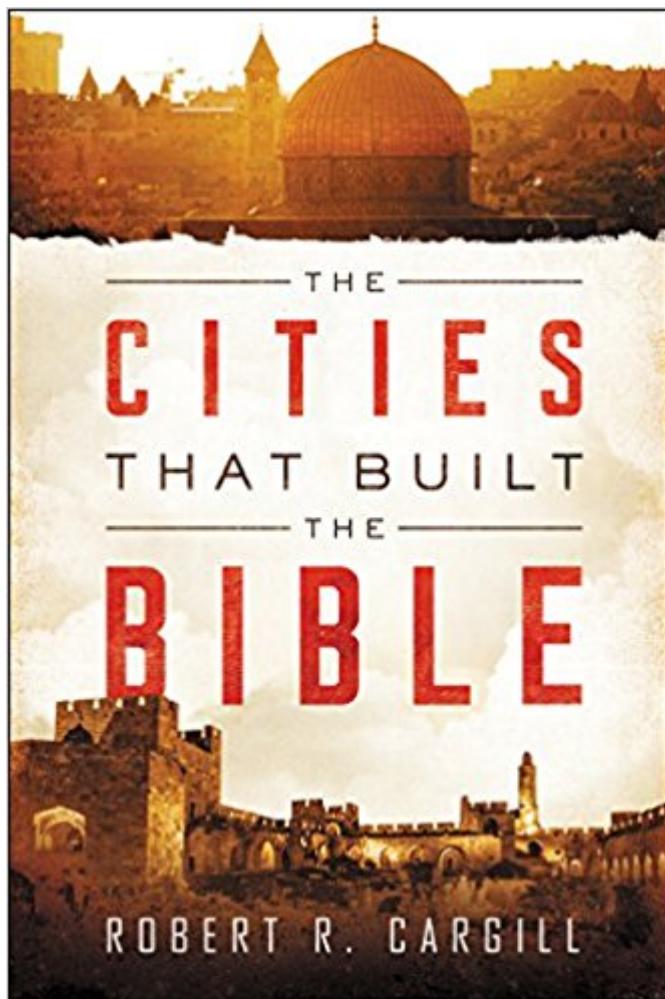


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# The Cities That Built The Bible



## Synopsis

For many, the names Bethlehem, Babylon, and Jerusalem are known as the setting for epic stories from the Bible featuring rustic mangers, soaring towers, and wooden crosses. What often gets missed is that these cities are far more than just the setting for the Bible and its characters—they were instrumental to the creation of the Bible as we know it today. Robert Cargill, Assistant Professor of Classics and Religious Studies at the University of Iowa, is an archeologist, Bible scholar, and host of numerous television documentaries, such as the History Channel series *Bible Secrets Revealed*. Taking us behind-the-scenes of the Bible, Cargill blends archaeology, biblical history, and personal journey as he explores these cities and their role in the creation of the Bible. He reveals surprising facts such as what the Bible says about the birth of Jesus and how Mary’s Virgin Birth caused problems for the early church. We’ll also see how the God of the Old Testament was influenced by other deities, that there were numerous non-biblical books written about Moses, Jacob, and Jesus in antiquity, and how far more books were left out of the Bible than were let in during the messy, political canonization process. *The Cities That Built the Bible* is a magnificent tour through fourteen cities: the Phoenicia cities of Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos, Ugarit, Nineveh, Babylon, Megiddo, Athens, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Qumran, Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Rome. Along the way, Cargill includes photos of artifacts, dig sites, ruins, and relics, taking readers on a far-reaching journey from the Grotto of the Nativity to the battlegrounds of Megiddo, from the towering Acropolis of Athens to the caves in Qumran where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. An exciting adventure through time, *The Cities That Built the Bible* is a fresh, fascinating exploration that sheds new light on the Bible.

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## Customer Reviews

“Cargill serves the reader as both an expert guide and teacher. As a geographical, historical and archaeological approach to the formation of the Bible, he delves into difficult topics with humor and ease and without seeming to pander to any particular audience. Well worth reading.” (Biblical Archeology) “An engaging journey into the Bible and archaeology from a new perspective: instead of starting with kings, prophets, or texts, the author starts with ancient cities in which so much was born - all the while combined with a lively personal account that puts flesh and bones on the tale.” (Richard Elliott Friedman, Th.D. author of *The Bible with Sources Revealed*) “Behind the pages of the book most revered by Jews and Christians, Cargill transports readers to these ancient locales, illuminating the municipal dynamics that shaped the Bible. Readers skeptical and pious will learn much here about the history and archaeology of the Bible.” (Booklist) “A compelling read. Cargill captures the excitement of different times and places as he narrates the history of the major events and influences that derive from each location. For the interested layperson wanting an up-to-date introduction to biblical studies, this is the book to read.” (Eric M. Meyers, Ph.D. Bernice and Morton Lerner Emeritus Professor in Judaic Studies, Duke University) “With heartfelt sincerity and timely humor, Cargill possesses the historical knowledge, command of biblical languages, and archaeological expertise necessary to successfully communicate the tale of the Bible.” “With a passion that highlights his love for the biblical world.” (Oded Lipschits, Ph.D. Professor of Jewish History and Director of the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology at Tel Aviv University) “The most original and entertaining approach to telling the story of the Bible that I’ve seen. This is both a delight to read and reliable in its scholarship. Anyone who wants to know how recent archaeological discoveries have revolutionized our understanding of the Bible should read this book.” (William Schniedewind, Ph.D. Kershaw Professor of Ancient Eastern Mediterranean Studies at UCLA and author of *How the Bible Became a Book*) “Professor Robert Cargill is among the world’s most capable and impressive biblical scholars and archaeologists. *The Cities that Built the Bible* is without peer. Scholars and enlightened laypeople will want to have this volume in their personal libraries.” (Christopher Rollston, Ph.D. George Washington University, Dept. of Classical and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) “In an appealing narrative full of interesting discussions and asides, Cargill

takes the reader on a journey over the lands and through the pages of the Bible. A must read for anyone wanting to learn more about the Old and New Testaments...and the cities that built them. (Eric H. Cline, Ph.D., Professor of Classics and Anthropology, George Washington University) "Woven through with insightful scholarship, humor, and the warmth of his own personal experience, Cargill will take you under the ground, into a cistern, across a border, and into closely-guarded archives to see things you'd never otherwise see, which allows you to see the Bible itself in new ways." (James F. McGrath, Ph.D. Clarence L. Goodwin Chair in New Testament Language and Literature, Butler University) "A riotous gazetteer, one filled with astute observations about the literal and figurative building materials that biblical authors mined from key cities of the ancient world. Readers will happily accompany their learned tour guide as they reconsider Near Eastern influence on the Bible and perceive its text from new perspectives." (David Vanderhoof, Ph.D. Boston College) "Cargill is a lucid and expert tour-guide, taking us from city to city to explain how and why the Bible is an extraordinary product of its material and urban contexts. The people, places, and peculiarities of ancient West Asia come alive in this exhilarating tour of the biblical past." (Francesca Stavrakopoulou, D.Phil, Professor of Hebrew Bible & Ancient Religion, University of Exeter) "After three decades of books that discuss how the Bible came into being, we have something new! Rather than focusing on textual or compositional history, Cargill explains the social settings that gave rise to the sacred books. Accessible and engaging critical reading for all students of the Bible. Highly recommended." (Andrew G. Vaughn, Ph.D. Executive Director, American Schools of Oriental Research) "In a compelling narrative that sparkles with life, Cargill takes his readers on a thrilling tour through the cities that built the Bible. The expert guide leaves his readers longing for more. A wonderful way to deepen your knowledge of the Biblical writings, their historical context and the ancient world." (Mark Goodacre, D.Phil., New Testament Scholar and Professor at Duke University's Department of Religion) "Cargill uses archaeology, literature, and personal experience to help readers contextualize the biblical Mediterranean and gain a firm hold on the topography of the Old Testament and the New Testament. By tying the literature to the geography, Cargill has provided a fascinating, dynamic map for readers to navigate with." (Sarah E. Bond, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Classics at the University of Iowa) "Catapults the reader from place to place in the ancient Near East and Mediterranean, and along the journey, the Bible comes to life as a real and complicated mess of texts written by humans with a variety of agendas. Eminently readable. Totally down to earth. And very much fun." (Kara Cooney, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Egyptian Art and Architecture, UCLA)

Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures)“Mr. Cargill has done a great service for the field of religious studies. It is a new approach--examining the Bible from the perspective of its cities. After reading it, you may want to take a trip to visit some of these ancient sites and cities yourself.” (Association for Mormon Letters)

For many, the names Bethlehem, Babylon, and Jerusalem are known as the setting for epic stories from the Bible, featuring holy mountains, soaring towers, and wooden crosses. What often gets missed is that these cities are far more than just the setting for the Bible and its characters—they were instrumental to the creation of the Bible as we know it today. Robert Cargill, assistant professor of classics and religious studies at the University of Iowa, is an archaeologist, Bible scholar, and host of numerous television documentaries, including the History channel series *Bible Secrets Revealed*. Taking us behind the scenes of the Bible, Cargill blends archaeology, biblical history, and his personal journey as he explores these cities and their role in the creation of the Bible. He reveals surprising facts, such as what the Bible says about the birth of Jesus and how Mary’s virgin birth caused problems for the early church. Cargill also reveals how the God of the Old Testament was influenced by other deities; that there were numerous nonbiblical books written about the patriarchs, Jesus, and the apostles in antiquity; and how far more books were left out of the Bible than were allowed in during the messy canonization process. *The Cities That Built the Bible* is a magnificent tour through fourteen cities: the Phoenician cities of Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos; Ugarit; Nineveh; Babylon; Megiddo; Athens; Alexandria; Jerusalem; Qumran; Bethlehem; Nazareth; and Rome. Along the way, Cargill includes photos of artifacts, dig sites, ruins, and relics, taking readers on a far-reaching journey from the Grotto of the Nativity to the battlefields of Megiddo, from the towering Acropolis of Athens to the caves near Qumran where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. An exciting adventure through time, *The Cities That Built the Bible* is a fresh, fascinating exploration that sheds new light on the Bible. *Excavating the History of the Bible*’s Greatest Cities“An engaging journey into the Bible and archaeology from a new perspective: instead of starting with kings, prophets, or texts, Cargill starts with ancient cities combined with a lively personal account that puts flesh and bones on the tale.”Richard Elliott Friedman, Th.D., author of *The Bible with Sources Revealed*“Cargill captures the excitement of different times and places as he narrates the history of the major events and influences that derive from each location. A compelling read.”Eric M. Meyers, Ph.D., Bernice and Morton Lerner Emeritus Professor in Judaic Studies at Duke University“Both a delight to read and reliable in its scholarship.”

Anyone who wants to know how recent archaeological discoveries have revolutionized our understanding of the Bible should read this book. •William Schniedewind, Ph.D., Kershaw Chair of Ancient Eastern Mediterranean Studies at UCLA and author of *How the Bible Became a Book* “Cargill is a lucid and expert tour guide, explaining how and why the Bible is an extraordinary product of its material and urban contexts. The people, places, and peculiarities of ancient West Asia come alive in this exhilarating tour of the biblical past.” •Francesca Stavrakopoulou, D.Phil., professor of Hebrew Bible and ancient religion at the University of Exeter “In an appealing narrative full of interesting discussions and asides, Cargill takes the reader on a journey over the lands and through the pages of the Bible. A must-read.” •Eric H. Cline, Ph.D., professor of classics and anthropology at George Washington University “Cargill possesses the historical knowledge, command of biblical languages, and archaeological expertise necessary to successfully communicate the tale of the Bible’s beginnings with a passion that highlights his love for the biblical world.” •Oded Lipschits, Ph.D., professor of Jewish history and director of the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology at Tel Aviv University “Robert Cargill is among the world’s most capable and impressive biblical scholars and archaeologists. *The Cities That Built the Bible* is without peer.” •Christopher Rollston, Ph.D., associate professor of Northwest Semitic languages and literatures at George Washington University

“Cities” is a very readable book, easily accessible to readers who have little Biblical archaeology or scholarship as background. Indeed, that is its strength. For those who follow such research, there isn’t much new here. Nevertheless, “Cities” is a very well-organized compendium of information about places related to Jewish and Christian Scriptures without assuming readers are “believers,” and therefore is relevant to anyone who is interested in the two millennia leading up to and including the origins of the Christian era.

Dr Cargill has written a wonderfully researched book from a unique perspective. Having read over 150 scholarly works on the period 1000bce in preparation for my own book I became overwhelmed and bogged down by my own notes. This book has helped me see historical events more clearly. *Cities That Built the Bible* is the perfect reference work for those who have tons of research to their credit and the perfect starter book for those who are not already scholars. It is easy to read but don’t let that fool you. It should be in the library of anyone interested in the Levant of ancient times.

Funny, literate, extraordinary in scope yet readable. Best enjoyed with google earth and wikipedia.

This is an incredible book. Cargill has a talent to make information accessible, warmed by his humor and insights.

An eye opener for those of us whose vision has been glassed over by religious rituals and words without understanding. Finally some meaning to the historical Bible in a clear path with studious reference easy to follow.

This book contains a wealth of information that clarifies the origins and histories of the world's most precious library. It is a must read for serious Bible scholars. I recommend it to all who preach the Good News and are willing to accept serious inquiry into the history of humanity.

Wonderful book. Easy to read. Made me go read other works cited by Cargill. Never liked history, but this book has me reading about BCE and enjoying it. Book arrived in 4 days with regular shipping.

I'm only about a third of the way through this book, but find it remarkably informative. Knowing which cities and areas contributed to the Bible, and how they contributed to its formation is fascinating. I'm looking forward to the rest of the story.

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