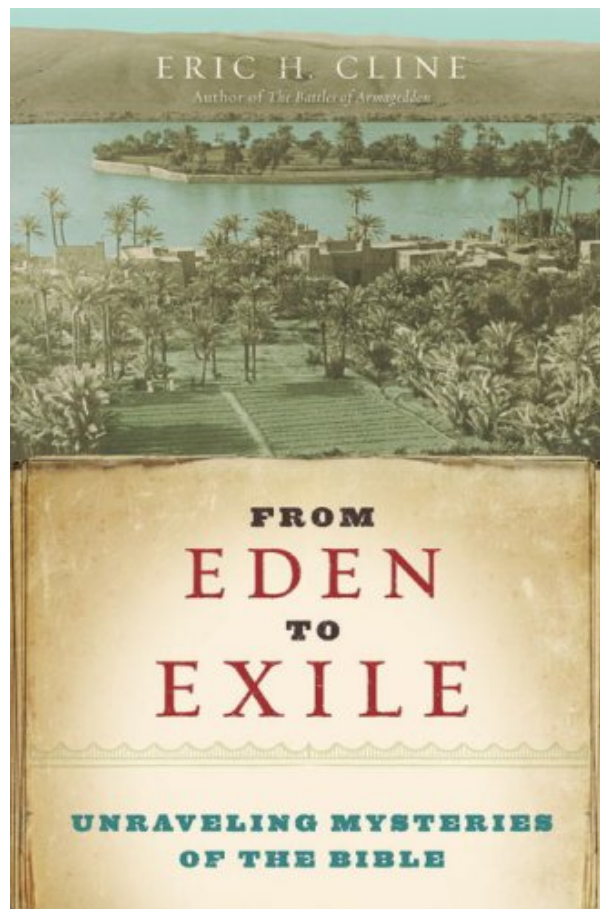
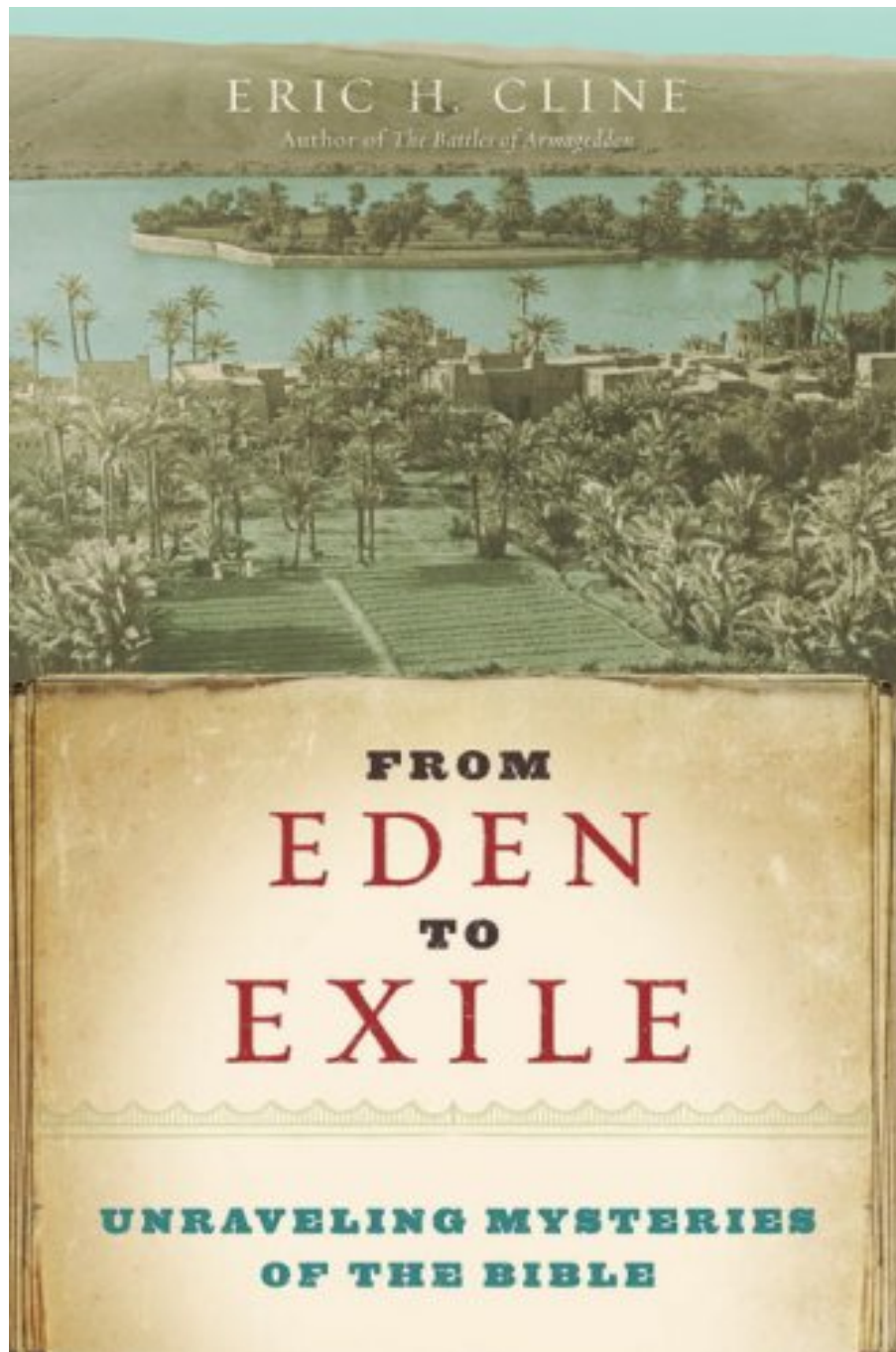


FROM EDEN TO EXILE: UNRAVELING MYSTERIES OF THE BIBLE BY ERIC H. CLINE



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Cline, a professor at George Washington University who has written several popular books on biblical studies and archaeology, here turns his attention to some of the most enduring biblical mysteries: Was there really a Garden of Eden, and if so, where was it? What happened to Noah's ark? Did the Israelites really trek through the desert for 40 years? What happened to the 10 lost tribes of Israel? These are topics that can and have filled up numerous books of their own, but what Cline intends here is a quick overview, a brisk trip through some of the great mysteries of biblical history, advancing his own theories about what happened and mentioning alternative opinions. In the final chapter, on the lost tribes, for example, after offering persuasive arguments for his opinion that most of the Jews of the time fled to Judah or intermarried with the Assyrians, who occupied the land, he then says, definitively, These people were never lost. An accessibly written introduction that will likely prompt readers to dig deeper. Cooper, Ilene

Review

"Cline's book is easy to read, as well as being authoritative."—Dallas Morning News

About the Author

Eric H. Cline holds degrees in classical archaeology, Near Eastern archaeology, and ancient history, and currently serves as chair of the Department of Classical and Semitic Languages and Literatures at George Washington University. Prolific researcher, he is the prize-winning author of seven books, including *The Battles of Armageddon: Megiddo and the Jezreel Valley from the Bronze Age to the Nuclear Age*, which won a Biblical Archaeology Society Publication Award for "Best Popular Book on Archaeology" and was a Main Selection of the Natural Science Book Club. He lives in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

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In this provocative yet persuasive book, now in paperback, 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 academic 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 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 and entertaining book by one of the rising stars in the field.

- Sales Rank: #155900 in Books
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- Dimensions: 8.98" h x .75" w x 6.02" l, .76 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 256 pages

Features

- Many interesting illustrations and Two or three maps of Holy Land.

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Most helpful customer reviews

54 of 56 people found the following review helpful.

Scholarly and eminently readable

By Janet Harris

In "From Eden to Exile," Eric H. Cline takes several library stacks' worth of biblical, archaeological and enthusiasts' ponderings on the mysteries of the Bible and delivers a highly readable, cogent explanation of their findings. Written in part as a companion piece to National Geographic Channel's television series on the same topics, this is no lightweight transcription of those shows, but rather a scholarly work of merit. Cline's writing is clear, conversational and at times witty as he weighs theories about each of these biblical mysteries against three points of evidence: biblical sources, non-biblical sources and empirical archaeology. Most impressive, however, is that "From Eden to Exile" does not simply present the data; Cline bravely delivers conclusions based on the evidence and his own well-respected expertise in the fields of ancient history and archaeology. Alternative theories by armchair archaeologists and untrained amateurs are given their due where appropriate, but Cline does not hesitate to dash unfounded notions with fact and reason. The reader is left with an unambiguous pronouncement on each of the mysteries addressed; even when the pronouncement is that the data is inconclusive, the reader clearly understands the wherefore and the why. Reading "From Eden to Exile" is like sitting in on a distinguished lecture series about the most enduring biblical and archaeological questions of the modern era.

37 of 39 people found the following review helpful.

Methodology is all important

By Walter R. Mattfeld

The single most valuable item for me is the author's explanation of the scholarly processes or methodologies which are needed to undertake any investigation. Wrong premises or presuppositions can result in wrong-headed conclusions. Cline explains these scholarly methodologies and uses them in his investigations. Subjects he addresses are: (1) The Garden of Eden; (2) Noah's Ark and the Flood; (3) Sodom and Gomorrah's location; (4) The dating of the Exodus; (5) The Fall of Jericho; (6) The Ark of the Covenant; (7) The Lost Tribes of Israel. Each of the seven has its own "problems" and he carefully notes them and attempts to come to grips with them. Are we dealing with truth or fiction? How to determine which? The book is an engrossing read and its scholarly methodologies ought to be helpful to all who are interested in these subjects.

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

Like Watching Mysteries of the Bible on TV

By Dr. Marc Axelrod

This book was published by National Geographic, and sure enough, it reads like the text for a National Geographic TV special. Eric Cline is an ancient historian and an archaeologist, and he attempts to unravel seven mysteries of the Hebrew Bible. While it would be a mistake to call Cline a biblical minimalist, he does seem to value secular and archaeological data more than the data found within the Hebrew text itself, a predilection that will color some of his conclusions.

He concludes that 1) If the Garden of Eden exists, it is probably in the southern Mesopotamian area, and perhaps at the bottom of the Persian Gulf. 2) He stresses that the Noah's ark story is a Hebrew rewrite of ancient legendary flood stories from other cultures and that the ark is probably lost forever if it ever existed, and that we should be spending an equal amount of energy searching for the arks mentioned in other Ancient Near Eastern legends as well. 3) He discusses the stories of Sodom and Gomorrah and concludes they are either lost somewhere under the Dead Sea, or that they existed along the Dead Sea and need to be further excavated. 4) He contends that the Exodus story could not have happened as the Bible portrays it because of its logistical improbabilities (2.5 million people marching through the desert for 40 years would not only be unlikely, they would have left some archaeological remains behind for us to examine). 5) While we do have some evidence of Israel in the land of Canaan as early as 1207 BC and there is some evidence that two of the Canaanite cities were overthrown and taken over by the Israelites, they were probably overthrown by the Sea Peoples, and the Israelites merely took advantage and occupied these towns. 6) The ark of the covenant was probably destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC, but if it still exists, it's probably buried under the Temple Mount. 7) The ten lost tribes of Israel were never really lost, because the kings of Assyria and Babylon only deported about 10-20% of the people. Others were moved in from the surrounding areas, and when they intermarried with the Israelites, they formed what we now know as the Samaritan people.

Cline is inclined to question the historicity of any Bible story that doesn't have corresponding evidence in the archaeological or historical records. This means that he is invariably more pessimistic about the Hebrew Bible's historicity up to the time of David than he is about the material after the time of David (though he has questions about some of this as well).

I am much more optimistic about the historicity of what we have in the Hebrew Bible narratives, and I must also say that Cline is not a biblical theologian/historian per se. But he writes well and he engages the reader throughout. He has discussions in every chapter about modern amateur archaeologists who have made unverifiable claims that they have solved and discovered some of these mysteries. He casually dismisses these claims, but he applauds their zeal. At the same time, he contends that we should only trust research performed by trained and reputable archaeologists and trained historians.

This is a very interesting book, and it should probably be read in conjunction with a book like the one edited by a reputable biblical historian, Daniel Block: "Israel: Ancient Kingdom or late Invention."

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