THE TOMB

The tomb of Jesus was a new tomb in which no one had been interred, and which no one used afterward. Recent restoration work to the edicule surrounding the tomb of Jesus has confirmed that it was a single-chamber tomb carved into a limestone hill during the 1st century. A stone bench consistent with an arcosolium tomb from the Roman period was protected underneath the current structure, the tomb was originally sealed with a large circular stone, and the Romans had built a temple over the site prior to the building of the church. This information accords with what was recorded in the Gospels and writings of the early church about the burial and the tomb of Jesus.

Christians in Jerusalem then passed down a continuous memory of the location of the tomb from the time of the burial and resurrection in AD 33 until the construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was started in about AD 326. According to the Gospels, the tomb of Jesus was a new tomb just outside the city walls, hewn out of rock, single-chambered, having a bench on which to place the body, and sealed with a large stone. Due to the significance of the resurrection in Christianity, the tomb of Jesus has been remembered, revered, and preserved for almost 2,000 years.



DATE: 4TH CENTURY AD DISCOVERED: CHURCH OF HOLY SEPULCHRE, JERUSALEM PERIOD: JESUS AND THE GOSPELS

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For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Romans 15:4



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OLD TESTAMENT

Recently, a tablet written about 1900 BC and sourced from a private collection was rediscovered and translated, containing the flood story of Atra- Hasis, who interacts with the god Enki. Measuring 11.5 cm by 6 cm, it contains 60 lines of cuneiform. In this particular text, many specifics were noticed that match the flood story of Noah found in Genesis: gods want to destroy all humans by a flood; one god warns a man about the flood and instructs him to build a boat; dimensions are given for a massive boat to be built with bitumen, multiple decks, and a roof; animals were taken on board two by two; a storm rages and the world floods; the boat lands on a mountain; and the survivor offers a sacrifice to the god who saved him.



Date: 1900 BC Discovered: Unknown, Iraq Period: Genesis 1-11 Bible Passages: Genesis 6:5-8:22; 2 Peter 2:5

THE EXODUS

An Egyptian list of domestic servants recorded on a papyrus from about the 17th century BC contains not only Semitic names but even Hebrew names. This period came just after the life of Joseph and preceded the Exodus, which was the time that the Hebrews lived in Egypt as settlers and then as slaves. A section of this papyrus contains a list of 95 servants. many of whom are specified as Asiatic or coming from western Asia (primarily Canaan). The servants with foreign names are given Egyptian names, just as Joseph was after he was promoted from a household servant under Potiphar to the role of vizier over all of Egypt. The majority of the names are feminine because domestic servants were typically female.



Date: 17th century BC Discovered: Thebes, Egypt Period: Exodus Bible Passages: Genesis 41:45; Exodus 1:5-22

NEW TESTAMENT

In 1878, a stone slab with a 22-line Greek inscription that was an "Edict of Caesar" surfaced in Nazareth and was purchased by a French antiquities collector. The edict was made about AD 41 when Claudius became emperor of Rome. It states that if anyone has "extracted those who have been buried, or has moved with wicked intent those who have been buried to other places... or has moved sepulcher-sealing stones... You are absolutely not to allow anyone to move those who have been entombed..." The edict describes the same type of tomb, a stone-carved tomb sealed with a large stone, which Jesus was buried in according to Judean custom, while Romans were typically cremated. According to Matthew, the false story that the disciples stole the body of Jesus was spread by the religious leaders of Judaism via the Roman soldiers, and this rumor apparently reached the ears of the emperor. Therefore, the edict recorded on the Nazareth Inscription was probably a reaction to stories about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and in particular the version that the Roman soldiers guarding the tomb were paid to say that the disciples of Jesus stole His body while they were asleep. By the time of Claudius, knowledge of Christianity and the story of the resurrection of Jesus had spread throughout many areas of the Roman Empire, beginning to cause problems in the realms of religion, politics, and society, and Claudius seems to have attempted to prevent any future claims of the resurrection of the dead.



Date: AD 41-54 Discovered: Unknown, Judea or Galilee Period: Jesus and the Gospels Bible Passages: Matthew 28:11-15