

# MYSTERIES UNEARTHED

## SENNACHERIB'S HEXAGONAL CLAY PRISM or TAYLOR PRISM

This six-sided clay prism found in Nineveh, dated 686 BC is inscribed with the details of 8 campaigns by Sennacherib, king of Assyria (705 - 681BC). It records the invasion of Palestine in 701 BC when Sennacherib besieged Hezekiah in Jerusalem and laid waste a number of towns, 2 of which were Debir and Lachish.

In it he claims to have “shut up Hezekiah, the Judean, in his royal city like a bird in a cage” but he makes no mention of a capture of the city. Could this indicate that he withdrew unsuccessfully? 2 Kings 10 records how the invading army retreated in the face of a plague which is not mentioned in the prism.

However, Sennacherib's return to Nineveh and his assassination in 681BC are mentioned in Assyrian texts (item no.92502) and in 2 Kings 19:37.

The correlations between the 2 records are remarkable. We will draw attention to the mention of Hezekiah in both records; the attack on his cities; the siege of Jerusalem in which Hezekiah was living and the tribute imposed, especially the 30 talents of gold.

<b>TAYLOR PRISM</b>	<b>BIBLE RECORDS</b>
a) “As to Hezekiah the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke, I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts and countless small villages in their vicinity, and conquered (them) ... “	a) 2 Kings 18:13,14a “Now in the 14 <sup>th</sup> year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.” “And Hezekiah king: of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish ...” (Isaiah 36:1)
"Hezekiah ... did send me later to Nineveh, my lordly city, together with 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, precious stones ...”	b) 2 Kings 18:17 “And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rasbaris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem ...”
c) “Himself (Hezekiah) I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence like a bird in a cage.”	c) 2Kings 18:14b -16 “... And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver ... and ... the gold ...”

Dr. WH Shea has proved archaeologically that there is a 13-year gap between verses 16 & 17 of 2 Kings 18 (Ministry, March 1980). Hence, 2Kings 19:32 (also Isa.37:33) refer to the siege of Jerusalem and not the siege of Lachish.

## SARGON'S PRISM

This nonagonal prism chronicles Sargon II's expedition's 721-705BC against Babylonia, Media, Syria, and Palestine. Mention is made of this King of Assyria's victory over Egypt and his conquest of Samaria in 721BC. In Isaiah 20 Sargon is mentioned along with his victory over the Egyptians. The tablet includes the words “the land of the house of Omri”. Omri was the father of Ahab and the founder of a strong dynasty that reigned approximately 11 years. It was Omri who moved the capital of Israel to Samaria (1Kings 16:21.)

## **BABYLONIAN CHRONICLE for the years 605-591 BC.**

This chronicle is an account of the Battle of Carchemish, the accession of Nebuchadnezzar II in 605BC, and the siege and capture of Jerusalem in 597BC (2 Kings 24:10-17 and Daniel 1:1,2.)

The entry for the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Nebuchadnezzar (598-7BC) reads:

<b>BABYLONIAN CHRONICLE</b>	<b>BIBLE RECORD</b>
“In the 7th year, the month of Kisimu, the king of Akkad mustered his troops, marched to the Hatti-land, and encamped against the city of Judah, and on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> day of the month of Addaru he seiged the city and captured the king. He appointed there a king of his heart, received its heavy tribute and sent it to Babylon.”	“Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged ... he carried away all the treasures ... to Babylon. And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king and changed his name to Zedekiah.” 2 Kings 24:10-17.

From this passage we see that the ‘king of Akkad’ was Nebuchadnezzar; that the ‘Hatti-land’ was Syria-Palestine; and that the city of Judah was Jerusalem. The king who was captured would be Jehoiachin, and the king who was of Nebuchadnezzar's heart was Zedekiah. This text also fixes the date of the first fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians as 16th March 597BC.

A barrel **CYLINDER OF NABONIDUS**, king of Babylon, 556-539BC. It gives an account of the restoration of the temple of Sin at Haran, and the rebuilding of the temple of the sun-god Samas at Sippar. His attempted religious reforms led to his exile in Tema in Arabia for 10 years, during which time his son ruled as co-recent.

**FOUNDATION CYLINDER** - Inscribed with a prayer for King Nabonidus and his son Belshazzar on the occasion of the restoration of the temple the moon-god.

The prayer is as follows:

“And as for me, Nabonidus, the King of Babylon, protect thou from sinning against thine exalted god-head, and grant thou me graciously a long life: and in the heart of Belshazzar, my first-born son, the offspring of my loins ...”

Nabonidus was the last King of Babylon and was absent when Cyrus took the capital. As Belshazzar was regent during his father's absence, he was killed when Cyrus captured Babylon. Belshazzar on that fateful day promised Daniel that he would be the ‘Third ruler the Kingdom.’ Belshazzar was the second. The critics before this claimed that Belshazzar was a myth of Biblical fantasy.