

# ***DEAD SEA SCROLLS: LIFE AND FAITH IN BIBLICAL TIMES***

**At  
Discovery Times Square,  
New York City**

**(A Christian Perspective)**

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## **Introduction**

The fantastic *Dead Sea Scrolls: Life and Faith in Biblical Times* exhibition at the Discovery Times Square building in New York City is about more than just the Dead Sea Scrolls; it is about daily life in the Biblical world. The subtitle – “Life and Faith in Biblical Times” – says it all. The exhibition runs until April 15, 2012, in New York City, and then, in May 2012, it will be at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, where it will run for another five months.

The Bible is more than just another book with black (and sometimes red) letters on a page. The Bible is about real people, in real places, experiencing real events in history. Sometimes, because of our twenty-first century Western mindset and experiences, it is difficult to imagine how people lived in Biblical times. For example, the LORD metaphorically searched Jerusalem with lamps (Zeph. 1:12). When we think of a lamp, we think of a stand with a shade and a socket with an electric light bulb that illuminates when a switch is flipped. In the Biblical world there was no electricity, only olive oil and a wick to light the oil lamp. This exhibition will give you an idea of what those lamps actually looked like.

Through the exhibition you will get a glimpse into the material culture of the Biblical world and add a third dimension to your Bible study! You will also be able to experience “Oh, now I **see** [literally] what the Bible is talking about” moments!

As an archaeologist and a Bible teacher, I was fascinated by the whole exhibition, which is on loan from the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA). I was able to view some of the latest archaeological discoveries from Israel for the first time, objects that I had only read about in the newspapers or in the archaeological journals. The last time the IAA sent such a large display of antiquities to New York City was to the Metropolitan Museum of Art during the winter of 1986-87. Hopefully, it will not be another 25 years before the IAA sends another collection to the Big Apple! Let’s enjoy this one while we can.

Unless you are an archaeologist and a Bible teacher, you might not appreciate each object that is on display. Usually the explanation sign just states what the object is, its provenience (where it is from), and the time period of its existence. But how do these objects relate to life and faith in Biblical times?

There is also a brief guide book that goes along with the exhibition (Levitt-Kohn 2011), with excellent pictures and some further explanations. This booklet can be purchased at the museum store at the end of your visit.

I have written this 39-page guide to supplement the display signs and guidebook. It is written specifically for an Evangelical Christian audience, but others will find it helpful as well. The guide can be used for a self-guided tour of the exhibition by home-schooled students, Christian school classes, Bible study groups, Sunday school classes, church youth groups, and individuals who are interested in the world of the Bible.

The views expressed in this guide are my own and may not be those of the Discovery Times Square or the Israel Antiquities Authority. I wrote it to encourage people to visit this fantastic collection of Biblically related objects with the hope that after the visit a person will have a better appreciation for Biblical archaeology and how it can enhance our understanding of the peoples, places, and events in the Bible. So go, learn, and enjoy.

### **How to Use this Guide**

This guide is not exhaustive, but rather, selective. I have listed each display sign in sequential order so the viewers can locate where they are in the exhibition. I have selected objects that can illustrate the Biblical text and provided commentary for them.

My suggestion on how to use this guide would be to print out this essay and take it with you to the Dead Sea Scroll exhibit in New York City. Before you go, however, read through the guide to familiarize yourself with the objects you will see and look up the Biblical references. The displays are listed in sequential order as you walk through the galleries.

It would also be helpful to visit the exhibitions website in order to familiarize yourself with some of the objects that are on display at the site.

Website: <http://www.discoverytsx.com/exhibitions/dead-sea-scrolls>

When you visit, if your eyesight is not the best, you may want to bring a magnifying glass because some of the details on the objects that are displayed are tiny and otherwise hard to see (the ancients had far better eye-sight than we have today!). The exhibition halls are also dimly lit so you may want to consider bringing a small flashlight to read this guide.

In this guide there are links to other essays that I have written that relate to the object being viewed or issues being discussed. You may want to print them out and read them before your visit, or wait until you have seen the objects and then use them as a review. I have also provided a bibliography at the end for those who would like to follow-up on some of the objects that are discussed.

Throughout the exhibition, the presenters use BCE (Before the Common Era) and CE (Common Era) to acknowledge cultural diversity. In this guide, however, the Lord Jesus will be honored by using BC (Before Christ) and AD (*Anno Domini*, Latin for "in the year of our Lord").

I trust you will enjoy your visit as much as I did mine. My prayer is that you will glean insights into the Scriptures that will help in your walk with the Lord. Shalom, enjoy, and God bless your visit.

## **“In the Beginning”**

The first two rooms set the stage for the rest of your journey through time (Biblical History) and space (the Land of Israel). In the first room, Genesis 12:1 is written on the wall and voices states in Hebrew and English the call of Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldeans: “Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you.’”

In the second room, there are three jars that represent, in my opinion, the life and faith of the Biblical world in the three parts of this exhibition. The first jar is a LMLK storage jar that contained wine from Hebron; also known in the archaeological jargon as a “484” jar that was excavated at Lachish. It came from the destruction level of Lachish level III that was caused by Sennacherib, king of Assyria, in 701 BC. This represents the life and faith of the Israelite period recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures, or Old Testament. The second jar is a stone vessel of the Second Temple period, the time of the Lord Jesus. It was excavated in Jerusalem. This represents the life and faith during the Second Temple period and the events recorded in the Gospels and Book of Acts. The last jar is one of the storage jars from Qumran that contained some of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the centerpiece of this exhibition.

## **The Journey Begins**

- **Where Past and Future Intersect**
- **Ottoman Period (AD 1516-1917)**
- **Mamluk Period (AD 1250-1517)**
- **Crusader Kingdom (AD 1099-1291)**
- **Fatimid Period (AD 909-1171)**

The **gold brooch** (#1) was found by a student of mine named Howard from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL during a field trip to Caesarea. We were setting up our picnic lunch near the Byzantine Street with the emperor statues in March 1988. I told the students, “If you would like to look for ancient coins before lunch, go into the banana grove nearby and look for what appears to be green buttons.” I did not tell them that any coins found are usually so corroded that they easily fall apart.

Howard came back and showed me the brooch and asked if it was anything important! I replied in the affirmative and reminded him that the antiquities law required that he turn it over to the Department of Antiquities of the State of Israel. He gave it to me to turn over because they were leaving the country the next day.

I took the brooch over to the Rockefeller Museum and handed it to my friend Dr. Joe Zias, the chief anthropologist for the Department of Antiquities. He was floored. Excitedly he said, “I can’t believe it. We have an honest tourist!” I

quipped, "He better be honest; he's a seminary student!" I am glad he gave it to me to turn over to the Department of Antiquities so now you can enjoy this beautiful object.

In its original form, it was concaved and one half of a spherical wired gold bead. It is "flower-shaped: six heart-shaped petals emerge from a central stamen" (Amitai-Press 1992: 171). There was an identical half that was joined together and a string placed through the center holes. "The gold-working techniques are characteristic of earrings, necklace elements (beads and pendants) rings and pins produced in the Fatimid period," or the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD (Amitai-Press 1992: 171).

- **Early Islamic Period (AD 638-1099)**
- **Byzantine Empire (AD 325-638)**
- **Roman Empire (63 BC-AD 313)**

This **Judea Capta coin** (#2) was struck during the reign of Emperor Titus by the mint at Caesarea-by-the-Sea. It commemorated the victory of the Roman Empire over the Jewish people in Judea and Galilee who revolted from AD 66 until the revolt was finally put down in AD 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem. Masada, however, did not fall until AD 73.

General Titus, the son of Emperor Vespasian, led the Roman army in the attack and subsequent destruction of Jerusalem. Josephus, the First Century AD Jewish historian, records: "Thus was Jerusalem taken in the second year of the reign of Vespasian on the eighth of the month Gorpiaeus [September 26, AD 70]. Captured on five previous occasions, it was now for the second time devastated" (*Jewish Wars* 6.435; LCL 3:501). Coincidentally, Solomon's Temple was destroyed the same day on the Jewish calendar as Herod's Temple!

In the First century AD there were no 24/7 news broadcasts, with blow-by-blow coverage, to inform the Roman world what had taken place in Judea. The Romans, however, were very clever and used coins as a propaganda tool. Coins were something everybody handled, from the richest to the poorest. When someone got a coin that said, "Judea Capta" they understood the message: "Don't you think about revolting. If you do, we will do to you what we did to them!"

When Emperor Titus died in AD 81, he was deified by the Roman Senate and a **Triumphal Arch**, [Image] depicting his conquest of Jerusalem and deification, was constructed in his honor.

For Further Study: The Arch of Titus and the Olive Tree of Romans 11

<http://www.lifeandland.org/2010/02/the-arch-of-titus-and-the-olive-tree-of-romans-11/>

After the death of Titus, his brother Domitian became emperor. He was different than Titus. He could not wait to die in order to be deified, so in AD 86, he deified himself! His coins reflect this and they were used as subtle propaganda against the Jewish people and the Christians.

For Further Study: Propaganda, Power, and the Perversion of Biblical Truths: Coins Illustrating the Book of Revelation

<http://www.lifeandland.org/2009/02/propaganda-power-and-perversion-of-biblical-truths-coins-illustrating-the-book-of-revelation/>

- **Persians, Greeks, and Hasmoneans (539-37 BC)**

There are three silver Yehud coins on display. Yehud was the name of the Persian province of Judea (Hendin 1996: 53-59). These small coins usually have the tiny Paleo-Hebrew word YHD written on them.

- **Iron Age II: Judah and Israel (1000-586 BC)**

An Iron Age house was discovered in the Western Wall excavation. The walls were preserved to a height of 2 meters. The house dates to the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. It was located about 100 meters from the Temple Mount. A **stamp seal** was found in the house with the name “**Belonging to Netanyahu, son of Yaush**” (#1) on it. This seal, made of semi-precious stone and elliptical in shape, measured about 1.1 cm x 1.4 cm. It is divided into three panels. The top one has four pomegranates in it, the bottom two, the names of the son and his father. Both names are known from the ancient sources. Netanyahu is mentioned in the Bible (1 Chron. 25:12; 2 Chron. 17:8; Jer. 36:14; 40:8; 41:9). Yaush is found on the Lachish letters (*ANET* 322). Unfortunately the two names do not appear together so identification with a person mentioned in the Bible can not be made.

These four **clay bullae** were discovered in a private house near the Gihon Spring dating to the 9<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. They include a Phoenician ship (#1); a large fish with a fisherman in a boat (#2); a winged figure with the cartouche of Thutmose III (#3); and humans (#4; Reich, et. al. 2007: 154-157; Reich 2011: 210-219). The Elad Foundation should be commended for investing time and money into this important wet-sifting project that recovered these, and other objects. Otherwise, they would be lost to history forever! [For other bullae from this house, see the **Sign of Royalty** display].

A jar handle from Tel el-Hamma with an inscription that has the name **Ahab** on it and it dates to the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC.

**Ivory plaque from Hazor**

**Bet David (House of David) stele** from Tel Dan [Image]. The fragments of this Aramaic stele were found during the 1993 and 1994 seasons in the piazza in front of the outer Israelite city-gate. The stele, dating to the 9 century BC, mentions the “house of David” and includes portions of the names of King Jehoram (of Israel) and King Amaziah (of Judah). This is the first, and earliest, time the name of King David appears in an extra-Biblical text.

- **Iron Age I – The Early Israelites (1200-1000 BC)**

The **Merneptah Victory Stele** [Image] was excavated by Sir Flinders Petrie in 1896 at Thebes in Egypt. This black granite stele was inscribed by Pharaoh Merneptah, who reigned from 1213 to 1203 BC, to commemorate his victory over the Libu and the Libyans. It also commemorated an earlier defeat of

Ashkelon, Gezer, Yanoem and Israel. This may be the first mention of Israel in the Land of Canaan and shows it was an established political force in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century BC.

- **Israelite Beginning**

Genesis 12:2

A large **decorated pithos** (#3) was found in an Iron Age 1 pit in Area A-4 at the northern city of Hazor (1200-1000 BC). Hazor is the largest archaeological site in the land of Israel. It is 200 acres in size and consists of an Upper City (acropolis) and Lower City. This vessel was used for storing grain. It has in relief on the side an ibex with a bird above it. The ibex, or mountain goat, is known for its long, curving horns and is mentioned four times in the Scriptures (1 Sam. 24:2; Job 39:1; Ps. 104:18; Prov. 5:19). On the rim of the vessel is what appears to be a paw of an animal, possibly a lion. Most likely it was kept by the individual who threw the pithos into the pit in the Iron 1 period.

### The Israelite “Four-Room House”

“Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established” (Prov. 24:3).

Most of the houses that were built during the Iron Age were the typical Israelite “Four Room House” (Levitt-Kohn 2011: 10). This rectangular house would have an entrance to a long, open-aired courtyard with two roofed-over long rooms on either side, as well as a roofed-over broad room in the back. Interestingly, the tombs (the “eternal home” – Eccl. 12:5) were patterned after the earthly home (Franz 2002: 85-91).

For Further Study: “At Home in Death”: An Archaeological Exposition of Psalm 49:11

<http://www.lifeandland.org/2009/02/%e2%80%9cat-home-in-death%e2%80%9d-an-archaeological-exposition-of-psalm-4911/>

- **Building Stones**

These stones were from an ancient house that was built in the City of David. Houses usually had stone foundations with mud-brick walls and wooden beams with thatched roofs overlaid with mud and grass growing on top (Ps. 129:6; Isa. 37:27).

- **Vessels Used in Household Activities**

The **storage vessels** (far left) are used to store grains or liquids. The **cooking pots** (#4 left of oil lamps) are used to cook the meal. The **kraters** (#5 left) are used to serve the meal with a ladle. The **bowls** (#5 far right) are used to eat from. The best way to remember these four vessels are their functions from the field to the table. All these vessels have to do with food preparation. The grain is harvested, the olive oil is pressed, and the grapes are pressed to begin fermentation. The figs, raisins, grain, olive oil, wine, etc. are placed in **storage vessels**. As the food is needed, it is taken out of the storage vessels and

prepared over a fire in **cooking pots**. From there, the food is placed in **kraters** and put on the dining room table. Each individual had a **bowl** from which to eat their meal.

On the floor are **oil lamps** (#4). These lamps were made from saucers that had their sides pinched to form a nozzle. Olive oil was poured into the bowl, a wick placed into the spout, and lit to provide light. The Prophet Zephaniah had these kinds of oil lamps in mind when he stated: “And it shall come to pass at that time that I [the LORD] will search Jerusalem with lamps, and punish the men who are settled in complacency, who say in their heart, ‘The LORD will not do good, nor will He do evil’” (1:12).

The **jar with three handles and a spout** has a small juglet in the spout (#5 center). An Israelite widow was in debt and the creditors were about to take her two sons and make them slaves. The Prophet Elisha asked her what she had in her house. She replied all she had was a **juglet with olive oil** in it. [The vessel being spoken of in this passage is about the size of the one on the three handled jar]. Elisha instructed her to gather all the empty vessels, probably storage vessels, and pour the oil from that small juglet into those vessels. She poured the oil from the small juglet into the empty vessels until she ran out of vessels, then the oil stopped. This miraculous intervention by the Lord provided the funds to pay off her debt and she and her sons could live on the income from the rest (2 Kings 4:1-7). Little is much when God is in the picture!

The **cooking pot** (#4 left of oil lamps) was placed over a fire to make stew. Sometimes wood was used for the fire, other times *Poterium* shrubs were used for a quick, hot fire. Solomon wrote, “For like the crackling of thorns [*seerim* in Hebrew, the *Poterium* shrub] under a [cooking] pot, so is the laughter of the fool” (Eccl. 7:6; Hareuveni 1984: 66-68).

The **basalt grinding stone** (#2) was used to grind wheat grain into flour in order to make bread. The grinding process is very laborious and time consuming. The description of the “virtuous woman” in Prov. 31 states: “She also rises while it is yet night, and provides food for her household and a portion for her maidservants. ... She girds herself with strength, and strengthens her arms” (31:15, 17). The grinding process will build up the arm muscles, as well as back muscles. Who needs to go to the gym when daily household chores will get your muscles in shape!

The **loom weights** from Lachish (#3) were used in the weaving of cloth and rugs.

- **Beauty and Luxury**

The limestone **cosmetic bowls** (#1) are from Hazor, Megiddo, and Arad. Usually eye-lash liner or some other skin coloring is placed in the bowl, a metal eye-lash liner is dipped into the bowl, and the liner is applied to the eyes. Queen Jezebel would have used something like this to apply her make-up (2 Kings 9:30; cf. also Jer. 4:30; Ezek. 23:40).

The **decorated bone handle** (#3) is from Hazor and dates to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. It has a deer grazing on the handle that is probably from the handle of a mirror.

In Isa. 3, the prophet lists a number of luxury items worn by the people of Jerusalem and condemns the people for their haughtiness (3:15-26). The people were more concerned with their outward adornment and appearance, rather than their walk with the Lord. The Apostle Peter addressed a similar issue in his day (1 Pet. 3:1-6).

- **Monumental Architecture**

Yigal Shiloh reports that the **limestone proto-aeolic capital** from Samaria (#W1 left) “was found in secondary use, southeast of the acropolis” along with two other capitals (1979:7). The other two proto-aeolic capitals (#W1 center and right) on display are from Megiddo.

One is reminded of the words of the Prophet Isaiah when he spoke of the reaction of the leadership in Samaria after a magnitude 8.2 earthquake hit the Middle East in the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century BC (Austin, Franz, and Frost 2000: 657-671). “The LORD sent a word against Jacob, and it has fallen on Israel. All the people will know – Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria – who says in pride and arrogance of heart: ‘The bricks have fallen down, but we will rebuild them with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will replace them with cedars’” (9:8-10). In other words, after the earthquake, the people of Samaria will rebuild their palaces and construct them bigger and better than before! The Prophet Amos predicted this earthquake two years before it happen (1:1). The earthquake was judgment on the Northern Kingdom’s pride and arrogance which produced social injustices. The Prophet Isaiah points to the pride of Judah as the cause of the earthquake as well (2:10-22).

- **Literacy in Ancient Israel**

The ancient Judeans could read and write. This is reflected by the large corpus of inscriptions found in archaeological excavations and the **abecedary from Lachish** (#1). This was probably a school boy’s homework as he practiced his ABC’s. The literacy of the people and their ability to read is also reflected in the Biblical records (Deut. 17:19; 31:11-19; 2 Kings 5:7; 19:14; 22:8, 10, 16; 23:2; Isa. 28:9-13; 29:11-12).

Letters were usually written on papyrus which was expensive. So as not to waste papyrus, the scribe practiced writing his letter on a potsherd, called an ostrakon (singular, ostraca is plural). Fortunately for the archaeologist, the ostrakon does not disintegrate or burn like papyrus, so they can be found in an archaeological excavation.

Archaeologists are always excited about finding inscriptions because that is how the ancients in the past can communicate with us in the present. We can learn much from these inscriptions. Sometimes they are historical inscriptions, other times religious in nature, still other times they are legal documents or economic texts.

At Tel Arad, a Judean fortress in the Eastern Negev Basin, over 80 Hebrew ostraca were discovered in the archaeological excavations conducted by Prof. Yohanan Aharoni in the 1960’s. Three of them are exhibited here.

**Arad Inscription #1** [Image]. Translation: “To Eliashib: And now, give the Kittiyim 3 baths of wine, and write the name of the day. And from the rest of the first flour, send one homer of flour in order to make bread for them. Give them the wine from the aganouth vessels” (Aharoni 1981: 12-14). The three essentials of life: Grain, oil, and wine, are mentioned in this inscription. The LORD promised these three foodstuffs if they were obedient to His commandments (Deut. 11:13-15).

**Arad Inscription #10.** (#4) Translation: “To Eliashib, and now: Give the Kittiyim 1 bath of wine and 200 loaves of bread. And one sealed jar of oil to Ben Obadiah, send in the hands of the Kittiyim.”

Eliashib is the commander of the garrison at Arad. He is sending wine, bread and olive oil with the Kittiyim, Greek mercenaries from Cyprus that are fighting in the Judean army, to the son of Obadiah, the commander of the fortress that will receive the supplies from the Kittiyim. This inscription dates to the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC (Aharoni 1981:24-25).

**Arad Inscription #60.** (#5) Translation: “As all ... I took (or weighed) 2+25 hekats. Shebanyahu 1. Mikneyahu, give to Gabriyahu 6.”

Hekats is a grain measure, so this must be referring to weighing out wheat or barley to certain individuals (Aharoni 1981:90).

- **Belonging to the King**

The 18 LMLK **storage jars** shown along the wall probably contain wine from the royal vineyards of King Hezekiah. The jars contained the supplies sent to the soldiers of the Judean garrisons defending Judah from the Assyrians at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.

These jars have four handles and are stamped with a seal impression that has a four-winged scarab or a two-winged disc. Above is the word “LMLK” (pronounced *La'melekh*) and is translated “belonging to the king.” Below is usually the name of one of four cities: Hebron (#1; Josh. 15:54), Ziph (Josh. 15:55), Socchoh (#2; Josh. 15:48), and MMST (*Mameshat*). These cities are located in the Hill country of Judah in areas that are famous for their vineyards (Rainey 1982:57-62). MMST is probably to be identified with Ramat Rachel (Barkay 2006: 41-43), and Ziph and Sochoh are cities located south of Hebron.

The tribal territory of Judah was famous for its vineyards. In fact, when Jacob blessed Judah, he said there would be such an abundance of wine, that people would even wash their garments in it (Gen. 49:11)! The Prophet Isaiah composed a song of the vineyard that reflects the viticulture industry of Judah (Isa. 5:1-7).

If these jars are tapped, they give off a metallic sound. The reason for this sound is that the clay is fired at a very high temperature. [But please don't touch the jars!]

## **Birth of a Nation**

“And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheva, all the days of Solomon” (1 Kings 4:25 [5:5 in the Hebrew Bible]).

- **Ancient Signature** (Levitt-Kohn 2011: 19)

This display case partially illustrates the passage of King Ahab's confiscation of Naboth's vineyard. Ahab coveted the vineyard because it was near his palace in Jezreel (Ex. 20:17). He offered Naboth a better plot of land or its worth in gold or silver, but both offers were refused by Naboth because the vineyard was his family's inheritance and was not to be sold to someone else. Ahab's wife, the wicked Queen Jezebel, took matters into her own hands. She, being a Phoenician, was unaware of the Israelite laws concerning property. "She wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who were dwelling in the city with Naboth" (1 Kings 21:8).

A letter was written on parchment, rolled up and tied with string. Then a piece of clay was placed over the string and a seal impression was made on it with the owners name or symbol. This clay, when hardened, is called a bulla (singular, the plural is bullae). Private seals usually belonged to high ranking government officials.

The **seal of LHGB** (#1) was found in the Western Wall Plaza excavation in 2008. It is made of black stone, elliptical in shape, and dates to the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. It has an archer in Assyrian style, facing right, shooting a bow and arrow. The name of the owner, LHGB ("for Hagab"), is engraved to the right of the archer. The image of the archer is influenced by Assyrian reliefs that depict archers shooting arrows at their enemies. [See the archers on the image of the Lachish Reliefs in the **Conquest of Lachish** display].

More than likely, LHGB was a senior military official in the Judean army during the reign of King Manasseh. Perhaps he was part of the Judean army that was forced to march with Ashurbanipal II, king of Assyria (669-634 BC), to Egypt and participate in the conquest of that land in 667-663 BC (see also, Nahum 3:8-10). Or, maybe he was part of the Judean delegation that brought the yearly tribute from Manasseh, the king of Judah (697-642 BC), to the Assyrian king, Ashurbanipal II, at his capital in Nineveh. While there, he saw the archers on the Lachish reliefs in Sennacherib's "palace without rival" and put that on his seal.

The jar handle with the private seal impression of **Neri, son of Shebnayaw** (#3) was discovered in Area F-4 of the Jewish Quarter excavations and is dated to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC (Avigad and Barkay 2000: 248-249, no. 54).

The seal of **RPAYHU SLM** (#5) was found in the City of David excavations. On the reverse side of this seal are a bird, an (olive?) branch, and a six-rayed star (Reich 2011: 218).

The bulla with the name "of **Shaul, son of Mesulam**" (#6) was also found in the City of David.

- **Scales and Weights**

During the Iron Age, as well as before, commercial transactions were carried out by a barter system: "I'll trade you three cows for one camel!" Sometimes silver or gold was the commodity of exchange. For example, in the case of Abraham, he purchased a cave and field in Machpelah near Mamre from

Ephron the Hittite for 400 shekels of silver (Gen. 23). The shekel was not a silver coin, but rather, a measure of weight of silver. During the Iron Age, one shekel weighed 11.33 grams. Assuming the weight was the same at the time of the Patriarchs, Abraham weighed out 4,532 grams of silver. To put that into present-day perspective, the silver would be equivalent in weight to 1,717 silver dimes. A roll of dimes has fifty dimes in it, so this would be about the weight of 34 rolls of dimes.

This display case illustrates financial transactions during the Iron Age. There are **two bronze scale pans** (#1) from Achziv that were suspended from a thin beam. The buyer would place his **ingot with silver** (#3) on one side, and the seller would place his **Israelite shekel weights** (#4) on the other side until the scale was balanced. When it was, the agreed upon transaction was complete. Another example of a transaction for land is recorded in Jeremiah 32. The Prophet Jeremiah redeemed a field from his cousin Hanamel. Note the shekels of silver being weighed out on a scale (32:9-10). [For a discussion on the Judean weights, see Kletter 1991: 121-163].

The buyer hopes that the merchant he is dealing with is honest and does not have a “wicked scale” and a “bag of deceitful weights” (Micah 6:11; cf. Prov. 11:1; Hosea 12:7), but rather an “honest, or perfect and just scale” and “honest, or perfect and just weights” (Lev. 19:35-36; Deut. 25:13-16; Prov. 16:11). Those merchants who cheat their customers are considered an abomination to the LORD (Deut. 25:16; cf. Prov. 11:1; 20:10, 23).

- **Yoke of Assyria**

The Assyrians were the rod of the LORD’s anger against Israel and Judah in order to chasten His wayward people (Isa. 10:5-6). The Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and captured the capital Samaria in 721 BC. The Israelites that survived were deported to various locations in the Assyrian provinces (2 Kings 17:4-41; 18:9-12).

In the year 701 BC, the Assyrians attacked the Southern Kingdom (Judah) and conquered a number of cities, including Lachish, but could not take Jerusalem because the Angel of the LORD destroyed the Assyrian army that was laying siege to the city. When Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, got word of this defeat while he was campaigning in the Shephelah (Lowlands), he left Judah and returned to Nineveh (2 Kings 18:13-19:35).

The LORD used the Assyrians to chasten His wayward people in order to bring them back to Himself (Prov. 3:11-12; Heb. 12:3-11). The Northern Kingdom was not exercised by the chastening of the Lord, but part of the Southern Kingdom learned lessons from the North and turned to the Lord, led by the godly King Hezekiah.

- **The Conquest of Lachish**

The **conquest of Lachish** (Levitt-Kohn 2011: 15) is one of those rare events where the Biblical records (2 Kings 18:14; 19:8; Isa. 37:8), the Assyrian records, an Assyrian “photograph” (the Lachish Relief, now in the British Museum), and the actual excavation at the site, all converge to give us a full

picture of what actually took place during this event. On the Lachish Reliefs, **archers** and slingers can be seen **shooting arrows** and slinging stones at the Judeans on the walls of the city [Image]. During the excavations by James Starkey (1932-1938) and David Ussishkin (1973-1987) many **iron arrowheads** (#1) and **flint sling stones** (#W11) were found from the battle in 701 BC. For a full discussion of the conquest of Lachish, see Ussishkin 1982.

Please note the size of the sling stone. It is slightly smaller than a tennis ball. David, when he slew Goliath, probably used a stone of about this size that he picked out of the brook in the Elah Valley (1 Sam. 17:40, 49-50).

## **In the Shadows of Empires**

2 Kings 15:19-21

### **Jerusalem: Center of Worship, City of Kings**

#### **Why was Jerusalem Chosen as the Capital of Israel?**

Jerusalem is a city that is sacred to the three monotheistic religions of the world: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It has been, and remains to this day, a contested piece of real estate for two of these religions.

The Bible, history, and geography are clear: Jerusalem was chosen by the Almighty as the capital of the nation of Israel ... why? The simple answer - God's Son.

Politically and strategically there were better sites that David could have chosen to be the capital of Israel; for example, Hebron, Gibeah of Saul, Bethel, Gibeon, or Shechem. But God had Jerusalem in mind, primarily, it can be argued, for spiritual reasons. These five cities may have been geographically, militarily, and strategically better capitals for the Kingdom of Israel, yet Jebus (Jerusalem) was chosen ... why? The simple answer - God's Son.

The ancient city of Jebus, located in the tribal territory of Benjamin, is situated on the ridge above the Gihon Spring (Josh. 18:16, 28). Jebus, later named the City of David, covered a small area of approximately 10 acres (Mazar 2007:12). It was not located on the Patriarchal Highway, in fact, one had to turn off the ridge route (the Patriarchal Highway) in order to get to the city (Judges 19:10-12). The city is also isolated by steep valleys (Psalm 125:1, 2). The Kidron Valley is on the east and the Tyropean Valley (Central Valley) is on the west (Neh. 2:13). The city is isolated and in a bowl because it is surrounded by hills (Psalm 125:1, 2). Strategically and geographically, Jebus (Jerusalem) should not have been chosen the capital of Israel, yet it was ... why? The simple answer - God's Son.

There are two reasons Jerusalem was chosen the capital of Israel. The first, from David's perspective, is political. The second, from God's perspective, and more importantly, is spiritual.

David understood the geo-political realities of the tribal territory of Benjamin. The easiest and most convenient road from Jericho, and thus the

Transjordanian Plateau, to the International Coast Highway in the west was via the Central Benjamin Plateau. The tribal territory of Benjamin is lower in elevation than the territories of Judah to its south and Ephraim to its north. David wanted to keep the tribe of Benjamin on Judah's side so he could control these east-west roads and not let them fall under Ephraim's control. Eventually, David and his men were able to take the city of Jebus and he moved the capital to the city (2 Sam. 5:6-10; 1 Chron. 11:4-9).

God chose to place His name in Jerusalem because of the two events that transpired in the city that are recorded in the book of Genesis. Both events foreshadow the Person and Work of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first event is recorded in Genesis 14. In this account, Abram delivers his nephew Lot from the Mesopotamian kings at the city of Laish (Dan). On his way back to the Negev he stops at the Valley of Shaveh (cf. 2 Sam. 18:18) and meets Melchizedek. Melchizedek was the king of Salem and also the priest of the Most High God (El Elyon). The King / Priest blessed Abram and Abram in turn gave a tithe to Melchizedek (14:18-20; cf. Heb. 7:1-4). One day, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Triune God, will return again to the Mount of Olives, just above the Valley of Shaveh, with His saints and sit upon the throne of David and establish His Kingdom over all the earth in Jerusalem as a King / Priest (Ps. 110; Zech. 14; cf. Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:5-8; Zech. 12:10; Rev. 19:11-19).

The second event recorded in the book of Genesis was Abraham offering up Isaac on a mountain in the Land of Moriah (Gen. 22), called in Jewish tradition *Akedah*, for the "binding" of Isaac. Abraham, the friend of God, somehow knew of the Person and work of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, because he called the name of the place "The LORD Will Provide" which meant "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided." [See the **Sacrifice of Isaac** in the **Light to the Nations** display in the Lower Level].

Abraham said to Isaac that God would provide a lamb as a burnt offering, but a ram was caught in the thicket. The ram is not a lamb! The ram was a substitute for Isaac, the ram died in Isaac's place. It is not until 2,000 years later that John the Baptizer [remember, John was a Jew, not a Baptist!!!] was at Bethany beyond the Jordan (Batanea) when he saw the Lord Jesus approaching him after His 40 days of testing (Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12, 13; Luke 4:1-13) and said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Jesus was the Lamb that God would provide Himself (Gen. 22:8).

It was on Mount Moriah that Solomon built a Temple (2 Chron. 3:1; and later where the Second Temple stood) where people could bring sacrifices that could only atone for, or cover, sins, but could never take away sins. It was on a nearby hill, called Calvary, that the Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect, sinless, Lamb of God, died as the perfect sacrifice in order to pay for all the sins of all humanity (Heb. 9:11-10:18; 13:13; 1 John 2:2; John 19:16-42). The final cry from the cross was "It is finished" (John 19:30). This word was used of a financial transaction that stated a bill was paid in full.

In the Mount of the LORD, eternal redemption was provided by God and He offers His righteousness to any and all that would put their trust in the Lamb of God. The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Philippi in Macedonia and said if

anyone could gain salvation by their good works, or their own merits, it was himself (Phil. 3:4-6). But he came to realize the great truth, “and be found in Him [the Lord Jesus], not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith” (3:9).

God chose Jerusalem as the capital of Israel because of the priority He placed on His Son and His Son’s coming to redeem sinners. Jerusalem figures prominently, practically, and prophetically into Jesus’s coming to earth. The two Jerusalem-centered events in the book of Genesis foreshadowed the Person and work of the Lord Jesus in His first and second comings to earth. The first time He came, He was the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world on a cross outside Jerusalem. The second time He will come, He will be the King / Priest who will rule the world from the Davidic throne on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. For Further Study: Why Did God Choose Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel?

<http://www.lifeandland.org/2010/02/why-did-god-choose-jerusalem-as-the-capital-of-israel/>

- **Jerusalem, City of David** (Levitt-Kohn 2011: 16-17)

A pottery fragment of a **cult stand** (#1) was excavated in the City of David that dates to the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC. A prisoner, possibly a Philistine based on the head-dress he is wearing, is carrying an animal for sacrifice.

- **Wings of a Dove**

David, when he fled from his enemies, sang: “Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. Indeed, I would wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah” (Ps. 55:6-7).

This tiny, **ivory pomegranate with a bird**, probably a dove, on top of it was discovered in the sifting of the material from the recent Gihon Spring excavation. The eagle-eyed sifter who discovered this .2 centimeter (3/4 of an inch) artifact is to be commended for having very good eyes and spotting such a tiny object! (I know; I’ve done sifting before!). It might have been used for decoration on furniture (cf. 1 Kings 7: 18, 42) and dates to the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC. During the Hellenistic period, the pomegranate and dove began to be associated with the goddess Aphrodite (Reich, et. al. 2007: 160-161; Reich 2011: 309).

A **bone plaque with 15 drilled holes** in three rows of five holes was discovered near the rock-cut “pool” in the Gihon Spring excavation. Similar objects have been found at Lachish but they have 30 drilled holes (Tufnell 1953: Plate 37:3, 17; 56:23). It has been suggested that these devices were calendars “used to count the days, by moving daily a small peg from day to day” (Reich, et. al. 2007: 162). Others have suggested it might be a votive board game.

- **Fit for a King**

The **Stepped Stone Structure** [Image] was first uncovered by British archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon in the 1960’s. Yigal Shiloh uncovered more of it

in the late 1970's. Both dated the structure to the Jebusite period, or Iron Age I (12<sup>th</sup> century BC) and some identified it with the Jebusite "stronghold of Zion" (2 Sam. 5:7, 9). Dr. Eilat Mazar, in her recent excavation of the area, has suggested that the Large Stone Structure and the Stepped Stone Structure were built together and re-dated both structures to the end of the Iron Age I, or the beginning of the Iron Age IIA (the early 10<sup>th</sup> century BC) (Mazar 2009: 64). She also concluded that it was part of David's Palace.

- **Sign of Royalty**

Fragments of over 180 clay bullae that were discovered in a city-dump of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC Jerusalem near the Gihon Springs, seven **clay bullae** (#1) are displayed here (Reich, et. al. 2007: 156-157; Reich 2011:213-219). None of them have ancient writing on them, but they do have various motifs, such as fishing nets, sailing vessels, fish, proto-Aeolic capitals, griffins, a winged sun, and other such objects. [Other bullae from this collection are on display in the **Iron Age II: Judah and Israel case**].

Also found in the dump, and retrieved by wet-sifting, were the remains of over 10,600 fish bones. About 90% are sea-bream and mullets from the Mediterranean Sea. More than likely, they were dried, smoked, or salted before being shipped to Jerusalem. There were even bones of Nile perch that were imported from Egypt. Some of the seals that were found in the dump were probably from sacks or boxes that contained the fish from the coast and Egypt. The **seals with the Phoenician motifs** (#1) may reflect trade between Judah and Phoenician during the reign of Queen Athaliah in the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC (2 Kings 8:18, 26-27; Reich, et. al. 2007: 157-163; Reich 2011: 215-215).

- **Fall of Israel**

The **decanter** (#W3 on right), found in the City of David, was used to store wine sometime in the 8<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century BC. The LORD instructed the Prophet Jeremiah to take an "earthen vessel" (the decanter) along with the elders of Judah and proclaim the Word of the Lord in the Hinnom Valley (Jer. 19:1-2). The Prophet Joel states: "Awake, you drunkards, and weep; and wail, all you drinkers of wine, because of the new wine, for it has been cut off from your mouth" (1:5). This was probably the only positive benefit of the locust plague that Joel was describing. The drunkards could not get drunk because there was no wine in the decanters because the locusts ate all the vineyards (1:7, 10-12)!

The Prophet Nahum writes about the **Assyrian war chariot** [Image] (Nah. 2:3-4, 13; 3:2; Franz 2003: 97-109).

For Further Study: Nahum, Nineveh, and those Nasty Assyrians

<http://www.lifeandland.org/2009/02/nahum-ninevah-and-those-nasty-assyrians/>

- **O Jerusalem**

This display case includes a decanter, a jug, and an "ancient goblet" that has a dark-red slip and was highly burnished on the potters' wheel (Levitt-Kohn 2011: 18). This fine quality of pottery indicts wealth and prosperity at the time of

the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. The archaeologist that excavated the room that these objects were found in, Dr. Yigal Shiloh, suggest the room was from an administrative building, rather than a private house.

There is more to the story of these objects than just the wealth and prosperity. The “**pottery goblet**” is described as a “deep krater” in the excavation report and was found in Locus 967 (known as the “House of the Bullae”) in Area G of the City of David archaeological excavation. There were actually two deep kraters within close proximity of each other that had a concentration of 51 bullae around them. The excavator suggested the possibility that the two “well-burnished kraters with high trumpet bases and drainage holes may have served for storage of the papyri, the bullae from which were scattered around them” (1986: 36). It would be these kinds of jars (“earthen vessel”) that Jeremiah would have placed his title deed that he signed, sealed, and delivered to Baruch, the son of Neriah, in the presence of his cousin Hanamel (Jer. 32: 14). [See the **Scales and Weights** display].

The 51 bullae were well preserved because they were baked hard by the violent conflagration in 587 BC when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem. Unfortunately, the papyrus did not survive the conflagration. One of the bullae that were found near this vessel was stamped with the name “Gemariahu ben Shaphan” (Bulla #2, Shiloh 1986:28-29, 33-34; Shiloh and Tarler 1986: 204, 208-209). His name, Gemariah the son of Shaphan (NKJV), is mentioned four times in connection with an incident that took place on the Temple Mount in the 9<sup>th</sup> month of the 5<sup>th</sup> year of King Jehoiakim (604 BC; Jer. 36: 10, 11, 12, 25).

The name of a second Biblical figure is possibly “Azariahu ben Hilkiahu” (Bulla #27; Shiloh 1986: 28-29; Schneider 1988: 139-141). Azariah the son of Hilkiah does not appear in any historical accounts, but the father/son combination is mentioned in the list of high priests (1 Chron. 9:11). The father, however, played a very important role in the reforms of King Josiah in 622 BC when he found a copy of the Book of the Law (2 Kings 22:8-10; 2 Chron. 34:114-17). It would have been helpful if the bulla stated he was the high priest, thus giving it certain identification. Since the title was not on the bulla, only a possible identification is given.

For Further Study: Signed, Sealed, and Delivered: An Archaeological Exposition of Jeremiah 32:1-15

<http://www.lifeandland.org/2010/06/signed-sealed-and-delivered-an-archaeological-exposition-of-jeremiah-321-15/>

- **Folk Religion in Ancient Israel**

The two **limestone incense altars** were excavated in the “House of the Bullae” in Area G of the City of David Excavations (Shiloh 1986: 23, 26). These two, plus two others were found in the immediate vicinity of the bullae and “ancient goblet” [see **Signs of Wealth and Prosperity** display].

- **Household Goddesses**

The Prophet Hosea states: “For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim (household gods)” (Hosea 3:4; Levitt-Kohn 2011: 21).

Over two thousand clay figurines have been found in the excavations of the cities of Judah so far. These terracotta women, usually with prominent breasts, are not Iron Age Barbie Dolls, but rather, represent the fertility goddess Asherah. The **figurine** from Lachish (#1) was found in Tomb 1002 and dated to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC (Tufnell 1953: Plate 28:10), the time of the prophets Micah and Isaiah. On the wall are displayed 56 **pillar figurines** (#W7) from Jerusalem and other sites throughout Judah.

The **dove figurine on a pillar** (#2) was excavated by the British in Tomb 1002 (Level 3, 810-710 BC) at Lachish during the 1930’s (Tufnell 1953: 229-236; Plate 28: 12). When Tufnell published it, she described it as a “delightful bird on a stand” (1953: 376).

- **Scents Pleasing to the Lord** (Levitt-Kohn 2011: 23)

The **pottery four horned altar** (#1) was excavated in Area A-4 at Hazor and dated to the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC (Ben-Tor 2004: 232).

An **Israelite four horned altar** was found at Megiddo dating to the 10<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century BC that had one horned lopped off (#W8). One must look carefully at the back left horn to see that it has been restored (cf. the horns of the altar at Bethel, Amos 3:14).

A **large four horned altar** was discovered at Tel Sheva [Image], identified by some at Beer Sheva, that was in secondary use as a wall after the altar had been dismantled by King Hezekiah. One stone had a wavy line on it suggesting it was part of a snake cult. In the first year of King Hezekiah’s reign, he had a great revival and carried out far-reaching spiritual reforms. “He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it and called it Neshushtan” (2 Kings 18:4). Perhaps this altar was connected to the Neshushtan cult.

- **Religious Reforms**

Prince Hezekiah had seen the consequences of the wickedness of his father King Ahaz. When Hezekiah came to the throne, he instituted many reforms to bring the people of Judah back to the Lord, as a result, a great revival broke out and God blessed the reign of King Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29-31).

One of the reforms he carried out was that he removed the high places (2 Kings 18:4). This action can be seen in the “holy of holies” at the **high place at Arad** [Image]. Hezekiah had ordered the “sacred” area of the High place blocked so the high place could not be used anymore.

- **Land of Milk and Honey**

The phrase “land of milk and honey” has been misunderstood by many Bible teachers. The director of Neot Kedumim (the Biblical Gardens near Tel Aviv), Nogah Hareuveni has given a good explanation for this phrase. He states:

“The phrase ‘a land flowing with milk and honey’ describes uncultivated areas covered with wild vegetation and a profusion of flowers. It was a positive and alluring description to the Israelites while they were still shepherds [Bounty of the Land. Ex. 3:8; Deut. 6:3; 26:15]. However, after they settled the land of Israel by clearing the ‘milk and honey’ areas for cultivation, the same phrase became a frightening description associated with the destruction of productive farmland [Destruction of the Land. Isa. 7:21-25]” (Hareuveni 1980:22).

In the display case there are **fragments of clay pomegranates** that were found in archaeological excavations. Three pottery chalices were discovered in the Edomite shrine at Horvat Qitmit in the Negev. On display is the bottom of one of them with a pomegranate protruding from its underside (#3). There is evidence that six more were on the chalice as well. Pomegranates were used to symbolize fertility because of its many seeds (Beit-Arieh 1988: 39, 41).

- **Biblical Music** (Levitt-Kohn 2011: 22)

Mosaic of **David playing the harp** [Image]. This mosaic was found in an excavation by archaeologists from the Egyptian Department of Archaeology in 1965 near the seashore of Gaza. It was published the next year as a female saint who was charming the animals around her, that was found in an ancient church. Fortunately Professor Michael Avi-Yonah noticed the inscription near the head of the figure that read, in Hebrew, “David” and he correctly identified it as King David playing the harp and the “church” as a 6<sup>th</sup> century AD synagogue. Thus far, it is the largest known synagogue ever excavated in the Holy Land ... in Gaza, no less (Obadiah 1969: 193-198)!

After the Six-Days War in 1967, the Israeli archaeologists rushed to the site in order to see the mosaic that they had only read about in the archaeological journals. Much to their dismay, the head and one hand had been destroyed, but the inscription, with the name of David, was still intact. For a picture of how it looked before the war, see Ovadiah 1969: plate 15a; for a picture of it after the war, see Green 1994:59.

Professor Asher Ovadiah re-excavated the mosaics and the surrounding area in August-September 1967. He describes the central mosaic as “King David as Orpheus, dressed as a Byzantine emperor and playing a lyre. Above the musical instrument is the Hebrew inscription ‘David’. Around the king are a lion-cub, a giraffe [later, re-identified as a deer], and a snake, all listening to his music. The whole is surrounded by a border of geometric patterns” (1969: 195; Green 1994: 61). The mosaics were donated to the synagogue by two brothers, Menahem and Yeshua, the sons of Jesse, in the year AD 508/9 (1969: 196).

The theme of David depicted as the Greek god Orpheus has been described as: “a brilliant combination of David as royalty and David as Orpheus, with the characteristics of each. He is Orpheus seated not on a rock, but on a throne; not with a cap, but with a crown. He is at once the ideal king and a harbinger of peace and redemption, taming even wild animals” (Green 1994: 61). David’s lyre / harp is a powerful instrument that even tamed the distressing spirit in King Saul (1 Sam. 16: 14-23).

The mosaic was removed from Gaza and taken to Jerusalem for restoration. For a description of the restoration process, see Green 1994: 62-63, 94.

The pottery figurine of a **female drummer** (#1) is unprovenanced and dated to the 9<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century BC.

The **three rattles** that are on display are from Lachish (#2 top and left) and Beth Shemesh (#2 right). Nine rattles were discovered during the British excavation at Lachish in the 1930's. Five were from Tomb 1002, level 3, 810-719 BC, and the rest were from ossuary deposits and from Tomb 106, level 2, 670-580 BC (Tufnell 1953: 179, 229-236, 376; Plate 27: 5 and 9 (#2 top); Plate 28: 15 (#2 left) and 16). The cylindrical part was made on a wheel and was about 5 centimeters in length so it could fit in an adult hand. The ends were sealed with clay disks with one or more holes in them. Inside was a clay pellet or small pebble to give it the rattle sound.

- **The Dwelling Place of God**

- **Fall of Judah and Jerusalem**

In the year 586 BC, Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians. The Book of Chronicles gives the reasons for this tragedy. First, the people defiled the Temple in Jerusalem with their abominations (2 Chron. 36:14). Second, the people mocked the prophets that God sent His people to warn them of the judgment to come (36:15-16). Third, the Prophet Jeremiah stated that they had not let the land rest every Sabbatical year (Jer. 25:9-12; 27:6-8; 29:10; 2 Chron. 36:21; cf. Lev. 25).

## **High Place of Dan**

Tel Dan (the ancient city of Laish that was later renamed Dan (Gen. 14:14)), is situated in the northern part of Israel at the base of Mount Hermon. It was excavated by Dr. Avraham Biran, of Hebrew Union College, from 1966 to 1999 (Levitt-Kohn 2011: 25).

Dr. Biran uncovered the Israelite High Place (*Bamah*) in Area T in the northwest quadrant of the city. This high place was built by Jeroboam I about 931 BC after the death of King Solomon and the division of the Kingdom of Israel (1 Kings 12:25-33; cf. 2 Kings 10:29; Amos 8:14).

When Solomon's son, Rehoboam, was crowned king at Shechem, the people, led by Jeroboam, petitioned the king to reduce their excessive taxes which were imposed by King Solomon. The wise elders of Israel advised Rehoboam to ease the tax burden on the people, but Rehoboam foolishly rejected this advice. Instead, he listened to the advice of the young men that he grew up with. They advised him to raise the taxes on the people! When Rehoboam arrogantly told the people he was going to raise their taxes even more, the people stoned and killed Adoram, the head of the IRS (ah, that's the Israeli Revenue Service)! Rehoboam fled back to Jerusalem and the ten northern tribes broke away from Judah and Benjamin. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, became king over Israel, the northern tribes (1 Kings 12:1-24).

All Israelite males, 20 years old and up, were required to go up to Jerusalem three times a year for the pilgrim festivals of *Pesach* (Passover), *Shavuot* (Pentecost), and *Succoth* (Tabernacles). Jeroboam realized that if the people went to Jerusalem, they might return to following the Davidic king, Rehoboam, as bad as he might be. So Jeroboam offered the people of Israel an alternative religion (1 Kings 12:25-33). First, he offered them an alternative god to worship. In this case, it was a golden calf instead of YHWH (1 Kings 12:26-28). Remember the trouble the Children of Israel got into worshipping the golden calf at Mount Sinai (Ex. 32:1-35)? Second, he offered them alternative places of worship. Instead of Jerusalem, they could go to either Dan or Bethel, cities at both ends of the Northern Kingdom (1 Kings 12:29-31a; Deut. 12:10-11; 15:20; 16:2, 6-7, 11, 15-16; 1 Kings 8:28, 29; see also 8:44, 48; cf. 2 Chron. 6:20, 33, 34, 38; Ps. 78:67-69; 132:13-14). Third, he offered them an alternative priesthood to lead them in worship. The priests were from every class of people, except the Biblically ordained Levites (1 Kings 12:31b; cf. 1 Chron. 23-27). Finally, he offered them an alternative calendar for worship. Instead of the seventh month for the feast of Succoth, he ordained the fifteenth day of the eighth month (1 Kings 12:32-33; cf. Lev. 23:33-34). All this he devised in his own heart (1 Kings 12:33)! In other words, he perverted Biblical truths and made up a new religious system.

The **horned altar** (#1) was found during the 1974 season just south of the steps of the high place. It is almost square in shape (Biran 1974: 106-107). One horn is intact, two damaged, and one is missing (cf. Amos 3:14). There is evidence of fire on the altar so it was probably used for small burnt offerings. The altar is dated by the excavator to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, the time of Jeroboam II (Biran 1994:203). It was during this time that the Prophet Amos cries in Bethel against all the social injustices that were going on in the Northern Kingdom. "Those who swear by the sin of Samaria, who say, 'As your god lives, O Dan!' ... They shall fall and never rise" (Amos 8:14). This was probably fulfilled when Tiglath-Pileser III and the Assyrian army marched into Israel in 733-32 BC and destroyed a number of cities (cf. 2 Kings 15:29). The city of Dan is not mentioned in the list of cities conquered, but there is archaeological evidence for the destruction of Dan in the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC (Biran 1994: 204).

A restored **bath** of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC was found near the *bamah* and was probably used for some kind of libation ceremony. Exactly what the ceremony was has not been determined (Biran 1994:174-175).

There are two decorative capitals on display. The **limestone capital** (#1) is "unique in the annals of the archaeology of this country" and found in the gate area (Biran 1994: 243). The second **capital** is made of **basalt** (#2).

***Proceed downstairs and turn to the left***

## **Second Temple and the Gospels**

### **The Rise and Fall of Jerusalem**

- **Portrait of a City**

Pliny the Elder (AD 23-79) said of Jerusalem: It is “by far the most famous city of the East and not of Judaea only” (*Natural History* 5:70; LCL 2:273-275).

- **Cookware**

The **stone bowl** [Image] with the word *qorban* on it and two upside-down pigeons is not a bowl, but rather, a cylindrical seal, that was found in the Southern Wall excavation. It has been suggested that this object might have been used for a lottery of turtle-doves in the Temple (Magen 2002: 78-79; see also Mishnah Kerithoth 1:7). The *Qorban* offering was a sacrifice that a woman offered after she had a discharge of blood or gave birth (Lev. 12:8; 15:14). Mary offered two turtledoves after the birth of the Lord Jesus because she and Joseph were poor (Luke 2:21-24).

- **Ritual Purity**

“Rabbi Simeon ben Eleazar said: ‘Come and see how far purity has spread in Israel!’” (BT *Shabbath* 13a).

The Book of Leviticus is about the holiness of God and His people being holy as He is holy (Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26). In chapter 15 the laws concerning a discharge from a man are given. One verse states: “The vessel of earth that he who has the discharge touches shall be broken, and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed with water” (15:12). The clay pottery vessel is in view here. Stone vessels, on the other hand, were not defiled by impurities (Mishnah *Oholot* 5:5; *Kelim* 10:1).

The **Temple Mount** [Image] was a raised platform built by Herod the Great to support his magnificent temple. It was one of the most beautiful buildings in the ancient world. The sages, who were no friend of Herod the Great, gave him a back-handed compliment when they said: “He who has not seen the Temple of Herod has never seen a beautiful building” (*Baba Bathra* 4a).

- **High Society**

On the stone tabletop is a **Herodian oil lamp** (#2). This is the kind of oil lamp the Lord Jesus spoke about when He said: “You are the light of the world. ... Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see you good works and glorify you Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:14-16). He also referred to oil lamps in the parable of the ten virgins (Matt. 25:1-13).

Purity in Jerusalem was a big issue during the Second Temple period and strict rules were followed. “The sages ruled that if a source of impurity touches the inside of a vessel made of pottery, it cannot be purified, and therefore must be broken or perforated so that it can never again be used as a container” (Reich 1995: 32). On the table are three **painted bowls** (#3) that had been broken. Perhaps they were broken because they came in contact with impurities. If so, this reflects the words of the Lord Jesus when He chided the Pharisees: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup

and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisees, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also” (Matt. 23: 25-26). On another occasion, Jesus made a similar statement (Luke 11:39-41).

On the far left are three **large stone vessels** for water. Stone vessels were not defiled by any impurities. “But they agree that one may make surface contact of water in a stone vessel to render it clean, but one does not immerse it” (Mishnah *Betzah* 2:3; see also Tosefta *Shabbat* 16:11). It is not surprising that the Lord Jesus is at a wedding in Cana of Galilee when they ran out of good wine. The Apostle John records: “Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing [two or three *metretes*] twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, ‘Fill the waterpots with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim” (2:6-7). Jesus then turned the water into the best wine.

Water could have been stored in clay vessels, but if it came in contact with impurities, the vessel had to be broken and the water was lost. It made sense to store your water in large stone vessels that did not contact ritual impurities (Reich 1995: 33).

- **Glass and Stone**
- **Essential Oils**

## **Jerusalem: City of Priests**

### **Jerusalem and the Dead Sea Scrolls**

- **Bone Gathering**

An ossuary is a bone box where the bones of the deceased are gathered after the flesh has decayed (Levitt-Kohn 2011: 69). Ossuaries may help us understand a “hard saying” of Jesus. There are two incidents recorded in the Gospels when a disciple requested a “leave of absence” in order to “bury” his father (Matt. 8:21-22 and Luke 9:59-60). Although the requests appear reasonable, Jesus gave a seemingly harsh reply in each case: “Follow Me, let the dead bury their own dead.”

Some critical scholars suggest that Jesus was encouraging His disciples to break the fifth commandment (honor your father and mother) by not giving their fathers a proper burial. Is He really demanding this? Most commentaries suggest Jesus meant, “Leave the (spiritual) dead to bury the (physical) dead.” This interpretation, though common, is not consistent with the text and with Jewish burial practices of the first century AD.

Byron McCane suggests an interpretation that is consistent with first-century Jewish burial practices (1990:40-41). After a body was placed in a burial cave, it was left to decompose. The family mourned for seven days, called *shiv'ah*. This initial mourning period was followed by a less intense 30-day period

of mourning, called *shloshim*. However, the entire mourning period was not fully over until the flesh of the deceased had decomposed, usually about a year later. The Jerusalem Talmud states: When the flesh had wasted away, the bones were collected and placed in chests (ossuaries). On that day (the son) mourned, but the following day he was glad, because his forebears rested from judgment (*Moed Qatan* 1:5).

The final act of mourning, the gathering of the bones into an ossuary, was called “ossilegium,” or “secondary burial.” It is this act, I believe, that is in view in our Lord’s response. The disciples’ request and Jesus’ response makes good sense in light of the Jewish custom of secondary burial. When the disciples requested time to bury their fathers they were actually asking for time to finish the rite of secondary burial. Their father had died, been placed in the family burial cave, and the sons had sat *shiv’ah* and most likely *shloshim*. They had requested anywhere from a few weeks to up to 11 months to finish the ritual of ossilegium before they returned to Jesus.

Jesus’ sharp answer also fits well with secondary burial. The fathers had been buried in the family burial caves and their bodies were slowly decomposing. In the tombs, along with the fathers, were other family members who had died, some awaiting secondary burial, others already placed in ossuaries. When Jesus stated: “Let the dead bury their own dead,” He was referring to two different kinds of dead in the tomb: the bones of the deceased which had already been neatly placed in ossuaries and the fathers who had yet to be reburied. The phrase “own dead” indicates that the fathers were included among the dead.

An amplified (interpretive) rendering of this statement might be: *Look, you have already honored your father by giving him a proper burial in the family sepulcher. Now, instead of waiting for the flesh to decompose, this can never atone for sin, go and preach the Kingdom of God and tell of the only true means of atonement, faith alone in Christ. Let the bones of you dead father’s ancestors gather his bones and place them in an ossuary. You follow me!* This interpretation allows for Jesus to have upheld the fifth commandment, takes the text at face value, and does justice to the Jewish burial practices of the first century. The interpretation is therefore consistent theologically, Biblically, and historically, and answers the critics accurately (Franz 1992: 54-58).

For Further Study: “Let the Dead Bury Their Own Dead”

<http://www.lifeandland.org/2009/02/let-the-dead-bury-their-own-dead/>

The **red limestone ossuary** was found on the western slopes of Mount Scopus near the Augusta Victoria in 1973. It was painted red, either in the burial cave or it was brought into the cave still wet because paint stains were found on the floor underneath the ossuary (Sussman 1982: 46-48, 5\*-6\*; Rahmani 1994: 178). This ossuary had a hole in the base “for bodily secretions or for the establishment of contact between body and soil, in accordance with TJ Kil. 32b, though noting that in an ossuary these would have been symbolic rather than functional” (Rahmani 1994: 99).

The name **Yeshua** [Image] was found on an ossuary from Talpiyot to the south of the Old City of Jerusalem. Yeshua (Jesus in English) was a very common name during the Second Temple period.

- **Revered Repository**

There are six **ossuaries** in this display case. The **decorated ossuary** (#3) has a vaulted lid and a yellow wash. Inscribed on it are two rosettes inside a zig-zag double frame. This ossuary was discovered in 1991 in an intact burial cave during a salvage excavation on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem (ossuary C10; Weksler-Bdolah 1998: 36\*, 39\*, 41\*).

Some ossuaries have inscribed on them common Hebrew names of the Second Temple period. For example, four of these ossuaries have the names Miriam and Mara (#1); Yeshua ben Yosef (#2); Yosi (#4); Matthew (#5) on them from a tomb in East Talpiyot in Jerusalem (Kloner 1996: 15-22). These ossuaries were the basis for the sensationalistic “documentary” by the “Naked Archaeologist” (he is neither naked, nor is he an archaeologist) on the so-called Jesus Family Tomb. There are no historical, archaeological, or Biblical facts to support this “documentary” - it is an outright hoax. The Lord Jesus bodily rose from the dead before His flesh began to decay - a fulfillment of Ps. 16:10 (cf. Acts 2:22-31), so there is no reason for the Naked Archaeologist to go looking for an ossuary with the name Jesus of Nazareth on it. For a thorough refutation, see my well-documented article: [The So-Called Jesus Family Tomb Rediscovered in Jerusalem](http://www.lifeandland.org/2009/01/the-so-called-jesus-family-tomb-rediscovered-in-jerusalem/)

<http://www.lifeandland.org/2009/01/the-so-called-jesus-family-tomb-rediscovered-in-jerusalem/>

## Journey to Qumran

- **Remains of an Ancient Pantry**
- **Simple Food**
- **Shekel Mystery** (Levitt-Kohn 2011: 64)

The **Tyrian silver shekel** (#1) was minted in Tyre in the year 28-27 BC. This is the kind of coin that Judas received when he betrayed the Lord Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 26:14-15). Most likely the Tyrian shekels came from the Temple Treasury. There are 27 silver coins in this display. Most are Tyrian shekels and half-shekels, but there is a couple of denarius in the collection.

- **Palms and Dates**

## Hidden Caves

## Final Stronghold: Masada

During the First Jewish Revolt (AD 66-70), when General Vespasian was besieging Jerusalem, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai summoned his nephew, Abba Sikra (“Father of the Sicarii”) and inquired when he would put an end to the starvation in Jerusalem. His nephew was paranoid and protested that if he did anything, he would be killed by the people of the city. Rabbi ben Zakkai realized the situation was hopeless and asked how he could get out of Jerusalem. His nephew suggested a plan to smuggle the Rabbi out of the city. This succeeded and Rabbi ben Zakkai was taken to General Vespasian. He greeted the general by saying, “Peace to you, O king, peace to you, O king!” Vespasian wanted to execute him on the spot because he called the general a king, but at that moment a messenger from Rome announced to Vespasian that the emperor was dead and the Roman Senate had made him king. Vespasian offered Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai one request and promised it would be granted to him. His request was: “Give me Yavneh and its Wise Men, and the family chain of Rabban Gamaliel, and physicians to heal Rabbi Zadok” (BT *Gittin* 56a, 56b). He wanted Yavneh to reestablish a rabbinical school of learning, and the family of Rabban Gamaliel because it was believed that they were of the House of David, thus the messianic line.

Professor Jacob Neusner, a leading rabbinical scholar, eloquently contrasted the fate of the Jewish people by describing two roads that led out of Jerusalem during the Revolt. He penned: “Two roads led out of Jerusalem, one to Yavneh, the other to Masada. Zealots fled to the Dead Sea and barricaded themselves in a massive old fortress of Herod. There they held out for three more years, fighting a hopeless fight rather than surrender. With their wives and children, perhaps a thousand people in all, they withstood advancing siege works, engineering marvels, until with walls breached, they saw at best another day of resistance. That night, the fathers slew their wives and children, and their soldiers one another, until the last Zealot, seeing none alive, slit his own throat. So all was deathly quiet at last [AD 73].

Rome was surely right, the soldiers must have thought as they entered the smoking ruins of a mighty fortress. She had achieved final victory. Nothing at all remained. The Zealots left no legacy, no vision for the future. They offered no ideal but a military, Spartan one: better suicide than subjugation. If the warriors of Masada represented the only options for the Jews, then and there Judaism would have ended for all time, as the Zealots of Masada supposed it had. The Jewish group may have lingered on, but not for very long.

The road to Yavneh, to the vineyard and the abundant fields and the open port – that was the other way. It was the way taken by the Jews who did not commit suicide and did not regard the disaster as the last drama in a tragic history. They did not suppose that the failure of the sword marked the final catastrophe. These Jews had a better understanding of the message of Isaiah that trust in the sword is arrogance against God. They kept alive the hope that God, and not the sword, would eventually bring salvation. Yohanan ben Zakkai led the way to Yavneh. Because he did, he fathered another generation, and they another. Judaism endured as a living faith and the Jews as an enduring people from that day to this one. Masada and its battlefield bravado was a dead end.

Through Yavneh and its tentative, hopeful faith led the way to the future. Masada left behind a few fragments of cloth, some coins, smashed rocks and bones, a monument to futile, barren courage. Yavneh left behind twenty centuries of life, and, I think, many more to come” (Neusner 1970: 174-175).

(Levitt-Kohn 2011: 72-75)

- **A Symbol of Courage**
- **Roman Siege Work**
- **Recovering the Past One Potsherd at a Time**

## **Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?**

- **Water for the Body and Soul**

The **stairs of the mikva** at Qumran [Image] were destroyed by the earthquake in 31 BC (*Jewish Antiquities* 15.122; LCL 8:59). *Mikva'ot* [plural] were used for ritual immersion and were first discovered at Qumran. Originally it was thought that this practice was carried out only by the inhabitants of Qumran, presumably the Essenes. It was only after the Six-Days War when *mikvaot* started to appear in the Jewish Quarter excavations that it was realized that all Jews immersed themselves in water during the Second Temple period, not just the Qumran community.

- **Inheritors and Survivors**

The Lord Jesus sent out His disciples two-by-two; they were instructed to take nothing for their journey except a staff and to wear sandals and one tunic (Mark 9:7-9). Here is an example of a typical Second Temple **sandal** (#2), similar to what people wear today (Levitt-Kohn 2011:66).

- **Unity and Identity**

Jewish men during the Second Temple period took the injunction given by Moses literally that the “words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ... You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes” (Deut. 6:6-9; cf. Ex. 13:9, 16; Deut. 11:18; Levitt-Kohn 2011: 65). This was the Biblical base for wearing phylacteries. They were worn daily, usually for morning prayers. For someone to wear them all day would be a special act of piety (BT *Sukkah* 28a; BT *Ta'anith*. 20b). For a discussion on phylacteries, see Fagen 1992:5: 368-370.

There were several **phylacteries**, called *tefillin* in Hebrew, found in Cave 4 at Qumran in 1952. Yigael Yadin (1969) purchased a phylactery that was worn on the forehead from an antiquities dealer in Jerusalem in 1968 that allegedly came from Cave 4 as well. It was made of calf leather and measured 20 x 28 millimeters before it was folded over to enclose four slips, or parchments, with Scripture verses on them (This appears to be #1, on right side). The four slips were made of a skin of an unborn kid (goat) or lamb and measured about 27 x 42

millimeters each, with a thickness of 0.04 millimeters. The four Scripture verses that were on the parchments of each phylactery were Ex. 13:1-10; Deut. 6:4-9; Ex. 13:11-16; and Deut. 11:13-21. Sometimes other verses were added as well. The verses were written with black ink and each letter was between 0.5 – 0.7 millimeters high on this very fine parchment. The scribe must have had very keen eye-sight, or a magnifying glass of some sort, and a very steady hand!

Prof. Yohanan Aharoni found a fragment of a phylactery in Cave 34 (the “Cave of the Scrolls”) in Nahal Seelin about 7 kilometers north-west of Masada during the expeditions to the Judean Desert during the winter of 1960. It had two parchments, one with Ex. 13:2-10 and the other with Ex. 13:11-16 written on them in very tiny letters (1961:22-23; Pl. 11).

In Matthew 23, the Lord Jesus called the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites, or actors who performed for the applause of the audience. He instructed the multitude to observe and do what the Pharisees say when they speak from the seat of Moses, but do not follow their lifestyle because their actions do not match their words (23:2-3). “Do as they say, don’t do as they do!” Jesus points out that “all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments” (23:5). Judging from the size of the phylacteries found near the Dead Sea, and assuming they were the normal size, Jesus was criticizing some of the Pharisees for wearing larger ones so that people would think they were pious because of the larger size of their phylactery. Bigger is not always better!

- **Ties that Bind**
- **Notes from the Past**

***TURN AROUND, IN THE CENTER OF THE ROOM IS A LARGE CIRCULAR DISPLAY CASE WITH A CYLINDRICAL JAR IN THE CENTER***

## **The World of the Dead Sea Scrolls**

There are twenty Dead Sea Scrolls in this exhibition (seventeen are show in the catalogue (Levitt-Kohn 2011: 26-61; see also Ariel, et. al. 2008), but only ten are displayed at one time. The twenty will be rotated throughout the display so the light will not cause them to disintegrate. The manuscripts are sensitive to light, so the presenters have the scrolls in a darkened environment and the light comes on when a motion detector senses a person looking at the display, so as to not “wear out” the parchments. Each scroll has a high resolution picture, an English translation, and a commentary explaining the scroll.

There is a large cylindrical jar in the center of the display. This is one of the jars in which the Dead Sea scrolls were found.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are NOT the oldest known copies of the Hebrew Bible. Two silver amulets with the Priestly Blessing (*Birkat Kohanim*) of Numbers 6:24-26 were discovered at Ketef Hinnom in Jerusalem in 1979. They were finally deciphered in 1986 and it was determined that these are the two oldest known

copies of the Hebrew Bible and they pre-dated the Dead Sea Scrolls by four hundred years (Franz 2005: 53-59 and further bibliography).

For Further Study: "Remember, Archaeology is NOT a Treasure Hunt!"

<http://www.lifeandland.org/2009/02/remember-archaeology-is-not-a-treasure-hunt/>

- **Paleo-Leviticus**

(Levitt-Kohn 2011:30-31)

- **Pseudo-Ezekiel**

(Levitt-Kohn 2011:42-43)

- **"Song of Moses" from the Book of Deuteronomy**

(Levitt-Kohn 2011:32-33)

- **Numbers**

(Levitt-Kohn 2011:28-29)

- **Isaiah**

There have been 21 copies of the book of Isaiah found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The "Great Isaiah Scroll", found in Cave 1, is the longest Biblical scroll that has been discovered at Qumran and it contains the entire Book of Isaiah (Cross, et. al. 1972).

On one occasion, the Lord Jesus returned to His hometown of Nazareth and attended the synagogue on Shabbat as was His custom. He stood up to read the weekly portion from the Prophets. On this occasion, he was handed the scroll of Isaiah and He opened it to Isaiah 61 and read verses 1 and 2. When He was done, He sat down and said: "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:16-21; Cross, et. al. 1972:113).

The fragment before you is **Scroll Number 4Q57**. It contains Isaiah 22:10-14; 23:8-24:15; 24:19-25:2 and was copied in Hebrew between AD 30-68 (Levitt-Kohn 2011:34-35).

- **Psalm Scroll**

The most popular portions of the Scriptures discovered at Qumran are the Book of Psalms. Thirty-six manuscripts have been found that date from 150 BC to AD 68. Whenever the divine name, YHWH, appears, it is in Paleo-Hebrew (Levitt-Kohn 2011: 36-38). On some manuscripts, the scribe would write the Scripture portion and then leave enough space for the four-letter name of God. After the manuscript was completed, the scribe would go back and write the name of the Lord in Paleo-Hebrew. How do we know this was his methodology? Because sometimes he forgot to fill in the Name!

On **Fragment EIII, Column III** (second from right), found in cave 11, Psalm 121:1-8 appears. The Hebrew text begins with *sar ha-malah* (A Psalm of Ascent, or degree). This indicates that the superscription in our English Bible was

considered part of the inspired manuscript by the Jewish people during the Second Temple period. I would like to suggest that when we read the Word of God publically, the superscriptions should be read as well. They are part of the inspired psalm.

- **Minor Prophets in Greek**

(Levitt-Kohn 2011:39-40)

- **Isaiah Commentary**

This *Pesher*, or commentary, (**4Q161**) was found in Cave 4 at Qumran in 1952. It is a commentary on Isaiah 10:22-11:5. It begins by quoting Isaiah 11:1-5 and then comments that the Davidic Messiah would fight Magog (line 21) who was understood to be the Roman armies and He would be victorious (Levitt-Kohn 2011: 44-45).

The Apostle Matthew composed his own *pesher* of this passage, playing on the Hebrew root *NZR* (*nun-tzade-resh*) and based on the sayings of the prophets, when he wrote: “He shall be called a Nazarene” (Matt. 2:23). The root of this saying is Isaiah 11:1. The Nazarene is a “watched over one” whom the Lord is protecting, so the Branch (*netzer*) was watched over (*natzor*) by the LORD and protected from Herod the Great in Egypt, and Archelaus in Galilee. The LORD placed the Nazarene, the Watched-Over One, in Nazareth (*NZR*), situated off the main roads and isolated in the Hills of Lower Galilee. God was faithful to His promise to David that the Davidic line would prosper and a descendent would sit upon the throne of David forever and ever (Luke 1:30-33). It is interesting that the Angel Gabriel reiterates the promise of the Davidic Covenant in Nazareth!

For a discussion of the agriculture of the olive tree and Isaiah 11:1, see Hareuveni 1984: 83-88.

- **Job Targum**

(Levitt-Kohn 2011:46-47)

- **Nahum Commentary**

(Levitt-Kohn 2011:48-49)

- **Rules of the Community**

(Levitt-Kohn 2011:50-52)

- **Book of War**

(Levitt-Kohn 2011:53)

- **War Scroll**

(Levitt-Kohn 2011:54-55)

- **Apocryphal Lamentations**

(Levitt-Kohn 2011:56-57)

- **Messianic Apocalypse**  
(Levitt-Kohn 2011:58-59)

- **Aramaic Levi**  
(Levitt-Kohn 2011:60-61)

## **RETURN TO THE STAIRS, TURN AROUND, AND CONTINUE ALONG THE WALL ON THE RIGHT**

### **The Temple**

“My House shall be a House of Prayer for all people.” (Isa. 56:7)

- **Temple Tax**

The Lord Jesus addressed the issue of the civil tax to the Roman government (Matt. 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26), as well as the religious tax, called the *Shekalim*, paid to the Temple in Jerusalem (Matt. 17:24-27). Matthew, the tax collector (Matt. 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32), was employed by the Roman government to collect civil taxes. He is the only gospel writer to record the incident of the Temple tax.

During the Second Temple period, the Temple institution collected a half-*shekel* tax annually. This tax was designated for the daily and *Shabbat* (festival) sacrifices, their libations, the *omer*, the two loaves of bread, the show bread, the communal sacrifices and other needs of the Temple (Mishnah *Shekalim* 4:1-4). The rabbis linked the annual half-*shekel* tax to the half-*shekel* offering in the Pentateuch. This half-*shekel* was mentioned in Exodus 30:11-16.

A warning was given on the first day of Adar (around the month of March) that the half-*shekel* was due (Mishnah *Shekalim* 1:1). On the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, the tables were set up in the provinces in order to collect the tax.

Every Jewish male, 20 years old and up, voluntarily paid this tax once a year. He was to pay the tax either in his province or in the Temple in Jerusalem (Mishnah *Shekalim* 1:3). The tax was always paid in the Tyrian coinage (Mishnah *Bekhoroth* 8:7; Babylonian Talmud *Kiddushim* 11b).

The shekel, with the laureate head of Melqarth-Herakles (a pagan deity) on the obverse and an eagle (a graven image) on the reverse, averaged 14.2 grams in weight and contained at least 94% silver. These coins were minted in Tyre between 126/125 BC and 19/18 BC. After the Roman government closed the Tyre mint, these coins continued to be minted at an unknown mint, probably in or near Jerusalem, from 18/17 BC until AD 69/70. The Jewish celators continued to strike coins with the image of Melqarth-Herakles and the eagle. This was contrary to the clear teachings of the Word of God (Ex. 20:3-4; Deut. 4:16-18; 5:8). Yet the rabbis declared that the Tyrian shekels were the only legal currency that was acceptable in the Temple (Hendin 2001: 420-429; 2002: 46-47). The rabbis decided that the commandment to give the half-shekel Temple

tax, with its proper weight and purity, was more important than the prohibition of who or what image was on the coin.

By paying the temple tax, Jesus was demonstrating humility and servant hood, the true characteristic of Biblical greatness, to Peter and his fellow disciples (Mark 10:42-45). Jesus, following up on Peter's great confession made at Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:15-17), was God manifest in human flesh (1 Tim. 3:16 NKJV). He did not have to pay the Temple tax because in the analogy that He made to Peter, He was the king's son. The Temple was His Father's House and He was greater than that Temple (Matt. 12:6; 21:12, 13; Mark 11:17), yet He voluntarily, and in humility, paid the tax. What a lesson in humility for us! For Further Study: "Do You and Your Master Pay the Temple Tax?"

<http://www.lifeandland.org/2009/02/temple-tax/>

- **Fallen Fragments from a Temple Mount Tunnel**

The limestone **architectural fragments** on display came from the Double Gate on the Southern Wall of the Temple Mount. There were two sets of gates on this wall during the Second Temple period (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 15.411; LCL 8:199). On the east was a Triple Gate and on the west, the **Double Gate** [image]. Because of the beautiful and ornate stones in this gate, some have identified this gate as the Beautiful Gate mentioned in Acts 3 where the Apostles Peter and John healed a lame man (3:10). For a discussion of the Double Gate and stairs, see Ritmeyer 2006: 65-77.

Pilgrims to Jerusalem for the three annual feasts entered the Temple via the Triple Gate; and exited, walking out backwards, through the Double Gate. The reason they did this was because they did not want to turn their backs on the Lord. One can see this same phenomenon today at the Western Wall. Worshippers walk up to the wall, pray, and then walk backwards as they leave the wall. They do not want to turn their backs on the Lord.

Once the pilgrim left the Double gate, there were 30 stairs to descend. These stairs were called the Rabbinic Stairs because rabbis used to preach to the crowds of pilgrims as they departed from the Temple during the Second Temple period. It is possible that Rabbi Jesus preached to the crowd from these stairs. It is here that He might have given the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37).

## **An Influence Across the Ages**

### **The Ten Words**

#### **Numbering the commandments**

## **The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Abrahamic Faiths**

### ***FROM LEFT TO RIGHT***

- **Mohamad the Prophet**

- **The Sign of the Cross**
- **A Light to the Nations** (Levitt-Kohn 2011: 70)

In the summer of 2011, a **stone object with a 5 branch menorah** (#3) was found in a drainage channel that ran underneath the Roman road that went from the Western Wall to the Pool of Siloam. The excavators, Eli Shukron and Ronnie Reich commented: “Interestingly, even though we are dealing with a depiction of the seven-branched candelabrum, only five branches appear here. The portrayal of the menorah’s base is extremely important because it clarifies what the base of the original menorah looked like, which was apparently tripod shaped” (IAA website). The excavators speculate that the individual who originally drew the menorah had actually seen the original menorah in the Temple. For whatever reason, he discarded his stone drawing, only to have it found 2,000 years later.

The **Sacrifice of Isaac** [Image], also known in Jewish tradition as *Akedah*, or the “binding” of Isaac, is depicted on a mosaic floor from the synagogue at Beth Alpha in the Beth Shean Valley. This floor was laid down, according to the excavator E. L. Sukenik, during the reign of Emperor Justin I, in the first quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD.

There were three mosaic panels on the synagogue floor. The “Sacrifice of Isaac” was at the entrance. The center panel was a Zodiac with the four seasons. The panel closest to the Ark where the Torah scrolls were kept depicted the Ark and two menorahs.

The first panel had an altar with a blazing fire on the right side with Abraham holding a bound Isaac close to the altar. In his right hand was a long knife. Behind Abraham is a ram caught in the thickets (only the feet are visible) with the words: “And behold ... a ram.” Above the thicket is a hand emerging from a cloud with the words: “Thou shalt not stretch forth.” On the left side of the panel (not visible) are the two servants and their donkey that carried the wood to the mountain in the Land of Moriah (Gen. 22).

## **The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origin of Judaism and Christianity**

- **Neither Christian Nor Jews**

The **marble slab with the Menorah** (#3) was found in Binyamina, a few kilometers to the north-east of Caesarea-by-the-Sea. On it is a seven-branch menorah with a shofar on the left and what appears to be a lulav on the right with a Greek inscription that reads: “One God, help Judah the elder. Year 471.”

This slab was originally thought to be a tombstone, but recently, it has been suggested that it was a dedicatory inscription from the wall of a synagogue in the area (Di Segni 1993:133-136; Levitt-Kohn 2011: 77).

- **The Scrolls and Christian Origin**

- **Let There Be Light**
- **Scrolls Open a Window to the Distant Past**
- **Reverence and Dedication**
- **The Scrolls and the Hebrew Bible**

## **The Western Wall**

- **Stone from the Western Wall**

Before you is a 3-ton stone from the southwest corner of the Temple Enclosure. It was probably pushed over by the Roman army after the destruction of the Temple when it fell to the street below. The retaining wall of the Temple enclosure was built by Herod the Great about 18 BC, but finished by his successors (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 20:219-222; LCL 10:117-119). For a full discussion of the Second Temple, see Ritmeyer 2006.

You may touch this stone as well as leave a note with a prayer request and it will be taken to Jerusalem and inserted into the real Western Wall, or you can forgo the note and “come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” and pray directly to the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 4: 16).

During the last week in the earthly life of the Lord Jesus, His disciples approached Him on the Mount of Olives and pointed to the buildings of the Temple. Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Matt. 24:1-2). Perhaps this was one of the stones being referred to by the Lord Jesus.

### **Where, When, and How Much?**

Street, between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues, in New York City. The hall is across the street from the Shubert Theatre and also a parking garage. Please note that West 44<sup>th</sup> Street is one-way going east so, if you are driving, Discovery Times Square must be approached from 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which is a one-way street going north.

The exhibition is open Monday to Thursday, 10 AM through 7 PM and Friday to Sunday from 10 AM through 8 PM. The last entry is one hour before closing. The exhibition will run until April 15, 2012 and then it will relocate to the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia and run for five months beginning in May 2012.

Ticket prices are \$25 for adults, \$22.50 for seniors and \$19.50 for children. You can order tickets over the Discovery Time’s Square’s Wed site, or buy tickets at the window at the entrance. A group rate is available for groups of ten or more people. To purchase group tickets or to find out more details, please call 855-266-5387, or send an E-mail to [groups@tsxnyc.com](mailto:groups@tsxnyc.com)

Coupons for a \$5 discount off the ticket price can be found in hotel lobbies in the city and at tourist information stands in Bryant Park, Harold’s Square, and

the Port Authority bus terminal. With the discount, the entrance fee for an adult would be \$20. So, seek and ye shall find these coupons. Please note the discounts are only valid all day Monday to Friday anytime, Sunday after 2 PM. It is not valid on Saturdays and holidays.

Headsets are available for an audio tour of select objects with commentary by Professor Lawrence Shiffman of Yeshiva University; Professor Bill Dever, retired from Arizona State University; and Professor Ronnie Reich of Haifa University and the Israel Antiquities Authority. Headsets may be rented for \$7 apiece.

Discovery Times Square Website:

<http://www.discoverytsx.com/exhibitions/dead-sea-scrolls>

For pictures of some of the objects on display:

<http://www.discoverytsx.com/exhibitions/dead-sea-scrolls/press-kit/images>

### **About the Author of this Essay**

Gordon Franz is a Bible teacher who has done graduate studies in the history of ancient Israel at the Institute of Holy Land Studies (now Jerusalem University College) in Jerusalem and holds an MA in Biblical Studies (Old Testament) from Columbia Biblical Seminary, SC. Since 1978, he has engaged in extensive research in Biblical archaeology and has participated in a number of excavations in and around Jerusalem, including Ketef Hinnom, City of David, Ramat Rachel, and the Temple Mount Sifting Project; as well as the excavations at Tel Lachish, Tel Jezreel, Tel Hazor, and Tel Zayit.

Gordon has also explored other Bible lands, including Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, Greece, Malta, and Italy. He has taught the geography of the Bible and led field trips in Israel for the Jerusalem Center for Biblical Studies, the Institute of Holy Land Studies, and the IBEX program of The Master's College. He also co-teaches the Talbot School of Theology's Bible Lands Program for Turkey, Greece, and Rome. Gordon is on the staff of the Associates for Biblical Research in Akron, PA.

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