the small ones, so basically you give up the tables and many of the figures (though with a good magnifying glass you can see some of them better). All this is downright distracting. I download lots of Kindle books because shipping is a problem where I live in West Africa, but this is one book I will probably return for a refund, to buy the paper book sometime in the future.

Quite readable, clear & fascinating, but a bit superficial. I say this because I have watched some lectures by Finkelstein in Hebrew and he pointed out some interesting issues that are not included in the book, although usually books contain more material than parallel lectures. For example the fact that also many bad things are written in the bible about King David although the bible is actually a sort of propaganda for the Davidic dynasty is not explained. In the lectures, Finkelstein said that this is so because the redactors had to include negative traditions about David brought by the refugees from the fallen Israelite kingdom in Yehuda which were a very large part of the population in the 7th century BC.

My honest opinion is you take what is written at face value. Make sure as you're reading that there isn't newer evidence. This was written in 2001. Much has been added to the list of biblical archeological finds. Overall, I enjoyed their theories and it's well written with the information that was readily available at that time! Just read with new information and it's a great read!

Sound archaeology, excellent writing. This is a winner for anyone wanting to explore the roots of western civilization. (It has caused head explosions among many folks whose thinking is more rigid.)

An interesting archaeological study surrounding stories from the old testament. The result of the archaeological findings raises considerable doubt as to the authenticity of many stories of the Old Testament and when they were written. For instance, according to the Bible 600,000 men, plus women and children were involved in the exodus from Egypt. Assuming one wife plus two children per family (and during that time period families were often much larger) more than 2 million people would be involved in the exodus. Also, according to the Bible, this group spent 40 years traveling in the desert. As a result, there would be many deaths, piles of trash, and other indications of their meanderings. The archaeologists were not able to find anything indicative of this. The book is written for people who understand archaeology and goes into considerable detail. At times, this was a little too much for me, and I would speed read to get to the conclusions.

Readers may feel that they are drowning in the details, but they should try to stay afloat. The authors have convincingly crafted a meticulous case for Josiah's influence on the modern Hebrew and Christian Bibles. The many maps are useful, though it would have been nice to have photographs in addition to diagrams. My knowledge has been expanded on several fronts. I appreciated the organization of the book, as well.

Excellent, well written and very informative. Somewhat hard to follow all the characters, ages plus all the data on archeology periods etc.

This book appealed to the archaeologist in me. If you ever wondered if there are any artifacts which might prove bible stories to be true, this book is for you. I loved it!

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