

# Discovery of Joshua Tablet Confirms Authenticity of the Bible

By Jack Cascione [redeemerpress.org@earthlink.net](mailto:redemerpress.org@earthlink.net)

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The astonishing discovery of the Joshua Tablet on Mount Ebal was accomplished by an archaeological team directed by Dr. Scott Stripling and sponsored by The Bible Seminary and Assembly of God congregations.

As described in Job 19:24, the Joshua Tablet was written as a contract with an iron pen on lead.

The Joshua Tablet predates the oldest extant extrabiblical Hebrew related to the Torah by at least two centuries to approximately 1300 BC or earlier. The estimated date of the tablet is confirmed by its style of writing and a chemical analysis of the lead.

In Deut. 27:4-13, God gave the first command for Israel to write its own liturgy for Divine worship. God wrote the laws for sacrificial worship. Then, for the first time, when Israel was a church in its own land, God told them the subject of a special worship service, and He told them to write their own liturgy for the service. The Joshua Tablet is half of the world's first church bulletin. The multitudes may have responded to each other antiphonally from one mountain to the other. David would not write the hymnbook for the Temple for another 450 years.

God told the nation of Israel to divide its tribes: half of the tribes were to write blessings on Mount Gerizim and the other half were to write curses on Mount Ebal. The altar on Mount Ebal, where the tablet was discovered, was surrounded by ashes and numerous bones of ceremonially clean animals. The Joshua Tablet contains the oldest extent record of God's name.

We are waiting for the universities, seminaries, and religious denominations to comment on this discovery. The tablet overturns and contradicts long accepted academic pronouncements about the history of the Torah. The standard position is that Hebrew writing did not develop earlier than the 10<sup>th</sup> Century BC. It is also claimed that the Torah is a collection of documents of unknown origin written over many centuries by at least four groups of authors.

In many ways the importance of the Joshua Tablet is greater than the Dead Sea Scrolls because it affirms the accuracy, historicity, and religion of the Torah. First, it is the only written record of the Hebrews' response to their own Torah found within the geographic location stated in the text. Second, it is the only original text from the time of the Exodus, not just a copy. Third, it affirms the Hebrews' religious practice by not placing the altar on the mountain of blessings but rather on the mountain of curses where sins needed to be forgiven. Fourth, only the bones of clean animals were found around the altar. Fifth, small scarab ornaments were found at the site, evidence that the Hebrews had exited Egypt. Sixth, it is the oldest written Hebrew liturgy, older than the Book of Joshua.

The following two videos are excellent resources for learning about the Joshua Tablet.

*Mt. Ebal "Curse Tablet" Full Press Conference*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDD92qp\\_lfQ&t=13s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDD92qp_lfQ&t=13s) held at the Lanier Theological Library in Houston Texas.

*Archaeological find upends secular academia - Pod for Israel*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWIKg9g1IXs&t=1908s>

It now appears that atheists will require faith to maintain their mythology on the origins of the Torah.

What is equally astonishing is the confirmation of the order in which the Joshua Tablet arranges the words. The words also exhibit aesthetic form.

In 1978 this author began research into the unique, metered genre in which the Hebrew text and its New Testament derivatives were written. The research developed into an M.Div. thesis with assistance from four seminary professors, including President Robert Preus, Department Chairman Dr. Waldemar Degner, and Dr. Harold Buls. Years later, thesis advisor Dr. James Voelz withdrew his support and became an advocate for Reader Response Criticism.

After studying Hebrew and Greek, as a former art professor at the University of Southern Indiana (1974-77), this writer observed the presence of ancient aesthetic design and form in the Hebrew and Greek texts. Today, secular and ecclesiastical scholars have abandoned any notion that the Bible is a Divine artifact and view the text as the product of faith. All religious denominations reject evidence of a Divine hand or form in the text, in nature yes, but not in the text. Yet, there is no hesitation to classify paintings by Rembrandt, Monet, and Picasso or the meticulous order in a Jackson Pollock as works of art worthy of the cultured museum temples.

The abandonment of form in the text by Lutheran and Reformed denominations has led to the abandonment of form in their church buildings and is why their sanctuaries resemble vacuous barns. One can see more conviction in Lascaux cave art. Colorless bare walls and utilitarian stages/chancels tell what they believe about God and the Bible. Scientists no longer credit God for the Creation and religious denominations no longer credit God for the Bible. Empty walls build consensus. Contemporary worshipers are free to envision a phantom God of their own imagination. Future archaeologists will ask, "What was that building, an auditorium, a car dealership, or a strip mall?"

In 1987 the thesis became a book titled, "*In Search of the Biblical Order.*" A more comprehensive second edition was published in 2012, under the same title, and a third book titled, "*Repetition in the Bible*" was published in 2016.

Over the past six years further research has located approximately 1,400 examples of Hebraic Meter in the Torah. These examples are sentences, phrases, words, numbers, genealogies, events, locations, ceremonial rubrics, and anaphora in multiples of 7s, 10s, and 12s. These literary forms reveal profound eternal order in the Bible which testifies to the presence of God on earth. The text declares greater glory to God than the heavens and the earth.

This author did not expect archaeological confirmation of Hebraic Meter in his lifetime. The Joshua Tablet confirms that the Torah was intentionally written with Hebraic Meter. It writes the word “curse” ten times with the name God in the middle of the text arranged in chiasmic order. Thus, the message and the genre of the Joshua Tablet is comparable to the text we have today.

Hebraic Meter serves at least three purposes. First, it offers internal proof that we have the original text. If we can identify the meter in the text, we must have the original text. Second, Hebraic Meter sets the Torah apart from any other ancient genre at the time it was written. Third, order in the text testifies to the God who brings glorious order to what was without form and void.

There is no evidence that anyone was even aware of Hebraic Meter in the text until it was first identified by Hebrew scholar Moshe David Umberto Cassuto (d. Jerusalem, Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>, 1951). The discovery of the Joshua Tablet confirms that Israelites at the time of the Exodus were aware of Hebraic Meter in the Torah and incorporated it into their worship liturgy.

Rather than locating God in the Egyptian cult of the dead, Israel located God on its written scrolls inside the Ark of the Covenant. Unlike Noah’s Ark, which saved the people in the Ark, Israel’s Ark saved the people outside the Ark. Noah’s Ark was 300 cubits long and the circumference of the Tabernacle was 300 cubits.

The curses in the Joshua Tablet at Mount Ebal are on those who ignore the Torah, and the blessings at Mount Gerizim are on those who believe and obey the Torah. Today, this applies to those who believe and obey the entire Bible, not just to the first five books (cf. Revelation 22:18-19).

The Joshua Tablet confirms that Christ’s sacrifice on the cross took place according to the sacrificial laws established by Moses. Man lives by the word of God.

*"And He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD." (Deut. 8:3 NASB)*

*"But He answered and said, 'It is written, Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" (Matt. 4:4 NASB)*

Thirty-five hundred years after Deuteronomy 27 was written archaeologists found the list of curses, not the blessings. This warning to the world is just as relevant today as it was then.

The Joshua seal cannot be opened and is read only with specialized x-ray equipment which is available in Czechoslovakia and can penetrate lead. It reminds us of seals in the Book of Revelation that cannot be opened until the time of end.

The Joshua Tablet is the only known artifact from the Exodus and locates the people, the events, and the Torah in human history.

*"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (Isa 40:8 NASB).*