

Devotions with Your Feet

It's not just a tour, it's a journey with eternal benefits.

Top of the Arbel Pass, looking over into Upper Galilee

A Quarterly Newsletter

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When asked if Howard Carter could see anything as he peered into the tomb of Tutankhamen for the first time, Carter declared, "Yes, wonderful things!" This past year has proven to reveal more wonderful things—things vital to our study of God's Word. Below we have selected what we feel are ten of the top biblical archaeological finds in 2015.

•**The Opening of the Khirbet Qelyafa.** Located in the Elah Valley, this fortress is where David met Saul prior to fighting Goliath. Later this site served as one of David's palaces (cf. 1 Chron 4:31). While the site was discovered in 2007, the fortress is now available to the public.

•**The Opening of Recent Excavations at Magdala.** Excavations began in 2009 and are now open to the public. Undoubtedly, one of the most significant finds at this site is a first-century synagogue. Jesus would have most likely taught in this very location (cf. Matt 4:23).



•**Hezekiah Seal.** While various seals from Hezekiah exist, this is the first time that a seal impression of an Israelite or Judean king has ever come to light in a scientific archaeological excavation (cf. 2 Kgs 18:5). This seal was found in Jerusalem by leading Israeli archaeologist, Eliat Mazar.

•**10th-century Stone Seal.** An ancient stone seal dated to the 10th century BC has been found in soil taken from Jerusalem's Temple Mount. In describing the significance of this find, Gabriel Barkay and Zachi Dvira said, "The seal is the first of its kind to be found in Jerusalem ... The dating of the seal corresponds to the historical period of the Jebusites and the conquest of Jerusalem by King David, as well as the construction of the Temple and the royal official compound by his son, King Solomon."

•**The Gate at Gath.** Remains of the monumental city gate and fortifications of Iron Age Gath—home of Goliath—were uncovered this summer in excavations at Tell es-Safi in central Israel (cf. 1 Sam 17).



The Eshbaal Inscription

•**Eshbaal Inscription.** The Biblical name Eshbaal has been found for the first time in an ancient inscription. Incised before firing on a 3,000-year-old large ceramic storage jar, the inscription was discovered at the site of Khirbet Qeiyafa in Israel (cf. 1 Chron 8:33).

"The excessive skepticism of many liberal theologians stems not from a careful evaluation of the available data, but from an enormous predisposition against the supernatural."

Millar Burrows, *Professor of Archaeology at Yale University*

•**Source of Solomon's Silver.** Where is Tarshish, the Biblical source of the Phoenician silver trade? A recent study points to Spain and Sardinia as the Biblical world's source of silver in the 10th century BC, lending scientific credence to textual associations between Biblical Tarshish and modern Sardinia (cf. 1 Kgs 10:22-27).



•**Another First-Century Mansion Found in Jerusalem.** Led by Shimon Gibson and James Tabor, the excavations at Mt. Zion in Jerusalem have unearthed a first-century AD mansion that may have belonged to aristocrats or a member of the wealthy Jewish priestly families.

A hacksilber hoard from Tel Dor. According to 1 Kings 10, silver from Tarshish brought great wealth to Solomonic Jerusalem.

•**New Evidence for the Location of Cana.** Excavations at Khirbet Cana in lower Galilee provide compelling evidence that the town where Jesus' first miracle was performed has been found. The discovery of a large Christian underground veneration complex suggests that the site may have been seen as the location of "Cana of Galilee" by early Christians since the 5th century (cf. John 2:1-4).

•**Jewish Fortifications Found at Tel Burna.** Further excavations at Tel Burna strongly support this site to be Libnah of the Old Testament.

Libnah is included in the "southern campaign" of Joshua (Josh 10:29-31, 39; 12:15) and the town has lists of both the tribes of Judah and Levi (Josh 15:42; 21:13; cf. 1 Chron 6:57). During the Divided Kingdom (931-586 BC), Libnah is mentioned as a town that rebelled from the rule of King Jehoram (c. 853-841 BC) of Judah (2 Kings 8:22; 2 Chron 21:10). Around 140 years



Tel Burna or most likely, the biblical site of Libnah later, Libnah was the last site destroyed by Sennacherib before the

Neo-Assyrian king turned his attention to Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:8; Isa 37:8). Finally, in the seventh century BC, Libnah was mentioned as the hometown of Hamutal, the wife of King Josiah and mother of Jehoahaz and Zedekiah, two of the last kings of Judah (2 Kings 23:31; 24:18; Jer 52:1).

These top 10 discoveries of 2015 further demonstrate the value of archaeology in studying the Word of God! This is also one of the reasons why Ancient Tours is committed to providing first-hand experiences in biblical lands. As we have often stated, the opportunity to study the Bible in the land allows you to appreciate all the more the historicity and veracity of the Scriptures! Indeed, it is an incredible opportunity to witness the Bible move from black and white to Technicolor!

"I tell you, if they [the Pharisees] keep silent, the very stones will cry out!"
~ Luke 19:40

We are excited about our four tours to Israel slated for 2016.

As with travel anywhere in the world today, there is concern for safety. Despite the unrest that is reported in the news, Israel remains safe.

Currently, there are thousands of tourists visiting the Holy Land. Please know that we are taking the necessary precautions, however, to do our best to ensure your safety so that each tour is as free as possible from any distractions due to logistics. For

instance, we are carefully evaluating a visit to Jericho. If we deem unsafe, we have already made arrangements for alternative sites. We also have no hotel bookings in East Jerusalem. These are just a couple of ways we are seeking to ensure that nothing deters from your trip of a life-time. If you have any specific questions, please feel free to contact us.



A rare Byzantine hoard was discovered at the site of the Temple Mount, and is now on display to the public for the first time at the Israel Museum. The hoard contains coins and jewelry made of gold and silver, including a gold medallion bearing the image of the Temple's seven-branched menorah - the largest and most impressive discovery of its kind.



May the Lord richly bless you in this New Year!

Blessings to you,
~ Rich and David

For additional information concerning our upcoming tours, you may visit our website or contact us at:



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