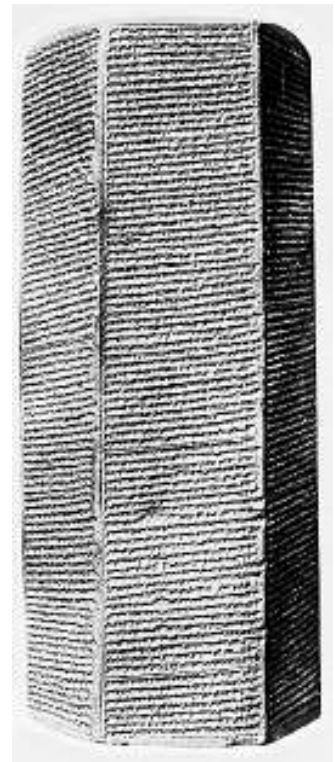


### ***Archaeological Spotlight: The Prism of Sennacherib:***

**The Prism of Sennacherib.** This artifact is also known as the *Taylor Prism*. It was found in Nineveh. Events recorded on the prism imply that it was carved in 686 BC. It reports the attack and siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib. These events are related in detail in **2 Kings 18:17-19:37**. The writer of **2 Kings** states that Jerusalem was put under siege by Sennacherib's army. After preparing the defenses of the city, King Hezekiah prayed to God for deliverance. As described in **2 Kings**, that night the army of Sennacherib was slain by an angel of the Lord, who slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers, and Sennacherib retreated back to Assyria. The account of the siege as recorded on the Sennacherib cylinder is as follows:

*“As for Hezekiah the Judahite, who did not submit to my yoke: forty-six of his strong walled cities, as well as the small towns in their area, which were without number, by leveling with battering-rams and by bringing up siege-engines, and by attacking and storming them on foot, by mines, tunnels and breeches, I besieged and took them.” (Sennacherib’s Prism).*

*“(Hezekiah) himself, like a caged bird I shut up in Jerusalem, his royal city...I added to the former tribute, and I laid upon him the surrender of their land and imposts – gifts for majesty. As for Hezekiah, the terrifying splendor of my majesty overcame him...To pay tribute and to accept servitude, he dispatched his messengers.” (Sennacherib’s Prism).*



***The Prism of Sennacherib***  
(c. 686 BC), reporting the siege of Jerusalem by King Sennacherib and the tribute paid by Hezekiah recorded in **2 Kings 18-19**.

**Significance of the Find:** The Prism is dated to approximately **689 B.C.** and contains in its text the annals of King Sennacherib, son of Sargon II, one of the kings of Assyria who reigned from **701-681 B.C.** The Prism is believed to have been excavated from the mound at Kuyunjik, at the modern location of Mosul, Iraq, and was purchased by the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago where it has resided since 1919.

The significance of Sennacherib’s prism to Bible believer cannot be overstated. The object corroborates in several particulars the Biblical account of Assyria’s invasion of Judah, and subsequent siege of the city of Jerusalem. This siege took place during the reign of King Hezekiah, who reigned in Jerusalem from approximately **728 to 699 B.C.** (This event is recorded in the Old Testament in **2 Kings, chapters 18 and 19**).

**The Scriptural Record:** Concerning King Hezekiah, the inspired record says: *“Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel. There was no king like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. He held fast to the Lord and did not cease to follow him; he kept the commands the Lord had given Moses. And the Lord was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him.”* (**2 Kings 18:5-7**, NIV).

And again, *“In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah’s reign, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them.”* (**2 Kings 18:13**).

*“So Hezekiah king of Judah sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: ‘I have done wrong. Withdraw from me, and I will pay whatever you demand of me.’ The king of Assyria exacted from Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the temple of the Lord and in the treasuries of the royal palace.”* (**2 Kings 18:13-15**).

What is understandably absent from Sennacherib’s account of the campaign is that in the continued siege of the city, the hand of the Lord intervened: *“That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning – there were all the dead bodies! So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there.”* (**2 Kings 19:35-36**).

Surely if Sennacherib had actually defeated and captured Hezekiah, it would have been mentioned on the cylinder. Apparently, both **2 Kings** and those who recorded Sennacherib's accomplishments agree that he put siege to Jerusalem, but that he left Canaan without overcoming Jerusalem.