

An aerial, high-angle photograph of a city with numerous skyscrapers and buildings. A vertical bar with a green-to-yellow gradient is positioned on the left side of the image. A white, thick-lined frame is centered over the image, containing a dark grey rectangular area. The text 'RECAP WEEK 3' is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters within this dark grey area.

# RECAP WEEK 3







# RECAPPING WEEK 3 – IS THE BIBLE RELIABLE?

- We learnt what Inerrancy meant: that what was communicated by God and written down in its original form and manuscript had no errors.
- However we learnt that we don't have any of the originals
- But we learnt that we have an immense amount of manuscripts and fragments that are dated very early.
- We Christians have an abundance of riches.
- We also learnt that though we don't have the originals because we have so many copies, we can know what was in the originals
- We learnt there were variations but none of the variations impacted the meaning of any of the doctrines we hold as Christians.
- So as Christians we have evidence beyond reasonable doubt to trust what we have as the Word of God is reliable and trustworthy.

# CONFIDENCE BOOSTER

God in His Nature is Truth and cannot lie

God through His Holy Spirit inspired the human authors

The witness of the Holy Spirit

> 25000 Manuscript & Fragments. Very early dating.

Accuracy of transmission with no impactful scribe errors

The amazing internal consistency and harmony

Written by 40 authors over 1600 years

Biblical Prophecy

Findings in science, archaeology and history

Inspire movements

Transform societies

Changes lives

God

The Bible

Others knowledge

Change



An aerial, high-angle photograph of a city with numerous skyscrapers and buildings. The image is dark, with a prominent green-to-yellow gradient overlay on the left side. A white, stylized frame surrounds a central grey rectangular area containing text.

# WEEK 4

Is the Old Testament  
Authentic?



# STEPPING INTO THE OLD TESTAMENT

- The Bible, as we know, is in two separate parts.
- The Old Testament and the New Testament.
- Instead of thinking as Old and New, we could think of the Bible as two acts of a play, telling the story of God's love for humanity.
- Act 1 is the Old Testament
- Act 2 is the New Testament
- The Hebrews sat and watched Act 1 and left the theatre at the interval.
- The Christians came after the interval and watched Act 2
- Both groups think they know the whole play by watching only a part.
- As Christians it is important we watch the whole play, both Act 1 and 2.



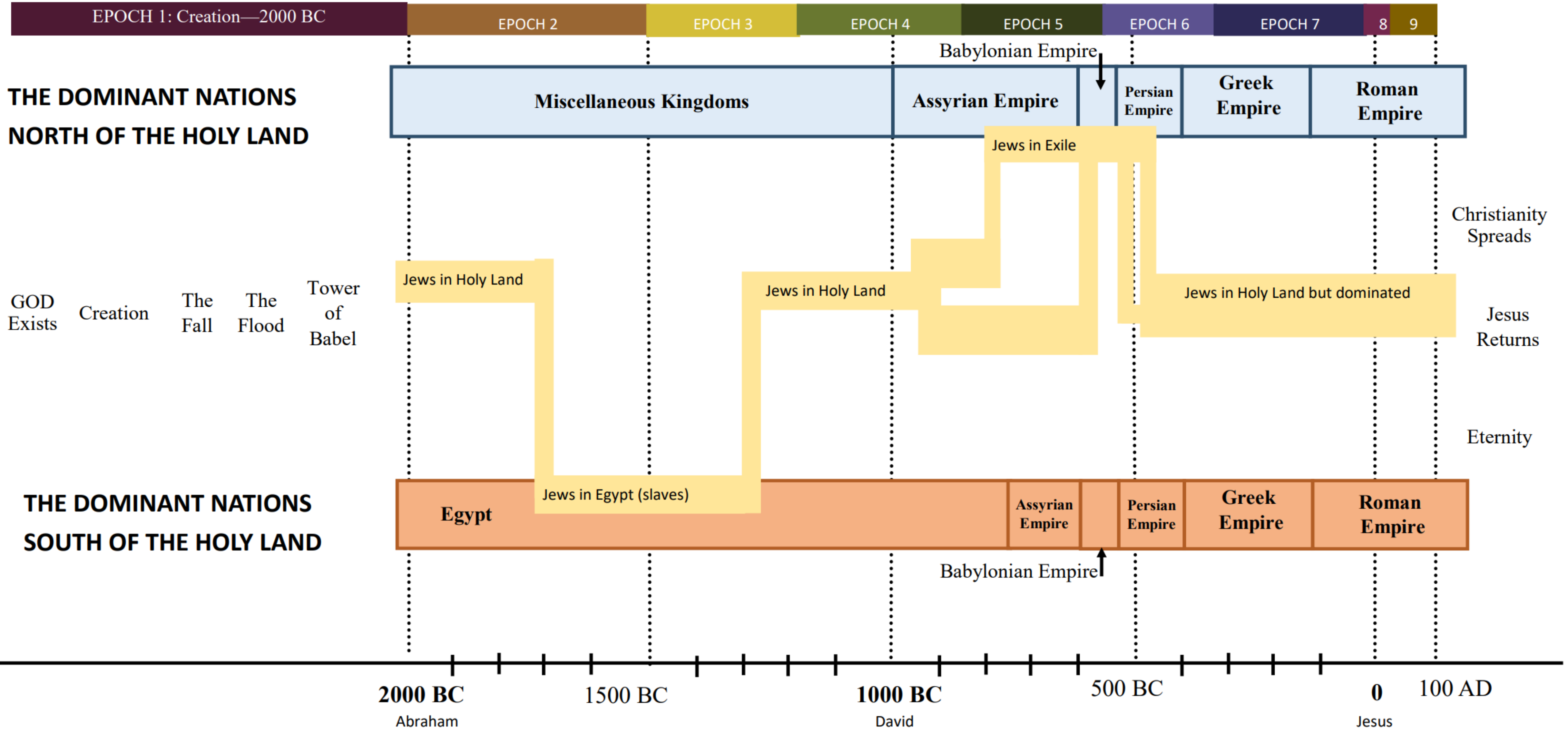


***LET'S DIVE IN***



# A Simplified Timeline of the Events of the Bible

A history of the nation of people whom God chose and prepared (the Nation of Israel) so that he could pay *all* people's debts for *all* time because of His tremendous love for each of us



## OLD TESTAMENT TIMELINE





# DO WE HAVE THE ORIGINALS?



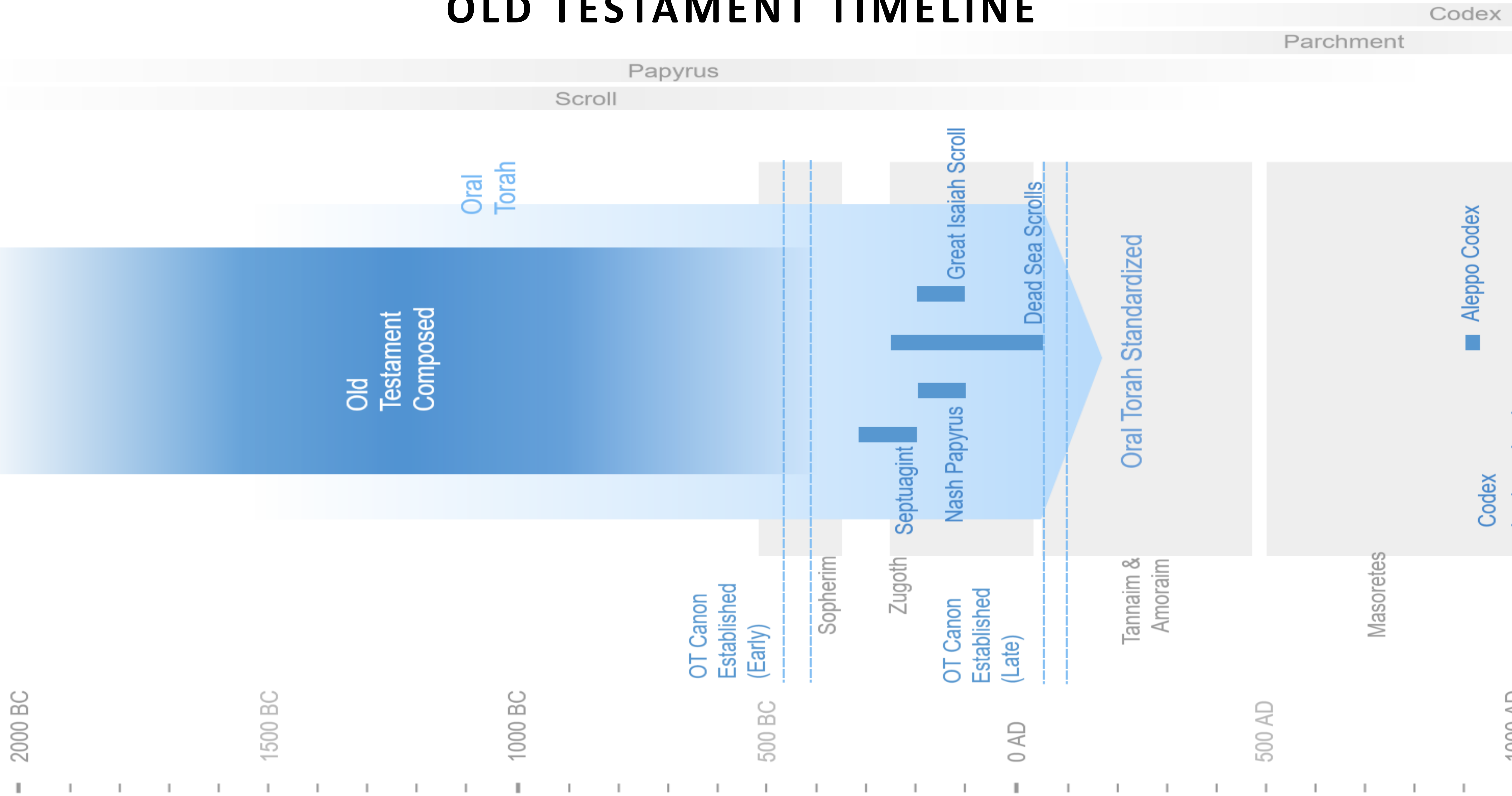


# DO WE HAVE THE ORIGINALS?

- We don't have the original manuscripts
- Why?
  - Time, weather, animals, decay
  - God in His providence and by His choice has not chosen to preserve the originals as we know it
- So what do we have?
  - For the Old Testament like the New we only have copies and copies of copies.

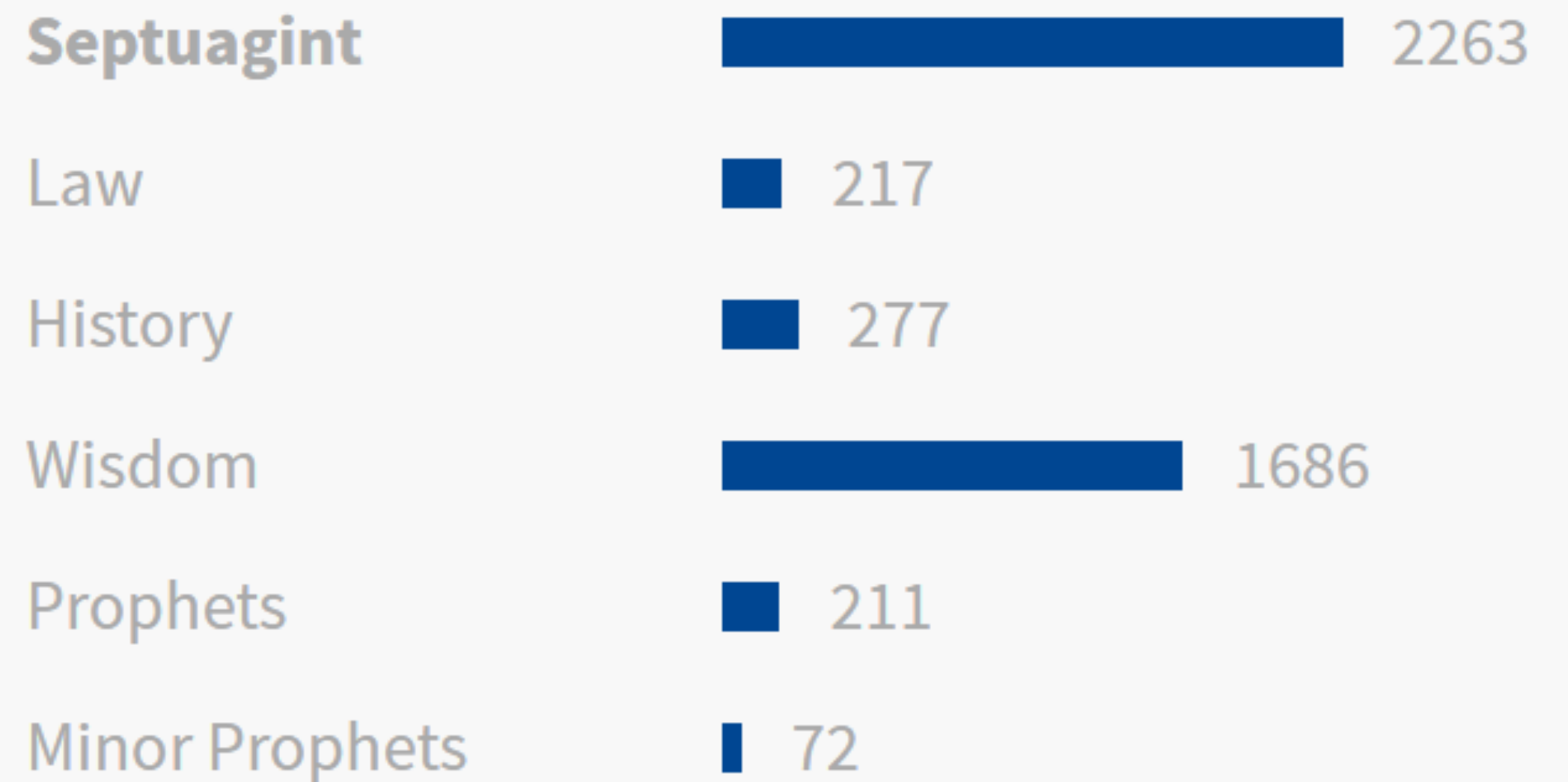
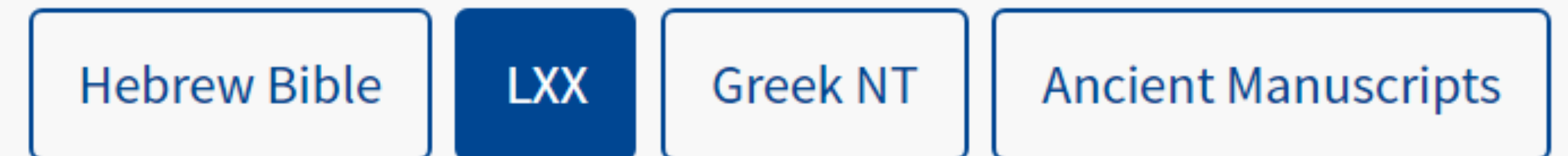
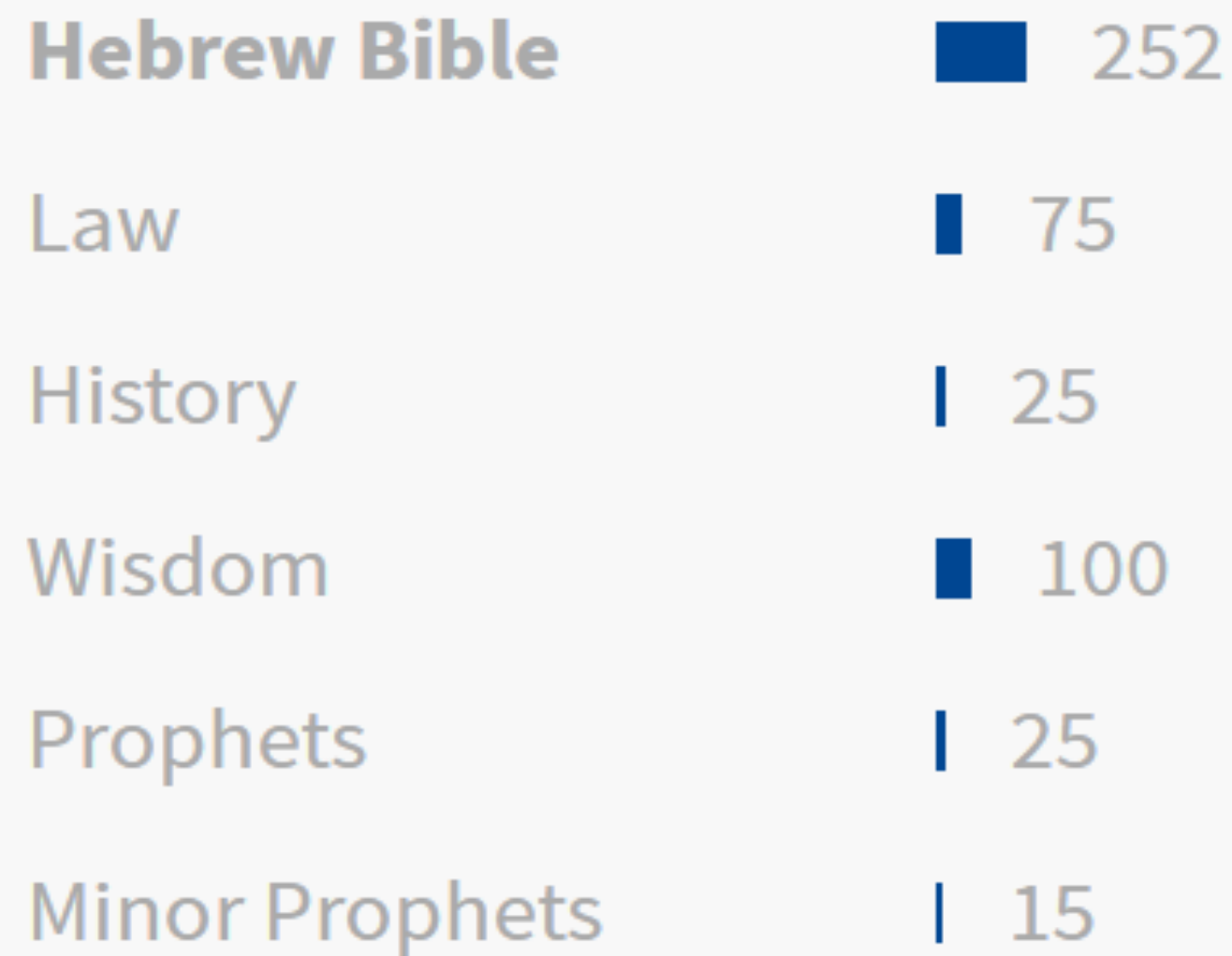


# OLD TESTAMENT TIMELINE





# NUMBER OF OLD TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS



- The most copied of an ancient book is Homer's Iliad. It has 650 copies
- Unlike the NT (within 100 years of the death of Christ – P52), the earliest fragments of the Old Testament we have are from around 250 BC (mostly from the scrolls discovered from Qumran).



# NUMBERS 6:24-26 - AMULET

- Archaeologist Gabriel Barkay uncovered (1979) two small silver scrolls—no bigger than the diameter of a coin dating back to around 700 BC.
- These small scrolls were originally worn as amulets around the neck.





# HOW DID THE SCRIBES DO THE COPYING?





# HOW DID THE SCRIBES DO THE COPYING?

- God commanded Moses and the prophets to write His words down.
- The scribes had a very high view of the Scriptures and therefore were meticulous.
- They formed a variety of rules to ensure the copying process can be as accurate as possible.
- They also introduced checks and balances. This was serious business. It is the Word of God.



500BC – 100AD  
Soferim - priests



200AD – 500AD  
Tannaim – copying Soferim tradition



200AD – 500AD  
Amoraim – Scribes preserving text meticulously



800AD  
Masoretes – Scribes whose work has enabled us have the OT today



# HOW DID THE SCRIBES DO THE COPYING?



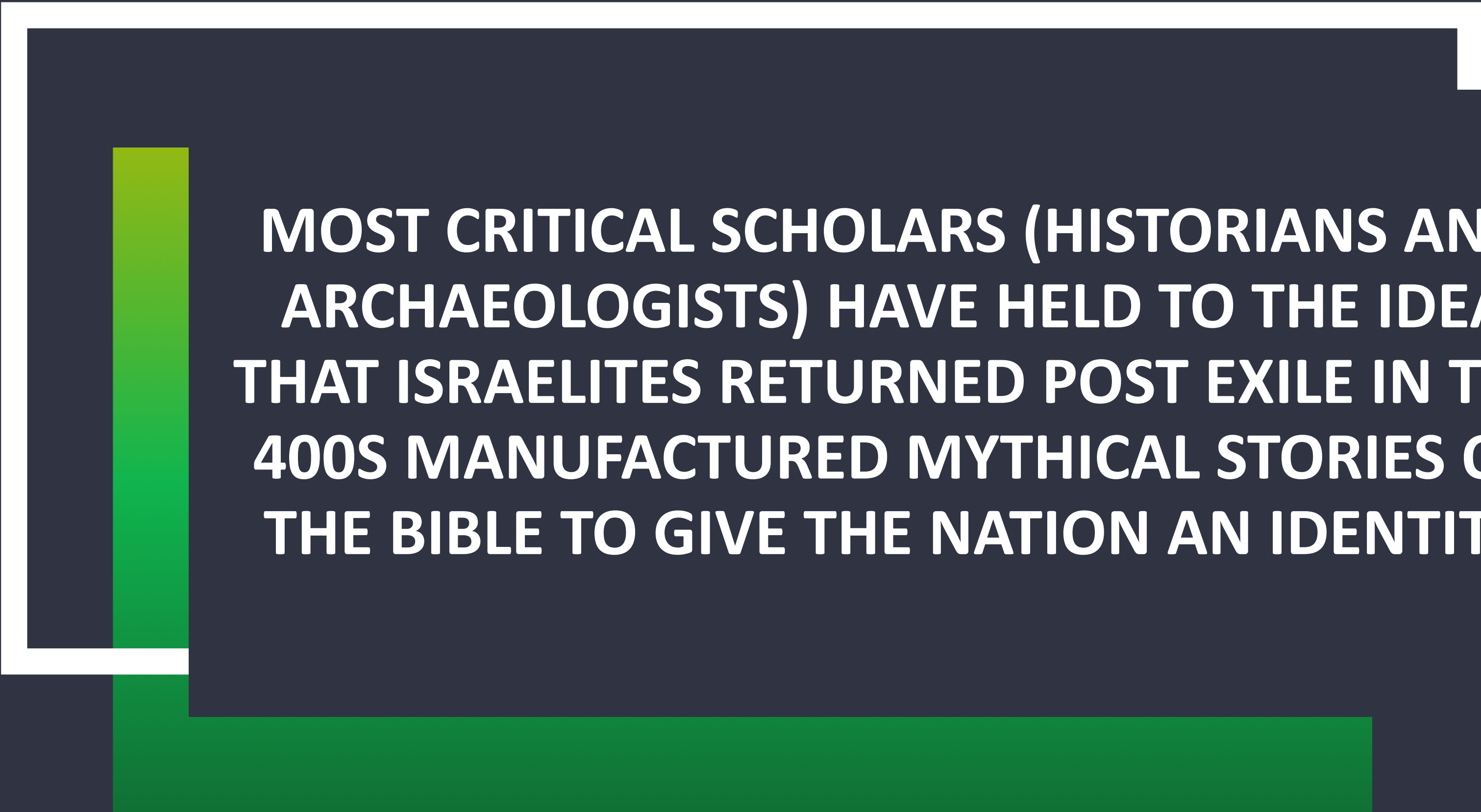
- Freshly bathed and in full Jewish Dress
- Parchment (clean animal skin) of high quality, pens (quills), ink (special recipe)
- Number of words per column: 48-60 lines & verbalize each word aloud
- In 30 days, review. If 3 pages need correction or 2 letters are touching, scroll is rejected
- Each time the name Jehovah was written, quill was broken. Stored in Synagogues with final review there



## WHAT CAN WE DEDUCE FROM THESE?

- While we don't have the originals, we have many copies across time and language.
- This allows the interpreters and translators to check and cross-check across all the manuscripts to arrive at the original text.
- The fact that the scribes were thorough and meticulous AND held scripture at the highest level, shows they were determined to preserve truth.
- Bringing these 3 strands together we already have a good level of confidence that what we have is trustworthy.





**MOST CRITICAL SCHOLARS (HISTORIANS AND  
ARCHAEOLOGISTS) HAVE HELD TO THE IDEA  
THAT ISRAELITES RETURNED POST EXILE IN THE  
400S MANUFACTURED MYTHICAL STORIES OF  
THE BIBLE TO GIVE THE NATION AN IDENTITY**



# LET'S GO DEEPER, INTO HISTORY





# GETTING THE SMALL THINGS RIGHT

## TREATIES

- Treaties found in Genesis (Abraham) are different from the covenant between Yahweh and Israel after the Exodus
- The law code is more like the Hittite Treaties.
- This is accurate as Moses and Joshua lived during the late Bronze age. The format of treaties is unique to this age.
- If someone was writing in late Iron Age (post exile), how did they get the treaty formats between Genesis and Exodus

## Price of Slaves

- Price of Joseph's sale as a slave in Genesis 37 is 20 shekels.
- This was the price during the middle Bronze Age, when Joseph lived.
- All contracts / treaty documents, show the average price was 20 shekels.
- By the time of Moses it was 30 shekels.
- In the Iron Age, the going price of a slave was 150+ shekels.
- How can the OT writer get the little details right, even between Genesis and Exodus?



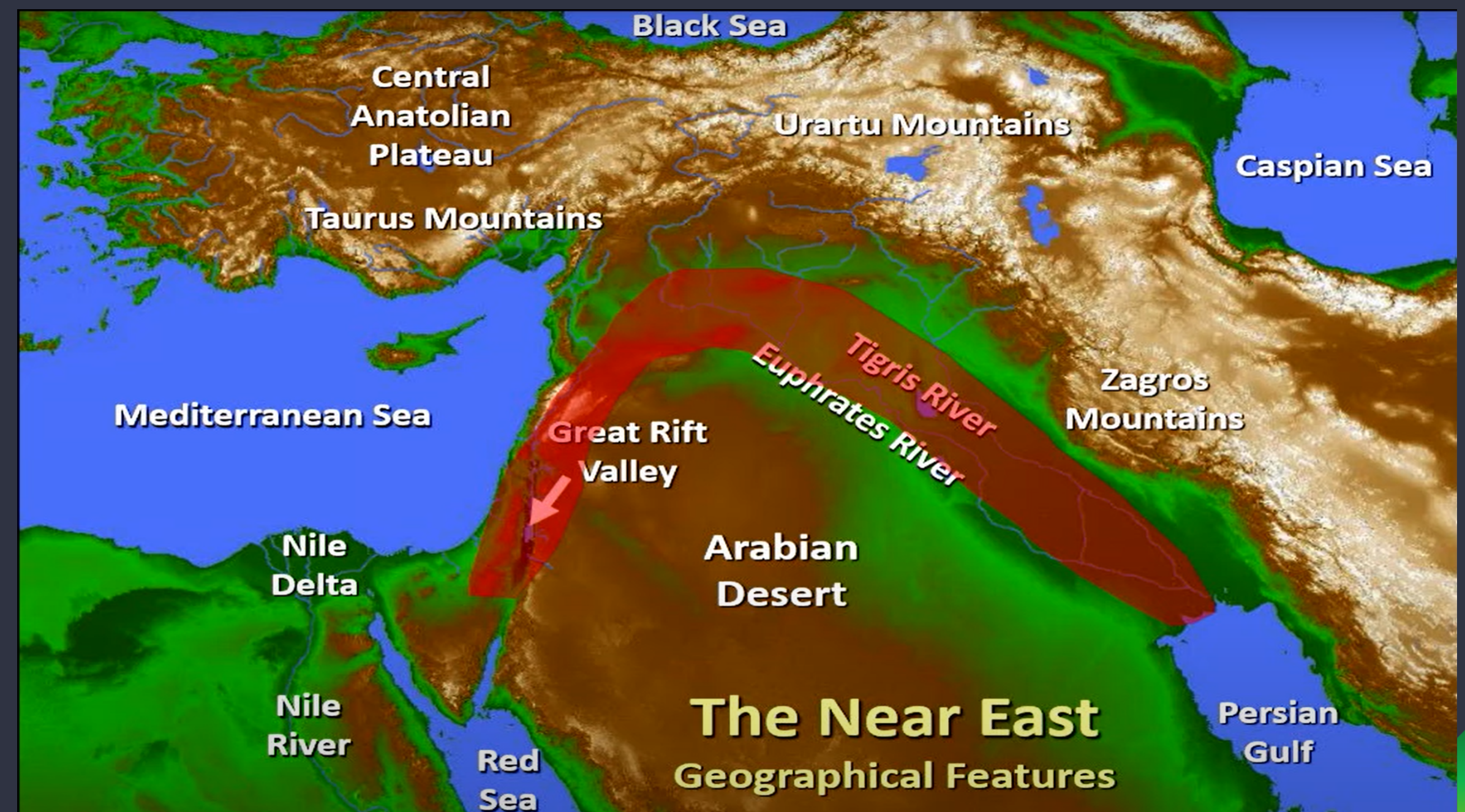
# GETTING THE GEOGRAPHY RIGHT

## Exodus Route

- The exodus route taken by Moses and the Israelites were trade routes at that time in the Near East.
- These trade routes are attested to by Egyptian maps.
- The names of the towns and places and the route itself belongs to the late Bronze Age
- The Canaan route taken by the Israelites lists all the places in the right order

## Begining of Civilization

- Gen 10 – Fertile Crescent
- Cradle of Civilization accurately identified (Mesopotamia, Levant, Egypt)
- The Bible gets it right as this is where towns and cities are formed.





# GETTING THE EVENTS RIGHT

## Sodom

- Sodom discovered in Tall el-Hammam in Jordan.
- The largest continually occupied city in the region surrounded by abundant water (green pastures – Lot).
- The city existed across the Bronze Age
- A city state with administrative building, ramparts, defensive walls
- The layers of charcoal and burns confirm the sudden destruction of the city.
- No city for 700+ years thereafter

## Jericho

- There was no Jericho before or after the 1300s.
- This was the case until around 1000 BC.
- Joshua walks into the only Jericho available
- This is absolute precision by the writer of Joshua.
- We also now have the evidence of Jericho itself – a city with massive walls that collapsed.



# GETTING THE POSITION OF THE ISRAEL RIGHT

## Canaan

- The Canaanite religious practices, the prostitution, the child sacrifices, etc., were condemned by God.
- God warned the Israelites, but they did not heed Him and fell into sin.
- The archaeological records show the existence of Canaanite gods and goddesses.
- The archaeological records also show the apostasy of the Jewish people in disobeying God and adopting Canaanite practices

## People, not a nation

- Mernepta became Pharaoh: he established a stela (1200 BC)
- Pharaoh mentions Israel as one of the enemies.
- Pharaoh calls Israel not “a nation but a people.” Why? Israel had no king. It was God who was their King.
- This matches the Biblical record precisely.



Mernepta Stela  
1200 BC



# HOUSE OF DAVID – TEL DAN STELE

- Critics had always claimed that there was a King David.
- They claimed it was a legend manufactured to give Israel's history meaning.
- Discovery of the Tel Dan Stele (written by an Aramean King Hazael), refers to the House of David.
- The stele affirms that, during a time of war between Israel and Syria, the god [Hadad](#) had made the author king and given him victory. In the process, he had killed King Joram of Israel and his ally, King Ahaziah of the "House of [David](#)."
- **Scripture**
  - 2 Kings 10:32, 2 Kings 13:22, 2 Kings 13:3





# SILOAM INSCRIPTION – KING HEZEKIAH’S TIME

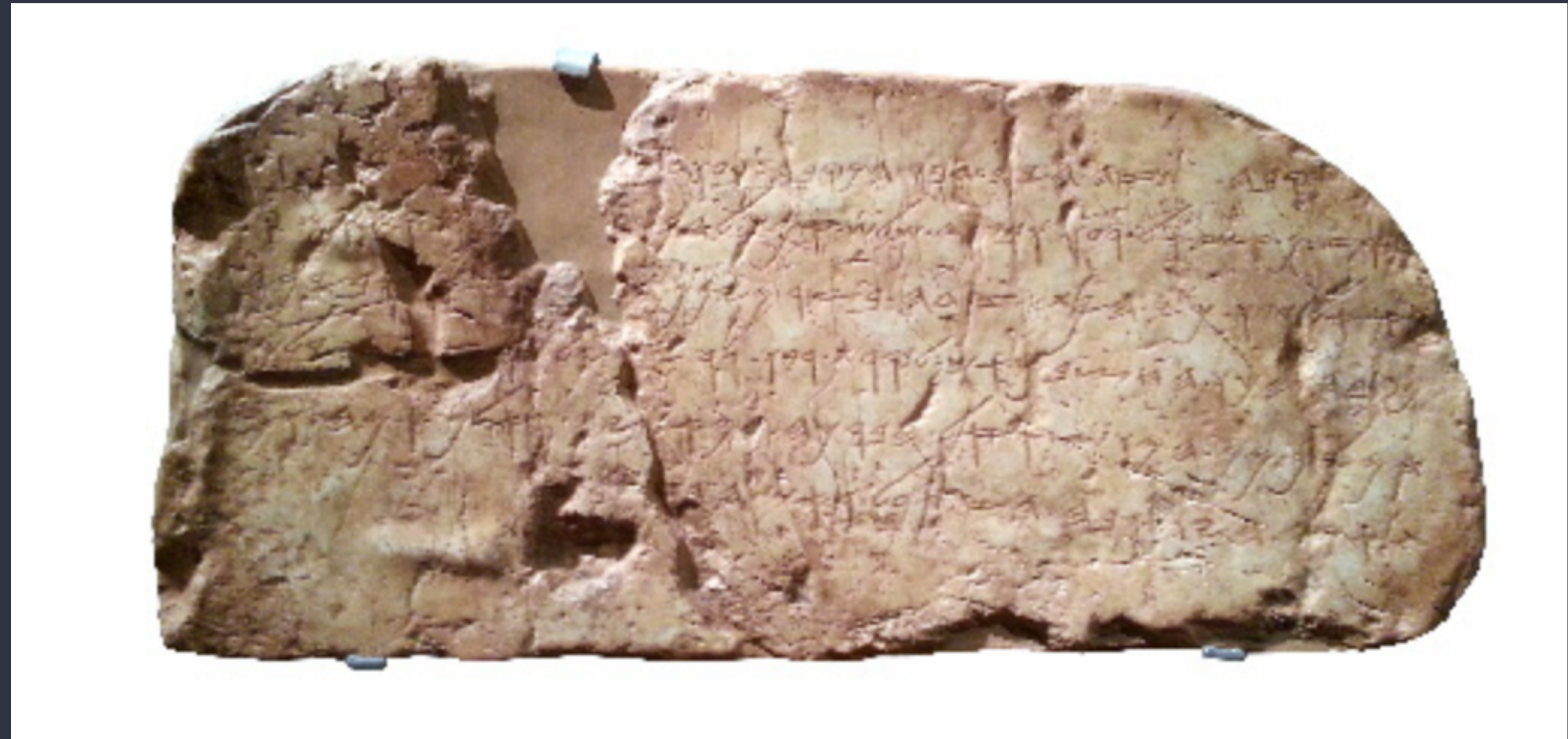
## Scripture

Now the remainder of the acts of Hezekiah, all of his powerful deeds, and how he made the pool and the conduit and brought the water into the city, are they not written in the scroll of the events of the days of the kings of Judah?

[2 Kings 20:20, LEB](#)

And he said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated “sent”). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

[John 9:7, LEB](#)





# PRISM OF SENNACHERIB OF ASSYRIA

- This prism, also known as the Taylor Prism, contains six columns of text by Assyrian king [Sennacherib](#) and describes his triumphs.
- Column three recounts his campaign against Judah, presenting a version of the events narrated in [2 Kgs 18–19](#) (laid siege).
- Like the Bible's account, he describes the victories that led to his [siege of Jerusalem](#). He implies, however, that he left Hezekiah in Jerusalem “like a bird in a cage” after Hezekiah sent him the spoils of the city.
- Conversely, the Bible describes Sennacherib's army departing after the [Angel of Yahweh](#) slew many of them.
- Sennacherib himself admits that Hezekiah himself was not defeated, **he** only laid siege.





# BABYLONIAN CHRONICLES – KING JEHOIAKIM

- The **Babylonian Chronicles** are a series of clay tablets inscribed with Babylonian history.
- They were written at different times, beginning around the 600BC.
- Some describe events of biblical history —including Jehoiakim’s refusal to pay tribute ([2 Kgs 24:1](#)), Nebuchadnezzar’s siege of Jerusalem ([2 Kgs 24:10–11](#)), and Jehoiachin’s capture ([2 Kgs 24:12](#)).
- The exact date of March 6, 597 BC





# DANIEL AND BELSHAZZAR

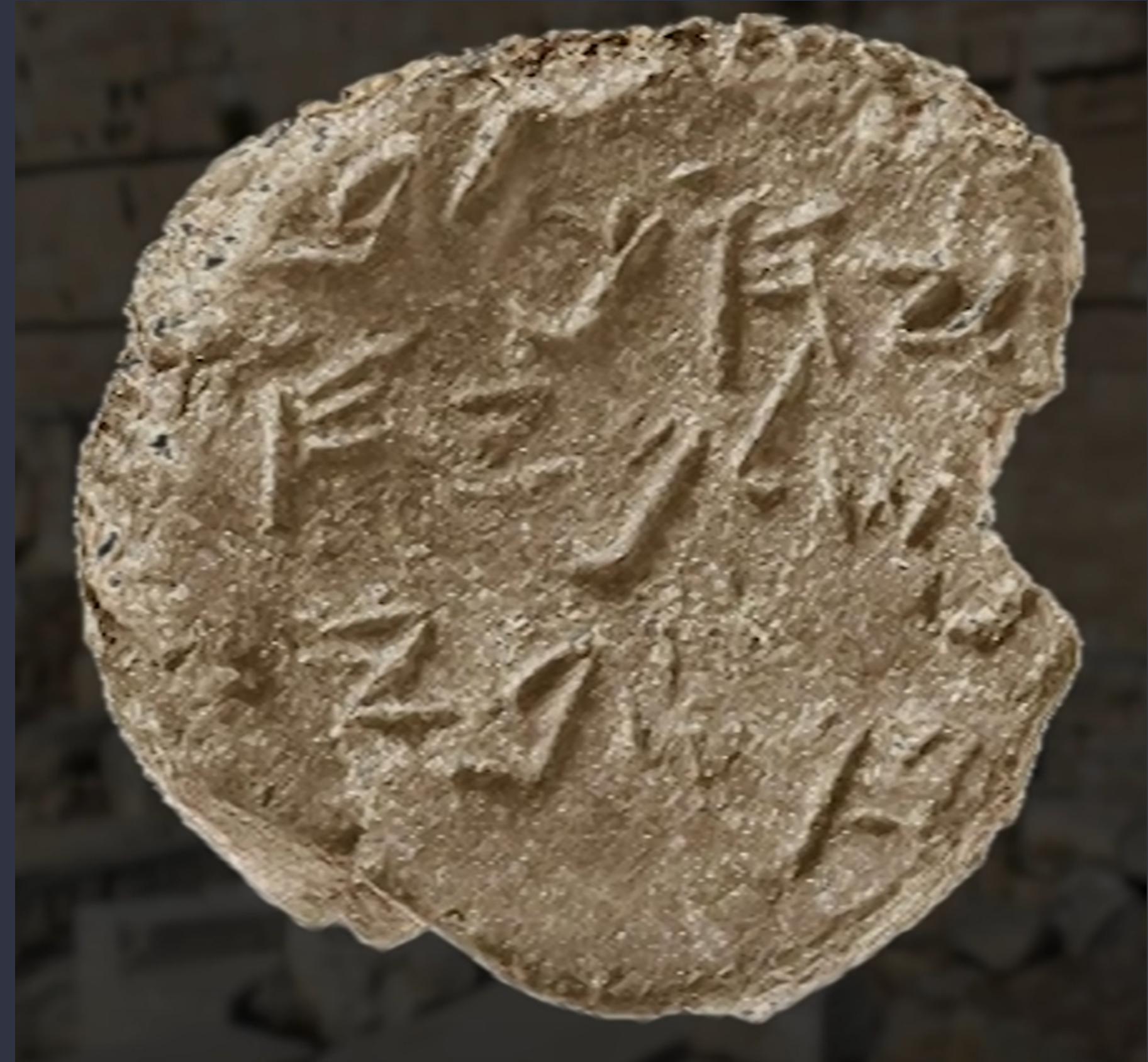
- Daniel states that Belshazzar was the last king of Babylon.
- This was rejected by historians as fiction.
- However with the discovery of the Nabonidus Cylinder, the claim of Daniel about Belshazzar is confirmed.
- He was the last ruling monarch in Babylon before it fell to the Persians under Cyrus.





# JEREMIAH AND JEHUCAL

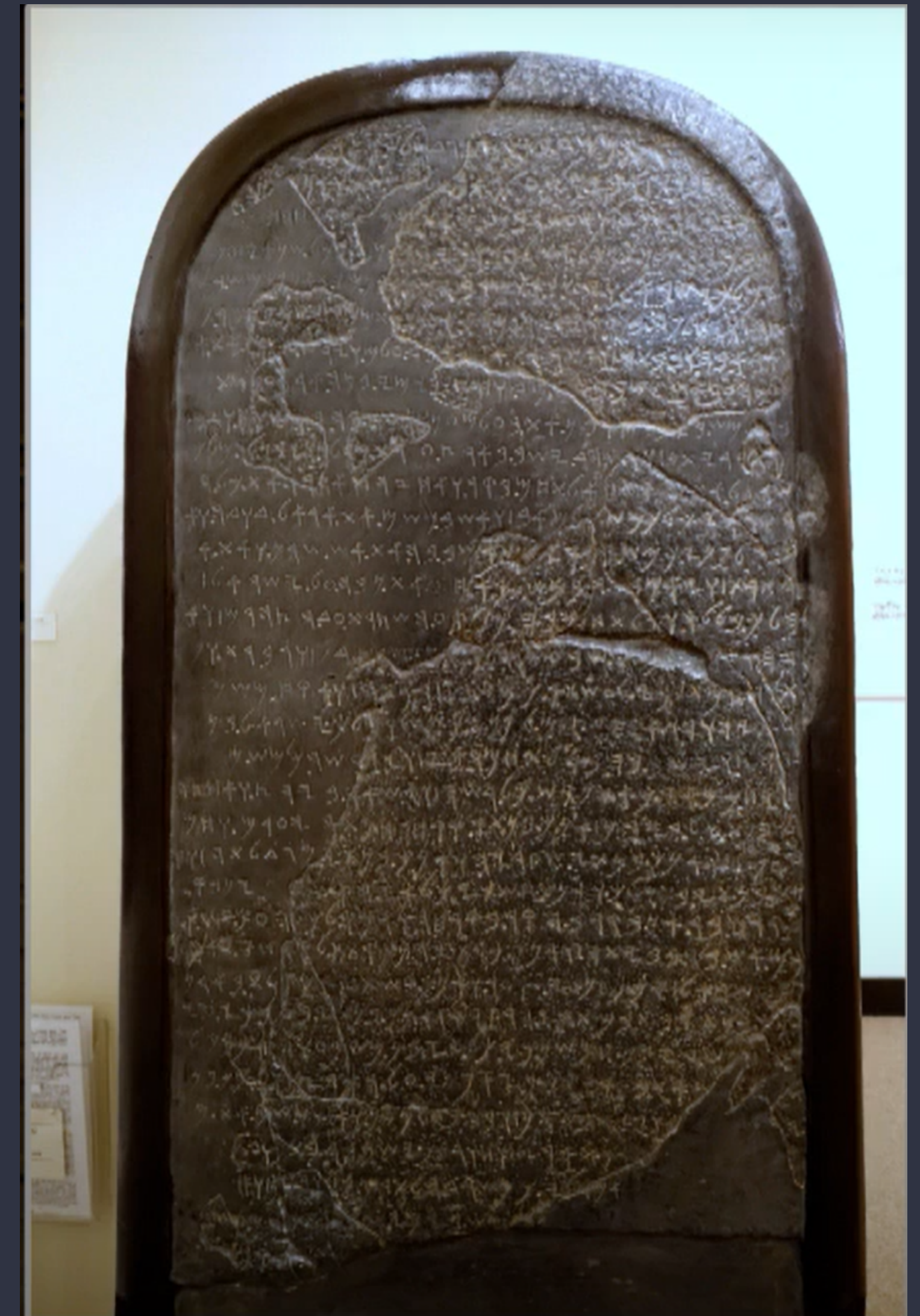
- In Jeremiah 37:3, King Zedekiah sends Jehucal son of Shemaiah seeking intercession.
- The Bulla (something like an insignia) discovered states the name Jehucal son of Shemaiah.





# MESHA STELE – MOABITE STONE – 2 KINGS 3

- Mesha rebelled against the king of Israel (2 Kings 3)
- This is dated to around 840 BC
- Note King David reigned around 1000-900 BC.
- So the age of the stone is close enough to confirming King David as a force.
- Describes the events in 2 Kings 3:4-27
- Specific details
  - Sheep herder,
  - The god of Kimosh,
  - The name of Yahweh
  - The House of David





# DEAD SEA SCROLLS

- Scrolls discovered in 1947 in Qumran belonged to a monastic community, often identified as **Essenes**
- The majority of the Dead Sea Scrolls are made from leather and papyrus and are written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Many of the scrolls were stored in clay jars.





# NASH PAPYRUS

- Was discovered in 1898
- Prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Nash Papyrus was the oldest known Hebrew manuscript (150BC)
- While the text largely follows Exodus 20:2–17 and Deuteronomy 5:6–21, the order of the 6th and 7th commandments are reversed.





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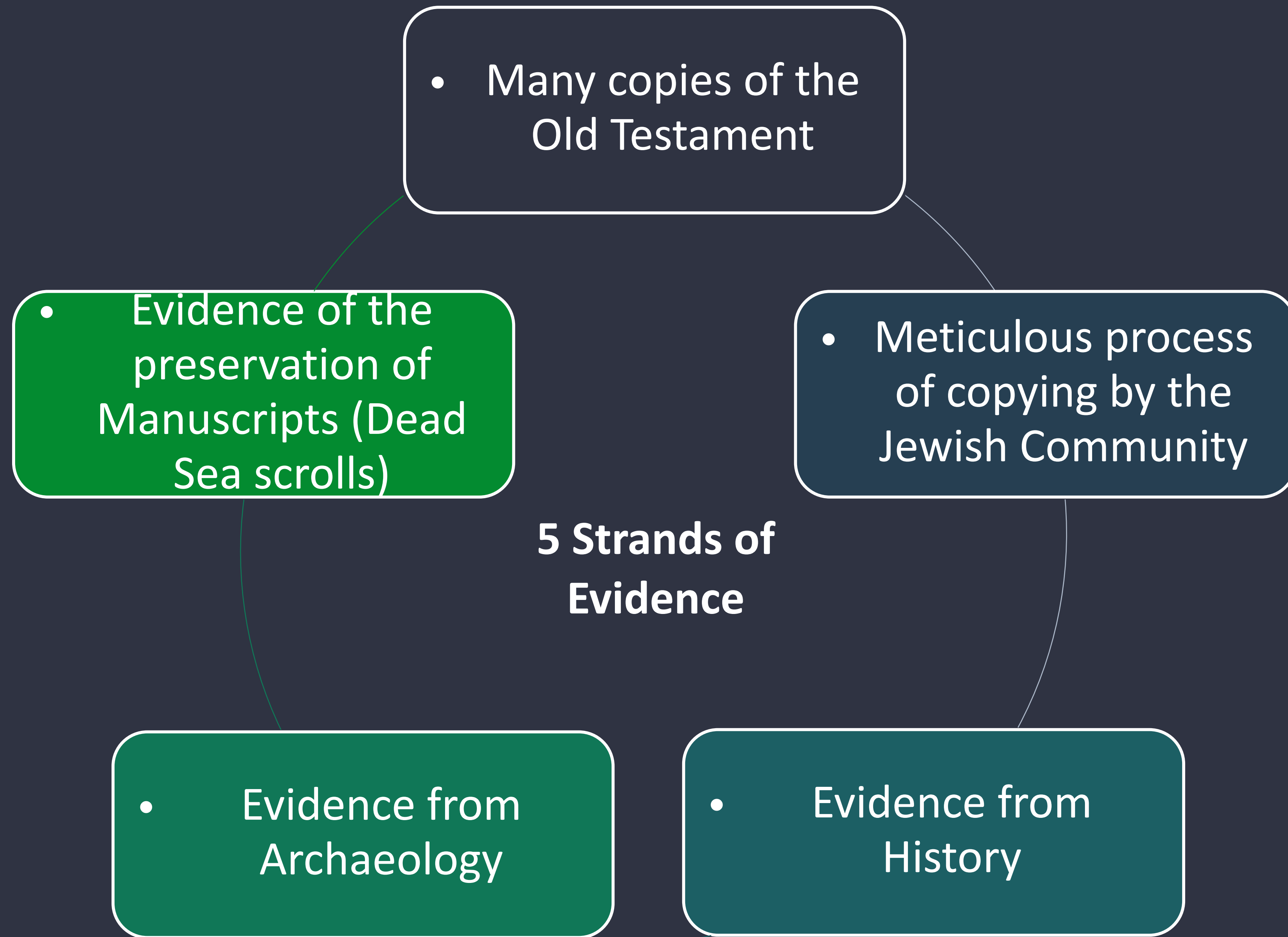


# GREAT ISAIAH SCROLL



- The **Great Isaiah Scroll** from the Dead Sea Scrolls contains the entire text of the Book of Isaiah (100 BC).
- The text is largely in agreement with the Masoretic Text (1000 AD)







# HOW SHOULD WE THINK ABOUT THE OT?

- It is also vital to recognize how highly Christ and the Apostles viewed the Old Testament.

*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil. 18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. 19 Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven – Matthew 5:17-19*



# HOW SHOULD WE THINK ABOUT THE OT?

- Christ viewed the Old Testament as
  - Authoritative
  - Historical
  - Factual
  - Valuable (Christ quoted 14 OT books)
- If Christ is the perfect model of what a Christian should be, then we too need to have a high view of the Old Testament.
- We need to study and learn from the Old Testament.
- The Old Testament looks forward to the revelation of the Messiah. The New Testament lives in the realization, the actualization of the Messiah and His Kingdom.

*I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but they didn't see it. And they longed to hear what you hear, but they didn't hear it –  
Matthew 13:17*





# Q&A