

Geomagnetism and Biblical Dates

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Is the history of the Old Testament real? Some would say it is just a collection of stories compiled later that jumbled history and romanticized a bunch of fables. A study published in October, 2022 provides another example where modern scientific technology provides evidence of the accuracy of Biblical history.

The earth's magnetic field is not constant but has varied through time. It has at times completely reversed and even in historic times it has varied in its strength and orientation. Any measurable property that has varied through time can be used as a clock or calendar. Iron contained within volcanic rocks solidified in the orientation of the magnetic field when they cooled. Volcanic rocks aren't the only materials that have been really hot and cooled. Archaeomagnetism uses the magnetic intensity and orientation of iron that was frozen in orientation when items such as bricks or ceramics cooled. One has to appreciate the large amount of work that has gone into developing the standards to calibrate the measurements.

Vaknin, et al. 2022 applied this technique in investigating a series of sites in the Near East that represent different deposits related to ancient military campaigns. The chronology and locations tie well to the Biblical narrative and to other discoveries that have been made. The result is a more complete understanding of Biblical military campaigns. As stated in a Biblical Archaeology Review article, "This allowed them to pin down the dates for several biblical wars

and campaigns, including those of Shishak (1 Kings 14:25), Hazael (2 Kings 12:1), Jehoash (2 Kings 14:11), Tiglath-Pileser III (2 Kings 15:29), Sennacherib (2 Kings 18-19), and Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25)." (Steinmeyer, 2022}

Here are some points to notice from this work:

1. This supports the view that the Bible records actual historical events. Compare this for instance to the Book of Mormon where there is no archaeological support at all.
2. This work helps to develop a more complete understanding of the events in the Bible and thus can provide for a better interpretation of the text.
3. This shows another example where scientific methods are complementary with other studies. The best results come from integrating all of the available methods to provide an integrated picture. These include archaeological discoveries such as manuscripts and tablets, radiocarbon dating, and now archaeomagnetism.
4. Some Christians who doubt science's age of the Earth also reject radiocarbon dating and the evidence that the Earth's magnetic field has varied and reversed over time. This is another study that shows that these datasets, when used appropriately are consistent with God's revelation in scripture. It would be inappropriate to use them when they support our viewpoint and conveniently reject them when they do not.

It is also true that demonstrating that the Bible records actual historical events does not prove that the miracles occurred or that God is real. That said, if the Biblical history were false, there would be little reason to believe that it really is a book of truth, let alone that it is God's word.

References:

Steinmeyer, N, 2022, "*Dating Biblical Wars through Magnetic Fields*", Bible Archaeological Society website, Bible History Daily, https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/ancient-cultures/ancient-israel/biblical-wars-and-archaeomagnetism/?mqsc=E4147845&dk=ZE2400ZF0&utm_source=WhatCountsEmail&utm_medium=BHDA%20Daily%20Newsletter&utm_campaign=10_28_22_Dating_Biblical_Wars

Vaknin, Y., et al., 2022, "*Reconstructing biblical military campaigns using geomagnetic field data*", PNAS, [Reconstructing biblical military campaigns using geomagnetic field data | PNAS](#)