

of Jonah was actually encompassed in the metropolitan area of ancient Ninevah! There he found the palaces of the great kings of this nation, which terrorized most of the ancient near East for many centuries. Best of all there was found the ~~mighty~~ library of the last of its great kings, the king Ashurbanipal. A library for which this king had secured copies of most of the great literature of the Assyrian and Babylonian empire. The city of Ninevah was overcome by its enemies in 612 B.C. Much of it was burned, and other parts were destroyed. Within a few centuries the sands of the desert had covered the ruins, to so great an extent that in c. 400 B.C. when the Greeks under Xenophon in their Anabasis passed through the area where Ninevah had been, there is no evidence that anyone even remembered the great city that had once been there. The city disappeared and only the statements in the Bible preserved the memory of its greatness.

As 1 Pet. 1:24-25 declares, All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass; the grass withers and the flower falls away, but the Word of the Lord endures forever."Fortunately for us the Assyrians did not have access to a simple source of paper like a papyrus, that was available to the ancient Egyptians. Consequently they developed a very interesting system of putting their records on lumps of clay about the size of a cake of ivory soap. The writing was done with a stylus that looked somewhat like a small screw-driver. This was pressed into the clay a little more heavily on one end than on the other, so as to make a series of wedge-shaped marks. Therefore we call this writing, wedge-shaped, or cuneiform. Hundreds of thousands of these tablets have been excavated. Many of them have been taken to the museums of the western world. Scholars have studied them and have learned to read the languages of the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians. Many