

# SCHEME OF CONTENTS

## LEVELS OF 'PROOF'

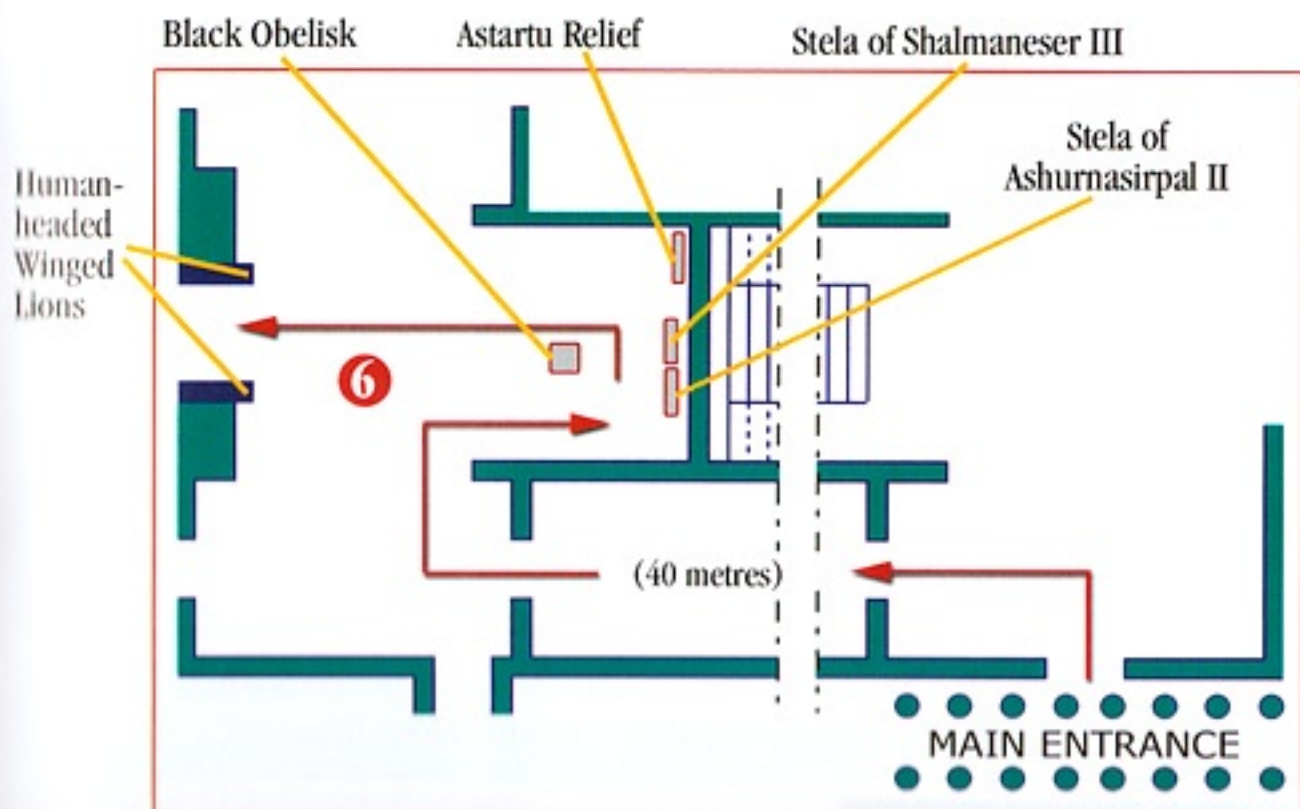
- \*\*\* Direct evidence for biblical events and names
- \*\* Authenticity of biblical descriptions confirmed
- \* Insights into the biblical environment

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## How Assyrian Monuments Confirm the Bible

The first leg of this tour surveys discoveries found mostly in the excavations of Assyrian royal palaces. From around 880 BC the Assyrian empire really began to take shape bringing terror and tyranny for nearly three centuries, and engulfing many other kingdoms. Several Assyrian kings invaded or threatened the Bible lands of Israel and Judah, securing submission and tribute from them. Many years of such interaction naturally led to various names and battles being mentioned in both the Bible and the annals and monuments of the Assyrians, confirming the historical accuracy of the biblical record.

We begin this tour turning immediately left inside the Museum entrance and proceeding past the cloakroom to Room 6, the Assyrian Sculpture Gallery, to see the first of many highly significant discoveries.





## Shalmaneser Names Ahab and Benhadad 853 BC

Turn immediately right as you enter Room 6 and walk to the end wall.

One of the first items we view is an Assyrian monument mentioning the names of two kings who feature prominently in the Old Testament, and confirming the integrity of biblical dating.

Three similar monuments stand together, one of which (in the middle) commemorates Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 BC), the Assyrian king who began the policy of expansion and empire building. He introduced new siege techniques to Assyrian warfare, particularly the use of earth ramparts and battering engines, supported by slingshooters and archers.

**To the left of him** is a sandy-coloured monument of tremendous importance to us. It is known as the *Stela of Shalmaneser III* (also called the *Kurkh Stele*). This shows Shalmaneser III (who ruled Assyria from 859-824 BC) saluting his gods symbolised in the small pictures above his hand. Writing appears all over the king's picture and also on the back of the monument. This text describes Shalmaneser's first six military campaigns, including specific mention of Ahab (king of Israel) and Benhadad I (king of Syria).

He records how (in 853 BC) he ventured west threatening many kingdoms, but the king of Hamath organised a mighty defence force supplied by twelve kings (Ahab and Benhadad being among them). These two spent most of their time at war with each other, but during a three-year peace (mentioned in *1 Kings 22.1*) they joined forces with Hamath to repel Shalmaneser. (This was during the ministry of the prophet Elisha.) An engagement was fought at Karkara (also spelt Qarqara) near Hamath. In this monument, Shalmaneser describes it in these words:

### THESE PAGES

#### DATES

853 BC

#### CHIEF PEOPLE

Ashurnasirpal II

Shalmaneser III

Ahab, king of Israel

Benhadad, king of Syria

#### AT THE TIME OF

Elisha

#### BOOKS OF BIBLE

1 Kings 22





Left: The Stela of  
Shalmaneser III  
[ANE 118884] in  
Room 6

Below: The Stela of  
Ashurnasirpal II  
[ANE 118883] in  
Room 6



**ASSYRIAN  
QUOTE**

'I approached Karkara. I destroyed, tore down, and bound Karkara, his royal residence. He brought along to help him 1,200 chariots, 1,200 cavalymen, 20,000 foot soldiers belonging to Hadadezer [*Benhadad I*] of Damascus, . . . 2,000 chariots, 10,000 foot soldiers belonging to Ahab the Israelite . . .'



# Heritage of Evidence

**I**n today's atheistic climate most people have no idea how much powerful evidence exists for the literal accuracy and authenticity of the biblical record. The British Museum holds a huge number of major discoveries that provide direct corroboration and background confirmation for an immense sweep of Bible history. This survey of Bible-authenticating exhibits has been designed as a guide for visitors, and also to give pleasure and interest to readers unable to tour the galleries.

The 'tour' followed here started life over forty years ago and has been used by thousands of people. Previously serialised several times in magazines, it has been fully revised with 135 colour illustrations.



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 **Wakeman**

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