

## END NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Eilat Mazar, "Did I Find King David's Palace?" <<http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-sites-places/jerusalem/did-i-find-king-davids-palace/>>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Hershel Shanks, "First Person: The Bible as a Source of Testable Hypothesis", *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Issue 37:04, July/August 2011, <<http://members.bib-arch.org/search.asp?PubID=BSBA&Volume=37&Issue=4&ArticleID=12&UserID=0&>>.

<sup>5</sup> Abe Seleg, "Jerusalem City Wall Dates Back to King Solomon", <<http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Jerusalem-city-wall-dates-back-to-king-solomon>>.

<sup>6</sup> Christopher S. Carson, *Uncovering Israel's Past*, <<http://frontpagemag.com/2013/christopher-s-carson/uncovering-israels-past/>>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Mesha Stele, (a.k.a. Moabite Stone), discovered intact by Frederick A. Klein, an Alsatian missionary; now housed in the Musée du Louvre.

<sup>9</sup> "The Tel Dan Inscription: The First Historical Evidence of King David from the Bible", <<http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-artifacts-artifacts-and-the-bible/the-tel-dan-inscription-the-first-historical-evidence-of-the-king-david-bible-story/>>.

<sup>10</sup> *A Brief Guide to Al-Haram Al Sharif Jerusalem*, (Jerusalem: Supreme Moslem Council, 1924), 4.

<sup>11</sup> Christopher S. Carson, "Uncovering Israel's Past", <<http://frontpagemag.com/2013/christopher-s-carson/uncovering-israels-past/>>.



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# Jerusalem's Past: THE KEY TO ITS FUTURE!

By Charles E. McCracken

Christians who visit the modern state of Israel invariably leave remarking that the experience changes the way they read the Bible. After touring the ancient sites, the words of Scripture pop-up in 3-D perspective replacing the flannelgraph scenes they remember from Sunday school. The City of David Jerusalem Walls National Park is a case in point. At the heart of David's kingdom and central to a significant portion of biblical history, this active archaeological dig is uncovering Israel's past and confirming the reliability of Scripture in the process. While some see these relics of history as merely the ambient environment that contributes to Jerusalem's charm, in reality *they tell a story*—the modern city of Jerusalem is inexorably connected to its past; and the past is the key to its future.



Dr. Eilat Mazar standing near the most impressive wall of the small tower of the Solomonic Wall at Ophel.  
Photo: Noga Cohen-Aloro, Courtesy of Eilat Mazar.

## Observing the Present

The extraordinary city of Jerusalem has been the heart of Jewish identity since King David established it as the capital and spiritual center of united Israel over 3,000 years ago. Obvious reminders of his connection to the past can be seen throughout the city even today. From the much revered tomb of King David, an ancient landmark on Mount Zion, to the King David Hotel famous for housing royalty and dignitaries since the 1920s, to the exclusive *David HaMelech* (King David) Street, and the many businesses that incorporate the nomenclature of King David into their identity—all point to David's celebrated connection to the city.

## Excavating the Past

Even more compelling is the archaeological evidence that not only links King David to the city of Jerusalem, but also verifies its prominence as Israel's capital. In recent years, excavation just to the southeast of the Temple Mount in the City of David provides unfolding detail about the most famous king in history and the ancient city he established. Although hindered by difficult and costly land purchases critical to continuing excavations, exciting discoveries at the archaeological site reveal a new perspective of King David, whose palace

complex has been the focus of the work since 2005.

Interestingly, the archaeologist responsible for the discovery of what is believed to be King David's Jerusalem palace, Dr. Eilat Mazar, asserts that it was the Bible that led to her discovery.<sup>1</sup> Using 2 Samuel 5:17 as a reference, she postulated that the large structure at the northern-most end of the dig fits the location for David's palace. Commenting on the find, she states, "choosing a site for his palace adjacent to the northern side of the Jebusite fortress would have been a very logical step for someone who was already planning a northern expansion of the city".<sup>2</sup> Coupled with other discoveries such as the five foot wide proto-Aeolic capitol discovered by Kathleen Kenyon who dug in in the same vicinity in the 1960s, along with bullae (imprinted clay seals) and pottery with inscriptions that epigraphers have identified as proto-Hebrew (an early form of Hebrew), and the fact that the building was, "a structure that was clearly the product of inspiration, imagination and considerable economic investment," suggests a high probability that it is indeed the palace used by King David in Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup>

While some in the field criticized her for her use of the Bible as a guide to begin her search, *Biblical Archaeology Review* editor, Herschel Shanks, stifled opponents in an editorial applauding her methodology: "I would have thought that Eilat would have been praised for proceeding quite scientifically—according to the vaunted scientific method that has produced so much for our civilization. As I understand it, you formulate a hypothesis and then you proceed to test it, either proving or disproving it. Eilat had a hypothesis and she wanted to test it by digging."<sup>4</sup>



Tombs of the Davidic Dynasty, City of David

Mazar also discovered a massive wall believed to have been built during the time of Solomon. This find provides evidence confirming that Jerusalem, "was home to a strong central government that had the resources and manpower needed to build massive fortifications in the 10th century BCE."<sup>5</sup>

In other words, the city of Jerusalem during David's time was not an insignificant backwater village, as skeptics contend, but a bustling center of commerce and government. The evidence corroborating the biblical account asserts that David and his son Solomon truly lived and ruled as monarchs in Israel. In light of new evidence revealed in early August of 2013, many of these same skeptics are frantically back-pedaling.

Over the past seven years, archaeologists have excavated a site believed to be the fortress of King David in the Elah Valley. Known as Khirbet Qeiyafa today, it is believed to be the, "Judean city of Shaarayim, where, it is alleged, the young David smote Goliath as described in the Bible, and where David later kept a palace."<sup>6</sup> The significance of the site is articulated by a former skeptic who now declares, "This is indisputable proof of the existence of a central authority in Judah during the time of King David."<sup>7</sup>

The discovery of the Mesha Stele erected around 840 B.C. near Dan is one of the

# JERUSALEM IN PERSPECTIVE

1913 B.C.	Abraham meets Melchizedek, King of Salem, in the Valley of Shaveh (poss. where the Kidron, Hinnom and Tyropean valleys meet, east of Jerusalem.) Gen. 14:17, 18
1872 B.C.	Abraham and Isaac travel to Mt. Moriah, the future site of the temple. Gen. 22
1400 B.C.	Jebusites take control of the city of Salem; rename it Jebus.
1048 B.C.	David captures the city making it the capital of united Israel. 2 Sam. 5
1017 B.C.	David purchases Ornan's threshing floor. 2 Sam. 24:24; 1 Chr. 21:25
1004 B.C.	Solomon completes the temple. 2 Chr. 5 - 6
975 B.C.	Kingdom divided; Jerusalem remains capital of Judah. 1 Ki. 12
740 B.C.	Assyrian captivity of Israel (10 northern tribes). 2 Ki. 17
607 B.C.	Babylonian captivity of Judah; temple destroyed. 2 Ki. 25
536 B.C.	Cyrus' decree permitting right of return to Jerusalem. Ezra 1
515 B.C.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Temple completed under Ezra. Ezra 6:15
445 B.C.	Rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls completed under Nehemiah. Neh. 6:15
176 B.C.	Antiochus Epiphanes outlaws Judaism; desecrates the temple.
164 B.C.	Temple cleansed; worship restored (commemorated in the Festival of Hanukkah).
37 B.C.	Romans appoint Herod the Great as client king; Jerusalem named capital of Judea.
18 B.C.	Herod the Great begins program to expand and improve the temple complex.
A.D. 70	Titus destroys Jerusalem and the temple.
A.D. 363	Roman Emperor Julian permits the return of Jewish people to Jerusalem.
A.D. 638	Forces of Islam led by Abu Ubaidah (under the authority of Caliph Omar) conquer Jerusalem.
A.D. 691	Dome of the Rock shrine built on the Temple Mount by Caliph Abd al-Malik.
A.D. 700 - 1917	Crusaders, Turks, Mamluks, Spain, Egypt and Ottoman Empire vie for control of Jerusalem.
1917	Gen. Allenby captures Jerusalem from the Turks. The Balfour Declaration issued—"His Majesty's Government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people".
1947	U.N. votes in favor of partitioning the land into two autonomous Arab and Jewish states; the plan is rejected by the Arabs, but accepted by the Jewish people.
1948	The Jewish people declare an independent Jewish state called Israel. The next day, the newly-formed nation is attacked by five Arab armies.
1967	The Six-Day War results in Israel unifying Jerusalem and reclaiming the Temple Mount. Although Israel's ownership was firmly established, a few days later, Moshe Dayan ceded internal administrative control of the Temple Mount to the Jordanian Waqf; Israel maintains security.

**... AND MY EYES AND MY HEART WILL BE THERE PERPETUALLY. 1 Kings 9:3**

Some dates are approximate based on a consensus of historical sources.

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earliest mentions of the house of David validating other evidence that he was an actual person who ruled a literal dynasty.<sup>8</sup> Discovered in 1868, the stone, "set up by one of ancient Israel's fiercest enemies more than a century after David's death, still recognized David as the founder of the kingdom of Judah."<sup>9</sup>

## Investigating Biblical History

Before David defeated Goliath, Samuel the prophet had already anointed him as the next king of Israel. Although a young man, David demonstrated the courage, integrity and faith in God characteristic of a true king of Israel. The unexpected victory over the giant propelled David to a place of prominence that would profoundly impact future generations. Seven years later, David became king of Judah and ruled from Hebron. Upon the death of Ish-bosheth, representatives of the northern tribes of Israel came to David seeking to unite under his leadership. In an act of solidarity, the elders of Israel and Judah crowned David king over the twelve tribes of Israel just as God had promised (2 Sam. 5:3; 1 Sam. 16:13).

Although David had already ruled from Hebron, the isolated city was no longer a suitable capital for united Israel. David quickly moved to secure a more appropriate site—Jerusalem, the Jebusite stronghold also known as Jebus. The Jebusites were specifically named by God as one of the Canaanite groups to be driven from the land (Deut. 20:17). In the 400 years since Israel's conquest, however, the Jebusites had doggedly held this fortress in a pocket of land between the tribes of Benjamin and Judah (Josh. 15:63; Jud. 1:21).

It was the perfect spot for David's new capital. Perched on a rock formation called the Ophel at 150 to 200 feet above the valley floor, it provided a strategic view of the surrounding valleys, was highly defensible and had access to fresh water. Since none of the tribes had been able to claim Jebus as their permanent possession, it also provided an element of neutrality necessary for the center of government. And, because of its location in the Judean highlands, boasted a moderate climate.

At this crucial point in Israel's history, God providentially delivered the city to David who made it the capital of united Israel. The King of Tyre (Lebanon) immediately recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital sending workers and materials to help build David's palace (2 Sam. 5:11). David ruled Israel for almost 40 years, and it was to this beautiful city that he brought the Ark of the Covenant making Jerusalem the heart and soul of his kingdom (6:17).

Ruling as God promised from the neutral stronghold of Jerusalem over a united Israel, David's gratitude to God intensified his desire to build a temple to house the Ark of the Covenant. Although God denied David that honor, He did promise that his son Solomon would ultimately build the structure. Despite his disappointment, David devoted much of the next three decades to planning and gathering materials for the project.

At the proper time, God unmistakably guided David to the site upon which the temple would be built. It was near the peak of Mount Moriah, where Ornan (Araunah) the Jebusite still owned a threshing floor, that God directed David



Active archeological excavation site, City of David

to build an altar and offer a sacrifice (2 Sam. 24:18). David immediately made his way up to the place where he explained God's directive to Ornan who had come to meet him. Ornan generously offered the threshing floor to the king free of charge along with the implements and the oxen needed for the sacrifice.

David's integrity would not allow him to offer a sacrifice to the Lord at no expense to himself, but there was even more at stake. How could David offer a sacrifice to the God of Israel on land that still belonged to a Canaanite? Rather than accepting Ornan's proposal, David paid the full market value of 600 gold shekels for the land and 50 silver shekels for the oxen and instruments, leaving absolutely no doubt about the ownership of the land—the property belonged to David (2 Sam. 24:24; 1 Chr. 21:25).

David immediately prepared the altar, arranged the sacrifice and the Lord, "answered him from heaven by fire on the altar of burnt offering" (v. 26). When David saw his sacrifice had been accepted, he acknowledged that God had chosen this place as the site of the future temple, intensified his efforts to prepare materials and began communicating detailed plans to Solomon (22:5-6).

It is no coincidence that almost 900 years earlier, it was to this very place God called Abraham to the ultimate test of devotion. Here on Mount Moriah, God provided a ram as a substitutionary sacrifice on behalf of his son Isaac (Gen. 22:1-13). Before leaving, Abraham marked the significance of the place by renaming it *Jehovah-Jireh* (The-Lord-Will-Provide), and the text elaborates by saying, "as it is said to this day, 'In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided'" (22:14).

Upon the death of David circa. 1015 B.C., Solomon issued the command to begin construction of the temple. The project required seven years to complete utilizing the labor of 180,000 workers with 3,300 overseers (1 Ki. 5:13-16, 6:37). Solomon dedicated the temple, "at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite" (2 Chr. 3:1). After Solomon's dedicatory prayer, "fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple" (7:1). Later that evening, God appeared to Solomon and assured him, "For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually" (2 Chr. 7:16).

Interestingly, in a booklet published by the Supreme Moslem Council in 1924, a reference to the Temple Mount asserts, "Its identity with the site of Solomon's Temple is beyond dispute. This, too, is the spot, according to universal belief, on which 'David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings'".<sup>10</sup>

## Anticipating the Future

God's covenant with David had eternal implications not only for him, but also for the city of Jerusalem. Nathan the prophet communicated the details of God's covenant with David as outlined in 2 Samuel 7:11-17 and 1 Chronicles 17:10-15. Although both passages relate to King David, one emphasizes the role of Solomon as heir apparent to the throne; the other focuses on the prophesied Messiah who will establish the Messianic Kingdom and rule from Jerusalem.

After reaffirming the promises regarding the physical land of Israel made in the Abrahamic and Deuteronomic (Land) Covenants, God reassured David through Nathan the prophet, "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever" (2 Sam. 7:16). God promised David three things: (1) an eternal dynasty with an eternal right to rule, (2) an eternal kingdom over which to rule and (3) a descendent who will rule from David's throne forever.

The Davidic Covenant continues as a valid covenant that will have ultimate fulfillment when Messiah establishes the Messianic Kingdom. In the context of communicating this covenant, God confirms, "Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore" (7:10). Jeremiah gives more detail saying, "foreigners will no more enslave them [Israel]. But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King whom I will raise up for them" (Jer. 30:8-9). This is a reference to Messiah who is a descendant of David and the ultimate fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant.

During the Messianic Kingdom, Jerusalem will not only be the center of Jewish life as it has for more than 3,000 years, it will be the center of worship for the whole world (Isa. 2:2-4). Under Messiah's rule, the Messianic Temple in Jerusalem will be the focal point of worship and the whole world will be obliged to come to Jerusalem annually to observe the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. 14:16).

The rocks of Jerusalem tell a story—a powerful story. An anti-Israel minimalist, Phillip Davies of the University of Sheffield, England asserts, "Debate about ancient Israel is also debate about modern Israel, and in the eyes of many people, the legitimacy of the latter depends on the credibility of the biblical portrait"<sup>11</sup> Despite attempts to minimize the biblical record, recent discoveries firmly establish the vibrant modern city of Jerusalem as a living monument to David's legacy. But, that is not the end of the story. The credibility of the biblical account goes beyond establishing the legitimacy of Jerusalem's present; it solidly assures Jerusalem's future. And, with Messiah sitting on the throne of David—what a future!



Jerusalem Archeological Park