LET THE STONES SPEAK

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AMERICA'S HEBREW ROOTS



AMERICA 250

LET THE STONES SPEAK

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FROM THE EDITOR | GERALD FLURRY

Celebrating America's Biblical Heritage

Why it is important for America to continue to treasure its relationship with Israel

This year, the United States of America is celebrating 250 years as an independent nation. This is a milestone well worth recognizing. America's presence and might have been a great blessing to this world.

This sentiment is contentious today, but it is the truth: Nations and peoples across the globe have benefited from the wealth, stability and security America has brought. One nation in particular has had a uniquely special relationship with America. I believe this relationship—a brotherhood, really—is one of the oldest and most important relationships that exists between two nations, historically and strategically. Since the founding of the modern nation of Israel, America has been one of Israel's greatest supporters.

In fact, America was the first nation to publicly recognize the newly formed Jewish state in 1948. Minutes after David Ben-Gurion announced the establishment of the State of Israel as an independent nation, United States President Harry S. Truman said: "I had faith in Israel before it was established; I have faith in it now. I believe it has a glorious future before it—not just another sovereign nation but as an embodiment of the great ideals of our civilization."

This is an opinion that most of America's presidents since that time have held.

Richard Nixon said, "Israelis have shown qualities that Americans identify with: guts, patriotism, idealism, a passion for freedom." Gerald Ford believed America's "role in supporting Israel honors our own heritage." Jimmy Carter said that America and Israel share "a special relationship."

With few exceptions, America's leaders have sought to defend and support the Jewish people.

Israel is one of the few nations listed as a "major non-NATO ally." "Israel has been the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. foreign aid since its founding, receiving over $300 billion (adjusted for inflation) in total economic and military assistance," the Council on Foreign Relations wrote on Oct. 7, 2025. Since 1948, America has been committed to Israel's security and welfare; it has been committed to the defense and support of the Jewish people.

America has been incredibly generous with *many* nations. But why is its relationship with a small nation in the Middle East so deep and unique? This is one of the subjects we explore in this issue of *Let the Stones Speak.*

In a way, the answer is simple: Israel's history is America's history. America's *identity*—morally, ideologically, politically, philosophically and theologically—can be traced to the Holy Land—to Jerusalem.

America and Israel's special relationship stems from, as President Ford highlighted, *a common heritage.* The Judeo-Christian values from the Hebrew Bible are at the very core of America's founding 250 years ago.

Melanie Phillips, acclaimed journalist and Jerusalem resident, explained it well: "The values that everybody in the West [especially America] holds dear or purports to hold dear ... are biblical values. And so the West's onslaught on itself has been in effect an onslaught on biblical values. Few people understand the immense importance of those values of the Hebrew Bible to the West, civilization and greatness."

It's important to consider the history of this relationship, and America's deep historic connection to Israel, because it appears the America-Israel brotherhood is flagging.

When U.S. President Donald Trump was re-elected, people in Israel rejoiced. Banners throughout Israel displayed statements of congratulations. Outside the U.S. ambassador's residence in Jerusalem, a 20-foot-tall banner read, "Welcome Back, Dear Friend."



"I had faith in Israel before it was established; I have faith in it now."
PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN



"Our role in supporting Israel honors our own heritage."
PRESIDENT GERALD FORD



"Israelis have shown qualities that Americans identify with: guts, patriotism, idealism, a passion for freedom."
PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON

President Trump's first term, it seems, was the high point of the relationship. Relations between Washington and Jerusalem today are much more volatile. In America, support for the Jewish state is declining, even among Christians and others who have traditionally cherished Israel.

This is a reality that is making headlines. On July 7, *Haaretz* published an article titled "The 'Special Relationship' With the U.S. Is Gone, and Israel Isn't Ready for What's Coming." "In a nutshell, the era of the 'special relationship' is over," wrote David Rothkopf. "While Israel will probably remain a U.S. ally for the foreseeable future, it will almost certainly receive much less support ....

"It will be more akin to other important international friendships the U.S. has, with countries like France or Germany, where cooperation and collaboration are sought but where periodic chills are also expected."

What a sad reality. Israel is the only functioning democracy in the Middle East, yet it is the most persecuted. And the superpower and brother that it once could rely on for security is chilling the alliance and proving itself increasingly unpredictable.

There are several reasons for America's growing apathy toward Israel. But one major reason is this: Americans are forgetting, and even *demolishing,* their history and identity. This sad trend brings many tragic results, including the destruction of the enduring and exceptional brotherhood with the Jewish state.

In order to preserve who we are, we must know and value who we are. We must remember our heritage. America was founded on Judeo-Christian principles. It was founded on the *Hebrew Bible.* This is the heritage America and Israel share. This is the source of our bond.

Why should Americans *continue* to deeply treasure their relationship with Israel? It's simple really: When we support and defend Israel's identity, we are supporting and defending America's history and identity. ■

PUBLIC DOMAIN (3)

Hezekiah's Historic(al) Reform

Does new evidence from Tel 'Eton reveal the religious reform of one of Judah's greatest kings?

BY MICAH VAN HALTEREN

IT WAS A CELEBRATION UNLIKE ANYTHING THE PEOPLE of Israel had ever experienced. The streets of Jerusalem were filled with citizens from all over the kingdom. Everyone had gathered for one purpose: to keep *Pesach* (Passover) and *Chag HaMatzot* (the Feast of Unleavened Bread).

This particular festival year, in the late eighth century B.C.E., was so exciting and joyous the people decided to add an extra seven days "with gladness." It was an exhilarating and altogether unique experience. "So there was great joy in Jerusalem; for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem" (2 Chronicles 30:26).

Why so much joy?

King Hezekiah was on the warpath, eradicating false religion and pagan worship from Judah and returning the nation to true worship centered around the temple in Jerusalem. The results were stunning: "Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and broke in pieces the pillars, and hewed down the Asherim, and broke down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities" (2 Chronicles 31:1).


Tel 'Eton

Today there is a lot of skepticism about whether Hezekiah's reforms actually took place. The rise of modern scholarship and textual criticism has seen many scholars cast doubt on the biblical account. Some scholars suggest Hezekiah's reform was simply a projection of the acts of Josiah; others claim the Assyrians were actually responsible for desecrating Judah's idols, but their actions were attributed to Hezekiah by the biblical authors.

"The historicity of Hezekiah's reforms is a hotly debated topic, and as the historical credibility of the biblical texts gradually eroded, so the reliance on archaeological data increased," wrote Prof. Avraham Faust from Bar-Ilan University ("Hezekiah's Reform? A View From Tel 'Eton on the Religious Development in Judah"). What does the archaeological data indicate? Let's review the evidence of Hezekiah's reforms, which now includes data from a site new to this debate: Tel 'Eton.

Tel 'Eton

Tel 'Eton is located 11 kilometers (7 miles) southeast of Lachish, Judah's second city. The mound of Tel 'Eton has been excavated over 10 seasons between 2006 and 2015 by a team from Bar-Ilan University led by Professor Faust.

In Area A, excavators uncovered the remains of a large four-room house. Identified as Building 101, the structure is informally called the "governor's residence," due to its monumental size. According to Professor Faust, Building 101 would have likely housed multiple families. (For more on four-room houses, visit *ArmstrongInstitute.org/1072*.) Radiocarbon specialists have dated the original construction of the "governor's residence" to the 10th century B.C.E.

The walls of Building 101 were built on top of continuous foundations, where a long footing wall supports multiple above-ground walls. In its southwestern and largest room, excavators encountered a later dense platform of stones. Integrated into this platform was one "exceptionally large, worked stone" that had been broken in two. This stone sat on top of the continuous foundation, indicating the stone had been there since initial construction of the building.

Faust identified this unique stone as a *massebah,* or standing stone. *Massebot* were common in ancient Israel and sometimes functioned as idols in domestic cults. (For an in-depth explanation of these stones, visit *ArmstrongInstitute.org/1154*.) Professor Faust suggested that the stone at Tel 'Eton was a central part of the domestic cult of the people living in Building 101.

It seems the platform, which covered only part of the room, was constructed to conceal the *massebah* that was taken down. This suggests the object still held some sentimental value to the inhabitants of Building 101. Integrated into the platform, the stone no longer

GRIFFIN HIGHER PHOTOGRAPHY

held sacred value, but the memory of the objects presence was preserved.

Since this standing stone was incorporated into the platform in the late eighth century B.C.E., *before* the Assyrian invasion—as the platform was in use before the destruction of the house, Faust has associated its dismantling with the reforms of Hezekiah. "It appears that the inhabitants of Building 101 abided by the new religious norms," Faust wrote, "but were not happy to desecrate an element that was the focus of their household worship for so long. They, therefore, dismantled the *massebah* and incorporated it into the new platform."

Arad, Beersheba and Lachish

Before the discovery of this standing stone at Tel 'Eton, the archaeological debate about Hezekiah's reform mainly revolved around evidence from three sites: Arad, Beersheba and Lachish. Each of these sites shows signs of cult destruction during Hezekiah's reign; although some of the dating is disputed.

In the 1960s, archaeologist Yohanan Aharoni uncovered a temple at Tel Arad. The incense altars at this temple have been associated with the idolatrous reign of Hezekiah's evil father, Ahaz (see *ArmstrongInstitute.org/254*). Over time, the cultic use of this pagan temple came to an abrupt end. Aharoni suggested that this cancellation occurred during the reforms of King Josiah. However, Prof. Ze'ev Herzog from Tel Aviv University constrains the use of the temple to the eighth century B.C.E. as there was no evidence of burning or destruction from the Assyrian invasion. Therefore, he connects the cancellation to Hezekiah's reforms.

Though its cultic elements were abolished, many parts of the original temple were integrated into later phases of construction.

Aharoni also excavated Beersheba, where he found evidence of a large four-horned altar made of ashlar stones. The altar was destroyed and integrated into a wall belonging to the construction of Stratum II, which was destroyed by the Assyrians, demonstrating that the altar was demolished and its stones reused *before* Sennacherib's invasion.

Both the Arad temple and Beersheba altar have long been connected to Hezekiah's reforms. "[A]lthough we do not have an archaeological proof that the intentional abolishment of the cultic centers of Arad and Tel Beer-sheba was made under orders from Hezekiah," wrote Professor Herzog, "the combined archaeological and biblical data point in favor of this possibility" ("Perspectives on Southern Israel's Cult Centralization: Arad and Beer-Sheba").

More recently, evidence of King Hezekiah's reforms has also been uncovered at Lachish. In one of the rooms of Lachish's six-chambered gate, archaeologists Saar Ganor and Igor Kreimerman found the remnants of a gate shrine that was desecrated and replaced by an unused toilet. This toilet was later buried in the debris of the Assyrian destruction.

When was this cultic gate shrine desecrated? "The desecration of the shrine by breaking the horns of the altars and placing a latrine in the holy of holies *can be reasonably associated with Hezekiah's cultic reform,*" wrote Ganor and Kreimerman ("An Eighth-Century B.C.E. Gate Shrine at Tel Lachish, Israel").

Tel 'Eton can now be added to the sites that demonstrate evidence of Hezekiah's reforms. But this topic is not without debate.

Objection—Assyria?

Critics of the historicity of King Hezekiah's reforms say the destruction at these sites is evidence of Assyria's invasion at the end of the eighth century B.C.E. According to the skeptics, biblical authors attributed this destruction to Hezekiah to venerate his reign and reputation.

This argument is turned on its head, however, by the archaeological evidence uncovered at both Tel 'Eton and Beersheba.



The removal and concealment of the Tel 'Eton religious stone dates to several years before Assyria's invasion of Judah. The platform it was integrated into was in use when the house was destroyed. Clearly, there was a deliberate cancellation of this domestic religious shrine before the Assyrians devastated the land of Judah.

The other sites tell the same story. Although the evidence from Arad and Lachish is a little more debated stratigraphically and interpretatively, Beersheba definitely shows that the altar was destroyed before the Assyrian destruction: The wall its remnants were integrated into was part of that destruction. "One way or another, the changes in at least some of the sites clearly preceded the arrival of the Assyrian army and cannot be associated with events surrounding the Assyrian conquest," Faust wrote.

Therefore, these changes must be associated with an event preceding the Assyrian conquest at the end of the eighth century B.C.E. Of course, this could be an event that history did not record. However, as Faust wrote regarding Tel 'Eton, "it is far more probable that the changes in Building 101 had to do with a broader event or at least more wide-reaching processes." The most logical explanation, then, is King Hezekiah and his reforms documented in the biblical text.

Other Objections

Evidence for cultic sites during the Iron Age II is quite limited. "We must remember that very few Iron Age II Israelite cultic sites were excavated," Faust wrote. And yet of the few cultic sites excavated, "all eighth-century cultic sites offer evidence for cult cancellation or, at least, alteration." In short, archaeology confirms the destruction of various cultic sites in Judah in the late eighth century B.C.E., the time of King Hezekiah.

Part of the reason for the lack of evidence of early cultic behavior is Hezekiah's destruction, which, according to the biblical text, was extensive. If the reform and destruction of idolatrous sites was indeed as extensive as Chronicles records, then we should not expect much evidence of local or domestic cultic activity continuing from the eighth to the seventh century B.C.E.

As it turns out, "there is not a single known (excavated) temple or cultic building that continued uninterruptedly from the eighth to the seventh century B.C.E.," Faust wrote. "Hence, the *limited* evidence does not reflect the *lack* of evidence but is indicative of the nature of the cult and the scarcity of temples at the time."

The few sites where we do find cultic evidence only serve to give possible context to how these cult desecrations may have taken place.



Archaeologists remove the ancient toilet seat from the gatehouse at Tel Lachish.



This leads us to another objection: Some critics claim that the inconsistency in destruction methods between sites is evidence against Hezekiah's singular cultic reform.

In a 2022 article from TheTorah.com, "Hezekiah's Reform: The Archaeological Evidence," Dr. Sabine Kleiman questioned the evidence from Lachish, Beersheba and Arad used to support Hezekiah's reform. "Even aside from the alternative interpretations for each site presented above, the three parade examples for Hezekiah's reform show a clear inconsistency," she wrote. "In Lachish, the site was supposedly defiled by vandalism and the installation of a toilet. Similarly, in Beersheba, the altar is treated as scrap, though we have no idea what happened to the cultic site. In Arad, however, the objects are buried with care [like at Tel 'Eton] and treated as retaining a residual holiness.

"This suggests that these three sites should not be seen as part of a single cultic reform dictated by the reigning king, and probably carried out, or at least overseen, by his representatives from Jerusalem, as such a reform would have left more consistent evidence."

Yet the differences in destruction tactics evidenced at each site does not mean that these cancellations were *not* part of a singular reform initiated by King Hezekiah in Jerusalem. The biblical text gives the big overview, saying that they continued "until they destroyed them all." It does not reveal the specifics of *how* the pagan idols were destroyed. If representatives were carrying out the destruction, then the method of destruction was likely different at every site.

Just because the Bible does not go into great detail about Hezekiah's reforms doesn't mean it didn't happen.

ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY/IGOR KRASERMAN, BUDDANI | CC BY-SA 2.0



It was the people themselves who "broke in pieces the pillars [*massebot*], and hewed down the Asherim, and broke down the high places and the altars."



Replica of the Beersheba altar

"It is hardly likely that the [biblical] author had exact and detailed information about the actions as performed in each city of Judah," Herzog wrote (op cit).

Looking at the first verse of 2 Chronicles 31, it is clear the reform was carried out by the general population. It was the people themselves who "broke in pieces the pillars [*massebot*], and hewed down the Asherim, and broke down the high places and the altars."

"The fact that the archaeological picture is varied indicates that the orders were interpreted differently in each site," continued Herzog. "In my view, the lack of match between the biblical orders and the archaeological reality strengthens the historical reliability of the reform, rather than weakens it ...."

This evidence provides possible insight into how these reforms were received among the general populous, rather than discrediting them. The difference in how these cultic cancellations occurred provides amazing *archaeological context* for the passage. The way the *massebah* at Tel 'Eton was preserved in the stone platform may indicate that some of Hezekiah's subjects were not entirely supportive of his reforms—something also witnessed at Tel Arad.

The Reform's Reception

According to the Bible, Hezekiah's reforms were so widespread that they were even well known among the Assyrian high command during the failed siege of Jerusalem. 2 Kings 18:22 records King Sennacherib's general, Rabshakeh, threatening the royal officials of Jerusalem: "But if ye say unto me: We trust in the Lord our God; is not that He, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and to Jerusalem: Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?"

According to Jewish tradition, this Rabshakeh may have been an Israelite traitor, based on his ability to speak Hebrew and his knowledge of these reforms. (For more information, read *ArmstrongInstitute.org/209*.)

The account in Chronicles records a message sent from Sennacherib himself: "Doth not Hezekiah persuade you, to give you over to die by famine and by thirst, saying: The Lord our God will deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Hath not the same Hezekiah taken away His high places and His altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying: Ye shall worship before one altar, and upon it shall ye offer?" (2 Chronicles 32:11-12).

The full account makes clear that both Rabshakeh and Sennacherib were trying to appeal to the dissatisfaction with and apprehension of the religious reforms. This fits well with the varied evidence from Lachish, Beersheba and Arad, but especially Tel 'Eton. Perhaps the inhabitants of Building 101 found it hard to let go completely of their idolatrous past.

Why Doubt?

The period of Hezekiah's reign is one of the most archaeologically attested periods in biblical history. We have evidence of the existence of Hezekiah from both Assyrian sources and his extant bullae. We have evidence of the Assyrian campaign in Judah. Additionally, a lack of a destruction layer from Jerusalem at this time proves the preservation of the capital city. All of these elements corroborate the biblical account.

The finds in Arad, Beersheba, Lachish and Tel 'Eton add to the evidence verifying the accuracy of the Bible's account of Hezekiah's reign.

Hezekiah's religious reform did take place. The discovery of this standing stone at Tel 'Eton now gives us an even better understanding of how it might have taken place and how it was received.

Instead of disproving the Bible, the archaeological evidence brings this great history to life. ■

AMERICA'S HEBREW ROOTS

Why the Pilgrims, Puritans and founders saw themselves as modern Israelites

BY ANDREW MIILLER



AMERICA'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY IS ABOUT FAR MORE THAN FIREworks and celebrations. It is a moment to reflect on the distinctive cultural and religious values that have set the United States apart from other nations. No other country has so consistently upheld limited government, separation of powers, the rule of law, religious liberty, free speech and free enterprise—principles enshrined in the U.S. Constitution.

But where did these ideas originate?

America's founders were overwhelmingly Christian—yet a particular kind unwelcome in Europe. They read the Bible literally and held deep reverence for the law of Moses. To them, Europe was Egypt; King George, Pharaoh; the Atlantic, the Red Sea; and America, the Promised Land. Their journey was a new Exodus.

My own 12-times-great-grandfather, William White, sailed on the Mayflower and stepped ashore at Plymouth Rock in 1620. He died that first brutal winter, yet remained convinced his children would build a "New Jerusalem" in the American wilderness. Stories like his explain why the U.S. government recently recognized the City of David archaeological site in Jerusalem as a testament to America's Judeo-Christian heritage. The U.S.-Israel relationship is far more than diplomacy; it is a civilizational bond rooted in biblical law and history.

The deeper one digs into early American history, the clearer the parallels with biblical Israel become. No other Christian community has identified so closely with the People of the Book. The early settlers saw their own lives as a living reenactment of the Hebrew nation's own biblical drama.

"What made this country different from all others was a prevalent belief that God played a direct and active hand in founding a people," author William Bennett writes in *Our Sacred Honor.* "Like the Jerusalem of old, America's 'New Jerusalem' was to become God's promised land to the oppressed—an example to all humankind."

Puritan Exodus

Medieval Catholic traditions vilified both Jews and "Judaizing" Christians as outsiders, yet English society began to change after the Protestant Reformation. Johannes Gutenberg invented his printing press in 1450. Britain broke with the Catholic Church in 1534. The first English translation of the complete Bible available en masse appeared in 1535. The King James Bible was completed less than a century later in 1611.

For the first time, ordinary Englishmen could read the Scriptures for themselves. The effect was transformational. In *The Ecclesiastical History of New England,* Puritan minister Cotton Mather compared English parishioners in Austerfield to the Jews of King Josiah's day. The rediscovered Book of the Law had moved Josiah to weep and reform; similarly, the English Bible transformed a 12-year-old Austerfield orphan named William Bradford, prompting him to join a Separatist congregation in nearby Scrooby.

In Scrooby, Bradford found a small but fervent group of like-minded believers that included my 12-times-great-grandmother Susanna Jackson. Convinced that Anglican traditions such as the observance of Christmas, Easter and other holidays were unbiblical remnants of Roman Catholicism and pre-Christian paganism, the congregation met in secret. When the archbishop of York sent men to arrest them, the congregation realized that it was no longer safe and began planning their exodus to the Netherlands.



It was in Amsterdam, and later Leiden, that Bradford, Susanna and the rest of the community came into contact with Jews for the first time. Jews had been expelled from England for more than 300 years, but Sephardic Jews fleeing persecution in Spain and Portugal had established a thriving merchant community in Holland. These encounters further deepened the Pilgrims' appreciation for the Hebrew roots of their faith and reinforced their commitment to a simpler, more scriptural form of worship.

Unlike the Catholics and Anglicans, the Pilgrims did not believe that the Christian Church had completely replaced Israel as God's chosen people. Rather, they anticipated that Jews and Christians would converge in some meaningful way before a great end-time conflict involving "the Turks and the Catholic Church" would culminate in the coming of the Messiah, who would rule the world from Jerusalem.

Covenant Theology

It was in Leiden that my 12-times-great-grandparents, William White and Susanna Jackson, married and had their first child, Resolved, my 11-times-great-grandfather. He was named Resolved because his parents and many other English Separatists in Leiden had resolved that they could not establish a New Jerusalem in the Netherlands. They would have to leave everything and set out for the New World.

This resolution split the Separatist community, with some staying in Holland to join Mennonite groups, others returning to England to become Baptists, and the final core boarding the infamous Mayflower.

The Pilgrims' famous 66-day journey across the Atlantic is memorialized in America every year on Thanksgiving Day. Yet few Americans today know much about what the Pilgrims actually believed.

During their time in the Netherlands, studying the Bible and conversing with Jews, the Pilgrims concluded that legitimate communities are formed through voluntary consent to agreed-upon, codified terms rather than through submission to a tyrant's will. God had more power than any tyrant, yet He established His relationship with the Israelites as a voluntary covenant. This was a highly unusual, even revolutionary, development in ancient Israel compared to the surrounding nations.

This understanding prompted Bradford, White and 39 other passengers to sign the Mayflower Compact after arriving at Cape Cod on Nov. 11, 1620. They solemnly agreed, "in the presence of God," to form a "civil body politic" and to enact "just and equal laws" for the general good of the colony. This was one of America's first written covenants, and it was directly inspired by the biblical pattern established at Sinai.



The *Mayflower Compact 1620*, by J. L. G. Ferris



The Mayflower Compact stated that the Pilgrims had undertaken their voyage "for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith," yet it revolutionized governance in ways few could have imagined.

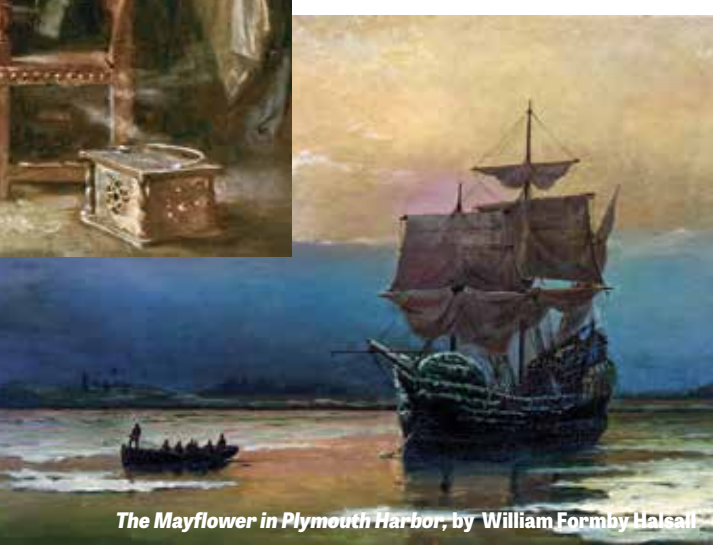
Though only one page long, the Mayflower Compact inspired practically every colonial charter that followed it, including the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, which served as a template for the U.S. Constitution.

Today, about 97 percent of the world's nations have a written constitution. One can easily assume this is simply the normal way governments operate, but the majority of these documents are relatively recent attempts to imitate the success of the U.S. Constitution. Amazingly, even the people who directly benefit from the principles of this Constitution and those like it don't realize that its core ideas, the rule of law and legitimate authority coming from the consent of the people, trace back to the Bible.

This astonishing truth is why David Hillel Gelernter, a contributing editor at the *Weekly Standard,* wrote: "Puritanism didn't merely influence Americanism. It turned into Americanism. In a sense, the molten bronze of Puritanism became the solid metal of the American religion." Many modern Americans have forgotten the religious doctrines underpinning their founding values, but that doesn't change the fact that America was established as a Hebraic republic patterned after the example of Old Testament Israel.



The Mayflower Compact was one of America's first written covenants, and it was directly inspired by the biblical pattern established at Sinai.



The Mayflower in Plymouth Harbor, by William Formby Halsall

Promised Land

My 12-times-great-grandfather died only 102 days after signing the Mayflower Compact. His widow later married Edward Winslow, one of the colony's leading figures and its unofficial historian. He recorded the details of what happened at the First Thanksgiving, a festival patterned after the biblical Feast of Sukkot.

Together with William Bradford, Edward Winslow coauthored *Mourt's Relation.* The book drew heavily on biblical imagery, especially from Joshua, to portray the Pilgrims' settlement of Massachusetts as a latter-day version of the Israelites' settlement of Canaan. Later Puritan writers embraced this parallel even more explicitly. They cast John Carver as an American Moses who died after leading his people across the Atlantic Ocean, and Bradford as an American Joshua who guided them into the Promised Land.

You can tell how strongly the early Americans identified with Israel by the litany of cities, towns, mountains, deserts, forests, rivers and other locations they named after places in ancient Israel: Bethlehem, Bethel, Goshen, Hebron, Jericho, Jerusalem, Mamre, Moriah, Pisgah, Rehoboth, Salem, Sharon, Shiloh, Zion and many more. These were not just Bible names; they were locations in the land of Israel.

William Bradford believed that God spoke Hebrew, and the colony he established came within one vote of adopting Hebrew as its official language at a time when no nation spoke it. After Bradford died in 1657, his tombstone bore three Hebrew words: *Adonai ezer hayai* ("My Lord, the help of my life").

The Pilgrims' identification with ancient Israel was even reflected in their children's names. In early Plymouth Colony, roughly 90 percent of children received biblical names, most of them drawn from the Old Testament, such as Abigail, Benjamin, Hannah, Joseph, Josiah, Ruth and Samuel.

My 11-times-great-grandfather, Resolved, was an exception, named after the decision to come to America rather than after a biblical figure. Yet he named one of his five sons Samuel and another Josiah, emphasizing their position as citizens of the New Israel he was building in America.

America's founders looked back to ancient Israel's example as no society had before. The first 10 colleges established in America offered courses in Hebrew. The seal of Yale University includes the words *Urim V'Tumim* ("Light and Perfection"), which were written on the breastplate of the Israelite high priest. The seals of Dartmouth and Columbia University also featured the name of God written in Hebrew characters.

Such symbology was not a homage to the past; it was a promise for the future. America was meant to be a new Jerusalem, a shining city upon a hill where the principles of biblical liberty and justice could flourish.

Religious Liberty

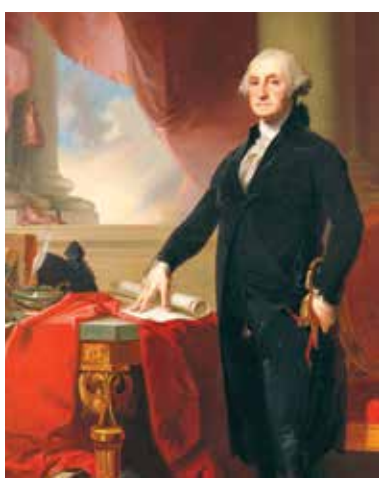
The first Jews arrived in America just 34 years after the Mayflower, when 23 Sephardic refugees fleeing Portuguese Brazil landed in Dutch New Amsterdam. From there, they spread to Newport, Philadelphia, Charleston and Savannah. By the time of the American Revolution, between 1,500 and 2,500 Jews lived in the colonies. Overwhelmingly patriots, they played key roles in the fight for American independence.

Men like Haym Salomon helped fund George Washington's Continental Army, and Washington never forgot the Jewish support. After he was elected president, he wrote to the Hebrew congregation in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1790 declaring that the nation would give "to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance."

"It would be inconsistent with the frankness of my character not to avow that I am pleased with your favorable opinion of my administration and fervent wishes for my felicity," he wrote. "May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants—while everyone shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree and there shall be none to make him afraid. May the Father of all mercies scatter light, and not darkness, upon our paths, and make us all in our several vocations useful here, and in His own due time and way everlastingly happy."

Alongside figures like James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, Baptists and Jewish Americans were instrumental in building the foundation for the First Amendment's guarantees of religious freedom. The Jews had been persecuted in Europe for centuries, as had the Baptists, whom many Christians accused of "Judaizing" for practicing traditions such as adult baptism, rejecting certain church hierarchies, and emphasizing a direct return to Scripture. Both groups had a vested interest in helping establish America as a land where everyone could live according to the dictates of their conscience without fear of persecution.

> "May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants …."
>
> **President George Washington**
> *Letter to the Hebrew congregation in Newport, Rhode Island*



In fact, so many Jews and Seventh-Day Baptists settled in Rhode Island that the state altered some of its "Blue Laws" to make it easier for businesses to close on Saturday and open on Sunday. This created a kind of economic synergy in many communities as Sabbath-keeping Christians traded with Jewish merchants instead of persecuting them. Such activity greatly enriched America.

"Nowhere else in Christendom," wrote Angelo Codevilla, "was the Old Testament read so much and the notion of God as Lawgiver so widespread" (*The Character of Nations*). Here, both Jews and Protestants drew from the same Hebrew Scriptures while living side by side under a government that refused to pick winners among consciences.

Mosaic Republic

Over a century after Bradford's death, Samuel Langdon, who graduated from Harvard alongside Samuel Adams, continued campaigning for biblical Hebrew to be made an official American language.

Like Governor Bradford, Langdon wanted to establish the law of God as the law of America. As the 11th president of Harvard University, he pointed people back to the law of Moses. "The Jewish government, according to the original constitution which was divinely established, … was a perfect republic," he said in a famous sermon he gave in 1788. "… Let us, therefore, look over their constitution and laws. … They had both a civil and military establishment under divine direction, and a complete body of judicial laws drawn up and delivered to them by Moses in God's name. … Instead of the 12 tribes of Israel, we may substitute the 13 states of the American union; and instead of the high priest and his successors, we may substitute a president and his successors in office; and instead of the great council of the nation, we may substitute a Senate and House of Representatives; and the great similarity will at once appear."

In a world dominated by kings, emperors and rigid class systems, America's founders were impressed by the Bible's emphasis on equal justice and limited government. Old Testament Israel offered a different system where every person had rights to life, liberty and property, and even the king had to obey the law.

These were principles that no nation on Earth espoused until God used Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Even in Christian Europe, the political system resembled the hierarchy of the Roman Empire more than that of ancient Israel, so America's founders knew they would have to study the Old Testament.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu understands these truths well. "Moses was the greatest revolutionary of all time," he said in a 2022 interview for the documentary *Patterns of Evidence*. "Remember that in antiquity, there were grand empires that were based on one principle, and that is slavery. Moses challenged that twice. He challenged it by taking his

THOMAS SULLY

people, who were slaves in bondage in Egypt, and freed them and took them to their Promised Land. But he also challenged it by providing a code, a moral code for mankind, that said that it is not the king or the emperor that decides the law, there is a higher law. And that higher law means respect for your fellow man, and it also means that you have to be free. One of the reasons that Judaism didn't make its way so rapidly, and didn't spread in the ancient world, was that it premises its conception that you had to be a free man to espouse Judaism."

America's founders didn't want to live in a feudal society. They wanted to live in a republic of free men, a republic based on the Bible. Therefore, they looked to Moses and the ancient Israelites as their example.

Biblical Alliance

The fact that the Pilgrims, Puritans and founders saw themselves as modern Israelites goes a long way toward explaining the special relationship between America and the State of Israel. Even though the former is predominantly Christian and the latter is Jewish, the republican political values of America and Israel are more similar to each other than either is to technocracies like the European Union.

Even before the British Balfour Declaration allied the Jewish diaspora to return to their Holy Land, Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis became the leader of the American Zionist movement. He argued that Zionism and American patriotism were compatible because Jewish nationalism was deeply aligned with American ideals. In a sense, the mass Jewish return to Israel echoed what the American Pilgrims had done centuries earlier. My 12-times-great-grandparents wanted to build New Jerusalem in the American wilderness, while the Jewish diaspora wanted to restore the glory of Old Jerusalem in the Holy Land.

The U.S. became the first country to officially recognize the State of Israel in 1948, granting de facto recognition just 11 minutes after its declaration of independence. It did not do this because it favored the Jews over Arabs, but because it recognized the Jews' right to live in the land of their forefathers and saw the Jewish people as a civilizing force in the region. Just as the Pilgrims introduced the rule of law to the United States, the Jews reintroduced the rule of law to the Middle East after centuries of absence.

"Judaism is the West's civilizational soul," Melanie Phillips writes in *The Builder's Stone*. "Christianity itself, the institutional foundation of that civilization, rests upon Jewish precepts that Christianity channeled into Western culture. The Islamists, whose hatred of the Jews is embedded in religious ideology, grasp this very well. They understand that without Jewish values, there would have been no Western modernity. … The West doesn't realize this because it doesn't realize how deeply Jewish precepts are embedded in the cultural values it has taken for granted. It doesn't realize that by turning on Israel, the Jewish people, and biblical religion, it's turning on itself. It's only by restoring biblical values that the West will be able to save itself. And it can't even begin to do so unless it first acknowledges the Jewish people."



America's founders didn't want to live in a feudal society. They wanted to live in a republic of free men, a republic based on the Bible. Therefore, they looked to Moses and the ancient Israelites as their example.

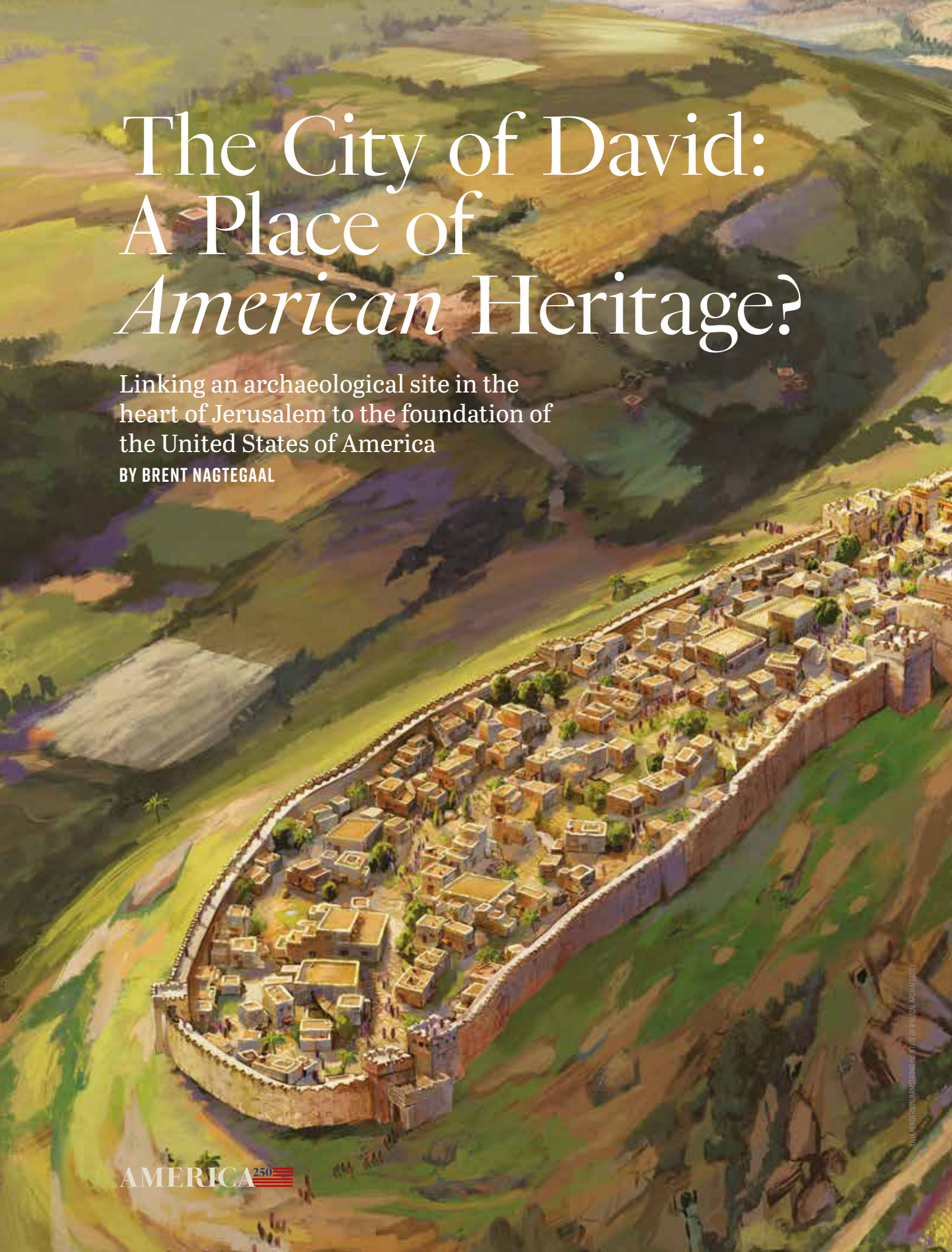
America became great because its founders looked back to precepts in the Hebrew Bible that most of Europe had discarded during the Middle Ages. America's greatness depends on remembering its Hebrew roots. To forget them is to risk becoming just another nation adrift. To reclaim them is to renew the shining city upon a hill that the founders envisioned—a beacon of ordered liberty for all mankind. ■

JOHN H. FROEHLICH

The City of David: A Place of *American* Heritage?

Linking an archaeological site in the heart of Jerusalem to the foundation of the United States of America

BY BRENT NAGTEGAAL



JULIA HENDERSON/ARMSTRONG INSTITUTE OF BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

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Many visitors to the City of David are probably surprised to see a large plaque bearing the United States' seal at the park's entrance. This plaque is the result of what turned out to be the last official act of U.S. President Donald Trump's highly industrious first term—when he formally recognized the City of David as a place of *American heritage.*

"The United States Embassy in Jerusalem, together with the United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, have recognized the City of David as a testament to America's Judeo-Christian heritage and founding principles," stated the Jan. 18, 2021, press release. "The archaeological discoveries at the City of David bring biblical Jerusalem back to life and reaffirm the prophetic messages of freedom, justice and peace that inspired America's founders."

That is a powerful declaration. But is it true? America is 5,500 miles from Jerusalem and only 250 years old. How connected could it be to the *3,000-year-old* history of the City of David?

Origins of Judeo-Christian Values

Named after Israel's greatest king, the City of David is a roughly 20-acre patch of land situated along a ridge adjacent south of the Temple Mount. Many visitors don't know it, but this area is the oldest part of Jerusalem. The City of David centers on the Gihon Spring, Jerusalem's perennial water source. Archaeological evidence reveals human activity in the area of the Gihon as early as 2000 B.C.E.

When it comes to understanding ancient and biblical Jerusalem—*and the theology and history of Judaism and Christianity*—the City of David is where it all began. Abraham, David, Solomon, the Jewish prophets, the first and second temples—each of these towering biblical figures and stories is central to Judeo-Christian history and theology. And all these epic accounts unfolded in and around the City of David.

The City of David is one of the most excavated archaeological sites in the world. Discoveries in and around this area include King David's palace and seal impressions of biblical figures, including King Hezekiah, Isaiah and Judean princes mentioned in the book of Jeremiah.

Over the past 10 years, archaeologists have excavated a major Roman Period road that was a key thoroughfare from the massive pool at the southern end of the city to the temple in the north. Designated the "Pilgrimage Road" by the City of David Foundation, the organization responsible for managing the site, Jewish pilgrims at the time of Jesus would ascend this road to worship at the temple.

David Friedman, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel, visited the City of David regularly. During his time in office, he was known for routinely bringing delegations

of American officials to the City of David, becoming an informal ambassador for the City of David to his American counterparts.

In June 2019, Friedman was a keynote speaker at an event commemorating the Pilgrimage Road. During his message, Mr. Friedman commented on the significance of the City of David, not just to Jews—but to America. "In modern America," he said, "we are inspired by many monuments that remind us of the history of our republic. I've often wondered, what monuments inspired our Founding Fathers. When the drafters of the Declaration of Independence proclaimed that our Creator had endowed each and every American with certain unalienable rights, what monuments inspired them? I suggest that those monuments are located right here, IN THE ANCIENT CITY OF JERUSALEM" (emphasis added throughout).

Friedman presented a plaque to the City of David Foundation, stating: "We have given this plaque to the City of David Foundation with the hope that it will prompt all who read it to think of the Judeo-Christian values upon which our country was founded and how those values were inspired by ancient Jerusalem and its inhabitants."

Paul Packer, chairman of the Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, also attended the ceremony. In his address, he told attendees: "With the unveiling of this plaque and the recognition of the City of David for its contribution to America's heritage, we are fulfilling another, larger purpose: to unify Americans around our foundational principles and values. The City of David serves as a living testament to those enduring values, and it is our duty to ensure it remains for generations to come."

This decision to recognize the City of David as a place of *American heritage* is easily understood by those rooted in U.S. history. America's founders and forefathers looked to the Bible's guiding principles in establishing the Constitution (see article, page 8). Those principles and laws, as well as the prophets and kings who espoused them, were located in ancient Jerusalem.

It was in Jerusalem that the Prophet Jeremiah warned that the heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked (and by implication, needs to be kept in check). It was in Jerusalem that the Prophet Isaiah spoke of a time to come when swords will be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. And Jerusalem was home to King David, author of many of the psalms that moved so many early Americans.

These passages of Scripture were as inspiring and potent to many of America's forefathers in the 18th to 19th centuries as they were to the founders of the Jewish state in the mid-20th century.

Founders Inspired by King David

So many of the speeches and letters of America's founders reveal how familiar they were with the biblical history centered around Jerusalem, and with the missives of Israel's kings and prophets. These words not only moved them emotionally but shaped their actions and decisions.

In the midst of the Revolutionary War, Congress leaned on the example of the teenage David to inspire citizens and the Continental Army to keep fighting the British Goliath. Congress released a statement on May 26, 1779, that read, "America, without arms, ammunition, discipline, revenue, government or ally, almost totally stripped of commerce and in the weakness of youth, as it were with a 'staff and sling' only dared in the name of the Lord of hosts to engage a gigantic adversary, prepared at all points, boasting of his strength, and of whom even mighty warriors 'were greatly afraid.'"

Four years after the Revolutionary War ended, Benjamin Franklin employed the use of one of the psalms of ascent to plead for the necessity of prayer before every day of deliberation at the Constitutional Convention of 1787. The psalms of ascent are believed to have been sung as pilgrims came to Jerusalem to observe the holy days three times per year.

Though Franklin might not have been aware of the function of the ancient songs of ascent, he was aware of their sacred value to America. Addressing the president of the assembly, he warned, "I have lived, sir, a long time and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that *God governs in the affairs of men.* And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writings that 'except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it' (Psalm 127:1). I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without His concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel: We shall be divided by our little partial local interests; our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall be become a reproach and a byword down to future age. And what is worse, mankind may hereafter from this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing governments by human wisdom, and leave it to chance, war and conquest. I therefore beg leave to move—that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service."

In 1813, John Adams penned a letter to Thomas Jefferson in which he declared his own enduring affection for the writings of the sweet psalmist of Israel. He

wrote on November 15, "The psalms of David, in sublimity, beauty, pathos and originality, or, in one word, in poetry, are superior to all the odes, hymns and songs of our language."

His son John Quincy, America's sixth president, took his appreciation for the psalms to the next level, composing his own metrical version of the psalms. Seventeen of these were included in a widespread hymnbook created by William P. Lunt known as *The Christian Psalter.* On June 29, 1845, John Quincy recorded, "It was my version of the 65th Psalm; and no words can express the sensations which I heard it sung. Were it possible to compress into one pulsation of the heart the pleasure which, in the whole period of my life, I have enjoyed in praise from the lips of mortal man, it would not weigh a straw to balance the ecstasy of delight which streamed from my eyes as the organ pealed and the choir of voices sung the praise of Almighty God from the soul of David, adapted to my native tongue by me."

Perhaps no American president was more moved by and familiar with the Hebrew Bible than Abraham Lincoln, the Civil War's indispensable man. Lincoln regarded the Bible as "the best gift God has given to man." Without it, he said, "we could not know right from wrong." His speeches and interactions were full of biblical references.

In one instance, Lincoln resorted to the wisdom of David when deciding upon what mercy to provide the South after the conclusion of the war. John Gillespie, a friend of Lincoln, reported him as saying, "[S]ome think their heads ought to come off; but there are too many of them for that, and for one, I would not know where to draw the line between those whose heads (it might be said) ought to come off or stay on. My policy would be different. *I would prefer to follow the example of King David.* I have been recently reading the history of the rebellion of Absalom and would be inclined to adopt the views of David. When David was fleeing from Jerusalem, Shimei cursed him. After the rebellion was put down Shimei craved a pardon. Abishai, David's nephew, the son of Zeruiah, David's sister, said, 'This man ought not to be pardoned because he cursed the Lord's anointed.' David said, 'What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that you should this day be adversaries unto me? Know ye that not a man shall be put to death in Israel.'" Lincoln not only knew the text, he looked to the actions and words of David as a source of wisdom for his own leadership of the United States.

For Lincoln, biblical events were not fantasy or fiction. Although archaeology had yet to confirm the historicity of the events described in the Bible, he voiced his agreement that the Bible ought to be given the benefit of the doubt. In one account recorded by

SEE **HERITAGE**
PAGE 20

J. DAVID HAWKINS



The plaque dedicated to the City of David includes the following text:

The City of David brings Biblical Jerusalem to life at the very place where the kings and prophets of the Bible walked. It is the site where internationally acclaimed archaeological discoveries have been unearthed, including the Pool of Siloam, the Pilgrimage Road, the Gihon Spring and Hezekiah's Tunnel.

As the prophet Isaiah said, "Out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." The spiritual bedrock of our values as a nation comes from Jerusalem. It is upon these ideals that the American Republic was founded, and the unbreakable bond between the United States and Israel was formed. The City of David serves as a proud reminder of the glorious heritage of the United States of America.

"I REJOICED WITH THOSE WHO SAID TO ME,
'LET US GO TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.'
OUR FEET ARE STANDING IN YOUR GATES, JERUSALEM."
—PSALM 122:1–2

AMERICA 250

ROOTS AND FRUITS
OF A BROTHERHOOD

The United States of America is founded on Judeo-Christian values that are rooted in the Hebrew Bible. As we explain in this issue, the Pilgrims, Puritans and founders of the U.S. saw themselves as modern Israelites. This fact goes a long way toward explaining the special relationship America and the State of Israel share today, which has produced many fruits since 1948.

Military and Security Partnership

Military cooperation and shared intelligence have strengthened both nations.

Economic and Tech Collaboration

Cooperation has produced advances in science and mutual prosperity.

Cultural and Heritage Affirmation

America's recognition of Israel's identity preserves America's own biblical roots.

Political and Diplomatic Support

Most U.S. presidents recognize the value of the partnership.



First Recognition (1948)

The U.S. was the first nation to recognize the newly formed State of Israel.

Democratic Alignment

America and Israel stand together to uphold freedom and the rule of law in a turbulent region.



An Everlasting Covenant

The U.S. Constitution was modeled on the covenant made at Mount Sinai.

The Statutes and the Judgments

America's government, limited by a written law, was inspired by the Old Testament.

Religious Liberty

Religious liberty for every individual was a principle shared by the Pilgrims, Jews and U.S. founders.

To Do Justly and to Love Mercy

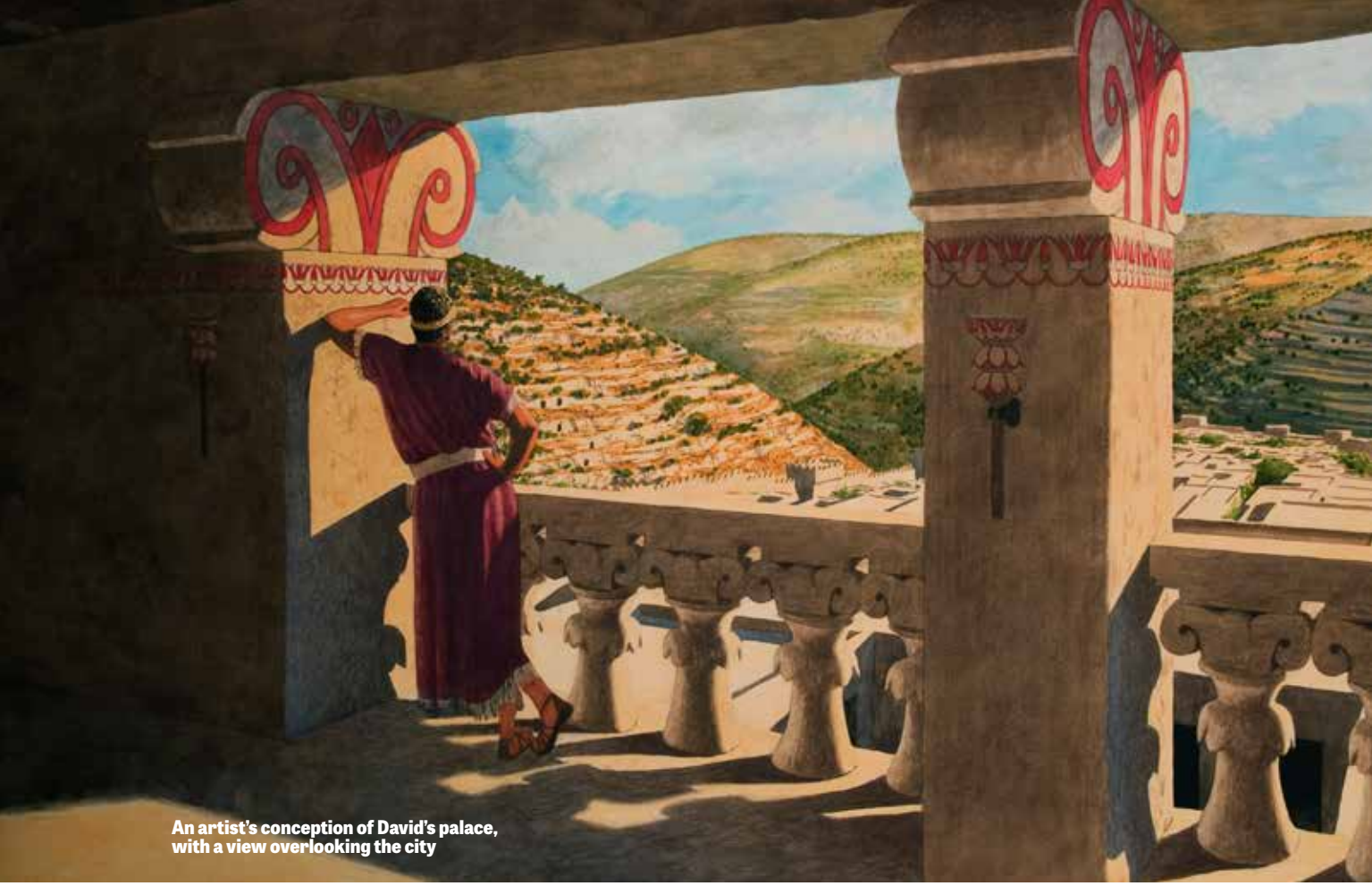
Core values of the Hebrew Bible are at the heart of America's founding ideals.

New Israel Vision

America's early settlers believed they were setting up a new Jerusalem.

Biblical Literacy and Naming

The biblical text inspired place names, U.S. college seals and early American education.



An artist's conception of David's palace, with a view overlooking the city

HERITAGE FROM PAGE 17

Treasury Department official Lucius E. Chittenden, Lincoln said, "Now, let us treat the Bible fairly. If we had a witness on the stand whose general story we knew was true, we would believe him when he asserted facts of which we had no other evidence. We ought to treat the Bible with equal fairness. I decided a long time ago that it was less difficult to believe that the Bible was what it claimed to be than to disbelieve it." With such a sentiment, it could be opined that Lincoln would actually make a pretty successful biblical archaeologist.

About the Bible, Lincoln once stated: "It's a good book for us to obey—it contains the Ten Commandments, the golden rule and many other rules which ought to be followed. No man was ever the worse for living according to the Bible" (Lucius E. Chittenden, *Recollections of President Lincoln and His Administration*).

It has been said that during the night of Lincoln's assassination, his mind was on Jerusalem. According to a manuscript by Noyes W. Miner, a family friend of the Lincolns, Mary Lincoln told Miner that some of her husband's final thoughts before he was assassinated were about Jerusalem. Lincoln's last reported words were, "After the war, we shall go to Jerusalem." Lincoln never fulfilled that wish, but his mind and heart at the end was on the Bible and on the land of the Bible.

A Bible-Infused Education

Clearly many of America's most foundational leaders were impacted by history made in the City of David and the larger history written in the biblical canon. But the Bible-informed Constitution, of itself, would not have been enough to safeguard the United States' republic. As George Washington famously stated in his First Inaugural address, "The foundations of our national policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality." The strength of the nation was dependent on the private morality of the citizens themselves.

A look back at the Bible-based morality of America's citizenry shows that everyday Americans saw Jerusalem's laws as their own. The people were familiar with the Bible's laws and history and were instructed on it weekly in churches and synagogues. This Bible-based education inculcated in the individual both the

PF/BALAGE BALOGH/ARCHAEOLOGY ILLUSTRATED



know-how and the motivation to voluntarily police themselves. It made the American public uniquely governable to a constitution that was designed to limit government intrusion.

Over 100 years before the Revolutionary War, the colonies sought to enshrine in law regular Bible education in the earliest levels of education. In 1647, the "Old Deluder Satan" act required that townships with 50 households establish grammar schools in order to ensure that literacy prevailed—for the express purpose that the public could read the Bible and thus not be deceived on truth. Correspondingly, the first grammar school textbook in America, the *New England Primer,* was full of biblical themes and stories and instruction on biblical morals. The 90-page work, first published between 1687 and 1690, also included select quotes from the King James Bible, including the Ten Commandments. Over the next century, an estimated 3 million copies of the primer were in circulation.

In 1839, a series of new grammar school texts—the *Eclectic Readers* or *McGuffey Readers,* as they're more commonly known—were published. Along with the Bible, these texts became the backbone of formative education. As with the *New England Primer,* the McGuffey texts included many Bible themes and quotations. For example, the third book in the series has a lesson on "Things to Remember." A few of the points read as follows: "When you rise in the morning, remember who kept you from danger during the night. Remember who watched over you while you slept, and whose sun shines around you, and gives you the sweet light of day"; "Let God have the thanks for your heart, for His kindness and His care; and pray for His protection during the wakeful hours of day"; "Never do anything that you would be afraid or ashamed that your parents should know. Remember, if no one else sees you, God does, from whom you cannot hide even your most secret thought"; "Trust in the Lord and He will guide you in the way of good men." Though not quoting the Bible itself, the values expressed are directly taken from the Jewish text.

"At this time, the nation was at a critical point of forming a distinct identity," professor of education at Liberty University Samuel Smith wrote about the *McGuffey Readers* in 2008. "These phenomena created a demand for textbooks that would not only meet the practical need for curriculum in developing schools but would also extend prevailing American values to both children new to the frontier and those new to the nation." Thus, a childhood education was inseparable from instilling both Bible knowledge and biblical virtue.

It's estimated that between 1839 and 1920, over 122 million copies of the *McGuffey Readers* were sold, making it the most popular textbook in American history. The only other two books to be as popular through that century were *Webster's Dictionary* and the Bible itself. It's safe to say that any literate education in America from its founding until the 20th century was completely infused with biblical teaching and values.

A Rightful Connection to Jerusalem

For the century leading up to America's independence and the century and a half following, the Bible and biblical stories were woven into the United States' social fabric. This biblical connection links Jerusalem to America. That is what the Trump administration wanted to highlight by making this declaration in the City of David. And rightfully so.

Through that particular official act, the United States officially connected itself to the bedrock of ancient Jerusalem.

With this in mind, notice how the City of David plaque concludes: "As the Prophet Isaiah said, 'Out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.' The spiritual bedrock of our values as a nation comes from Jerusalem. It is upon these ideals that the American Republic was founded, and the unbreakable bond between the United States and Israel was formed. The City of David serves as a proud reminder of the glorious heritage of the United States of America."

If only Americans really understood the weight of that statement. The glorious history of the United States doesn't just go back to 1776, rather it goes back 3,000 years or more to when the God of Israel established the law that would inspire many of America's most influential leaders.

It's vitally important that we remember this history. This is what it means when America is described as having a Judeo-Christian heritage. It is this biblical foundation, memorialized on a plaque in the heart of Jerusalem, that we should be deeply thankful for and celebrating. ■

From Sinai to Jerusalem to Philadelphia

The Hebrew Bible was a huge part of the inspiration behind the most enduring political document in history.

BY ANDREW MILLER



Moses Comes Down From Mount Sinai, by Gustave Doré

The United States of America is one of the world's youngest major nations, yet it possesses the world's oldest, continuously functioning, written national constitution. Written in 1787, this document has endured while dozens of other nations have cycled through new ones, even as they have tried to replicate its principles and its success. Since that time, France has adopted roughly 15 constitutions, Thailand more than 20, Venezuela around 26, and the Dominican Republic at least 32.

What explains the U.S. Constitution's remarkable durability? How did it help lay the foundation for the most powerful, prosperous and free nation in modern history?

Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology founder Gerald Flurry addressed this subject in a 2018 lecture. "Many people today hate the Constitution, and yet it's one of the most noble documents ever on this Earth," he said, "because it was established by many principles of the law of God." Its authors "were firmly rooted in divine law, and of course, that certainly saturated much of the Constitution. Now, that's why this document is much more important than most foundational documents of other nations."

These statements reflect a vital but overlooked truth that many would challenge or dismiss. The Constitution's text of only about 4,500 words contains no direct scriptural quotes and makes no explicit references to Bible verses. It establishes no national church or theocracy.

So how is the Constitution based on the Bible? Or is it?

A Written Covenant

The tendency of early Americans to identify with the children of Israel is central to understanding why the U.S. Constitution took the form it did. Britain, the mother country these colonists left behind, had no single written constitutional document. Its system of government had simply accumulated over centuries through common law, royal charters, parliamentary statutes and unwritten precedent. The American colonists broke from that pattern entirely and insisted on writing their political arrangements down.

This mirrored the way God structured His own relationship with ancient Israel.

"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will hearken unto My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be Mine own treasure from among all peoples; for all the earth is Mine; and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and





Scene at the Signing of the Constitution of the United States, by Howard Chandler Christy

a holy nation." The elders replied, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do" (Exodus 19:4-6, 8).

Moses then recorded the full terms of that agreement in writing. This mattered enormously: What had only been spoken became something fixed, public and permanent—a record that bound both parties.

Here is the principle buried inside that transaction: Even God submitted His side of the relationship to a written, knowable standard, rather than ruling by unrecorded decree. That is not how Near Eastern kings operated. Yet it is exactly the template the American colonists reached for over 3,000 years later, translating one written charter after another—compacts, colonial constitutions, state charters—into an increasingly sophisticated practice of self-government, culminating in Philadelphia in 1787.

By the time the founders sat down to draft a national constitution, this habit of writing things down was normal. It was already the American way of doing things, inherited from generations who had absorbed the biblical conviction that legitimate authority has to be able to show its terms in writing.

Consider how unusual that assumption still is by the world's standards. The vast majority of nations today have some form of written constitution, which can make the practice look like the ordinary, self-evident way to run a government. Yet most of those documents are recent, often direct imitations of the American model, adopted only after 1787 demonstrated that a nation could govern itself this way. Few of the officials who administer those constitutions today—or the citizens who live under them—would trace the lineage back far enough to land on Sinai. But the paper trail runs there all the same.

The Law Made Supreme

Written constitutions are invaluable in establishing the rule of law. They set fixed limits on government power, define the rights of citizens, and provide standards against which rulers can be held accountable.

The Bible powerfully illustrates this principle. The laws God recorded in Scripture are intended to govern everyone in the nation, from king to judge to citizen to immigrant. The king was to write out a personal copy of the law, read from it daily, and obey it faithfully (Deuteronomy 17:18-19). God Himself is the Lawgiver, and He decides what laws His people must be subject to. This is not decided by the whims of a human leader.

Early American settlers united this biblical understanding with their political thinking. Paul Johnson expressed this truth in "No Law Without Order, No

Freedom Without Law." "The rule of law, as distinct from the rule of a person, or class or people, and as opposed to the rule of force, is an abstract, sophisticated concept," he wrote. "[T]he essence of the rule of law is its impersonality, omnipotence and ubiquity. It is the same law for everyone, everywhere—kings, emperors, high priests, the state itself, are subject to it. If exceptions are made, the rule of law begins to collapse" (*Sunday Telegraph,* Dec. 26, 1999).

Studying the history of ancient Israel, Greece, Rome and other civilizations, the founders realized that these societies ultimately collapsed partly because they failed to conquer human nature and preserve the rule of law as opposed to the rule of force. They, therefore, sought to develop a system that, while powerful enough to protect and regulate the people, divided power among branches, balancing centers of power to check one another and to restrain any one leader or branch from abusing its power.

The founders enumerated the powers of each part within the government and specified that all powers not explicitly mentioned belonged to state and local governments or to the people themselves. And they sought to preserve individuals' God-given rights and give them a measure of responsibility in self-rule.

This realistic view of human nature—drawn directly from the Bible's teaching on the sinfulness of man—became one of the most important reasons for the Constitution's remarkable endurance.

Yet the founders' system of checks and balances is more directly traceable to the governing structures of the Roman Republic than to ancient Israel. This is a major reason why we see the checks and balances the founders established being circumvented today. No system of checks and balances, however cleverly designed, can long survive a people who reject biblical standards of self-control and virtue.

Equal Justice

One of the Bible's most revolutionary teachings is equal justice. In a world dominated by kings, pharaohs and rigid class systems, where rulers often determined the law according to their own will, the God of Israel declared that all human beings are created in His image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-27).

Because every person bears God's image, no individual—regardless of wealth, status or ethnicity—has greater inherent value than another. From this principle flow repeated commands for impartial justice: one law for both native and stranger (Leviticus 24:22; Numbers 15:15-16), "thou shalt not respect persons" in judgment (Deuteronomy 16:19), equal treatment for rich and poor alike (Exodus 30:12-15).

These biblical laws profoundly influenced the development of Anglo-American law and political thought. English philosopher John Locke wrote that there should be "one rule for rich and poor, for the favorite at court and the countryman at plow." These principles also helped shape the ideals embraced by America's founders as they established a nation grounded in the principle of equal justice under law. Political scientist Donald S. Lutz found in a landmark study that Locke was the fourth-most cited source among America's Founding Fathers—behind the Bible, Baron de Montesquieu and William Blackstone.

The Declaration of Independence declares that all men are endowed with specific, unalienable rights, not by the government but by their Creator. This profound truth enabled America to abolish slavery.

Although the U.S. Constitution initially left the issue of slavery largely to the individual states, President Abraham Lincoln—echoing Proverbs 25:11—described the Declaration as "an apple of gold in settings of silver." He believed the Constitution was designed to protect the Declaration's central truth about human equality. Lincoln used the constitutional amendment process the founders had established to ensure there was "one manner of law … for the stranger, as for one of your own country."

That vision was realized through the 13th and 14th Amendments.

The 13th Amendment, ratified in December 1865, permanently abolished slavery and involuntary servitude throughout the United States. The 14th Amendment, ratified in 1868, advanced the principle of equality further by declaring all persons born or naturalized in the United States to be citizens and guaranteeing that no state could "deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." These two amendments embedded the biblical ideal of impartial justice more deeply into America's framework.

Free Enterprise

The Bible also lays a strong foundation for free enterprise and economic liberty, bedrock principles that helped fuel America's unmatched prosperity. The Eighth Commandment ("Thou shalt not steal," Exodus 20:13) and the Tenth ("Thou shalt not covet," verse 14) clearly affirm property rights. These commands would be meaningless without the assumption that people can own possessions.

America's founders drew on this biblical heritage and explicitly rejected socialism and all systems that undermine property rights. In *A Defense of the*

Constitutions of Government of the United States of America, John Adams wrote, "The moment the idea is admitted into society that property is not as sacred as the laws of God, and that there is not a force of law and public justice to protect it, anarchy and tyranny commence. If 'Thou shalt not covet,' and 'Thou shalt not steal,' were not commandments of heaven, they must be made inviolable precepts in every society before it can be civilized or made free."

This biblical view of property and economic liberty was powerfully reinforced by the Scottish moral philosopher Adam Smith. His landmark 1776 work, *The Wealth of Nations*, arrived in America just months after the Declaration of Independence and was widely read by the founding generation.

Smith argued that when individuals are free to pursue their own interests within a framework of justice and limited government, an "invisible hand" directs resources in ways that benefit society as a whole. He strongly opposed mercantilism, monopolies and excessive state interference, a view that aligned closely with the biblical emphasis on honest dealing, voluntary exchange and personal stewardship.

Thomas Jefferson called *The Wealth of Nations* "the best book extant" on political economy. Alexander Hamilton engaged deeply with Smith's ideas while shaping early American economic policy.

The Constitution reflected this understanding in powerful ways. The Fifth Amendment declares: "No person shall be … deprived of life, liberty or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation." This clause placed strict limits on the government's power to seize or redistribute wealth. The Contract Clause (Article 1, Section 10) further protected the right to make and enforce private agreements. The Commerce Clause created a marketplace free from state tariffs. These provisions rejected the European model of state favoritism, instead establishing an order protecting private property, honest contracts and voluntary trade.

Righteous Character

The Constitution is a practical attempt to implement foundational biblical principles in the U.S. government. Popular sovereignty, individual rights, limited government, separation of powers, checks and balances, republicanism, federalism—these are the seven principles of the Constitution, and they are based on the framers' understanding of "the laws of nature and of nature's God."

George Washington acknowledged that the Constitution wasn't perfect, but he wrote that it was "the best that can be obtained at this epoch" and that it "approaches nearer to perfection than any government hitherto instituted among men." This form of government and the obedience of the people to the Bible enabled America to receive the greatest combination of wealth, power and freedom in history.

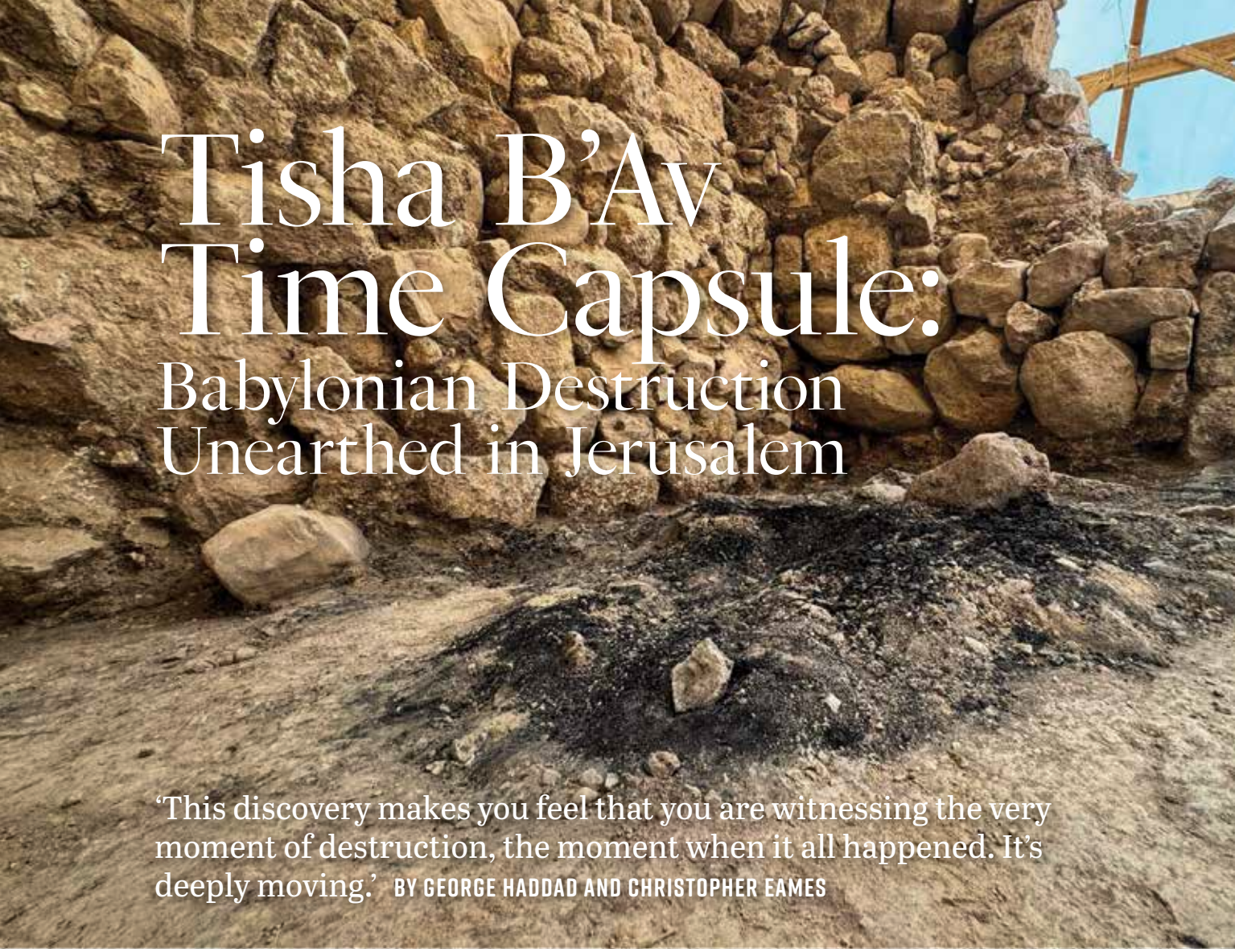
America's founders established limited government to protect people from the evils of human reason wielding massive power. They wanted to check tyrants, unjust judges and other misguided leaders. They knew, however, that this would create an enormous amount of freedom for the people. That is why founder after founder emphasized that it was crucial for the individual to be accountable to God.

The individual had to voluntarily obey the Bible's laws.

Before the constitutional convention, Benjamin Franklin wrote to friends, "Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters." After the convention, he was reportedly asked by a woman what sort of government had been created. His reply: "A republic, madam, if you can keep it." In his First Inaugural Address, George Washington famously stated, "The foundations of our national policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality." In his Farewell Address, he said, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports." John Adams was equally direct: "It is religion and morality alone which can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand."

Why was the Constitution written only for a moral and religious people? Alexis de Tocqueville answered this question powerfully in his classic *Democracy in America*. After traveling the United States in the early 1830s, the French observer concluded that religion and morality were essential to the republic's survival. The Constitution granted Americans sweeping liberty to do as they pleased, but only biblical faith and moral conviction kept them from doing what was immoral or unjust. Without the restraints of a higher spiritual law, liberty quickly descends into license and anarchy, which destroys true freedom.

The founders reemphasized religion and morality because they knew that developing self-control and virtue was a job that was always meant to belong to something outside the government itself—and the founders were candid that they were counting on it. Whatever one makes of their theology, the historical record is clear: A nation that borrowed its founding principles from Sinai has now outlasted nearly every constitution built on principles of its own invention. America's success depends on its founding formula. ■



Tisha B'Av Time Capsule: Babylonian Destruction Unearthed in Jerusalem

'This discovery makes you feel that you are witnessing the very moment of destruction, the moment when it all happened. It's deeply moving.' BY GEORGE HADDAD AND CHRISTOPHER EAMES

Tisha B'Av, the ninth of the Hebrew month Av, is known commonly as the "saddest day in the Jewish calendar." Observed with fasting by many in the Jewish community, it commemorates a number of catastrophes in Jewish history—most notably, the destructions of both the first and second temples.

Though debate surrounds the exact course of events on specific days of the destructions—for example, the Babylonian destruction is described in the Bible as occurring between the seventh and the 10th of Av (2 Kings 25:8; Jeremiah 52:12)—the first-century C.E. Jewish historian Josephus marveled at its parallels with the time of the destruction of the second temple by the Romans, for which he was an eyewitness: "[O]ne cannot but wonder at the accuracy of this period thereto relating; for the same month and day were now observed, as I said before, wherein the holy house was burnt formerly by the Babylonians" (*Wars of the Jews*, 6.4.8).

In the lead-up to Tisha B'Av this year, a fascinating new discovery came to light—in this case, a time capsule of the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E.

Large wooden beams scorched during the siege were unearthed in the ongoing Givati Parking Lot excavations in the City of David, run by the Israel Antiquities Authority and Tel Aviv University. It is rare to find such preserved beams. Excavation director Efrat Bocher explained the reason for their preservation, saying: "The beams appear to have served as the roof of an inner courtyard in a building from the First Temple Period. During the destruction, they collapsed onto the floor. We believe that the plaster cladding of the building's walls, melted by the fire, covered the charred wooden beams, and ultimately enabled their exceptional preservation."

The preservation of such organic material, complete with growth rings, allows for exceptional dating ability. In the words of radiocarbon dating specialist

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FAR LEFT **Destruction remains discovered during excavations in the City of David's Givati Parking Lot.**

ABOVE **Close-up of the burned wooden beams**

LEFT **Radiocarbon specialist Dr. Johanna Regev**

Dr. Johanna Regev: "It is very rare in Israel to find wood with such a large number of growth rings. Here, in the City of David, we found thick beams with many rings, offering significant research potential—with more growth rings enabling higher dating resolution. … Now we can attain much greater precision, narrowing the dating range down to as little as 10 years."

Additionally, it seems that a deliberate choice was made by the Jews returning to ancient Jerusalem to leave the charred wood remains in place. In the words of co-director Dr. Yiftah Shalev: "The concept of a landscape of memory is familiar from many cultures around the world. Preserving memory is a human need, seeking to preserve what once existed. Here we see it in its clearest form: a deliberate choice to leave ruins in place as a testament to the destruction and build the new layer over them."

Bocher noted the significance of the discovery in relation to Tisha B'Av. "We are just before Tisha B'Av," she said. "This discovery makes you feel that you are witnessing the very moment of destruction, the moment when it all happened. It's deeply moving." In the words of Minister of Heritage Amichai Eliyahu: "Jerusalem's soil continues to provide tangible evidence of the city's ancient past. The wooden beams burned in the destruction of the first temple stand as a powerful reminder of the Jewish people's presence in Jerusalem some 2,600 years ago. On the eve of Tisha B'Av, this discovery underscores that our connection to Jerusalem is rooted not only in faith but also in history, archaeology and collective memory. It is our responsibility to continue uncovering, preserving and passing this heritage on to future generations."

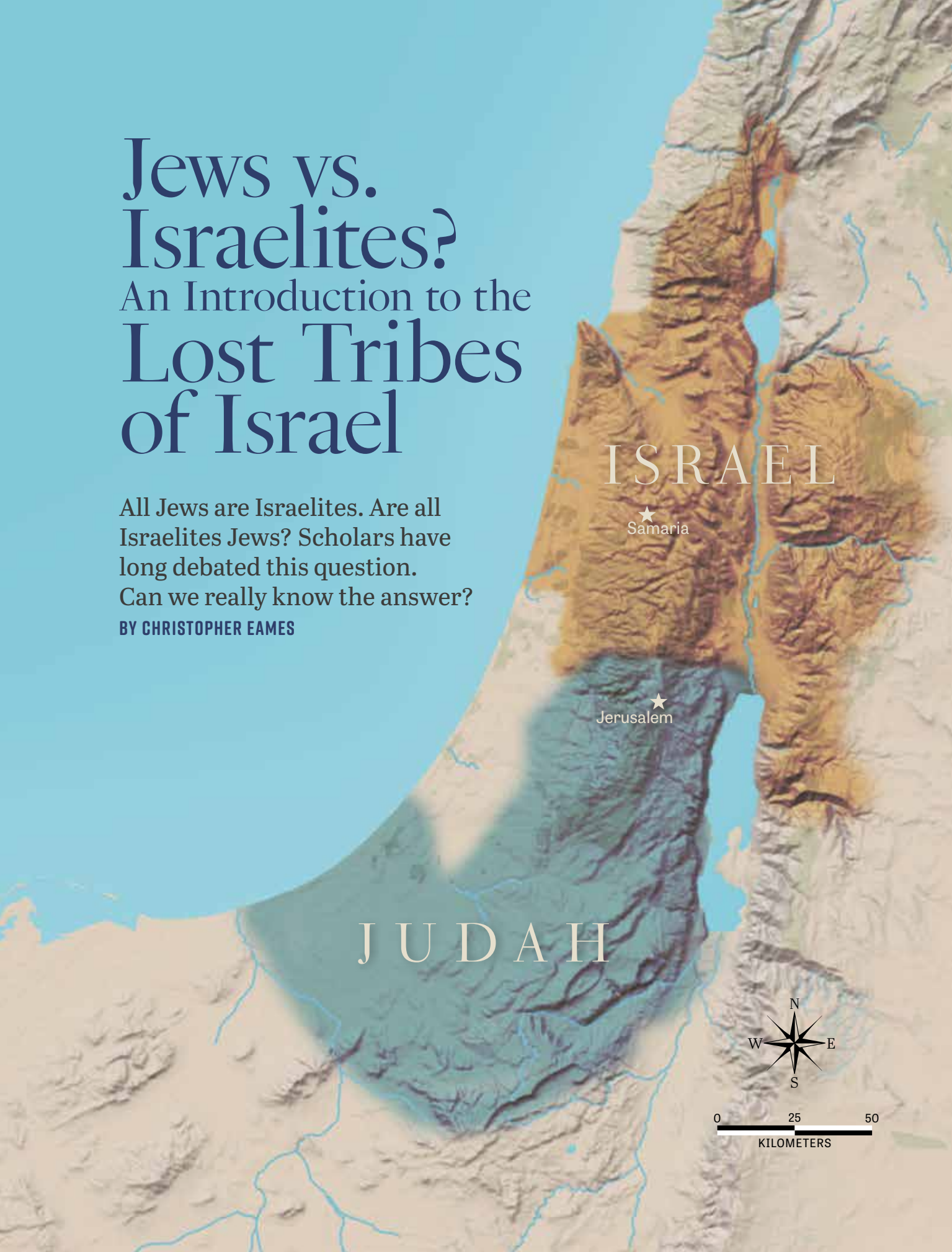
We await more exciting finds from the Givati Parking Lot excavations, as well as our own Ophel excavation, which is currently underway and revealing significant remains from both the first and second temple periods. You can keep up-to-date with progress via our blog at *ArmstrongInstitute.org.* ■

ERRAT BOCHER, REUT YAIF/CITY OF DAVID

Jews vs. Israelites?
An Introduction to the Lost Tribes of Israel

All Jews are Israelites. Are all Israelites Jews? Scholars have long debated this question. Can we really know the answer?

BY CHRISTOPHER EAMES



What is the difference between the terms *Jews* and *Israelites*? It is a common assumption that these terms are perfectly interchangeable and refer to exactly the same group of people. Many believe that all Jews are Israelites and that all Israelites are Jews.

These terms are preloaded with significant historical meaning and weight. They are also indelibly connected to one of the great enduring biblical mysteries—that of the "lost 10 tribes" of Israel.

Let's start with the basics. The biblical name *Israel* was first applied to the patriarch Jacob and used as an umbrella term for the 12 tribes descending from his 12 sons—aka, *Israelites.* Israel/Jacob had a son named *Judah*, who was the patriarch of one of these tribes. This is the name from which the term *Jew* derives. (This is more obvious in Hebrew than in English: יהודי, *Yehudi*—Jew; from יהודה, *Yehuda*—Judah. "Judahite" is therefore arguably a better English counterpart to "Israelite.")

Most will be aware that the original united monarchy of Israel fractured following the reign of King Solomon. At this time, the 10 tribes in the north established the kingdom of Israel, which was led initially by the Ephraimite King Jeroboam I (1 Kings 11:31-35). In the south, the tribe of Judah, ruling from Jerusalem—together with the neighboring smaller tribe of Benjamin and a part of the priestly line of Levi—formed the kingdom of Judah. Israel's initial united monarchy and eventual split into two distinct kingdoms is well-attested, both biblically and archaeologically (see, for starters, our exhibit issue, "David and Solomon's Monumental Kingdom," available at *ArmstrongInstitute.org/magazine_issues/13*).

The northern kingdom of Israel lasted barely two centuries before being conquered and deported by Assyria in the late eighth century B.C.E. Meanwhile, the kingdom of Judah lasted nearly 150 years longer before being conquered and deported by the Babylonians in the early sixth century B.C.E.

Here's something many people probably do not know: The very *first* time the word "Jews" (יהודים, *Yehudim*) appears in the Bible is in the second book of Kings—a full 12 books into the Bible, in a passage of text recording events that occurred near the *end* of the biblical kingdom period—after Israel's split into two kingdoms. Even more interestingly, this first time the word is used is describing a conflict *between "Israelites" and "Jews"*—clearly, two *distinct* kingdoms, with distinct terminology applied to each.

In this conflict, the "Israelites" of the northern kingdom formed an alliance with Aram (Syria) against the "Jews" from the southern kingdom of Judah: "Then Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war; and they besieged Ahaz [king of Judah], but could not overcome him. At that time Rezin king of Aram recovered Elath to Aram, and drove the *Jews* from Elath …" (2 Kings 16:5-6).

This passage continues to document the invasion of Israel by the Assyrians, beginning with Tiglath-Pileser III in the late 730s B.C.E. and culminating in the total subjugation of the kingdom in 718 B.C.E. The siege of Israel's capital Samaria (721–718 B.C.E.) was completed by Sargon II, who deported the Israelite population to the farthest northeastern reaches of the Assyrian Empire, replacing the Israelites—in typical Assyrian fashion—with immigrants from Babylon and elsewhere (2 Kings 17:6, 24; see sidebar, page 33).

This is the moment the saga of the "lost 10 tribes of Israel" begins. Where did the lost tribes ultimately go? Who are their modern-day descendants? Their identity is not the focus of this article. Rather, its purpose is to introduce the concept of the lost tribes through the use and interpretation of the terms "Jews" and "Israelites." Why is this important?

It's important because—despite the *obvious ancient distinction* between these terms and the peoples they represent—they have come to be used so interchangeably that each has been rendered effectively meaningless. Among scholars there is tremendous confusion and debate about these terms, leading to a significant degree of ignorance and confusion on this pivotal topic of national identity—both ancient and modern.

Amalgamation of Terms—and Peoples?

A case in point: Jewish historian and rabbi Dr. Henry Abramson of Touro University in New York City, in his 2020 lecture "The Ten Lost Tribes of Israel," described how "*Jews* were taken from the northern part of the land of Israel" during the Assyrian conquest of the late eighth century B.C.E. He immediately caught himself in his use of the terminology, however, quickly adding: "I tend to use the term 'Jews' anachronistically—just forgive me for it—*most Jews do that*" (emphasis added throughout).

Another case in point comes from Joel Kramer, of the popular YouTube archaeology channel Expedition Bible. In a 2022 episode titled "The 10 Lost Tribes of Israel—Are They Really Lost?" (with nearly a million views), he argued that the "12 tribes of Israel are preserved in a remnant that survived the Assyrian conquest," made up of "refugees that were fleeing the destruction of the northern kingdom" into Hezekiah's southern kingdom of Judah, becoming amalgamated into the southern population. As such, with representation of survivors

among each of the tribes, Kramer argued: "There is no such thing as the 'lost' 10 tribes of Israel"—with the northern representatives now incorporated into Judah (and thus referred to as "Jews").

Fast-forward to the return of the Jewish exiles from Babylon to the Holy Land in the latter part of the sixth century B.C.E. This is the time of the rebuilding of the second temple—the time of Zerubbabel, later Ezra and Nehemiah. The return of the Jews at this time is commonly assumed to be a fulfillment of the great prophecies of the restoration of wider Israel to their homeland, with the ingathering of the tribes—as above, with the terminology of "Jews" now commonly seen as synonymous with Israel, if they were not already seen as such before.

Yet the genealogies of these returnees make it abundantly obvious: THESE PEOPLE DESCENDED FROM THE TRIBES OF *JUDAH, BENJAMIN AND LEVI,* the tribes that exclusively constituted the southern kingdom of *Judah*. Their genealogies are clearly documented in passages such as Ezra 1:5, 3:9, 4:1 and 10:9.

Note too, these exiles came from areas within *Babylon*, not Assyria. And they returned to *Judahite* locations mainly in and around Jerusalem, not to land or cities in the north (now occupied by the Samaritans).

What about the claim that the 12 tribes were preserved in a remnant that survived the Assyrian conquest? There is some piecemeal archaeological evidence indicating certain northern Israelites fled into Hezekiah's Judah and Jerusalem at the time of the Assyrian conquest (see *ArmstrongInstitute.org/78*). But this represented a tiny fraction of the northern kingdom. The annals of Sargon II, for example, describe his deportation of tens of thousands of captives from his completion of the siege of Samaria alone—the final nail in the coffin following numerous battles and deportations from the time of Tiglath-Pileser III (sidebar, page 33).

Fast-forwarding another 500 years, the first-century Jewish historian Josephus leaves no room for doubt on this matter. He affirms that there remain only "two tribes in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans, *while the* 10 TRIBES *are beyond Euphrates till now, and are an* IMMENSE MULTITUDE, AND NOT TO BE ESTIMATED BY NUMBERS" (*Antiquities* 11.5.2).

Bible Aside

Biblically speaking, we *do* witness a sharp distinction between the use of the terms *Israelites* and *Jews,* with the latter terminology used most especially in the works of Jeremiah, Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah—all works following the fall of the northern Israelite kingdom.

Yet modern scholarship is leery of an overemphasis on internal biblical information. After all, as the popular view goes, most of these biblical texts were assembled long *after* the events they purport to describe anyway—with many believing most of them to have been composed in the post-exilic period. Thus, the Hebrew Bible is a compilation of texts specifically written *by* Jews, *for* Jews, *about* Jews—*if* you believe it, that is.

Prof. Zvi Ben-Dor Benite represents this critical perspective in *The Ten Lost Tribes: A World History:* "Derived mainly from the first and second books of Kings, the story [of the divide and collapse of the separate kingdoms of Israel and Judah] has been universally regarded by 10-tribes seekers as historical truth. Of course, nearly two centuries of probing biblical criticism and contested biblical archaeology have taught us *nothing if not that the biblical narrative cannot be treated as a chronological history narrating the past as it happened*.

"Indeed, in the case of the biblical narrative with which we're concerned here, it is important to bear in mind that at least the first part of the actual (as opposed to the prophetic) history of the 10 tribes story (the first book of Kings, which tells the story of the united kingdom created by David and its split into two under his grandson) is considered by biblical scholars to be almost entirely fictional. The second part, found in 2 Kings (which covers the history of the two kingdoms and the deportations of the Israelites), is thought to have been heavily edited and full of interpolations."

For those who subscribe to this (highly contestable) view—divorced from the necessity of taking at face value these biblical texts and instead giving primacy to a much later corpus of *Second* Temple Period literature and archaeological evidence—a definitional battleground has formed around how the terms "Israel," "Jews," etc were being used during these later periods. And for the past century, the scholarly consensus was that the terms *Jews* and *Israelites* were indeed being used synonymously to refer to the same group of people at this time.

What is the key source of this consensus? Irony of ironies, it traces back to a radical member of the *Nazi Party!*

The 'Insider/Outsider' Paradigm

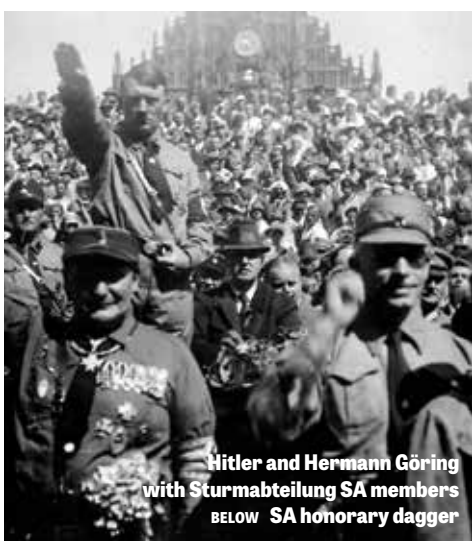
In 2021, Dr. Jason Staples of North Carolina State University published an exhaustive 440-page reassessment of the relevant literature on this subject, titled *The Idea of Israel in Second Temple Judaism: A New Theory of People, Exile and Israelite Identity.* This book, now being heralded as the authoritative work on the subject, takes this long-held assumption of linguistic equivalency to task.

Staples exposes both the dirty underbelly of the modern scholarship on this topic and the entirely opposite unanimity on the subject in the ancient world.

He begins: "The presumption that, after the Babylonian Exile, the term *Israel* is synonymous with 'the Jews' (that is, the people known in Greek as *Ioudaioi* and Hebrew as *Yehudim*) is so strong that it has gone unquestioned in numerous detailed studies on the semantic ranges of the respective terms.

"Indeed, few scholarly presumptions are so deeply rooted, as countless scholarly articles and books use these terms interchangeably, often alternating between them for stylistic reasons, regardless of the historical period under investigation. The two terms, however, are not evenly distributed across early Jewish literature or other ancient evidence," leading to "numerous studies attempting to explain why these functionally equivalent terms tend to appear in different contexts."

Dr. Staples explains how the debate over these terms has been shaped by Dr. Karl G. Kuhn, in particular his 1938 article on the topic, published in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* (TWNT) Long story short: Kuhn suggested the term *Jew* was the "outsider" terminology—i.e. used by either foreigners or Hellenistic Jews—while the terms *Israel/Israelite* and *Hebrew* were "insider" terminology used by the Jewish community. Thus, different names from different reference points—but all of which have effectively the same meaning, referring to the same group of people.



Hitler and Hermann Göring with Sturmabteilung SA members

BELOW SA honorary dagger



In the words of Dr. Kuhn, "ישראל [Israel] is the name which the people uses for itself, whereas יהודים- Ἰουδαῖοι [Jews] is the non-Jewish name for it. Thus ישראל always emphasizes the religious aspect, namely, that 'we are God's chosen people,' whereas Ἰουδαῖος may acquire on the lips of non-Jews a disrespectful and even contemptuous sound"—a word "which may often be used in a derogatory or even contemptuous sense" with a "depreciatory element that clings so easily" (as articulated in his article, "Ἰσραήλ, Ἰουδαῖος, Ἑβραῖος in Jewish Literature After the OT").

Kuhn's work laid the foundation of much of today's understanding of the subject. Staples continues: "Kuhn's insider/outsider model has proven so influential as to be baldly repeated, often without citation, in numerous subsequent studies, with some even using the model to distinguish between sources in the Gospels or to assess the implied audience of a text or even a chapter. … Even those who have recognized problems with Kuhn's paradigm have tended to make small corrections rather than calling the model itself into question."

There are indeed striking problems with Kuhn's paradigm—starting first and foremost with the fact that "the negative valence of *Ioudaios* is *unattested in antiquity,*" writes Staples. Yet "Kuhn's insider/outsider paradigm *does* describe the situation in 1930s Germany and Europe as a whole with remarkable accuracy."

There's a reason for that: Karl G. Kuhn was a member of the Nazi Party and a radical anti-Semite—as was his *Doktorvator* and editor of TWNT, Gerhard Kittel. "Kuhn lent his authority as a scholar of ancient Judaism and Jewish texts to the cause, delivering a speech on April 1, 1933, at an event in the Tübingen marketplace advocating the boycott of Jewish businesses," writes Staples.

Not only was Dr. Kuhn a member of the Nazi Party, he was one of the first 1,000 members to join the SA—the *Sturmabteilung* (loosely "Stormtroopers"), Adolf Hitler's original paramilitary organization. Kuhn would proudly lecture on Jews and Judaism in his SA uniform "with an 'Honorary Dagger With Dedication' clinking at his side," M. A. Beek remembered in his 1950 review of Kuhn's *Achtzehngebet und Vaterunser und der Reim*. Given his "specialities" in the field, Kuhn was one of 15 appointed to the "Research Department for the Jewish Problem" in 1936. His aforementioned TWNT article defining *Israel, Ioudaios* and *Hebraios* was published two years later—just prior to Kristallnacht and a series of highly publicized lectures from Kuhn addressing the "world problem" of Jewry, praising Hitler for "creating the conditions for a solution."

"Remarkably, Kuhn's reputation was rapidly rehabilitated after the war, owing largely to the supposed 'purely objective-scientific attitude' and 'solid study of the sources' evident in his publications," writes Staples. He cites all the expected excuses. From Beek: "The dagger and the uniform never hindered Dr. Kuhn's lectures on rabbinic texts. I have never been able to question his scientific purity on this point." From J.S. Vos: In Kuhn's dozen TWNT articles, "I have found no

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trace of anti-Semitism or even of exegetical anti-Judaism" ("Antijudaismus/Antisemitismus," 1984).

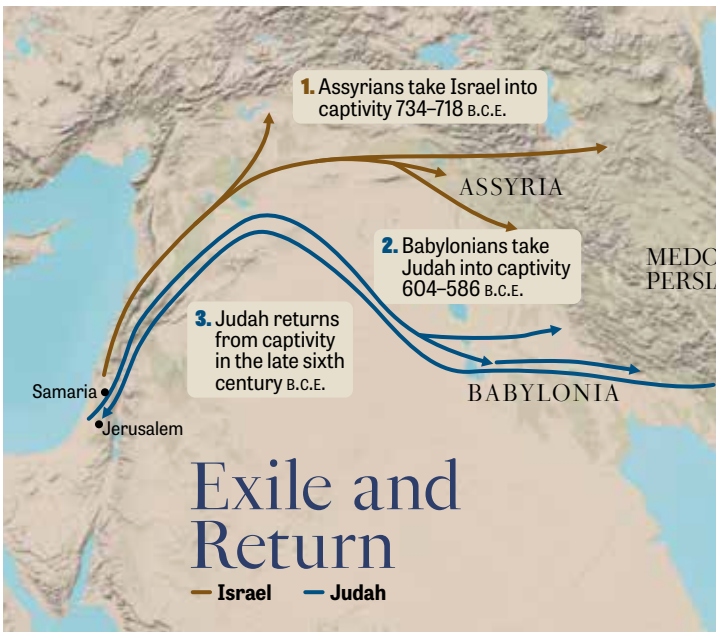
Staples concludes this fascinating introduction to his terminological study: "Faced with the empirical fact that *Israelite* and *Ioudaios/Yehudi* are used differently throughout the period he was surveying, Kuhn naturally turned to his immediate context for an explanation, assuming that *Ioudaios* was analogous to the German *Jude*—complete with the potentially derogatory outsider nuance—and constructing a model in which (just like [the German] *Israeliten/Juden*) Israelite/*Ioudaios* are synonymous but distinguished by insider/outsider preferences. … Kuhn thus explains the difference between *Israelite* and *Ioudaios* by *superimposing the idiom of Nazi Germany upon antiquity.*"

Later scholars, recognizing the complete lack of any original derogatory connotation to the term *Jew*, have tried to downplay the necessity of this part of Kuhn's argument for the use of this term as the "outsider" element. Yet as Staples highlights, this aspect is fundamental to the thesis. "Kuhn's paradigm has been taken for granted by scholars of this period for nearly a century …. Remarkably, some recent scholars have even attempted to employ Kuhn's insider/outsider model in the fight against anti-Judaism, apparently oblivious to how that paradigm reads the anti-Semitic assumptions of Nazi Germany into the ancient world."

Despite the counterargument that a flawed scholar does not necessarily equate to a flawed theory, Staples goes on to show that the insider/outsider paradigm *is* fatally flawed and *cannot* account for the uses of the terminology found in Second Temple Period literature. In fact, in rather extraordinarily consistent fashion, it is negated *entirely* across the broad spectrum of texts during this time, which use the terms *Israel, Jews* and *Hebrews* extremely particularly, separately and deliberately—*just as in the biblical account.*

Reassessing the Sources

In his book, Staples combs exhaustively through these texts, to see how all of them handle the various forms of these ethnonyms (e.g. *Israel, Israelite, Judah, Judahite/Jew, Hebrew*). The manifold texts he examines include the books of the Hebrew Bible, as well as the early Septuagint Greek translation's handling of the source material; the New Testament; the works of Philo and Josephus; the many apocryphal and other works from the Second Temple Period (including the books of Enoch, Maccabees, Tobit, Judith, Jubilees, Susanna, Additions to Esther, The Wisdom of Ben Sira, Psalms of Solomon, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Baruch, 4 Ezra, the Testament of Moses, the Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah, Joseph and Asenath, the Letter of Aristeas, etc).



Staples also examines the various works within the Dead Sea Scrolls corpus (besides its biblical texts), including the Damascus Document, the Community Rule, 4QMMT, the War Scroll, 4Q372 1, Pesharim, 4QApocryphon of Jeremiah, 4QPseudo-Moses, 4QPseudo-Ezekiel and the Temple Scroll. Accompanying his analysis of each of the texts are helpful charts tabulating and comparing the uses of these terms in focus.

The research is thorough and impressive, accompanied by a small-print bibliography nearly 60 pages long. And the conclusion is resounding and unanimous—there is a clear and consistent pattern right across the board. THE DATA CLEARLY SHOWS A PATTERN OF DELIBERATE AND CONSISTENT DIFFERENTIATION IN THE USE OF THE NAMES *HEBREW, ISRAELITE, JEW* AND THEIR ASSOCIATED AND DERIVATIVE TERMS! (See sidebar, page 36, for examples.)

"After examining a wide variety of evidence from the Second Temple Period in some detail, several conclusions can now be drawn," Staples writes. "Remarkably, the one perspective *not* significantly represented in this body of evidence is the one usually assumed by modern scholars: NAMELY, THAT ISRAEL IS EQUIVALENT TO THE JEWS (*Ioudaioi/Yehudim*). … Instead, the evidence is overwhelming that the three terms and the concepts they represent are neither synonymous nor coextensive in the Second Temple Period, with each having its own specific nuance, overlapping with but not identical to the meaning of the others."

Coming Full Circle

These three umbrella terms are summarized by Staples as follows: "*Israel* is the name either for the tribes of the biblical northern kingdom or for the 12-tribe covenantal

ANNALS OF ASSYRIAN CONQUEST

The following are excerpts from inscriptions relating to Assyrian kings Tiglath-Pileser III, Shalmaneser V and Sargon II, relaying their conquests of the northern kingdom of Israel and deportations of its inhabitants in waves in the late eighth century B.C.E.—culminating in the three-year siege of Samaria started by Shalmaneser V in 721 B.C.E. and concluded by Sargon II in 718 B.C.E. Alongside each inscription excerpt is a parallel biblical text describing the events at hand. (For references, see James B. Pritchard's *Ancient Near Eastern Texts.*)



TIGLATH-PILESER III

(r. 745–727 B.C.E.)

Tiglath-Pileser III Annalistic Records: [T]he towns ... of the Upper Sea, I brought under my rule. Six officers of mine I installed as governors over them. ... [Lands] which are adjacent to Israel and the wide land of Naphtali, in its entire extent, I united with Assyria. Officers of mine I installed as governors upon them. ... Israel ... all its inhabitants and their possessions I led to Assyria. They overthrew their king Pekah and I placed Hoshea as king over them. I received from them 10 talents of gold, 1,000(?) talents of silver as their tribute and brought them to Assyria.

2 Kings 15:29-30: In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maacah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali; and he carried them captive to Assyria. And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead ....



SHALMANESER V

(r. 726–721 B.C.E.)

Babylonian Chronicle I: On the 25th day of the month Tebet, Shalmaneser [V] ascended the throne of Assyria and Akkad. He ruined Samaria.

2 Kings 18:9: And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it.



SARGON II

(r. 721–705 B.C.E.)

Sargon II Gate Inscription: Property of Sargon, king of Assyria, conqueror of Samaria and of the entire country of Israel, who despoiled Ashdod ....

Isaiah 20:1: In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it.

Sargon II Annalistic Reports: At the beginning of my royal rule ... the town of the Samarians I besieged, conquered .... I led away as prisoners 27,290 inhabitants of it .... The town I rebuilt better than it was before and settled therein people from countries which I myself had conquered. I placed an officer of mine as governor over them and imposed upon them tribute as is customary for Assyrian citizens. ... I conquered and sacked the towns Shinuhtu and Samaria, and all Israel. ... Upon a trust-inspiring oracle given by my lord Ashur, I crushed the tribes of Tamud, Ibadidi, Marsimanu and Haiapa, the Arabs who live far away in the desert .... I deported their survivors and settled them in Samaria.

2 Kings 17:5-6, 23-24: Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away unto Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and in Habor, on the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. ... So Israel was carried away out of their own land to Assyria, unto this day. And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Avva, and from Hamath and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof. ■

SPEAKINGARCH VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS; ISSAMA SHUKIR MUHAMMED AMIN FROP (GLASGO) (2)

people of YHWH .... *Jew* continues to refer to the subset of Israel *specifically derived from the kingdom of Judah* either by descent, marriage or (eventually) proselytism/conversion. ... The third term, *Hebrew* (*Hebraios*), is often used to refer to someone from ancient, biblical Israel, especially in the pre-monarchy period, and also serves as a less ambiguous way of referring to the whole people in the period of the divided monarchies," as well as "referring to a speaker (or perhaps reader) of a Semitic tongue ... including what we call Hebrew today."

"[A]LTHOUGH JEWS ARE ISRAELITES, NOT ALL ISRAELITES ARE JEWS," concludes Staples.

As impressive as it is, Staples's "new" 440-page paradigm does not present fundamentally new understanding—rather, it adds empirical evidence to what is a long-established reality. Indeed, our own namesake, Herbert W. Armstrong—who wrote on this subject at length from the late 1920s onward—noted that the "world in general, mistakenly, has considered that all Israelites were Jews. But in the Bible, the term Jew applied only to the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi" (*Mystery of the Ages*).

Elsewhere he wrote: "Jews are Israelites, just as Californians are Americans. But *most* Israelites are not Jews, just as most Americans are not Californians. The Jews are the house of Judah *only,* A PART of the Israelites."

One of the most obvious cases in point of Second Temple Period Jews seeing their entity as heirs and inheritors of specifically the southern kingdom of *Judah* is the Hasmoneans: In establishing their independent kingdom in the second century B.C.E., they called it "Judah" (*Yehud/Ioudaia;* interestingly, for the modern State of Israel, the name *Judah* was likewise a candidate in the running). Further, based on the character of these contemporary Second Temple Period texts, Staples highlights how Jews of this time saw themselves as operating within a liminal space between history and prophecy, as *representatives, descendants and inheritors of the southern kingdom of Judah*—still waiting for the expected future restoration of long-lost, exiled Israel.

Concern for the 'Missing' Israelites

What, then, about these missing tribes of Israel? What happened to them? This, it seems, was a mystery even to Jews in the Second Temple Period. "[S]ince only a small portion of the descendants of exiles from the kingdom of Judah ever returned to the land," Staples writes, "a wide range of early Jewish texts ... portray Israel's exile as incomplete at best. Many of these texts continue to show a surprising degree of concern with the fate of the northern tribes scattered by Assyria in the eighth century B.C.E.

"The prevalence of this concern for the northern kingdom in so much early Jewish literature suggests that although there has been no lack of research on Jewish messianism and eschatology in the Second Temple Period, most of these studies have neglected a (perhaps

REMAINING ISRAELITES?

SOME ARGUING FOR A SIGNIFICANT population of northern Israelites remaining in the land following the Assyrian conquests point to 2 Chronicles 30 and 34—chapters describing the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah respectively. 2 Chronicles 30 is primarily appealed to, with its mention of Hezekiah sending letters to "all Israel and Judah, and [writing] letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the passover ..." (verse 1). The passage goes on to describe the rebuffing of the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh and Zebulun, although certain individuals of the tribes of Asher, Ephraim, Issachar, Manasseh and Zebulun did come to Jerusalem to worship (verses 10-11, 18).

Yet here there is no contradiction: This invitation went out in the first year of Hezekiah's reign (i.e. 2 Chronicles 29:17, 30:2); the northern kingdom, though severely destabilized by Assyria, did not fall entirely until the *sixth* year of Hezekiah's reign (2 Kings 18:10. Interestingly, no mention is made of Naphtali in 2 Chronicles 30—a territory that *had* fallen to Tiglath-Pileser III in the years prior to Hezekiah's reign—see sidebar, page 33). The placement of Hezekiah's Passover invitation *after* the fall of the northern kingdom relies on a particular popular chronological reconstruction, beginning his reign circa 716/715 B.C.E.—several years after the fall of Samaria in 718 B.C.E.

This popular chronology—one which, unbeknownst to many, is inherently based on the assumption of biblical error—is a complex subject for another article. Suffice it to say though that the internal biblical information is consistent in maintaining that the passover letter

the) key element of restoration eschatology: Jews in this period did not anticipate merely a *Jewish* restoration but a full restoration of *all Israel.* In keeping with this expectation, Jewish literature in this period consistently distinguishes between Israel (the whole) and the Jews (one part of the whole)"—once again, a clear and recognized distinction between *Jews* and *Israelites.*

As Staples thoroughly demonstrates, the Second Temple Period texts are virtually unanimous: The *Jews* are a known entity in the land—linked indelibly to the tribe and former kingdom of *Judah*. But *the bulk of Israel remains somehow unknown, missing, abroad*—"lost."

For a representation of precisely this Jewish concern at this time, look no further than the New Testament. Jesus repeatedly admonishes his 12 disciples to "go rather to the *lost sheep of the house of Israel"* (Matthew 10:6). James, brother of Jesus, addresses his epistle "to the twelve tribes which are *scattered abroad"* (James 1:1). Further to this end, in light of Jesus's command, it is notable that most of the apostles *disappear entirely* from the scene very early on. Who is it that instead remains as the most prominent and present figure in the continuing Greek New Testament—with by far the largest corpus of texts—operating within the Mediterranean realm of Josephus's Rome, under whom just two particular tribes are subjected? It is *Paul,* the "Benjamite" (Philippians 3:5)—himself serving specifically as "the apostle to the *Gentiles"* (Romans 11:13). Where did the other apostles go?

Paul himself is an interesting case in point—whose works contain details about the identity of Israel that have long confounded researchers and theologians. Staples gives an example: "[T]he Apostle Paul declares 'All Israel will be saved' (Romans 11:26) but precedes this statement with the puzzling declaration that 'not all from Israel are Israel' (Romans 9:6). This juxtaposition has frustrated interpreters both modern and ancient, as Origen of Caesarea complains, 'Who the "all Israel" are who will be saved … only God knows ….'"

Right Next Door All Along

Just *who* these missing "Israelites" are, separate and apart from the "Jews"—Josephus's "immense multitude beyond Euphrates, not to be numbered" at the time of the first century—Jesus's "lost sheep of the house of Israel"—James's "tribes scattered abroad"—has proved one of the most enduring and alluring mysteries. Speculation abounds. Various stories and tales have been told, with explorers and adventurers setting out in search of the tribes—from Asia to the Pacific to Europe to Africa to the Americas.

Professor Ben-Dor Benite summarizes these attempts to find the lost 10 tribes in his aforementioned book. He also highlights a number of long-standing Jewish traditions, based on the interpretation of particular scriptures, that assert that the identity of the lost tribes would somehow become known in conjunction

went out long *before* the kingdom of Israel fell. On this, Staples writes: "It is also surely no accident that in the chronicler's time scheme *Hezekiah's invitation precedes the final destruction of Samaria and consequent deportation by five years,* implying that had the northerners only returned to the Davidic kingdom, they might have managed to avoid such a devastating fate. This is an important point, as this passage is regularly cited as evidence that 'Chronicles depicts a sizable Israelite remnant remaining in the land following the Assyrian invasions and deportations.' Instead, Assyria did destroy the northern kingdom …" (emphasis added).

As for 2 Chronicles 34: The first half of the chapter describes an expedition of Josiah throughout Judah and even reaching deep into the former territory of northern Israel, destroying all traces of pagan worship throughout the lands and even digging up and burning the bones of deceased pagan priests—in fulfillment of a very specific prophecy in 1 Kings 13:1-2. The parallel account in 2 Kings 23 of Josiah's destruction of these pagan sites further portrays them as high places and sepulchres of old that were discovered and disinterred. The single mention of individual tribes of the north in 2 Chronicles 34 is in verse 6, which mentions in passing this desecration happening "in the cities of Manasseh and Ephraim and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their *axes* round about." This word *axes—mattocks,* in the King James Version—is an unusual word now usually translated as "ruins" in most Bible translations. The sense is clear—these are the once-populated, now-ruined cities and high places of these former tribes being purged by Josiah in fulfillment of prophecy.

Once again, the conclusion is consistent regarding the utter destruction and general deportation of the northern kingdom of Israel—from the biblical account to the Assyrian records to the later records of Josephus, with his "two tribes in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans [Judah and Benjamin], while the 10 tribes are beyond Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude, and not to be estimated by numbers" (*Antiquities* 11.5.2). ■

with the coming of the Messiah; even further, that it would be these lost tribes of Israel themselves that would somehow lead and facilitate the return of the Jews of the tribe of Judah, long ago exiled by the Romans, back to their land.

"The 10 tribes, the most exiled of all, must lead the way for all the Jews," Ben-Dor Benite writes. "Talmudic discussions about the 10 tribes deliberate as to whether or not they will return. Now, with the Midrash on Isaiah, all questions are over: The 10 tribes are unequivocally tied to the Jewish return from exile—*they even instigate it*" (op cit).

This immense and related subject of the actual *identity* of the lost tribes of Israel is a topic for another

HIGHLIGHTS FROM STAPLES'S RESEARCH



JOSEPHUS

(late first century C.E.):

"Rather than treating these terms as equivalent, Josephus differentiates between them with striking consistency, even going out of his way to correct another historian's conflation of the terms in Book 7 of his *Jewish Antiquities* .... Josephus uses *Ioudaios* [Jews] as the default term for his people, with that term appearing approximately 1,188 times in the Josephan corpus. But remarkably, despite its widespread use elsewhere in that corpus, that term appears only 26 times in the first 10 books of the *Antiquities.* The terms *Israel* and *Israelite,* on the other hand, appear 188 times in the first 11 books of the *Antiquities*—precisely where *Ioudaios* rarely appears—and then nowhere else in the Josephan corpus."

PHILO

(early first century C.E.):

"[A]lthough he uses the term *Israel* or *Israelite* a combined 80 times in the extant Greek works, Philo never uses *Israelite* as synonymous with *Ioudaios,* nor does he ever refer to the contemporary people as Israel or Israelites. ... Remarkably, with the exception of *Embassy to Gaius,* Philo never even uses *Israel* and *Ioudaios* (or *Ioudaikos*) in the same treatise, and even in that case, the terms are separated by 113 paragraphs."

DEAD SEA SCROLLS:

The *Yahad* (Dead Sea Scrolls community, second century B.C.E.–first century C.E.): "The sect thus identifies itself as comprised of Levi, Judah, and Benjamin (the traditional southern tribes), with the tribe of Levi listed first and suggesting priestly leadership. These southern tribes will ultimately be joined by the 'exiles ....'"

4Q504 (second century B.C.E.): "The speaker clearly depicts Israel as remaining in exile."

TOBIT

(third–second–century B.C.E. novella about a Naphtalite exile):

"Tobit is nowhere described as a Jew; instead, the book employs the term *Israel* and cognates 17 times while avoiding the term *Ioudaios.* ... The very existence of a novella like Tobit is evidence for a continued concern for the northern tribes among early Jews. ... [T]he narrative depends on the fact that the protagonists are not Jews at all."

JUBILEES

(second-century B.C.E. exposition of Genesis and Exodus):

"Given its pre-Mosaic context, it should be no surprise that Jubilees uses the term *Israel* and cognates 112 times but avoids *Yehudim* and cognates."

3 MACCABEES

(third century B.C.E.–first century B.C.E.):

"When referring to the contemporary people, the book consistently uses the term *Ioudaios,* which appears 28 times. In contrast, *Israel* occurs only in prayer or as part of a stock reference to God."

LETTER OF ARISTEAS

(third century B.C.E.):

"The term *Ioudaios* appears 17 times in the Letter of Aristeas .... In contrast, *Israel* and cognates never occur."

SUSANNA

(second–first century B.C.E.):

"Remarkably, this passage distinguishes between Susanna as a 'daughter of Judah' and 'daughters of Israel' in general ... 'daughters of Judah' apparently being a subset of the 'daughters of Israel' .... Susanna retains the concept of *Ioudaioi* as a subset of the larger body of Israel."

PSALMS OF SOLOMON

(second–first century B.C.E.):

"*Ioudaios* terminology does not appear in Psalms of Solomon. In contrast, the term *Israel* appears 32 times in Psalms of Solomon but is never used in reference to the contemporary Jewish people."

article. Suffice it to conclude with the following tantalizing words of Ben-Dor Benite: "While the characteristics of the tribes differ from tale to tale, in all such stories they are annoyingly, tauntingly elusive. The tribes are at once distant and very close. Only the bravest and cleverest can find them, yet once found, they are revealed to have been *right next door all along.*" ■

TESTAMENTS OF THE TWELVE PATRIARCHS

(up to second century C.E.)

"[T]he term *Ioudaios* never appears in the Testaments. Instead, the Testaments consistently highlight the continuing exile of Israel with particular emphasis on the fate of the north, expecting that all 12 tribes would one day be restored through divine intervention. … *Israel* in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs denotes a larger group than the Jews, remarkably including even those who may have forgotten their tribal and ethnic heritage as Israelites."

4 EZRA

(first century C.E.):

"4 Ezra never mentions 'the Jews,' instead preferring 'Israel,' which appears 12 times and consistently refers to the full 12-tribe nation."

2 BARUCH

(late first–early second century C.E.):

"The 9½ tribes are thus envisioned as still in exile somewhere across the Euphrates, separated from those from Judah who have been exiled to Babylon. … 2 Baruch limits Israel language to the full 12-tribe entity (10 times) or the northern kingdom while avoiding Jew/Judahite language except for three references to the kings of Judah, strong evidence that 2 Baruch understands *Jew* to denote someone specifically from Judah."

TESTAMENT OF MOSES

(early first century C.E.):

"[T]he Testament of Moses portrays the 10 tribes as multiplying and increasing to huge numbers among the nations of their exile. … Test. Mos. entirely avoids *Ioudaios* language in favor of *ten tribes/two tribes* terminology, with both uses of *Israel* referring to the 12 tribes as a whole."

FEEDBACK

A few weeks ago, I received "David and Solomon's Monumental Kingdom." I appreciate you sending me the magazine and also want to thank you for the beautiful and fruitful work you do, as well as for all the resources you use to raise awareness about the importance of Israel's history. I am delighted with the quality of your services.

PUERTO RICO

I very much enjoy reading your publication and always learn something new. Your graphics relating to the archaeological digs are superb and very much enhance my understanding of the accompanying articles. Thank you; please keep up the good work.

ISRAEL

Thank you so much for the amazing magazine and exciting videos on YouTube. I always look out for them with great expectation and excitement.

DENMARK

Thank you for all the work you do on updating your YouTube channel. It's so nice to listen to your informative podcasts spoken in my home accent. I love receiving your magazine. It's something I look forward to reading all the time.

AUSTRALIA

Thank you very much for the subscription to *Let the Stones Speak.* It is easily the most excellent, well-researched and well-rounded archaeological magazine I have ever read. We have been receiving it for about two years. Every issue and every article are impressive, informative, captivating and inspirational. I appreciate the way the authors bring out and address weaknesses and challenges to their points.

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