



THE REALITY OF BIBLE HISTORY IN THE NEWS!

Discoveries in Jerusalem link the past to the present.

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This is *The Bible in the News* brought to you again this week, by Paul Billington, speaking from Ontario in Canada.

As Americans along the U.S. Gulf coast dry themselves out after being hit by two major hurricanes in a row, and as politicians and officials down there scramble to explain away their poor response to it all—the rest of the world has been carrying on as normal, rather glad that it was those swaggering Texans that got washed out and not their precious selves!!

The Islamic ladies of Iraq have apparently joined the suicide bombers there—or at least one of the female variety has dispatched herself and at least six Iraqis, out of this present world..

Israeli forces are taking a whack at the liberated, yet chaotic Gaza strip—and they are rounding up Hamas militants in the West Bank. Egypt wants them to stop it—and presumably just let the Kassams keep on a coming! All we can say about that is; WATCH THIS SPACE!

Anyway—apart from all that, from Hurricanes to Hamas, something else turned up in the News this week, and this takes us right back to Bible times.

It has been reported in the Israeli news media that a seal dating back to the period of Solomon's temple has been found among piles of rubble which came from Jerusalem's temple mount. Let me read to you from the report in the Jerusalem Post:

"The small—less than 1 cm—seal impression, or bulla, discovered Tuesday by Bar-Ilan University archaeologist Dr. Gabriel Barkay amidst piles of rubble from the Temple Mount would mark the first time that an written artifact was found from the Temple Mount dating back to the First Temple period.

"The 2,600 year old artifact, with three lines in ancient Hebrew, was discovered amidst piles of rubble discarded by the Islamic Wakf that Barkay and a team of young archaeologists and volunteers are sifting through on the grounds of a Jerusalem national park.

"The seal, which predates the destruction of the First Jewish temple in 586 BCE, was presented Tuesday night to the press at an archaeological conference at the City of David sponsored by the right-wing Elad organization."

Some reports are saying that this discovery is the first of its kind from the time of King David. But this is either clumsy reporting or wishful thinking because the temple did not exist in David's time—it was built by his son King Solomon. Nonetheless it is another link with Biblical times.

There are three Hebrew letters on the seal which is made from burnt clay or mud, but the meaning—probably the name of the owner—has not yet been deciphered.

Several other seals from the First Temple period have been found in recent years—but not from the actual temple mount itself. Many are on display today at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, and include many seals bearing names of people known to us from the Bible. One can see seals bearing names like King Hezekiah, and right out



*Seal with the inscription:
"Belonging to Hezekiah, (son of) Ahaz,
King of Judah."*

of the prophecy of Jeremiah names like Elishama, Eliakim, and Gemariah the son of Shaphan—Jeremiah 36:10. There is one with the name “Baruch son of Neriah” which even has his thumb-print on it. you can read about him in Jeremiah 36:4-8.

Also announced in the news this week was the discovery of a First Temple wall—found in an underground chamber adjacent to the Western wall tunnels. The temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC.

The Israeli newspaper Haaretz says that a new archaeological site is to be opened near the Western Wall in Jerusalem in a few weeks time. The latest findings and the new High-tech centre are meant to link the past with the future, says the paper.

But you know, linking the past to the present and to the future really gives you something to think about. It should give us something to consider as well.

Here we are seeing evidence of *real* history. The people in the Bible were REAL people. The things that are recorded in your Bible actually happened. Here was a bustling civilization that was completely wiped off the map. It was scrubbed out!

Why? What happened?

The Bible tells us why—and it tells us what happened. The society of that time—that nation which existed then—and to which the prophets of God were sent, FAILED to respect the Truth that had been delivered to them. We can get a feeling for the situation from Jeremiah chapter 9. Let me read the first nine verses:

“Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD. Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity. Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of my people? Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait. Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

So what about ourselves today? Are we valiant for the Truth upon the earth? Do we KNOW the LORD?—Indeed, do we WANT to know Him?

You see—today’s news very soon becomes history. As the years quickly go by our every day objects quickly become antiques—and then artifacts. It is not long before archaeologists are discovering what we were like, and why it was that our civilization perished.

And so it is that we read in Acts 15:14 that “God at the first did visit the Gentiles, *“to take out of them a people for His Name.”*

Yes, we are asked to come out, to be separate, and *touch not* the unclean thing—2 Corinthians 6:17. There are plenty of unclean (we could say filthy) things out there today. DON’T EVEN TOUCH IT! says the Apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are being called out for God’s Name—that is, so that we might reflect His character and live by His



*Seal bearing the inscription:
“Belonging to Baruch son of Neriah”
A thumb print is clearly visible to left.*

principles.

The records of the past are there for us to read about in the Bible. What was News then is now in the Bible as history.

What about your news? Will your life end up as history— as artifacts in the rubble of a past civilization? Or will you take hold of the GOOD NEWS; the Gospel, and discover the life of Christ, and share in that life for the ages of eternity,

That is the News in the Bible!

Listen in again next week.