

ROCK SOLID EVIDENCE

Archaeology gives us some rock-solid proof for the Biblical record. Take the account of **Nehemiah**, for instance. This servant of God, whose book begins in 445 BC, was cup-bearer to the Persian king and was allowed to go and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. He had his friends and his enemies alike – and archaeological evidence shows they were not made up characters in a fairy story!

Take **King Artaxerxes**, for instance. The Bible says: **“And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, that I took wine and gave it to the king...”** (Nehemiah 2:1).



In the British Museum is a beautiful silver bowl, discovered in 1932, which has an inscription reading: *“Artaxerxes, the great king...in whose house this silver drinking cup/saucer was made.”* So, this king - who was kind to Nehemiah - was real, and the archaeology beautifully matches the Bible record.

But what about Nehemiah’s enemies? The same chapter

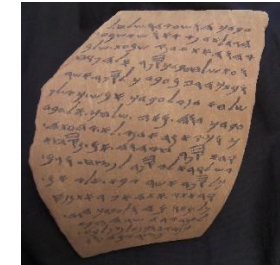
goes on to say: **“But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard [of Nehemiah’s plans to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem], they laughed at us and despised us...”** (v19).

Interestingly **Sanballat’s** name appears on a papyrus letter from the Jewish community in Egypt around that time (407BC).



As for **Tobiah**, the famous Lachish Letters (dating to the

6th century BC) have reference to an influential ‘Tobiad’ family.



And **Geshem** the Arab? Apparently, *“His name appears on a silver vessel discovered...in Egypt...within approximately 40 years of the events of Nehemiah.”* So, you see, the Bible was written about real people...and for real people – like you and me.

