

Biblical Archaeology Discoveries



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A

Abel Beth Maacah - unexcavated mound, city saved by "wise woman" in II Samuel 20:14-22.

Absalom's Pillar - located in Kidron Valley east of Jerusalem, mentioned in II Samuel 18:18.

Accho (now called Acre) - city mentioned in Judges 1:31.

Aczib - city which the tribe of Asher failed to take, mentioned in Judges 1:31.

Adullam - secret cave of David in I Samuel 22:1.

Ai - Joshua burned this city mentioned in Joshua 8:28.

Akeldama - Potter's Field where Judas hanged himself, mentioned in Matthew 27:6-10.

Amarna - tablets (dated 1400 B.C.) in this Egyptian city contain a letter from the ruler of Jerusalem (Jerusalem) warning the Pharaoh that all the cities of Canaan are besieged by the Hittites (Hebrews).

Anathoth - home town of Abiathar the priest mentioned in I Kings 2:26 and of the prophet Jeremiah mentioned in Jeremiah 1:1.

Antioch - mentioned in Acts 11:26, excavated in 1932, city where disciples were first called Christians.

Antipatris - mentioned in Acts 23:31, city where Paul was taken under arrest.

Arabah - a dry valley named in Joshua 18:18.

Ararat - mountains where Noah's ark rested in Genesis 8:4; large stones used to stabilize an enormous ancient ship are found in the area of Mount Lubar (a mountain of Ararat).

Areopagus - also called Mars Hill in Athens, mentioned in Acts 17:17, where Paul preached about the "Unknown God" monument discovered in 1903 in city of Pergamum.

Ashdod - Philistines took the ark of God here in I Samuel 5:5, excavated in 1962 which confirmed destruction by Uzziah king of Judah mentioned in II Chronicles 26:6.

Ashkelon - excavated in 1921, city mentioned in Judges 1:18.

Asaiah - a seal impression was discovered with the words "Asaiah servant of the king" mentioned in II Kings 22:12,14 and II Chronicles 34:20; he was one who King Josiah commanded to inquire of Huldah the prophetess concerning the lost Book of the Law.

Asshur - son of Shem in Genesis 10:22, first capital city of Assyria and named in Numbers 24:22, excavated in 1853.

B

Babylon (Babel) - excavated in 1899, first mention as Babel in Genesis 10:10, also discovered was the foundation of the "House of the Foundation Platform (tower) of Heaven and Earth" in Genesis 11, also clay tablets referring to Jehoiachin king of Judah mentioned in II Kings 24:12,15.

Baruch son of Neriah - a seal of this scribe was discovered, who wrote down the words of Jeremiah as mentioned in Jeremiah 36:4.

Beersheba - named by Abraham who dug a well still found there, mentioned in Genesis 21:30-32, discovered in 1874.

Bethany - town of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, mentioned in John 12:1.

Bethel - God revealed himself to Jacob who named this place in Genesis 35:2-7, excavated in 1954.

Beth Shearim - In this town, the tomb of the family of Rabbi Gamaliel is located. He was the grandson of Hillel, founder of the sect of Pharisees. He was also the teacher of Paul and a member of the Sanhedrin. Gamaliel gave his opinion and warning about the

ministry of Peter and the other apostles in Acts 5:34-40. The simple inscription on the tomb reads, "This [tomb] is of the Rabbi Gamaliel."

Bethesda - discovered in 1888 with its columns and porches, pool in Jerusalem where Jesus healed a man sick for 38 years, mentioned in John 5:2.

Bethlehem - location of Jesus' birth and Rachel's tomb still standing, mentioned in Genesis 48:7 and I Samuel 10:2.

Beth Shan - city mentioned in Judges 1:27 and temples discovered in 1937 where Saul's armour and severed head were displayed mentioned in I Samuel 31:10 and I Chronicles 10:10.

Beth Shemesh - city excavated in 1931, mentioned in Judges 1:33, jar handle discovered with inscription "belonging to Eliakim, steward of Jehoiachin."

Beth Zur - city excavated in 1931, fortified by Rehoboam to defend Judah, mentioned in II Chronicles 11:7.

C

Caesarea - city excavated in 1960, where Paul appeared before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, mentioned in Acts 23:33; discovered here was a stone inscription naming "Pontius Pilate Prefect of Judea".

Caesarea Philippi - city where Peter declared that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God in Matthew 16:16.

Calah - city excavated in 1845, mentioned in Genesis 10:11 as one of the first cities, built by Nimrod.

Capernaum - city located on northwest shore of Sea of Galilee, and mentioned in John 6:59, an ancient synagogue was discovered believed built on the site of the one where Jesus preached. The names of Alphaeus, Zebedee and John are found on one of the pillars (see Mark 3:17-18).

Carchemish - city excavated in 1914, where a decisive battle was fought ending the Assyrian empire, mentioned in II Chronicles 35:20.

Colossae - identified in 1835, location of the church to whom Paul wrote the Letter to the Colossians.

Corinth - inhabited until an earthquake in 1858, excavators found a 1st century limestone block referring to Erastus as commissioner of the city, mentioned in Romans 16:23; the court where Paul was taken in Acts 18:12 has been located.

Cyrus Cylinder - relates the decree of Cyrus to return the prisoners of Babylon (including the Jews) to their own land and the restoration of treasures to their temples as in Ezra 1:2,3.

D

Damascus - oldest continuous city, mentioned throughout the Bible beginning in Genesis 14:15, street called Straight still existing (at higher position) mentioned in Acts 9:11.

Dan - most northern city of Israel and where Jereboam set up golden calf, mentioned in Genesis 14:14 and I Kings 12:29, only surface explorations have been done.

Dead Sea Scrolls - found near Qumran began in 1947, manuscripts or fragments of every book of the Old Testament (except Esther) dating between 100 B.C. and 68 A.D., other scrolls repeatedly tell of their expectation that the Messiah was about to appear.

Derbe - a mound located 15 miles south of Lystra, where Paul preached mentioned in Acts 14:6.

Dibon - city excavated in 1868, Moabite Stone was discovered written in Hebrew, refers to the House of David; describes revolt of Mesha, king of Mesha, and names Omri king of Israel, mentioned in II Kings 3.

Dothan - town excavated in 1953, where Joseph was thrown into a well mentioned in Genesis 37:17-28 and where Elisha had a vision mentioned in II Kings 6:13.

E

Ebla - excavated in 1964, clay tablets with names similar to those in the Bible: Ebrum in Gen.10:21, Abraham, Esau, Saul, Michael, David, Israel, Ishmael, and of gods El, Ya, (who was supreme over other pagan gods named in Bible such as) Dagan, Astar, Adad, Kamis, Malik. Also named are hundreds of place names mentioned

in the Bible and one tablet mentions the 5 cities of the plain in the same order as given in Genesis 14:2 (first time these place names were found outside Bible).

Ecbatana - city where scroll of Cyrus was found issuing his decree for the release of the Jews from Babylon and for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, mentioned in Ezra 5:13-6:14.

Ekron - city where the ark of the covenant was taken mentioned in I Samuel 5:10. In 1997, an inscription was discovered in the buried ruins of a temple of Baal which identifies it as being in the city of Ekron.

Edrei - city where Og, king of Bashan, was defeated by the Israelites, mentioned in Numbers 21:33.

Ephesus - city excavated in 1863, where church was located to whom Paul wrote his Letter to the Ephesians; discovered are the Temple of Artemis and identifying inscriptions and the theater where Paul was dragged mentioned in Acts 19:23-41.

Erech - city excavated in 1852, founded by Nimrod mentioned in Genesis 10:9-10, clay tablets show early inhabitants worshipped only two deities.

Ebion Geber - city excavated in 1937, site of King Solomon's navy mentioned in I Kings 9:26.

G

Gallio - an inscription dated 52 A.D. was found in Delphi in Greece which mentions that Gallio was proconsul of Achaia as stated in Acts 18:12-17.

Gerazim - mountain where Samaritans still worship, mentioned in John 4:20.

Gezer - excavated in 1909, Solomon's chariot city mentioned in I Kings 9:16-17.

Gibeah - excavated in 1933, capital of Israel in I Samuel 10:26, castle of King Saul discovered with audience room where David played the harp.

Gibeon - excavated in 1957, tabernacle located here before Solomon's temple was built, Solomon chose wisdom here in II Chronicles 1:3-13, jar handles discovered with the name Gibeon, also

personal names of Amariah, Azariah, Hananiah in Jeremiah 28:1; the pool of Gibeon discovered carved out of rock, mentioned in II Samuel 2:12-17.

Gihon - excavated in 1867, Solomon crowned here; tunnel discovered leading from the spring into Jerusalem, mentioned in II Samuel 5:8.

Gilgal - excavated in 1955, Israel's first camping place after crossing Jordan; location corroborated by Joshua 4:19, Josephus, and Eusebius.

H

Hamath - excavated in 1872 and 1938, inscriptions of Hittites mentioned in Genesis 15:20; King of Hamath sent gifts to David in II Samuel 8:6.

Haran - Abraham lived here on his way to Canaan, mentioned in Genesis 11:31, Mari tablets refer frequently to this location.

Hazor - excavated in 1955, city was destroyed in Joshua 11:10 and rebuilt by Solomon in I Kings 9:15.

Hermon - highest mountains of Palestine; its slopes and peaks were the "high places" of Baal worship mentioned in Numbers 22:41; many ruins of shrines and a temple to Baal on the highest peak were discovered in 1934.

Herod's Tomb – found desecrated at the site of Herodium near Jerusalem in 2007. The palace of Herod the Great, who ordered the slaughter of infants in Bethlehem, was discovered in 1972. He died in 4 BC as recorded in Matthew 2:19 and confirmed by the Jewish historian Josephus (37-100 AD).

Hoshea - a seal of the minister of Hoshea last king of Israel was discovered, mentioned in II Kings 17:1.

J

Jabneh - unexcavated mound, location confirmed by many ancient sources; mentioned in Joshua 15:11, recaptured by Uzziah in II Chronicles 26:6.

Jacob's Well - located near Sychar in John 4:5,6; one of the most authentic sites attested by ancient Samaritan tradition and scripture location.

Jerahmeel - discovered was a seal impression of this son of the king, mentioned in Jeremiah 36:26, who was sent to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch (see above).

Jericho - excavated in 1868, 1911, 1936, and 1958; first city captured in Joshua 6:1-27; fallen walls and charred remains were discovered during the period of the Israelite seige which fit verses 20,24.

Jerusalem - numerous excavations since 1838, links to Biblical times are section of temple wall, stone signet of "Haggai, the son of Shebaniah" in Haggai 2:23, Pool of Siloam in John 9:7, identifying inscription and tunnel constructed by Hezekiah mentioned in II Kings 20:20, inscription at Herod's temple prohibiting Gentiles, inscription identifying burial place of Uzziah king of Judah, inscription of tomb of the son of the high priest Caiaphas who presided over the trial of Jesus in Luke 3:2 and John 18:13,14,24,28. See also *Herod's Tomb*.

Jezebel - unexcavated city at foot of Mount Gilboa, location of the palace of Ahab and Jezebel, where Elijah ran for his life in I Kings 18: 46, where Jezebel was trampled and eaten by dogs as Elijah predicted in I Kings 21:23 and fulfilled in II Kings 9:30.

Joppa - port city, minor excavations; from where Jonah left for Tarshish mentioned in Jonah 1:3.

K

Kedesh - partially explored, one of the six cities of refuge in Joshua 20:7, captured in Joshua 12:22.

Khorsabad - excavated in 1842, capital city of Sargon king of Assyria, discovered annals of his capture of Samaria confirming Isaiah 20 which was the only prior evidence of Sargon's existence.

Kiriath Jearim - minor explorations, in Joshua 9:17, city where ark of the covenant remained before David brought it to Jerusalem, mentioned in I Chronicles 13:5-8.

Kiriath Sepher - excavated in 1932, mentioned in Joshua 15:15.

Kish - excavated suburb of Babylon, dating from 4000 B.C., clay tablets show pictographic script from which cuneiform developed, evidence of rapid decline from monotheism to three gods (sky, earth, sun) to 5000 gods (see Erech).

Korazin - synagogue and stone seat discovered like Moses' seat mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 23:2.

L

Lachish - excavated in 1938, captured by Israel in Joshua 10:32, discovered were The Lachish Letters written by Hoshai mentioned in Nehemiah 12:32 and Jeremiah 42:1 and 43:2, and which describe the difficult years before the Babylonian capture of Jerusalem; refers to the words of the princes as "weakening our hands" mentioned in Jeremiah 38:4.

Laodicea - unexcavated city, home of one of the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 1:4,11; the outline of the city walls may be traced.

Lydda - unexcavated city, known as Lod in I Chronicles 8:12, town where Peter healed a paralytic in Acts 9:32.

Lystra - discovered in 1885 when a Roman altar was found with "Lystra" inscribed in large letters, on a mound 25 miles south of Iconium; where Paul taken as a god and later stoned and left for dead in Acts 14:8-20.

M

Mareeshah - excavated in 1900, home of prophet Micah and Eliezer mentioned in II Chronicles 20:37 and fortified by Rehoboam mentioned in II Chronicles 14:12.

Mari - excavated in 1933, depicts life in patriarchal times; discovered statue of Ashtoreth mentioned in I Kings 11:33 and official letters making frequent reference to cities of Haran, Nahor, Serug, Peleg, and Terah mentioned in the Bible as well as personal names of Reu, Terah, Nahor, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Benjamin, and David.

Medeba - a city of Moab, mentioned in Numbers 21:30 and Isaiah 15:2.

Megiddo - excavated in 1935, discovered were the signet seal of "Shema officer of Jeroboam" in I Kings 11:28, inscription of Shishak mentioned in I Kings 14:25,26; massive stable compounds for Solomon's chariots mentioned in II Chronicles 9:25.

Memphis - capital of Egypt, discovered were vast cemeteries mentioned rhetorically in Hosea 9:6.

Mizpah - excavated in 1935, where Samuel judged Israel in I Samuel 7:5-6; discovered were a massive wall built by Asa mentioned in I Kings 15:22, jar handles with "Mizpah" in Old Hebrew, a seal reading "Jaazaniah, officer of the King" mentioned in II Kings 25:23.

N

Nazareth - home of Jesus to age 30, a certain well still used has always been the only source of water for the town.

Nineveh - excavated in 1845, a city built by Nimrod in Genesis 10:11 and where Jonah preached, discovered were inscriptions and accounts of Sennacherib's capture of Hezekiah and cities of Israel with careful descriptions of spoils taken but no explanation of his failure to capture Jerusalem, which was due to a miracle of God described in II Kings 19:35-36; Sennacherib's final days described in verses 36-37 is confirmed by a clay cylinder found in Esarhaddon's palace; Ashurbanipal's library was found which contained early accounts of a great flood and of creation.

Nob - unexcavated city of priests near Jerusalem, where David fled from Saul mentioned in I Samuel 21:1-9.

Nuzi - excavated in 1931, a city of the same culture as Haran where Abraham lived; tablets show similar practices such as property transfers done at the city gate in Genesis 23:10-18, a handmaid could bear children for a childless wife in Genesis 16:3, childless couple could adopt a son as heir but would be replaced if a natural son is born as in Genesis 15:2-4, exchanging a small gift for an inheritance as in Genesis 25:30-34, blessing of a dying father as a legal way to bequeath property as in Genesis 27:30-33, possession of household

gods as evidence of property ownership shedding light on Genesis 31:30-35.

O

Olives - mount in Jerusalem with 1st century Christian cemetery and burial chests having names of Jairus, Simon Bar-Jonah, Mary, Martha, and Siloam.

P

Pergamum - excavated in 1878, a city of one of the churches addressed in Revelation 2:13 as "where Satan has his throne"; many pagan buildings and altars discovered.

Persepolis - excavated in 1935, capital city of Darius the Great in Ezra 4:5 and Xerxes, husband of Queen Esther, where their inscriptions were found.

Petra (Sela) - excavated in 1934, city mentioned in II Kings 14:7.

Philippi - excavated 1914 to 1934, city of the church of the Letter to the Philippians; discovered were the gateway to the river where Paul preached mentioned in Acts 16:12-13.

R

Rabbah (Rabbath-Ammon) - minor excavations, the name of this city today is Amman in Jordan, ancient capital of the kingdom of the Ammonites mentioned in Deuteronomy 2:19 and 3:11, people of which are descended from the son of Lot in Genesis 19:38.

Ras Shamra (Ugarit) - excavated in 1929 and 1939, discovered were a temple library, temples of Baal and Dagon, a belief in El as Creator and Father of all with Asherah as his consort, and which Israel denounced in Judges 2:12-15 and I Samuel 12:10.

Rome - city where Paul was under house arrest in Acts 28:16; city of the church of the Letter to the Romans; five million Christians were buried in the catacombs discovered in Rome.

S

Samaria - excavated in 1910 and 1935, capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel, discovered were foundations of the palaces of Omri and of Ahab mentioned in I Kings 16:24, thousands of pieces of ivory designed for decoration as mentioned in I Kings 22:39 and denounced in Amos 3:15 and 6:1,4; pool of Samaria in which Ahab's blood-stained chariot was washed in I Kings 22:38; inscribed pieces of pottery with Biblical names of Ahaz, Sheba, Nimshi, Ahinoam, and Gomer.

Sardis - excavated in 1908 and 1958, a city of the book of Revelation; discovered were a temple of Artemis with crosses engraved in many places indicating its conversion into a church building.

Shechem - excavated in 1909 and 1913 and 1934 and 1956, the first place Abraham visited in Palestine in Genesis 12:6-7 and where Joseph was buried in Joshua 24:32; discovered were a large wall and gateway where Hamor and son Shechem conferred with Jacob in Genesis 34:20-24, and evidence of the tower of Shechem mentioned in Judges 9:46-49.

Shiloh - excavated in 1931, city location given in Judges 21:19 and the young Samuel ministered here in I Samuel 3:21; discovered was evidence of lack of remains after 1050 B.C. when it was destroyed by the Philistines as mentioned in I Samuel 4:10-11.

Siloam - excavated in 1896, this pool in Jerusalem where Jesus sent the blind man to wash in John 9:7 is easily identified at the end of a tunnel from the village of Siloam; has 34 steps cut from rock and well-polished by foot wear.

Susa (Shushan) - excavated in 1852 and 1901, capital of ancient Elam (son of Shem), scene of many Biblical events in the time of Daniel, Nehemiah, and Esther mentioned in Esther 1:2; discovered were the palace fortress described in Esther chapter 1, floor of throne room in red, blue, white (porphyry) and black marble just as described in Esther; dice such as used by Haman; the King's gate where Mordecai sat; the inner court of the King's house; the outer ward court of the King's house; the palace garden, all described in the Book of Esther.

T

Taanach - excavated in 1904, captured by the Hebrews in Judges 1:27 and a supply city during the time of David and Solomon in I Kings 4:12; discovered were horse stables as in other strategic cities (see Megiddo).

Tadmor - a city built by King Solomon for trade and defense mentioned in II Chronicles 8:4, ruins are above ground.

Tahpanhes - excavated in 1886, Jeremiah and survivors of Judah fled here in Jeremiah 40:3 and 41:1-3 and 43:5,7; and here Jeremiah predicted the overthrow of Egypt in Jeremiah 43:8-11; in confirmation a fragmentary cuneiform tablet tells of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Egypt.

Thessalonica - the city of the church of the Letters to the Thessalonians; Luke identified the officials of the city as "politarchs" in Acts 17:6,8 which was thought to be Luke's contrivance until an inscription was found on a city gate of the period which reads "in the time of the politarchs..."

Tirzah - excavated in 1949, Jereboam's capital city in I Kings 14:17, discovered were government buildings begun but not completed when Omri moved his capital to Samaria; very poor and very rich houses as mentioned in Amos 5:11; destruction by the Assyrians mentioned in Hosea 8:14.

Troas - ruins of the city theatre, temple, and walls are found; place where Paul had a vision of the Macedonian in Acts 16:8-11.

Tyre - a seaport well-known from II Samuel 5:11 and Matthew 11:22 and Acts 21:7, now a small fishing village.

U

Ur - excavated in 1854 and 1919 and 1934, home town of Abraham; discovered were inscribed cylinders with the name of the city, and a prayer for Belshazzar to be "kept from sin" reflects Daniel 4:27 and 34-37.

Z

Zarephath - a city between Tyre and Sidon where Elijah lodged in I Kings 17:9.

Zoan - excavated in 1860 and 1929, city mentioned in Numbers 13:22.

Zorah - location of an ancient rock altar from the time of the Judges where Manoah may have presented a burnt offering mentioned in Judges 13:19-20; home of Samson in Judges 13:2.

SOURCES

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