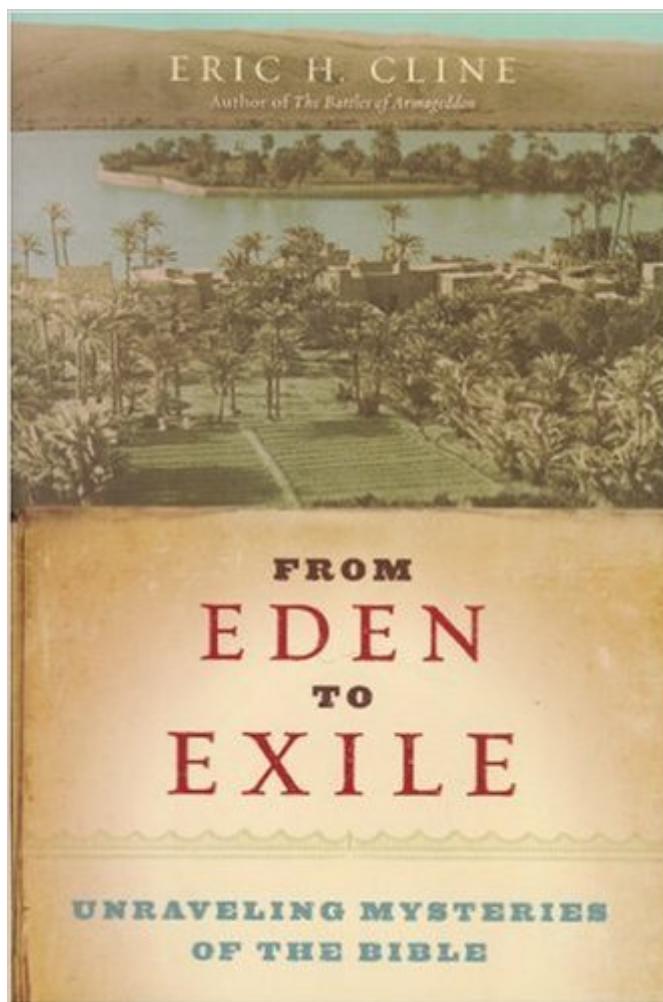


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From Eden To Exile: Unraveling Mysteries Of The Bible



Synopsis

Eric H. Cline uses the tools of his trade to examine some of the most puzzling mysteries from the Hebrew Bible and, in the process, to narrate the history of ancient Israel. Combining the academic rigor that has won the respect of his peers with an accessible style that has made him a favorite with readers and students alike, he lays out each mystery, evaluates all available evidence; from established fact to arguable assumption to far-fetched leap of faith; and proposes an explanation that reconciles Scripture, science, and history. Numerous amateur archaeologists have sought some trace of Noah's Ark to meet only with failure. But, though no serious scholar would undertake such a literal search, many agree that the Flood was no myth but the cultural memory of a real, catastrophic inundation, retold and reshaped over countless generations. Likewise, some experts suggest that Joshua's storied victory at Jericho is the distant echo of an earthquake instead of Israel's sacred trumpets; a fascinating, geologically plausible theory that remains unproven despite the best efforts of scientific research. Cline places these and other Biblical stories in solid archaeological and historical context, debunks more than a few lunatic-fringe fantasies, and reserves judgment on ideas that cannot yet be confirmed or denied. Along the way, our most informed understanding of ancient Israel comes alive with dramatic but accurate detail in this groundbreaking, engrossing, entertaining book by one of the rising stars in the field.

Book Information

Hardcover: 256 pages

Publisher: National Geographic (June 19, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1426200846

ISBN-13: 978-1426200847

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 0.9 x 9.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (35 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #655,960 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #849 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Criticism & Interpretation > Old Testament #3125 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Old Testament #138936 in Books > Religion & Spirituality

Customer Reviews

I just finished Eric H. Cline's book From Eden to Exile: Unraveling Mysteries of the Bible. It

examines seven "mysteries" of the Hebrew Bible from an archaeological perspective. Mr. Cline is a biblical archaeology scholar and is the associate director of an ongoing excavation in Meggido (the biblical Armageddon) in Israel. The book is aimed at the interested layman and his writing style is very readable and easy to understand. His treatment of the various mysteries in the Hebrew Bible is short but informative. While I question some of his positions, on the whole the book is a great resource and I recommend it to everyone. The seven mysteries his book tackles are: 1) The Garden of Eden 2) Noah's Ark 3) Sodom and Gomorrah 4) Moses and the Exodus 5) Joshua and the Battle of Jericho 6) The Ark of the Covenant 7) The Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. What's surprising in his book is his acknowledgement and treatment of crackpots. I'm used to scholars ignoring works by the lunatic fringe, for even acknowledging their theories gives them too much credibility. Not with Cline's book. In each of the mysteries, he enumerates both sober and fantastical ideas, challenging them for their consistency with the archaeological record. His dismissal of some fringe works can be acerbic, but not unwarranted as most of these "theories" get more media attention and gives genuine research a bad name. I won't go into detail on each of the mysteries (go out and buy a copy if you want to know more!) but I will have to nitpick on his chapter about the Ark of the Covenant. I think he gives too much credibility with the biblical claim that King Josiah rediscovered the Ark (p.).

Eric Cline, who has served as a consultant to National Geographic's "Science of the Bible" series, has written a great book for the layman who's curious about a scholarly perspective on the bible. More beginner-oriented than "The Bible Unearthed," "From Eden to Exile" explores 7 "mysteries" of the bible: *The Garden of Eden- There have been theories that the Eden story has a kernel of truth to it. Many archaeologists have tried to locate the Garden of Eden, in places from Iraq to Missouri, but no hypothesis has ever gained wide acceptance in the archaeological community. We'll probably never find the Garden of Eden outside the bible. *Noah's Ark- Expeditions are launched every year to locate Noah's Ark, but none of them have panned out. Cline wonders why no one is looking for the ark in Gilgamesh or the other ancient flood stories. Contrary to what many think, the bible never says that the Ark landed on Mt. Ararat, only on "the mountains of Ararat," which is much more vague. *Sodom and Gomorrah- Many attempts have been made to locate the cities, but none have succeeded definitively. If the flood story is purely mythical, then quite frankly, it's all moot. *Moses & The Exodus- Cline notes that the story of Moses' birth, flight, and discovery is probably a foundation myth, similar to Sargon of Akkad, Romulus and Remus, and Cyrus the Great. How much truth is there to the Exodus story? We don't know, and probably never will. Efforts to pin down the Pharaoh who would have been alive during the Exodus have not succeeded, nor have

efforts to locate archaeological evidence for a mass exodus. Egyptian scriptural evidence for such an event is not to be had.

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