

in association with

BIBLE TOURS

# Highlights Tour

This tour is unique to **bethel**tours, but has been prepared in association with Bible Tours and consists of an edited version of the Grand Tour. If you are familiar with the Grand Tour, you should be able to familiarise yourself with this tour in a short time. As with all Bible Tours, these notes are divided into two sections:

**Preferred Itinerary:** Lists the items we would like you to include each time you present this tour.

**Additional Items:** A list of approved items that may be included as necessary due to room closures or item removals.

The notes provide sufficient information for newer or less-frequent guides as well as the regular Bible Tours guides. References are provided if you wish to do additional research. If you need any further help or have any questions please, in the first instance, contact Philip and he will contact the Bible Tours team if necessary.

The tour is presented in a logical order in the museum, but you will often need to be adaptable, so feel free to present it in a different order when necessary.

We have tried to include in this document any graphics you may need to display on your tablet during the tour, but please review the virtual tours for any additional graphics you may wish to screenshot and share on your tablet.

As this is an edited version of the Grand Tour, it may be worth listening to the audio recording of the Grand Tour made by Matt in July 2022. If you do not have access to this recording, let us know and we will arrange to make it available to you.

### 1. Rosetta Stone

A quiet corner in Room 4 near the real Rosetta Stone, usually between pillars / Copy of Rosetta Stone in Room 1 (only when strictly necessary)

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Rosetta Stone first allowed archeologists to begin understanding Egyptian hieroglyphics. Not directly connected with the Bible, but has some interesting associations.

Broken off section of what was originally a much larger stone slab / stela. Discovered by accident in 1799 by Napoleon's army who were digging foundations of a new fort at a place called Rosetta in North Egypt. This big slab of granite that had been used as a scrap piece and built into a very old wall.

Dates from 196 BCE, a decree made by Egyptian priests on behalf of the reigning Pharaoh, Ptolemy V - descendent of Alexander's general. The text of the Rosetta Stone is actually a bit dull - it lists the deeds of Ptolemy V, and some tax reductions he granted to restore peace after a rebellion that led to his father's death!

#### TWO LANGUAGES, THREE FORMS OF WRITING

**Hieroglyphics:** A special form of writing reserved and only used by the priests and royalty, and remember this decree is written by the priests.

**Demotic:** Native Egyptian script of the time, the more everyday common writing - the language of the Egyptian people.

**Koine Greek:** While Greek has remained in use, the other two became obsolete, and knowledge of reading/writing was lost.

#### **DECIPHERING**

1799 - British and French Armies fighting in Egypt. British defeated the French, and basically stole the Rosetta Stone from them and brought it to the British Museum. Race to try and translate the stone. Thomas Young made some great discoveries. Realised "cartouche" contained names and had phonetic elements to them, but couldn't work out any more. French man, Jean Francois Champollion, finished the translation work. Using the Greek he translated the demotic and then the Hieroglyphics.

So the Greek language becomes the key that allowed us to understand the Egyptian writings. We would not understand the Egyptian gods, their history, and many aspects of their culture without this stone allowing us to translate the hieroglyphics.

#### **REFERENCES**

ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΣ

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# 2. Amenhotep III

Amenhotep III head and arm, Room 4 South side / Soleb lions, Room 4 South side

#### **BACKGROUND**

Pharoah in the 14th century BCE (over a century after the exodus) responsible for building magnificent temples at Karnak in Egypt and at Soleb in Sudan.

#### **IDENTIFICATION OF STATUE**

Originally a huge statue of Amenhotep III, but later repurposed by Rameses II. Only modern research revealed true identity. Shows futility of establishing a name with the world, make a name with Jehovah instead.

More statues now known to exist of Amenhotep III than of any other pharoh, he was in power at the peak of the Egyptian civilisation. Son, Akhenaton, reformed the religion of Egypt to emphasise the worship of Aton. Grandson, Tutankhamun, famous boy-king who died before he turned 20, reversed his father's reforms.

#### **TEMPLE AT SOLEB**

The temple that Amenhotep built in Soleb dedicated to Amun-Ra and decorated with depictions of prisoners from each territory that Amenhotep claimed to have subjugated. Among them, the lands of the Shasu people, a generic name used by Egyptians for all despised Bedouin tribes beyond Egypt's eastern border, as far north as Lebanon and Syria.

One has variously been read as "Yahwe in the Shosou land", "The Shasu land of Jahu" or "Land of the Shasu-yhw". The name corresponds to the tetragram of the god of the Bible, YHWH, used as a place name to identify both a locality and its god. Oldest known engraving of Jehovah's name.

#### WHO WAS PHARAOH OF THE EXODUS?

We do not know, Moses did not record it. There was no difficulty recording the names of many other pharaohs in the Bible. We even know the names of midwives, priests and others in Moses day. But no mention of the name of the pharaoh on any of the many occasions Moses met with him. The pharaoh who asked, "Who is Jehovah?" is now lost and forgotten, while the name of the living God, Jehovah, is recognised by millions and still being discovered in ancient artefacts.

#### **REFERENCES**

w10 5/1 pp. 21-22 • it-1 p. 696 • it-1 p. 777



### 3. Ram Sphinx

#### Ram Sphinx of Amun Ra / Tirhakah in Room 4 North side

#### **BACKGROUND**

Pharaoh Tirhakah mentioned in Bible, contemporary of Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:8, 9; Isaiah 37:8, 9)

Amon-Ra, "King of the Gods", whose high priest became head of all the Egyptian priesthoods, often depicted as a man with a ram's head or as a ram.

#### TARGETED BY THE TENTH PLAGUE

#### Read Exodus 12:5-7

During each plague, different false gods were humiliated. Before the last plague, the Hebrews were directed to slaughter a ram, put the blood on the doorway and eat the meat. Imagine the faith required!

Jehovah's angel put to death every firstborn, human or animal, who was not protected by the blood on the doorway. The rulers of Egypt styled themselves as gods, the sons of Amon-Ra. The firstborn son was, in turn, viewed as a god incarnate dedicated to Amon-Ra. Hence, the death of Pharaoh's firstborn, in effect, meant the death of a god. A severe blow to Egypt's religion and manifested the complete impotence of Egypt's deities.

#### **REFERENCES**

<u>it-2 p. 1109</u> • <u>it-1 pp. 96-97</u>

### 4. Lachish Letters

#### Room 57

#### **BACKGROUND**

Written shortly before King Nebuchadnezzar took Lachish from King Zedekiah, Josiah's son. Military correspondence written from remaining outposts of Judean troops to Yaosh, a military commander in Lachish. Corroborate the situation described at <u>Jeremiah 34:7</u> and indicates that Azekah had already fallen, or at least was failing to send out the fire or smoke signals expected.

Letter number IV (not on display): "May Yahweh cause my lord to hear this very day tidings of good! We are watching for the signals of Lachish, according to all the indications which my lord hath given, for we cannot see Azekah."

#### **USE OF THE DIVINE NAME**

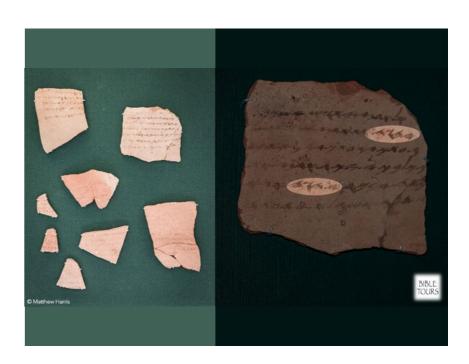
Sometime after Babylonian exile, superstition arose amongst the Jews that Jehovah's name was too sacred to pronounce. Misapplication of law.

Each letter in collection opens with phrases like "May Jehovah bless you" or "May Jehovah bring you peace". The divine name used freely.

May not look familiar as it uses the ancient Hebrew alphabet - we are more familiar with the later square Aramaic Hebrew characters.

#### **REFERENCES**

w0711/15 pp. 12-14 • it-2 p. 188



# 5. Taylor Prism

#### Room 55

#### **BACKGROUND**

Taylor Prism named after Colonel R Taylor. Discovered in the ruins of Sennacherib's palace supports Bible accounts of Sennacherib's conquests in Judah.

Cuneiform - "wedge-shaped" - writing.

#### PAYMENT OF TRIBUTE AND ATTEMPTED SIEGE OF JERUSALEM

#### Read 2 Kings 18:13, 14

When Sennacherib attacked Judah, capturing fortified cities, Hezekiah sent word to the Assyrian king at Lachish offering to pay the sum of tribute Sennacherib might impose.

Sennacherib's version of this event: "I added to the former tribute, and laid upon him as their yearly payment, a tax ... 30 talents of gold and 800 talents of silver ... and all kinds of valuable treasures."

Why exaggerated? Difference between inspired word of God and worldly propaganda. Despite differences note that Sennacherib never claims to have actually taken Jerusalem - perhaps an exaggeration too far. Instead, he simply says: "As for Hezekiah the Jew, who did not submit to my yoke ... Himself like a caged bird, I shut up in Jerusalem, his royal city."

#### **REFERENCES**

it-2 p. 894



# 6. Nabonidus Chronicle & Cylinder

#### Room 55

#### **BACKGROUND**

Chronicle dates from 200 years after Nabonidus and is likely a copy of an earlier document. Despite small size, is still the most complete cuneiform record of the fall of Babylon. Tone of the chronicle strongly glorifies Cyrus while presenting Nabonidus in a disparaging way - probably the work of a Persian scribe, sometimes referred to as "Persian propaganda" but historians feel the data it contains is nonetheless reliable.

#### **PIVOTAL DATE**

Establishes the fall of Babylon to the Medes and Persians on October 5, 539 BCE. As there is no evidence to the contrary, this date can be used as a pivotal date and allows us to calculate other key dates in the Bible.

Example: The fall of Babylon in 539 BCE means the Jews return to their homeland must have been 537 BCE, which means that 70 years of exile must have started in 607 BCE. From 607 BCE, we can count 2,520 years forward to 1914 CE.

#### **FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY**

The Chronicle reads "The army of Cyrus entered Babylon without battle." Cyrus' name and his easy victory was prophesied by Jeremiah around 70 years earlier.

#### **IDENTITY OF KING OF BABYLON**

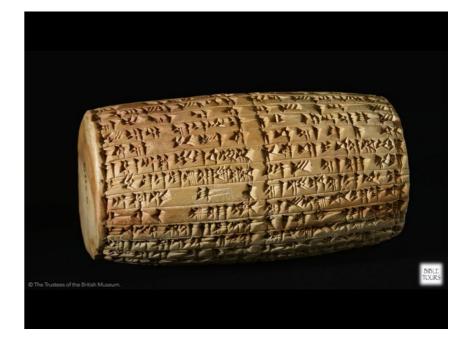
The Chronicle names the king of Babylon as Nabonidus, while the Bible calls him Belshazzar. This was a problem when the Chronicle was first discovered.

Chronicle acquired by BM in 1879. Cylinder had been acquired 25 years earlier in 1854 but detailed studies of the Cylinder had not been completed. When it was reexamined, it revealed that Nabonidus had a son, whose name was Belshazzar, and who reined as a co-regent. Left to govern Babylon while Nabonidus was away on official business.

#### **REFERENCES**

it-2 pp. 458, 459 • g 1/11 pp. 10, 11





# 7. Cyrus Cylinder

#### Room 52

#### **BACKGROUND**

A clay cylinder about King Cyrus the conqueror of Babylon found in 1879 at the site of the temple of Marduk, in Babylon. This cylinder tells about the ease with which Cyrus captured the city and also outlines his policy of restoring to their native lands the captive peoples residing in Babylon.

#### **TOLERANT POLICY**

#### Read Ezra 1:1-3

Doubted for many years. didn't make sense for a conquering king to simply release captives and encourage them to return home, rebuild cities and temples.

Cylinder discovered in 1879, reads: "I returned to [certain previously named] sacred cities on the other side of the Tigris, the sanctuaries of which have been ruins for a long time, the images which (used) to live therein and established for them permanent sanctuaries. I (also) gathered all their (former) inhabitants and returned (to them) their habitations."

**Note:** not the exact decree recorded in Ezra - speaks about Mesopotamian exiles returning to the area across the Tigris - but demonstrates a tolerant policy that would apply also to the Jews returning to Jerusalem.

#### **REFERENCES**

it-1 p. 569 • g 11/07 p. 18



### Additional Item

Refer to notes from virtual tours for these items. If you need to do any further research or have any questions, contact Philip in the first instance and he will contact Bible Tours if necessary.

#### **KHEPRI**

#### Room 4 North West end

Egyptians worshipped thousands of gods representing all aspects of life. Worship of insects like the scarab beetle directly condemned in <a href="Ezekiel 8:9,10">Ezekiel 8:9,10</a>.

#### TREASURES OF UR



Review treasures of Ur to show the civilised and luxurious lifestyle of Ur that Abraham gave up to follow God's command. <u>Genesis 12:1, 2</u>; <u>Hebrews 11:8-10</u>

#### **FLOOD TABLET**



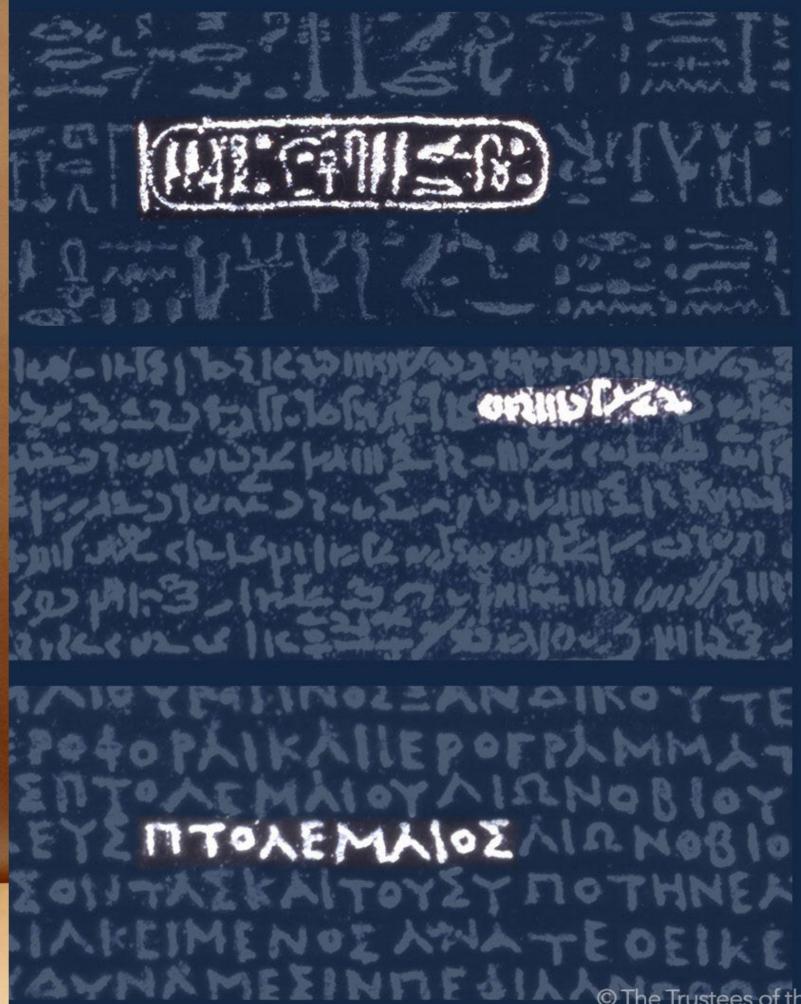
Similarity to Genesis flood details. One of hundreds of flood myths told around the world.

#### **IMMORTAL WARRIOR**



Wall tiles depicting Persian warrior known as the "Immortals".









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