



SEALS OF ISAIAH AND



KING HEZEKIAH DISCOVERED

התגלו החותמות של ישעיהו והמלך חזקיהו



**'LET THE
STONES
SPEAK.'**





Gerald Flurry

FOUNDER | ARMSTRONG INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL FOUNDATION



Celebrating 50 years of partnership

I still remember the first time I met Dr. Eilat Mazar. She is one of the warmest individuals I have met, and she has an infectious passion for Jerusalem archaeology. We quickly bonded over our love of Jerusalem and our shared history.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of our partnership with the Mazar family. The relationship began in November 1968, when Benjamin Mazar, Eilat's grandfather, met Herbert W. Armstrong, the chancellor of Ambassador College and the founder of our organization. The bond was sealed on December 1, when Mr. Armstrong and Israel's president at the time, Zalman Shazar, met at the presidential home in Jerusalem.

Between 1968 and 1985, Mr. Armstrong visited Israel more than 50 times. He was close friends with many of the nation's highest leaders. He met with every prime minister and president of Israel who held office over that period, including Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin, Menachem Begin and Shimon Peres. He was especially close to Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek.

Our relationship was restored in August 2006, when my son, Stephen, first began communicating with Dr. Mazar. Eilat was just about to start another phase of her excavation of the palace of King David in the City of David. Almost immediately Dr. Mazar invited us to join her on the dig. I eagerly accepted the invitation and put some of our students on a plane to Israel.

Since 2006, we have sent more than 57 diggers to Jerusalem to work on Dr. Mazar's excavations. Our students comprised most of the laborers on Dr. Mazar's most recent dig, which we also fully funded. Over the past 12 years, Herbert W. Armstrong College has participated in every one of Dr. Mazar's excavations in the City of David and on the Ophel.

During this time, Dr. Mazar has discovered some of the most stunning and important artifacts that I believe have *ever* been uncovered anywhere. Since 2005, she has unearthed evidence of King David's palace, King Solomon's royal quarters, the governor Nehemiah's wall, the seals of two Judean princes mentioned in Jeremiah 38, and, more recently, the golden Menorah Medallion and bronze coins. That's quite a remarkable record.

Then there are the seals of King Hezekiah and Isaiah.

It's impossible to rank Dr. Mazar's finds in order of importance; each discovery is significant in its own way. However, I believe that the seals of King Hezekiah and Isaiah—exhibited for the first time ever in Armstrong Auditorium—are unique and extra special. Each artifact is extraordinary and important in its own right, but THE POWER HERE IS THE PAIRING OF THESE ARTIFACTS.

It is incredibly rare to find a seal of King Hezekiah in the right archaeological context. Dr. Mazar discovered not only the seal of Judah's second-greatest king, but also the seal of one of Judah's greatest prophets. And they were found in the same layer of soil, just a few feet apart.

These artifacts have special meaning for the people of Israel and for all humanity. These seals are the fruit of Dr. Mazar's most important work and our wonderful 50-year partnership. I cannot think of a better way to celebrate this anniversary than for Armstrong International Cultural Foundation to have the privilege of showcasing these sensational artifacts.

Dr. Mazar is a scientist, and I've heard her state many times that "we must let the stones speak." We have tried to follow Dr. Mazar's guiding principle in this exhibit. We have tried to let archaeology and documented historical records—both biblical and secular—speak for themselves. For me, one of the most



compelling facets of this exhibition is the way we have juxtaposed biblical and secular history. This is not just Bible history; it is Assyrian and Babylonian history too.

In this exhibit, we have tried to bring to life some of the most dramatic and inspiring ancient history you will ever read. This is the story of Assyria's conquests; it is a story of repentance, redemption and national salvation. It is the story of how God, through a remarkable king-prophet alliance, saved a city and its people from terrorism, war and conquest. It is the ultimate story of hope.

Take as much time as you need to let this history—and the lessons it carries—sink in. You are welcome to take this brochure home. If you have questions, please ask one of our exhibit guides. These young people are knowledgeable about this history. If you have feedback, we would love to hear it.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Mazar for her vital contributions to this exhibit. Not only did she uncover these artifacts, she was also an invaluable resource in preparing and creating the exhibit. Indeed, without Eilat, there would be no exhibit and no seals of King Hezekiah and Isaiah.

We deeply value our long partnership with Dr. Mazar and her grandfather. We consider it a marvelous blessing to have been by her and her grandfather's side these past 50 years, and we look forward to continued collaboration. We hope you enjoy your time here, and remember: *Let the stones speak.*

Gerald Flurry

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BLACK SEA

MESHECH

ARARAT

ASSYRIA

★ Nineveh

• Tarsus

• Asshur

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

SYRIA

• Damascus

• Tyre

• Samaria

ISRAEL

★ Jerusalem

JUDAH

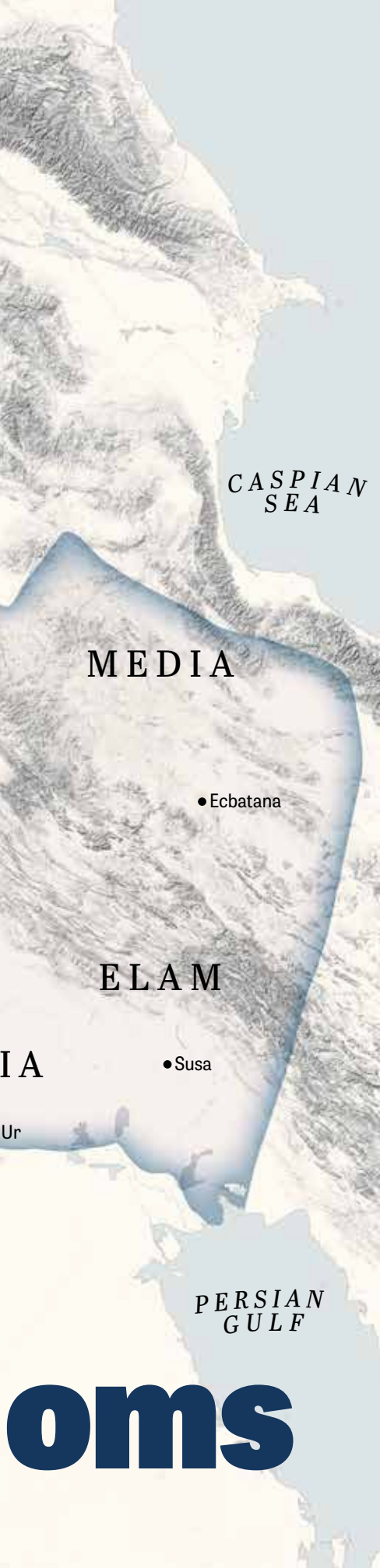
PHILISTIA

• Babylon

BABYLON

EGYPT

A Clash of Kingd



The Assyrians

Assyria is widely considered the world's first great empire. The Assyrians were a warrior race with a thirst for conquest and war; they are infamous for their cruelty toward enemies.

The Assyrians inhabited Upper Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq, Syria and Turkey). Assyria's capital in the late eighth century B.C., Nineveh, was situated on the east bank of the Tigris River. The Assyrians were the descendants of Asshur, the son of Noah's son Shem (Genesis 10:22, 11).

Assyria's ancient history has been heavily documented with a wealth of archaeological finds, including thousands of inscriptions, ornate wall decorations and art pieces, alongside large buildings and palaces. The Assyrians also feature heavily in the biblical record. Most references describe their interactions with the kings of Israel and Judah. Through the Prophet Isaiah, God calls the Assyrians "the rod of my anger, the staff of my fury!" (Isaiah 10:5; Revised Standard Version).

Assyria in the Eighth Century B.C.

At the beginning of the eighth century B.C., Assyria was in a precarious situation. Internally, its leadership had been weakened by infighting. Externally, the power of its neighbors—particularly



A wall relief depicts Tiglath-Pileser III in his chariot.

Syria and Babylon—was growing. Assyria's decline was halted in 745 B.C., when strongman Tiglath-Pileser III seized control of the kingdom. He initiated a host of internal reforms and soon restored political stability and military strength.

With his kingship secure and Assyria's power restored, Tiglath-Pileser III turned his attention to foreign conquest. In 743 B.C., he began campaigns against Syria, Babylon and Armenia; by the end of his roughly 20-year reign he had subjugated virtually the entire Middle East. Nations had either been conquered outright or escaped destruction by agreeing to pay tribute.

The Divided Kingdom

Following the death of King Solomon around 931 B.C., the nation of Israel split into two kingdoms: Israel and Judah. The northern kingdom of Israel was comprised of 10 tribes and was led by Jeroboam, an Ephraimite. The southern kingdom of Judah consisted of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and most of the Levites.

The split diminished the power of both Israel and Judah. By the eighth century B.C., large and aggressive empires, including Assyria, Syria, Babylon and Egypt, surrounded both kingdoms.

Israel's Final Years

When Tiglath-Pileser III invaded Israel in the mid-eighth century B.C., Israel's King Menahem stayed his hand by paying tribute to Assyria. After Menahem died, his son, Pekahiah, reigned for two years before being murdered and replaced by Pekah, an Israelite captain. Tiglath-Pileser invaded Israel during the reign of King Pekah. He conquered large swathes of territory and took thousands of captives back to Assyria (2 Kings 15:29). King Pekah was murdered by Hoshea, who seized the throne for himself. He would be Israel's last king.

Tiglath-Pileser III died around 727 B.C. and was succeeded by his son Shalmaneser V. King Hoshea continued to pay yearly tribute to Shalmaneser, but after forming an alliance with King So of Egypt, he stopped. Assyria's king was furious. In 721 B.C., he led his army to Israel's capital, Samaria. In 718 B.C., after a three-year siege, Samaria fell to the Assyrians. The Israelites were deported to Assyrian territory on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea; they were replaced with a people who became known as the Samaritans (2 Kings 17).



■ The Black Obelisk: A kneeling King Jehu of Israel presents tribute to Shalmaneser III of Assyria.





Judah in the Eighth Century B.C.

Of the 21 kings who ruled Judah leading up to its destruction in 585 B.C., only five were recorded as righteous. One of these was King Jotham. His son, Ahaz, who began his reign in 739 B.C., did not follow his father's positive example. Instead, he led the nation into idolatry. Ahaz stopped the temple service in Jerusalem, worshiped pagan gods, and even sacrificed some of his own children.

When Syria and Israel joined forces against Judah, King Ahaz stripped gold from the temple to pay Assyria's King Tiglath-Pileser III in exchange for protection (2 Kings 16:8). While this decision neutralized the threat from Israel, getting entangled with Assyria caused long-term problems. Tiglath-Pileser increasingly harassed Judah and demanded more regular and more costly tributes. Assyrian history records Tiglath-Pileser receiving tribute from King Ahaz.



■ This royal seal bears the inscription "Belonging to Ahaz, (son of) Jotham, King of Judah." Although not discovered in scientific excavation, archaeologists believe it is genuine.

Ahaz died in 724 B.C., leaving his crippled vassal state to a son who had somehow escaped his pagan sacrifices: Hezekiah.

1000 B.C.

King David conquers Jerusalem, makes it Israel's capital.

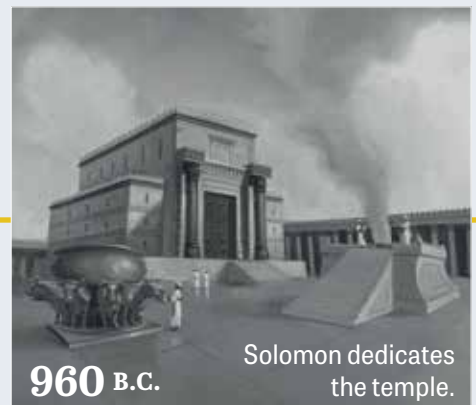


971 B.C.

Solomon is crowned king of Israel.

967 B.C.

Construction begins on the first temple.



960 B.C.

Solomon dedicates the temple.

King Hezekiah

Hezekiah was 25 years old when he ascended to the throne of Judah. From day one, Hezekiah set about demolishing pagan worship, renovating the temple and restoring right temple worship, cleansing the priesthood, and reestablishing God's law in the land (2 Kings 18; 2 Chronicles 31-32).

Hezekiah's first priority upon becoming king was to prepare the nation to keep the spring holy days. He even dispatched messengers to the northern kingdom to warn the Israelites of their sins and invite them to visit Judah to commemorate these sacred festivals.

The biblical account of Hezekiah's purge of national idolatry has been verified by archaeological evidence. Pagan groves and monuments were smashed and defiled. Hezekiah also stopped his tribute payments to the king of Assyria. Under Hezekiah, Judah experienced its greatest renaissance since King David; the kingdom thrived politically, culturally and financially.

Ezra's words in 2 Chronicles 29:2 summarize King Hezekiah's accomplishments best:

“And he [Hezekiah] did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done.”



■ Archaeologists remove an ancient toilet seat from Tel Lachish. The seat, dating to Hezekiah's time, was found in a room full of smashed pagan objects. The scene of utter contempt toward paganism speaks to the thoroughness of Hezekiah's religious reforms. There was precedent for Hezekiah's actions: 2 Kings 10:27 records King Jehu of Israel turning a place of Baal worship into a public toilet.

928 B.C.

The nation splits into two kingdoms: Israel and Judah.

c. 830 B.C.

King Jehu of Israel pays tribute to Shalmaneser III.

c. 792 B.C.

King Jeroboam II initiates the resurgence of Israel.



c. 775 B.C.

Isaiah the prophet is born.

Isaiah the Prophet

The Prophet Isaiah witnessed Israel's destruction, Hezekiah's reforms and the later Assyrian incursion into Judah. Isaiah served during the reigns of five kings of Judah (Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah and Manasseh). He lived from around 775 to 687 B.C., making him one of the longest-serving biblical prophets. The prophets Jonah, Hosea, Amos and Micah were all contemporaries of Isaiah.

Isaiah most likely lived with his family inside the royal complex on the Ophel in Jerusalem. He was an official historian to Judah's kings. Isaiah was married to a prophetess, and together they had at least two sons, Shearjashub and Mahershalalhashbaz. According to Jewish tradition, Isaiah also had a daughter, Hephzibah.

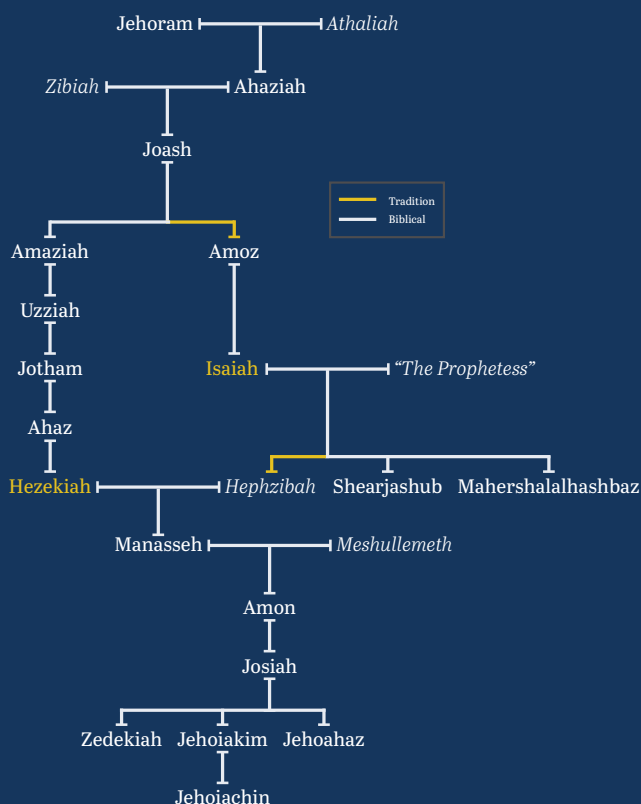
Isaiah appears to have been a royal prophet. According to tradition, his father, Amoz, was brother to Judah's King Amaziah. Ancient Jewish records show that Isaiah's daughter married King Hezekiah.

The Prophet Isaiah wrote his prophecies on a tablet, which he presented to the inhabitants of his day. He also recorded his prophecies on a scroll to preserve them "for the time to come" (Isaiah 30:8). Isaiah prophesied against the temple priests in Judah and against the northern kingdom of Israel. He also prophesied about the rise and fall of surrounding nations. In one prophecy, he even explained in detail the life and work of the Persian King Cyrus. This prophecy is found in Isaiah 44-45, a passage that was written 200 years before the events it describes.

Many of Isaiah's prophecies focused on a future millennial world in which war would cease, the dead would be raised, wild animals would become tame, and the Messiah would rule over all mankind.

The details of Isaiah's death are not recorded in the Bible. According to Jewish tradition, Hezekiah's son Manasseh was frustrated by Isaiah's prophecies and had the prophet, his own grandfather, sawn in two. The New Testament may be referring to Isaiah in Hebrews 11, a chapter which recalls Old Testament figures and says, "They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword ..." (verse 37; RSV).

Genealogy of Isaiah and Hezekiah





■ These iron arrowheads and flint slingstones were discovered in the eighth-century B.C. destruction layer at Tel Lachish. These weapons were used with deadly force during Sennacherib's siege against the city. Traveling at high speed, these very items may well have met their mark and taken the lives of individuals on both sides of this very real conflict.

Assyria Descends

Assyria invaded Judah in the late eighth century B.C. Isaiah 36:1 records:

“Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them.”

King Sennacherib's army moved through Judah swiftly. To use a modern term, it was

blitzkrieg. According to ancient records, Assyria conquered 46 fortified cities of Judah in less than 12 months—almost one city per week.

At first, King Hezekiah sought assistance from Egypt. Artifacts from the period indicate a significant relationship between Judah and Egypt—a partnership that the Prophet Isaiah warned against (Isaiah 30 and 31). Judah's effort to recruit Egypt was futile, and the Assyrians moved through Judah unimpeded.

745 B.C.

Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria begins his reign.

c. 739 B.C.

King Ahaz of Judah begins his reign.

732 B.C.

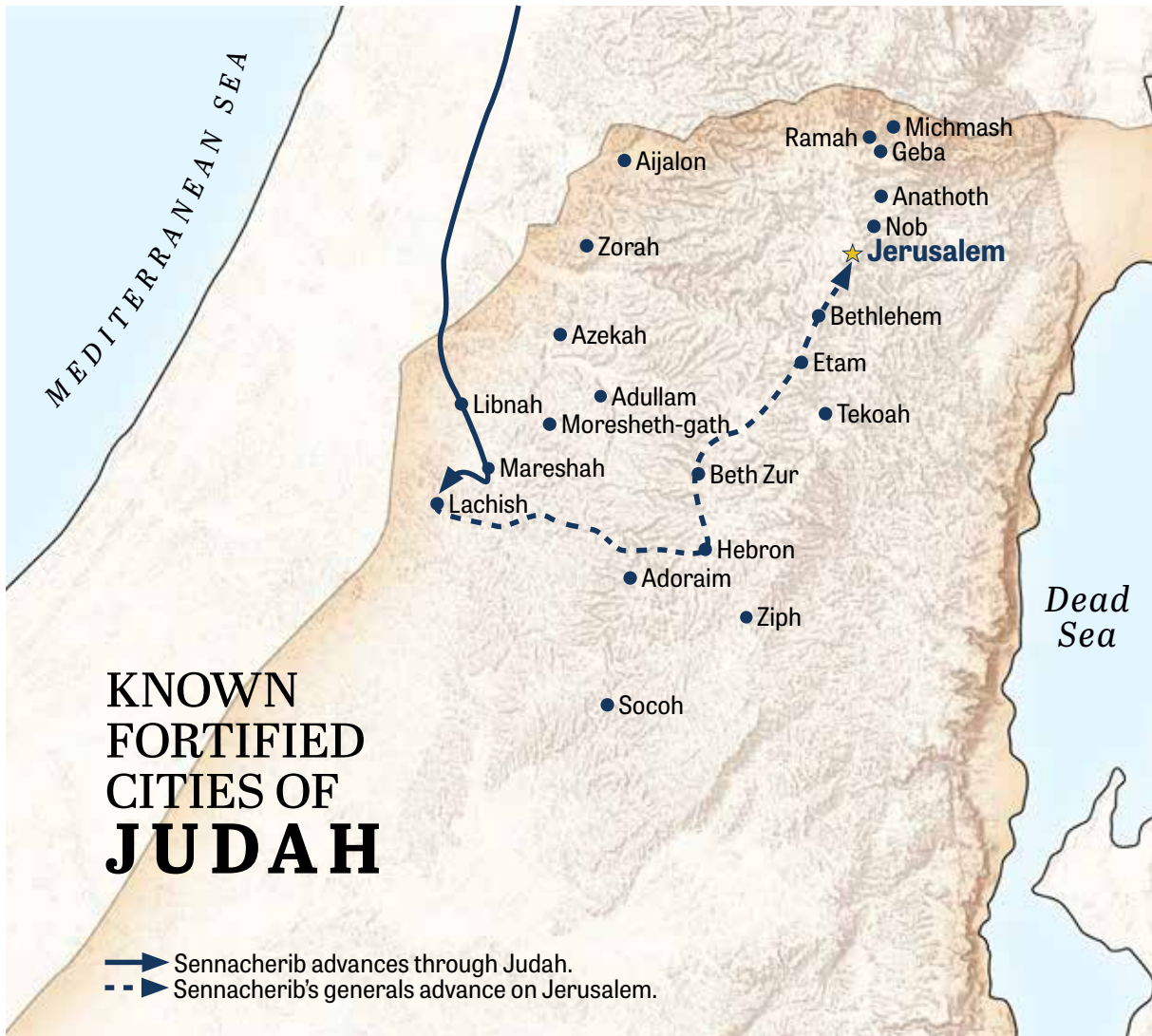
Tiglath-Pileser III invades Israel.

724 B.C.

The reign of King Hezekiah begins.

721–718 B.C.

The northern kingdom of Israel goes into Assyrian captivity.



c. 710 B.C.

Assyria Invades Judah

c. 700 B.C.

Sennacherib takes the throne of Assyria. Hezekiah begins fortifying Jerusalem.

Sennacherib attacks Judah, conquers 46 fortified cities.

Sennacherib lays siege on Lachish.

Sennacherib lays siege on Jerusalem. Hezekiah is miraculously healed.

Babylonian ambassadors visit Jerusalem.

Siege of Lachish

One of Judah's largest, most important cities, Lachish, was situated about 38 miles southwest of Jerusalem. It was extremely well fortified, having been built on a high mound and then further secured with man-made defenses. However, the city could not withstand the Assyrian war machine.

Assyria's destruction of Lachish is well documented, both in the Bible and in secular history. 2 Chronicles 32:9 says that King Sennacherib

“himself laid siege against Lachish, and all his power with him”

Sennacherib documented his siege of Lachish in massive carved portrayals, known as reliefs, on the walls of his palace in Nineveh. These impressive reliefs depict the gradual destruction of Lachish and the torture and enslavement of thousands of Jews.



695 B.C.

King Hezekiah dies; Manasseh begins to reign.



TAYLOR PRISM

c. 690 B.C.

Sennacherib is assassinated by his sons.

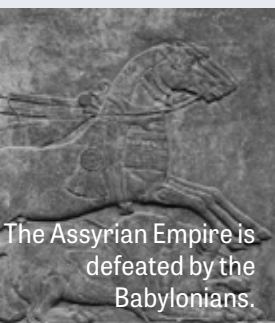
c. 687 B.C.

Isaiah the prophet is martyred.



c. 612–609 B.C.

■ These are Panels 6, 7 and 8 of the Lachish reliefs, as displayed in the British Museum. This scene depicts Assyrian soldiers besieging the city. The majority of Lachish is portrayed in the background. The main gatehouse is shown in the foreground and is surrounded by massive Assyrian siege ramps. This scene parallels the remains discovered during excavations at Lachish, which included a massive Assyrian siege ramp. Note the difference in dress between the Jews and the Assyrians. Also note the Assyrian siege engines mounting the ramps. In the lower central part of the image, three Jewish victims are impaled on poles.



The Assyrian Empire is defeated by the Babylonians.

604 B.C.

The Babylonians begin the first siege of Jerusalem and make Judah a vassal state.

598 B.C.

The second siege of Jerusalem begins, King Jehoiachin is taken captive, and Zedekiah is made king.

586–585 B.C.

The third siege ends with Jerusalem's fall and the destruction of the temple.

Artifact Descriptions



▶ **BOWL**
PROVENANCE TEL BEERSHEBA
MATERIAL POTTERY
HEIGHT 1.4'
DIAMETER 6.4'

▶ **HOLE-MOUTH JAR**
PROVENANCE TEL BEERSHEBA
MATERIAL POTTERY
HEIGHT 9.4'
DIAMETER 7'

▶ **BOWL**
PROVENANCE TEL LACHISH
MATERIAL POTTERY



▶ **BURNISHED BOWL**
PROVENANCE TEL LACHISH
MATERIAL POTTERY

The scenes inscribed on the reliefs can be divided into three general chapters. The first chapter shows Assyrian soldiers marching on Lachish. The second shows Assyrian engineers building a massive earth ramp; it includes images of siege machines atop the ramp, masses of soldiers attacking the city, and victims having their throats slit and being impaled on pikes.

The final chapter portrays scenes of Jewish captives being tortured and marched out of the city. One famous scene depicts Jewish captives made to bow before King Sennacherib, who had set up his throne at the front gate of Lachish.

In a desperate effort to placate Sennacherib, King Hezekiah sent tribute



- “Hacksilver” is the term given to small chopped or bent fragments of silver that were typically used as currency or melted down for reuse. This hacksilver came from the northern coastal city of Dor, which belonged to the tribe of Manasseh.



■ TWO-SHEKEL WEIGHT

■ PYM WEIGHT

- A pym is an ancient weight value used in Judah over hundreds of years. It weighed about 7.6 grams—equal to about two thirds of a shekel weight (about as heavy as three pennies). This weight comes from Tel Batash, believed to be the biblical site of Timnah (Joshua 15:10, 57). The two-shekel weight comes from Tel-Malhata, a southern city of Judah. This weight is approximately 23 grams (about as heavy as one AA battery). The shekel standard is referenced in dozens of scriptures.

to the king at Lachish. He had hastily gathered a monstrous haul of spoils, including valuables stripped from the temple (2 Kings 18:14-16). Receipt of this tribute is recorded on Sennacherib’s Winged Bull inscription. By attempting to buy protection using wealth stripped from the temple, King Hezekiah repeated the mistake of his father, Ahaz. The result

was the same: Hezekiah’s gesture exposed his vulnerability and emboldened the Assyrian king.

With the fall of Lachish inevitable and King Hezekiah seemingly ready to negotiate, Sennacherib dispatched messengers to the only city standing between him and ultimate victory.

■ King Sennacherib and his general set off for Jerusalem.



Assyria Falls on Jerusalem

Sennacherib sent his top commander, Rabshakeh, and a retinue of Assyrian soldiers to deliver a message to King Hezekiah. When the Assyrian commander arrived in Jerusalem, Hezekiah instructed Eliakim, the governor of the royal household, to go out and converse with the Assyrians.

Rabshakeh began by mocking the Egyptians, with whom the Jews had allied for help, as a “broken reed.” He warned the Jews that it would be foolish to believe God would save them. Finally, he offered King Hezekiah peace—and even 2,000 horses—if he surrendered. Rabshakeh did not communicate with Eliakim quietly and in his own tongue; instead, he spoke loudly and in Hebrew. Eliakim asked him to speak in Assyrian so the spectators would not understand. Rabshakeh exploded. Speaking in the Jews’ language, he thundered:

“Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand: Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord”

During Rabshakeh’s diatribe, the Jews “held their peace” and followed Hezekiah’s instruction to “[a]nswer him not” (2 Kings 18:36). Rabshakeh returned to his king. Following his return, King Sennacherib himself wrote to Hezekiah. In his letter he denigrated Hezekiah’s God and assured him of Jerusalem’s imminent destruction if the nation did not peacefully surrender (2 Kings 19; 2 Chronicles 32; Isaiah 37).

Assyrian Cruelty

The conquest of Lachish is one of Sennacherib's most documented accomplishments. The reliefs discovered in Nineveh give a glimpse of the Assyrians' abhorrent cruelty.

One relief shows Judean prisoners stripped naked, handcuffed and then impaled on large stakes. Another shows a soldier forcing a leader to kneel while another prepares to cut him down. The scene in the top photo shows Judean leaders being made to parade barefoot and bareheaded (a symbol of subservience) in front of King Sennacherib before they were beheaded.

Another relief depicts two naked Judeans being flayed alive while a column of exiles looks on. These prisoners are bound flat, arms stretched wide, while the soldiers grip their legs to complete their grisly task. It was common for the Assyrians to boast of using their enemies' heads and skins to decorate their city walls.



■ Lachish relief scenes

Many other Assyrian reliefs and records also illustrate Assyria's barbarism. There are scenes depicting victims being dismembered limb by limb; others show people having their ears, noses and eyes removed. On one clay prism, Assyrian King Esarhaddon records how he paraded conquered nobles through the streets "wearing" the heads of fellow nobles on their shoulders.

Another records a defeated Arabian leader being taken to Nineveh and made to live in a kennel alongside the dogs guarding the city gates. On the Taylor Prism, King Sennacherib brags about creating so much blood from death and disembowelment that his horses waded through it like a river. The Prophet Nahum condemned the Assyrians' bloodlust and cruelty (Nahum 3:1, 19).

Hezekiah Turns to Isaiah

The situation was grave. The Assyrians were about to conquer Lachish and were making preparations to fall upon Jerusalem. Despite the grim predicament, Judah's king was not without hope. 2 Kings 19 and 2 Chronicles 32 record his inspiring response to the threat. Hezekiah "rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord" to pray (2 Kings 19:1).

King Hezekiah also relied heavily on the Prophet Isaiah, his friend and distant relative. Isaiah, now about 65 years old, beseeched God for protection and guidance. Verses 6-7 record Isaiah's words of comfort to his king: "Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."

Sennacherib's Prisms

The Taylor Prism is one of three similar clay prisms commissioned by King Sennacherib toward the end of his reign. The prisms recall Sennacherib's military campaigns throughout the Middle East, including those against Judah.

Composition dates on the prisms show that they were written about 16 months apart (the prisms were fashioned c. 700–690 B.C.). Each prism is hexagonal, stands roughly 15 inches (38 centimeters) tall, is constructed from baked clay, and is inscribed in the Akkadian cuneiform script.

The inscription reads, in part: "As for Hezekiah the Judahite, who did not submit to my yoke: 46 of his strong, walled cities, as well as the small towns in their area, which were without number, I besieged and took them by leveling with battering rams, by bringing up siege engines, by attacking and storming on foot, by mines, tunnels, and breeches. 200,150 people, great and small, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, cattle and sheep without number, I brought away from them and counted as spoil. **As for Hezekiah, I shut him up like a caged bird in his royal city of Jerusalem.** I then constructed a series of fortresses around him, and I did not allow anyone to come out of the city gates."



■ Taylor Prism



■ Oriental Institute Prism



■ Jerusalem Prism

Following the fall of Lachish, the Assyrian army headed south to battle Egypt. During this expedition, Sennacherib sent a letter to King Hezekiah assuring him that he would return to wage war on Jerusalem. Verse 14 records the king's reaction: "Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord." With Sennacherib's letter spread before him, the king pleaded for divine protection.

God answered the king's request through the Prophet Isaiah, who assured him,

"He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord. For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake."

■ Hezekiah lays Sennacherib's letter on the ground and prays for God's help.



Sudden Death

Jerusalem was surrounded—185,000 Assyrian soldiers were encamped on the outskirts of the city, sharpening their weapons, preparing siege implements, waiting for orders to attack. The Jews in Jerusalem were trapped. The siege had begun; no one could leave or enter the city.

Then, late one night in the enemy camp, Assyrian soldiers suddenly began dropping dead. Thousands of vigorous, highly trained, experienced soldiers were dying for no apparent reason. At dawn, when the watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem peered into the Assyrian camp, they were speechless. The entire Assyrian army, 185,000 soldiers, lay dead.

Assyria's Sudden Defeat in the Secular Record

The precipitous death of 185,000 Assyrian soldiers did not escape the attention of secular historians. Berossus was a third-century B.C. Babylonian priest and historian. In his book *Babyloniaca* (known today as the *History of Babylonia*), Berossus recorded:

“Now when Sennacherib was returning from his Egyptian war to Jerusalem, he found his army under Rabshakeh his general in danger, for God had sent a pestilential distemper upon his army; and on the very first night of the siege, a hundred four-score and five thousand, with their captains and generals, were destroyed.

“So the king was in a great dread and in a terrible agony at this calamity; and being in great fear for his whole army, he fled with the rest of his forces to his own kingdom, and to his city Nineveh; and when he had abode there a little while, he was treacherously assaulted, and died by the hands of his elder sons, Adrammelech and Seraser, and was slain in his own temple, which was called Araske.”

Herodotus was a famous Greek historian who lived during the fifth century B.C. Cicero called him the “father of history.” Herodotus recorded Assyria’s defeat in his seminal work, *Histories*. Many scholars believe that Herodotus’s account of King Sennacherib’s defeat in battle with Egypt at the city of Pelusium is in fact a reference to the sudden death of the Assyrian army during the siege of Jerusalem. Herodotus wrote that the Egyptian leader Sethos prayed to his god for help in defeating the massive Assyrian army.

Herodotus wrote:

“As the two armies lay here opposite one another, there came in the night, a multitude of field mice, which devoured all the quivers and bowstrings of the enemy, and ate the thongs by which they managed their shields. Next morning they commenced their fight, and great multitudes fell, as they had no arms with which to defend themselves. There stands to this day in the temple of Vulcan, a stone statue of Sethos, with a mouse in his hand, and an inscription to this effect—‘Look on me, and learn to reverence the gods.’”

2 Kings 19:35 records what happened:

“And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.”

King Sennacherib was left with no choice but to return to Nineveh, shocked and humiliated. Upon his return, Sennacherib set his artists to work recording his impressive military campaign in Judah. The king adorned the walls of his palace with images of the siege of Lachish. He recorded his destruction of Azekah. He chronicled his subjugation of 46 of Judah’s fortified cities.

Among the items Sennacherib commissioned were the three clay prisms (page 16). These prisms document King Sennacherib’s victories in Judah and specifically mention Assyria’s destruction of 46 Judean cities, including the large cities of Azekah and Lachish. But what about Jerusalem?

Sennacherib boasted about his siege of Jerusalem and trapping King Hezekiah “like a caged bird.” Yet among the volumes of reliefs, inscriptions and ancient records and artifacts documenting King Sennacherib’s campaign in Judah, it is not once mentioned that he captured Jerusalem.

Even today, historians study the annals of Sennacherib and are perplexed. Why would Assyria’s king boast of trapping King Hezekiah “like a caged bird” in Judah’s most prestigious city, the center of Judah’s identity, yet refrain from conquering Jerusalem?



■ Sennacherib

Hezekiah’s Miracle Healing

Most likely during the siege of Jerusalem, King Hezekiah became fatally ill. He was close to death when the Prophet Isaiah told him: “Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live” (2 Kings 20:1).

Upon hearing the news, Hezekiah turned and delivered a tearful prayer. The Bible says God was so moved by his prayer that He told Hezekiah, through Isaiah, that He would extend his life by 15 years. As a sign of the divine promise, God turned the sun back 10 degrees (verses 10-11). Evidence of this miracle is documented in Egyptian records.

The healing was necessary not only for Hezekiah’s well-being, but also because the king had not yet produced an heir. Three years after Hezekiah’s recovery, his son, Manasseh, was born. Tradition states that Manasseh’s mother, Hephzibah, was the daughter of the Prophet Isaiah.

Death of Sennacherib

Ancient records show that King Sennacherib was later killed by his sons, just as Isaiah prophesied. One Babylonian document implicates Arda-Mulissi (biblical Adrammelech) for the murder. Evidently, he teamed up with his brother Nabu-sarru-usur (biblical Sharezer) to kill their father, which they did while he was worshipping.

This history is also recorded in 2 Kings 19:37:

“And it came to pass, as he [Sennacherib] was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.”

The Destruction of Sennacherib

By Lord Byron

*The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.*

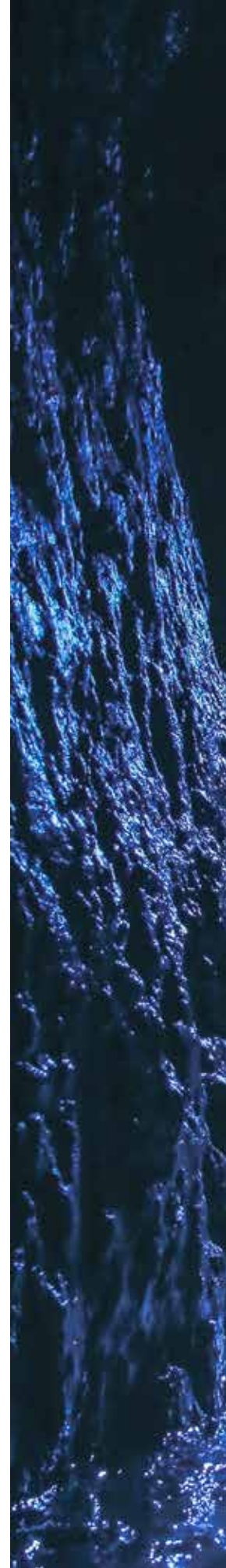
*Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.*

*For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!*

*And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.*

*And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.*

*And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!*



A photograph of a narrow, dimly lit tunnel. The walls are rough and textured, and the floor is covered in a path of light reflecting off the surface. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and ancient.

Hezekiah's Tunnel

Hezekiah's Tunnel

Constructed roughly 2,700 years ago, long before the invention of GPS and laser levels, Hezekiah's Tunnel is one of Jerusalem's most incredible landmarks. Even by today's standards, the construction of this 1,750-foot-long subterranean passageway is an extraordinary feat of engineering.

Hezekiah's Tunnel connects the Gihon Spring to the Pool of Siloam. The Gihon Spring is situated on the eastern side of the City of David. This natural spring is Jerusalem's only fresh-water source and is absolutely essential to life in the city.

The Gihon was well fortified at the time of King Hezekiah. Water from the Gihon overflowed into the Kidron Valley and was used to irrigate crops, vines and fruit trees.

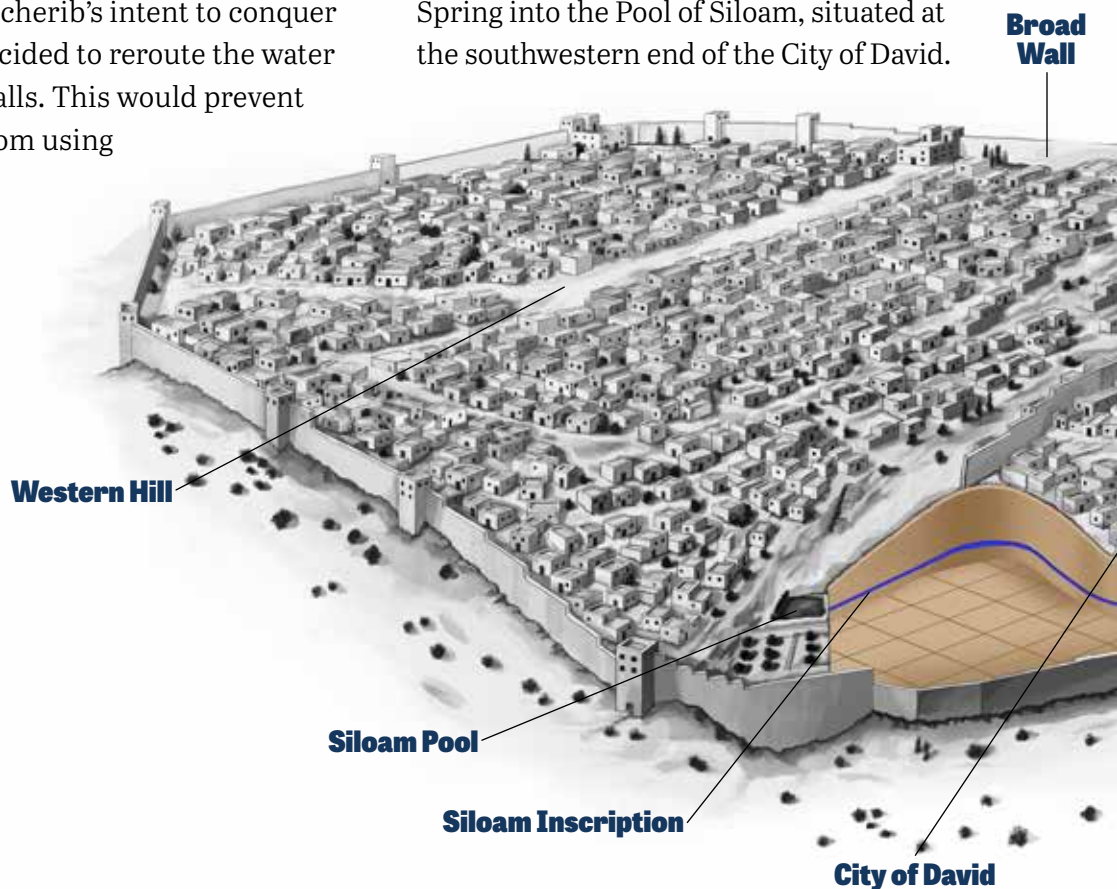
Around 710 B.C., when King Hezekiah learned of Sennacherib's intent to conquer Jerusalem, he decided to reroute the water inside the city walls. This would prevent Assyria's army from using

the critical resource. 2 Chronicles 32:4 records:

“So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water?”

Carving the tunnel was a monumental task. The snaking channel was cut through solid bedrock by laborers working from both ends. This bold strategy meant that the tunnel could be constructed much faster, but it also required exceptional engineering skills. (The difference in height from start to end is 12 inches.) We don't know exactly how long it took for the tunnel to be created; estimates range from nine months to four years.

The water flows south from the Gihon Spring into the Pool of Siloam, situated at the southwestern end of the City of David.



The Siloam Pool provided water to both the inhabitants of the City of David proper and the inhabitants on Jerusalem's western hill, which was developed and settled during the time of Hezekiah.

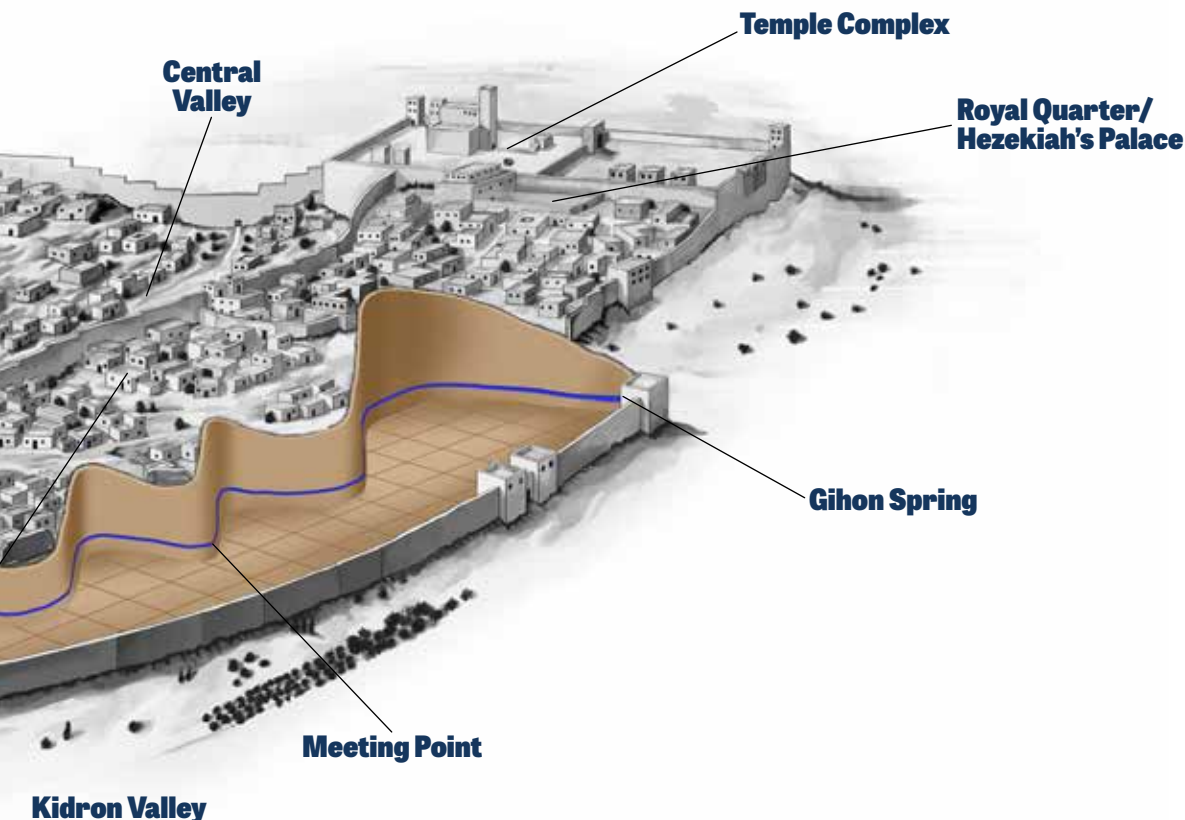
Even today, many scientists are baffled about how the teams successfully met in the middle. The best guess is that rock-sounding techniques were used. The tunnel has been dated using various methods, including radiocarbon dating, to Hezekiah's time period, thus confirming the biblical verses that state that it was built by Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 32:2-4, 30; 2 Kings 20:20).

Inside the tunnel was an engraving called the Siloam Inscription. Discovered in 1880, this moving inscription documents the story of the tunnel's construction. In 1891, the inscription was taken to Turkey by the Ottoman Empire. Today, it resides in Istanbul, Turkey.

Siloam Inscription

... the tunneling ... And this is the story of the tunneling. While ...

... the pickaxes, each crew toward the other. And while there were still three cubits to [cut], the voice of a man was heard calling to his counterpart, for there was a [break?] in the rock, on the right ... and on the day of breaking through the miners hewed, each man toward his fellow, pickax against pickax; and the water flowed from the spring to the reservoir, 1,200 cubits. And the height of the rock above the stonecutters was 100 cubits.



The Hezekiah Bulla



SIZE
**13 mm x 12
mm x 3 mm**

UNEARTHED
2009-10

RELEASED
2015

FRONTAL MOTIFS
**Winged sun,
ankhs**

REVERSE
IMPRESSION
**Papyrus and
thin cords**

INSCRIPTION
**"Belonging to
Hezekiah,
[son of]
Ahaz, King of
Judah"**

DATE
**Late eighth
century B.C.**

The Hezekiah bulla is the only seal impression belonging to an Israelite or Judean king ever to have been found in controlled scientific excavations. It was found just 10 feet away from the Isaiah bulla, in the same assemblage of soil, dating to the time period of Hezekiah (late eighth century B.C.).

The bulla was unearthed in 2009—however, due to some minor damage to its face, the full significance of what was written on it wasn't realized.

In full, the bulla reads:

"Belonging to Hezekiah, [son of] Ahaz, King of Judah."

The inscription on this bulla not only proves the existence of the powerful Judean King Hezekiah, but also confirms the existence of his father, King Ahaz. The symbols on the Hezekiah bulla also provide an interesting glimpse into royal Judean life.

The Winged Sun

While this is the first Judean seal to be unearthed in a professional excavation, several other seals belonging to King Hezekiah have come to light in the antiquities market (AM)—a place where artifacts of unknown provenance are bought and sold. This new seal impression helps confirm the legitimacy of the AM seals belonging to Hezekiah. Some of these AM seals bear the image of a scarab beetle with proud, upturned wings, rolling a sun disk. This is a deeply Egyptian symbol of the creator-god Khepri. The Prophet Isaiah warned against the Egyptian influence creeping into Judah before the Assyrian invasion (e.g. Isaiah 30-31). Hezekiah's scarab seals would certainly fall into this category. In addition to these seals, a number of LMLK jar handle seals belonging to Hezekiah bear an inscription of a winged scarab.

This new bulla indicates an about-face in royal logo design. As summarized by Dr. Eilat Mazar, based on the design, this seal can best be attributed to the time directly after Assyria's invasion and Hezekiah's miraculous healing. The rare display of a sun with downturned wings indicates protection. The ankh motifs at the sides—while still essentially Egyptian in nature—are



■ Sun Disk



■ Downturned wings

universally understood to symbolize life—thus, the added years of Hezekiah's life, after his healing. Several biblical verses parallel the sun with wings imagery. For example, Psalm 84:11: “God is a sun and shield”; Psalm 91:4: “He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge”; Ezekiel 16:8 “I spread My wing over you” (New King James Version). In particular, the imagery on this bulla is vividly expressed in Malachi 4:2: “The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings ...” (NKJV).

The winged sun may also carry additional meaning—hearkening to the miracle performed at the time of Hezekiah's healing, when the sun “moved” and the shadow on the sundial of Ahaz turned backward 10 degrees (2 Kings 20:9-11). Perhaps even the lines extending from the sun—terminating in circular dots—are a depiction of this sundial, rather than solar rays.

LMLK Seals

LMLK seals were stamps on the handles of official vessels used during the reign of King Hezekiah. The handles bear the inscription LMLK, Hebrew for “Belonging to the King.” The exhibit features three LMLK seals, one on a complete jar, two on ancient jar handles.

A large percentage of the LMLK seals bear the image of a two-winged sun—perhaps these were produced alongside this new royal seal in the latter part of Hezekiah's life, as a broad administrative change to the winged scarab LMLK seals and early personal seals of Hezekiah.



The Isaiah Bulla



SIZE

1 cm

UNEARTHED

2009-10

RELEASED

2018

FRONTAL MOTIFS

Grazing doe?

REVERSE

IMPRESSION

Fabric

INSCRIPTION

**"Belonging
to Isaiah ...
[Prophet]"**

DATE

**Late eighth
century B.C.**

In 2009, the Isaiah bulla was unearthed together with the Hezekiah bulla by Dr. Eilat Mazar and her team, including students from Herbert W. Armstrong College. The seal was discovered next to the massive Solomonic-period Ophel walls. However, Dr. Mazar was not able to complete her study of the Isaiah bulla until 2018. News of the discovery was released in February 2018.

The long wait between the bulla's discovery and its release was due in part to ensuing excavations and the release of the Hezekiah bulla. But another reason was the difficulty in interpreting the bulla's inscription.

The Hezekiah bulla is indisputable proof of the existence of Judah's King Hezekiah and his father, King Ahaz. Analyzing the Isaiah bulla, however, is more complicated. There is an ongoing debate in the scientific community as to whether or not this seal really belonged to the Prophet Isaiah. We feel it is important to recognize this debate and summarize its general parameters.

Textual Analysis

The Isaiah bulla, unlike the Hezekiah bulla, has sustained heavy damage. Much of the upper half of the bulla is broken off. This missing portion does not hinder interpretation, however, because the top half contained a picture, or motif, not text. (A small remaining section of this motif can be seen on the upper right-hand side of the bulla.) The lower half of the bulla contains the all-important inscription bearing the name of its owner.

Two lines of text have been preserved. Both lines are slightly damaged on the left side by a visible thumbprint, probably made by the owner of the seal as he held down the edge of the clay while stamping it. This thumbprint pressed some of the letters. In spite of the damage, the first line of script is easy to interpret. All the experts agree that it reads, “Belonging to Isaiah.” The final letter of the name Isaiah is missing, but there is no mistaking the name.

The debate revolves around the text on the bottom line, or lower register. Three letters are legible: “*Nvy*.” A Hebrew speaker, upon hearing this word (without adding vowels), would naturally take it to mean “prophet.” However, the Hebrew language is built on critical *root letters*. The final root letter of “prophet”—the aleph—is *silent*. (We will represent this silent sound with an apostrophe from here forward.) Thus, “prophet” is correctly transliterated as *Nvy'* and properly pronounced with an added “a” vowel, *Navy'*. The place where an aleph would be expected was damaged by the thumbprint. The thumbprint covers just after the third letter from the right on the bottom line (remember, Hebrew reads from right to left).

Much of the debate over this bulla revolves around whether or not the aleph existed. If there was an aleph, then the word would



read “prophet.” If the aleph did not exist, then it would be a different word entirely.

If there were only three letters, this would leave two options. *Nvy* could be pronounced two different ways, with two different meanings. (Vowels were not written in the ancient Hebrew language—the “i” sound is a special case.) The first option is *Novi*—a name found in the Bible and other archaeological findings. In this case, the bulla would read “Belonging to Isaiah [son of] Novi” (Isaiah the prophet’s father was Amoz). The other option is *Novai*—this means “from Nov” (translated “Nob” in English Bibles). Nov was a city near Jerusalem. If this was the case, the inscription would read, “Belonging to Isaiah the Novite/from Nov.”

If there were *four* letters, and the final one

wasn't an aleph (making "prophet"), there could theoretically be a number of combinations. However, they are largely all speculative rather than being rooted in known discoveries and historical texts. One exception is *Nebajoth*, a four-letter name (*Nvit*) found in the Bible.

Another element to consider is that the Hebrew language typically uses a definite article before a title. If this seal belonged to Isaiah the prophet, we would expect to find the Hebrew letter *h* ("the") after the name *Isaiah* and before the word *prophet*. This we do not see.

Those who claim this bulla does not belong to Isaiah the prophet use the arguments noted above. There are, however, rational dissenting opinions to these arguments. For example, it is unusual for such a seal to characterize someone as being "of" a city. Such an identification would have been exceptionally vague. Given the fact that Isaiah was such a common name, to identify him as "the Novite" seems overly obscure. Seals were meant to clearly denote a specific individual; the best and most common way to do that is by using a family name or a title.

The notion that the four-letter name *Nebajoth* (*Nvit*) is the name on our bulla is highly unlikely, considering that this personal name is from the book of Genesis (a son of Ishmael), thus predating the bulla by a millennium. After that time, it is referenced once as a place name, probably for these descendants of Ishmael.

So if the lower register of the bulla *does* have a *four*-letter word, the most logical and by far most *common* word that includes the letters *Nvy* is "prophet."

Regarding the need for a definite article *h* before the title: A recent discovery of another bulla in Jerusalem from the same time period, reading "l'Sar Ir" ("Belonging

to Governor [of the] City") does not have a definite article before the title. This shows that having a definite article is not *always* an essential requirement.

When interpreting this seal, two options stand out as the best and most logical. First, that there were only *three* letters in the lower register, thus translating as the family name "Novi." Second, that there was a damaged *fourth* letter, an aleph, thus reading *Nvy'* ("prophet"). Three letters or four? Can we know?

Novi or Nvy'?

Further clues can help determine what this final word was and how many letters it contained. Note the border edge curving around the lower right-hand portion of the bulla. If this edge is reconstructed around the full circumference of the bulla, it is evident that there is sufficient space for a fourth letter in the lower register. If only three letters were present, then this seal would have had a fairly large empty space on the bottom left. It is virtually unheard of for a seal to have unbalanced vacant space. Such poor workmanship, especially for such an otherwise beautifully crafted seal, would have been unacceptable. Thus, we see ideal space for the four-letter word *Nvy'*, "prophet."

Further, if the border line is visually traced up around the first line of text, it becomes



apparent that there is enough room not only for the missing final letter of Isaiah, but also for another letter—the *h* sound, which in Hebrew denotes “the”—i.e., Isaiah *the* prophet. The space best fits this interpretation, *Isaiah heh Nvy*, rather than simply *Isaiah Novi*.

Finally, it appears that part of an aleph *may indeed* be visible in the bottom register, just above the fingerprint damage. There are some remaining lines that match the appearance of an aleph. If this were indeed true, the bulla would read: “Belonging to Isaiah the Prophet.”

The evidence cited thus far comes from a textual examination of the bulla. Many epigraphers stop there and base their analysis purely on the text. But doing this overlooks some of the most compelling proof that this seal belongs to Isaiah the prophet: the archaeological context.

Archaeological Analysis

This bulla dates to the late eighth century B.C., precisely the time that the Prophet Isaiah was on the scene. The bulla was found just outside the royal Ophel area, the very place where Isaiah served. And the bulla was found within 10 feet of the bulla belonging to King Hezekiah, a man Isaiah directly served alongside. These bullae were found in exactly the same assemblage and strata of soil. King Hezekiah and Isaiah the prophet are mentioned together in 16 Bible verses. Their physical and biblical proximity is compelling.

Given these facts, what are the chances that this is *another* Isaiah *Nvy*?, separate from *the* Isaiah *Nvy* of the Bible? What are the chances that this individual happens to have exactly the same title, potentially excepting just one letter? Such a coincidence would be extraordinary, and is difficult to believe. Only high-ranking individuals carried personal seals. Two high-ranking,

late-eighth-century B.C. Isaiah *Nvy*'s in the same place together? As Dr. Mazar herself wrote in *Biblical Archaeology Review*, the “chances of it belonging to any other but the known Prophet Isaiah are EXTREMELY SLIM.” The sum weight of evidence points to this being the personal seal of Isaiah the prophet.

Interesting Tidbits

The facts strongly indicate that this bulla was the personal seal of Isaiah the prophet. The preserved sliver of a motif at the top of the bulla, believed to be that of a grazing doe, is imagery the prophet used in his book (Isaiah 11:6; 13:14; 35:6). It follows, then, that the damaging thumbprint was likely the unique imprint of the prophet himself. The specific placement of the steadying thumbprint indicates that the prophet was right-handed.

The detail that can be gleaned from such a small artifact is extraordinary. For example, it seems the bulla split in half due to the string cord that bound the package beneath it. This cord created a weak point through the bulla, which eventually broke along this line. Also, the backside of the bulla bears a cloth sack imprint. This seems unusual at first, since one would naturally expect the prophet to seal a papyrus letter or some other formal written document. However, the bulla was found just outside what is believed to be the royal Ophel bakery area. Perhaps the sack contained a food item. In 2 Kings 20:7, Isaiah ordered a “cake of figs” (RSV) to be brought to a sick Hezekiah and placed on his wound.



A Fruitful 50 Years

■ Herbert W. Armstrong
and Prof. Benjamin Mazar

**THE MAZAR-ARMSTRONG PARTNERSHIP HAS PRODUCED
WONDERFUL FRUIT OVER THE PAST FIVE DECADES.**

Before Armstrong International Cultural Foundation, there was Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, an organization founded by the late humanitarian and religious leader Herbert W. Armstrong. Under Mr. Armstrong, the foundation supported humanitarian ventures all over the world. Mr. Armstrong personally visited with dozens of heads of state from Asia to Africa to Europe and beyond. His greatest affection, however, was for one tiny, new country at the heart of the world: Israel.

As a devoted student and teacher of the Bible, Mr. Armstrong cherished both the

remarkable history and the glorious future of Jerusalem. Between 1967 and his death in 1986, Mr. Armstrong met with many prime ministers and presidents, including Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin, Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Navon.

Following Israel's victory in the 1967 war, Hebrew University Professor Benjamin Mazar was placed in charge of the university's massive new archaeological dig near the Temple Mount. In the fall of 1968, Mr. Armstrong flew to Israel to meet with Mazar. He was impressed by the scope and importance of the excavation.

The 'Big Dig'

In November 1968, Professor Mazar, together with the dean of Hebrew University's Humanities Program, Josef Aviram, traveled to America to tour Mr. Armstrong's Ambassador College (AC) campuses in California and Texas. Meanwhile, Hebrew University was fielding offers from several major American universities seeking to participate in the Temple Mount project. These offers were rejected—while AC was given a 50/50 joint partnership with Professor Mazar and Hebrew University.

The partnership was formalized on December 1, 1968, at the presidential palace in Jerusalem. There, Tourism Minister Moshe Kol proposed “an iron bridge” between Hebrew University and Ambassador College “that can never be broken.”

In May of 1969, 50 Ambassador students traveled to Israel to volunteer on the excavation. The “big dig,” as it became known, would continue nearly 10 years. It provided hundreds of Ambassador students the opportunity to touch the ancient remains of Jerusalem. In addition to sending student laborers, who were often praised as the excavation's most enthusiastic workers, AC also shouldered half of the cost of excavations from 1968 until the conclusion of the dig in 1978.

As the years passed, the friendship between Professor Mazar and Herbert Armstrong blossomed. The two friends could often be seen walking arm in arm around the dig site, or relaxing at Mazar's home in Jerusalem. Professor Mazar visited Ambassador College multiple times. On one occasion, Mr. Armstrong, Israel Exploration Society president Josef Aviram and Professor Mazar teamed up to host an

archaeological exhibit in Japan, where they were welcomed by Prince Mikasa.

Professor Mazar and Mr. Armstrong shared many similar traits. Both were straight-talking and uncompromising. Both considered the Bible a valid historical source. Both valued the importance of objectively seeking the truth, whatever it might be, rather than striving merely to reinforce preconceived beliefs. Benjamin Mazar was praised as a pioneer of a research discipline that fused archaeology, geography and the history described in Jewish Scripture and other ancient Near Eastern sources. He was also noted for accurately portraying details of Jerusalem's impressive Umayyad period under Muslim rule, impressing visiting Arab leaders with his candor.

When Professor Mazar wrapped up his Temple Mount excavation in 1978, Mr. Armstrong supported the large archaeological excavations in the City of David, directed by Yigal Shiloh. When Mr. Armstrong died in January 1986, Professor Mazar wrote, “During the years of our association with him, all of us developed the highest regard for his wonderful personality and qualities. His deep devotion to the ideals of peace and justice in the spirit of the biblical prophets was appreciated by his friends in Israel. His feeling for Israel and Jerusalem was manifested in his true interest in the archaeological excavations near the Temple Mount and in the City of David. His name will always be attached to this most important undertaking carried out in Jerusalem.”

During Benjamin Mazar's excavations in the shadow of the Temple Mount, a young girl was often seen at his side, rubbing elbows with archaeologists and Ambassador students. She was the professor's granddaughter: Eilat Mazar.



Restoring the Iron Bridge

Benjamin Mazar's Temple Mount excavations ended in 1978, but about a decade later, a second round of digging began on the Ophel, this time under the direction of Dr. Eilat Mazar.

Meanwhile, back in the United States, the work of Herbert W. Armstrong was about to be revived. When Mr. Armstrong died in January 1986, his successors abandoned his legacy, and within 10 years, the globe-encompassing, multimillion-dollar humanitarian work was practically dead, the work in Israel had been abandoned. But in December 1989, a revival took place. Gerald Flurry, an Ambassador graduate and Worldwide Church of God minister, was fired for holding fast to the teachings and legacy

of Mr. Armstrong. On December 7, 1989, Mr. Flurry started the Philadelphia Church of God to continue the legacy of Mr. Armstrong.

On February 22, 1996, Mr. Flurry established the Armstrong International Cultural Foundation, a humanitarian organization patterned after Mr. Armstrong's Ambassador International Cultural Foundation. The foundation began supporting humanitarian ventures in Jordan by providing support and volunteers to the Al-Hussein Society in Amman, which works with handicapped children, the Young Moslem Women's Association and the Petra National Trust. For three years the foundation sent volunteers to work in the schools and workshops run by the Al-Hussein Society.

In 2001, another piece of Mr. Armstrong's

legacy was raised up with the establishment of what is today Herbert W. Armstrong College (HWAC). Begun with just a handful of students, the college has grown to have two permanent campuses, located in the United States and the United Kingdom, and one seasonal campus in Jerusalem, Israel.

In the summer of 2005, the world of archaeology was rocked when Dr. Eilat Mazar announced that her team had unearthed a huge public building in the ancient City of David that she believed to be the palace of King David. Gerald Flurry read about Dr. Mazar's landmark discovery with keen interest, and was thrilled to learn that Eilat Mazar is the granddaughter of Prof. Benjamin Mazar.

In July 2006, Herbert W. Armstrong College president Stephen Flurry contacted Dr. Mazar. Though many years had passed since she had worked with Mr. Armstrong, her childhood memories flooded back.

“Without the support of Mr. Armstrong and the Ambassadors, the Temple Mount excavations would have never become, as it did, the most important and largest excavations in Israel at that time,” she recalled.

When Mr. Flurry said that HWAC was eager to provide support for her excavations, Dr. Mazar quickly accepted. Within months, HWAC students were living in Jerusalem and working daily on Dr. Mazar's City of David projects. It took only a matter of weeks before the eager students found willing teachers among Dr. Mazar's staff. The HWAC liberal arts education, which includes emphasis on developing the whole character as well as specific skills, has meant that our volunteers are valuable for excavating, research, writing, processing finds and leading and assisting other staff members. From the start of our partnership, Dr. Mazar has used HWAC students and alumni at all levels of her excavations.

'Ambassadors' Return

Since 2006, Herbert W. Armstrong College has participated in every one of Dr. Mazar's excavations in the City of David and on the Ophel. During this time, Dr. Mazar has made some extraordinary discoveries.

October 2006 The first students to join Dr. Mazar's team arrived in Jerusalem in October 2006. They volunteered on Phase 2 of Dr. Mazar's Summit of the City of David excavations. Our students took part in uncovering the 19-foot-thick eastern wall of King David's palace. The excavation continued through March 2007.





■ HWAC students and alumni on the 2012 dig, along with other crew members

Summer 2007 On July 4, 2007, Gerald Flurry and his son met then Mayor of Jerusalem Uri Lupolianski. Mr. Lupolianski had been deputy to Mayor Kollek, a close friend of Mr. Armstrong. During the summer of 2007, a small group of Armstrong students again joined Dr. Mazar’s team. They initially helped Dr. Mazar with office work before moving back into the field to help repair a collapsing wall in the City of David that needed urgent archaeological attention. Their work ethic and experience secured their place within the small excavation team.

What began as simple restoration work soon morphed into a full excavation as the integrity of the wall was too compromised to repair. As the wall was dismantled, the assemblage of sixth- and fifth-century B.C. pottery found beneath it redated the wall from what was originally believed to be the Hasmonean period to the Persian period. Investigation showed that it was constructed during the time period that Nehemiah was on the scene rebuilding Jerusalem’s wall in 52 days (Nehemiah 6:15). This incredible discovery brought life to another biblical figure and event.

November 2007 More Armstrong College volunteers were dispatched to Jerusalem when Phase 3 of the City of

David excavations began in late 2007. During this season the Gedaliah seal was discovered; this bulla bears the name of one of the princes who persecuted the Prophet Jeremiah (“Belonging to Gedaliah son of Pashur,” Jeremiah 38:1). A 150-foot-long water tunnel running behind the Stepped Stone Structure in the City of David was also unearthed. This may have been the conduit through which King David’s forces crawled in order to conquer the city in the 10th century B.C. The excavation of the tunnel, Dr. Mazar said, was almost entirely an “Armstrong College enterprise.” This phase finished in the summer of 2008.

November 2009 Dr. Mazar returned to the area of her grandfather’s 1970s excavations and her own 1986 excavation area: the Ophel. Situated just south of the Temple Mount, this area has turned out to be a veritable gold mine of significant artifacts. Phase 1 of Dr. Mazar’s renewed Ophel excavations ran from late 2009 into 2010. HWAC students were a part of Dr. Mazar’s small team. During this excavation, the assemblage of pottery that included the bullae of King Hezekiah and Isaiah was discovered.

A gatehouse structure, originally exposed in Mazar’s 1986 excavation, was also firmly

dated to the time of King Solomon, alongside a massive length of wall (making up the largest Iron Age structure in all Israel), matching the description of Solomon's Jerusalemite expansions in 1 Kings 3:1.

November 2011 Eager to continue supporting projects in Israel, the foundation presented a check to the Israel Exploration Society to aid with publishing the finds of the Temple Mount excavations. Chairman Gerald Flurry met with Dr. Josef Aviram, a close friend of Mr. Armstrong and an associate of Prof. Benjamin Mazar.

Summer 2012 In May 2012, a group of HWAC students, alumni and faculty journeyed again to Jerusalem. The goal was to report on news in the region for the *Philadelphia Trumpet* and assist Dr. Mazar in planning the next phase of her excavation. Soon after their arrival, Dr. Mazar was granted a license, and Ophel Phase 2a began on August 26.

Some more HWAC volunteers were added, making it the largest group to date. A wealth of finds emerged from this excavation. The earliest Hebrew inscription ever found in Jerusalem was discovered, along with a royal Israelite (proto-Aeolic) capital, Herodian ritual baths ("mikvaot"), and another massive wall that was confidently dated to the time of King Solomon. The volunteers made up the backbone of Dr. Mazar's team for the five-month stint, helping excavate, sift material and then process the finds ready for publication. Four students and alumni stayed on after the excavation for a number of months, aiding Dr. Mazar in the publication process.

Just days after the last few volunteers returned, HWAC president Stephen Flurry





■ HWAC students and alumni on the 2018 dig with Dr. Mazar

announced that Phase 2b of the excavation would begin that summer. Fourteen HWAC volunteers were chosen to participate.

Summer 2013 During the first few weeks of Phase 2b, a massive gold hoard was discovered hidden away on the floor of a Byzantine structure, including a large golden menorah medallion, over 30 gold coins, and several other gold and silver artifacts. Several other precious items were found during the four-month excavation, including a c. 10th-century dagger.

2014–2017 These years were a hiatus from excavating, allowing Dr. Mazar to focus on publishing her findings, including her final reports for the City of David excavations and the first two phases of the Ophel excavations. Significantly, it allowed her time to fully study and publish the finds of the Hezekiah and Isaiah bullae.

In February 2016, Brent and Michelle Nagtegaal moved to Jerusalem and established a permanent office for the foundation and the *Trumpet*. In addition to supporting Dr. Mazar, Brent started the Israel branch of the *Trumpet* website, rebranded as *www.WatchJerusalem.co.il*. This site focuses on news, archaeology, history and prophecy in Israel and the wider Middle East.

October 2017 Gerald Flurry visited Jerusalem and met with Dr. Mazar. During this visit, Dr. Mazar was granted a license to begin Part C of her Phase 2 Ophel excavations. In December, Mr. Flurry decided that, for the first time, the Armstrong International Cultural Foundation would shoulder the entire cost of Dr. Mazar's dig.

In January 2018, 11 Armstrong students and alumni traveled to Jerusalem for the three-month dig. In a special release for the Jewish holiday of Pesach (Passover), Dr. Mazar announced the discovery of dozens of A.D. 66–70 Jewish Rebellion coins found during the excavation. This hoard includes potentially the largest cache of specially minted Year 4 (A.D. 70) coins ever found. Dr. Mazar's team is now processing and documenting the rest of the finds from this phase, ready for release and publication.

Today, Herbert W. Armstrong College and the foundation continue to support the work of Dr. Eilat Mazar as she processes the finds and information collected in the latest phase and prepares for the next exciting excavation. 2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the special Armstrong-Mazar partnership. We look forward to the fruits of further discoveries and sharing once-in-a-lifetime experiences in this most rewarding, unique and blessed partnership.



Meet Eilat Mazar

Dr. Eilat Mazar has been excavating Jerusalem for 50 years. As a small child, Eilat worked alongside her grandfather, the late Prof. Benjamin Mazar, on the Temple Mount excavations. Benjamin Mazar was a founding father of the modern Jewish state; he was central to the establishment of Hebrew University and the Israel Exploration Society, as well as numerous other intellectual and public institutions.

As a child, Dr. Mazar visited archaeological digs all over Israel. Together with her sister (Tali), young Eilat would serve tea and coffee at her grandfather's weekly living-room gatherings of Israel's most important figures. When Eilat finished her mandated stint in the army, she literally ran to the admissions office at Hebrew University. She studied archaeology and history of the Jewish people.

In 1981, after attaining her bachelor's degree, Eilat participated in the City of David excavations directed by Prof. Yigal Shiloh (1981–1985). Within a few weeks of starting work, she was given her own area to supervise. For her master's thesis mentored by Prof. Nahman Avigad at Hebrew University, Eilat studied the First Temple period finds from the prior excavations of the Ophel area just south of the Temple Mount's southern wall.

In 1986, Eilat convinced her grandfather to return to the field and join her as codirector

of a small excavation at the southernmost area of the Ophel. Benjamin agreed and almost immediately the pair discovered remains of a First Temple period gatehouse (the first ever discovered in Jerusalem). In 1997, Dr. Mazar attained her Ph.D. from Hebrew University for a comprehensive pioneering study about the biblical Phoenicians based on her ongoing excavations (which began in 1984) at the key Phoenician site of Achziv (northern shore of Israel).

In 1997, Dr. Mazar wrote an article for *Biblical Archaeology Review* suggesting the location of King David's palace based on the description in 2 Samuel 5:17 that King David "went down" into his city. She hypothesized that the ruins of David's palace must be in the northern part of the City of David. In 2005, she received funding and permission to start an excavation. Within weeks, Eilat had uncovered massive walls, indicating the presence of a large structure, which dated to King David's period.

Dr. Mazar conducted three phases of excavations in the City of David between 2005 and 2008. She uncovered more evidence of David's palace, as well as other remarkable artifacts supporting the biblical record, including the seal impressions of two biblical figures mentioned in Jeremiah 37 and 38, as well as a portion of Nehemiah's hastily constructed wall (Nehemiah 6:15).

In 2009, Dr. Mazar returned to the Ophel to excavate. This dig and three more excavations (2012, 2013, 2018) have uncovered some extraordinary history. Discoveries include a massive city wall from King Solomon's time, the Menorah Medallion treasure, dozens of coins relating to the first-century Jewish revolt, and two biblical seal impressions: one belonging to King Hezekiah of Judah and the other belonging to Isaiah.

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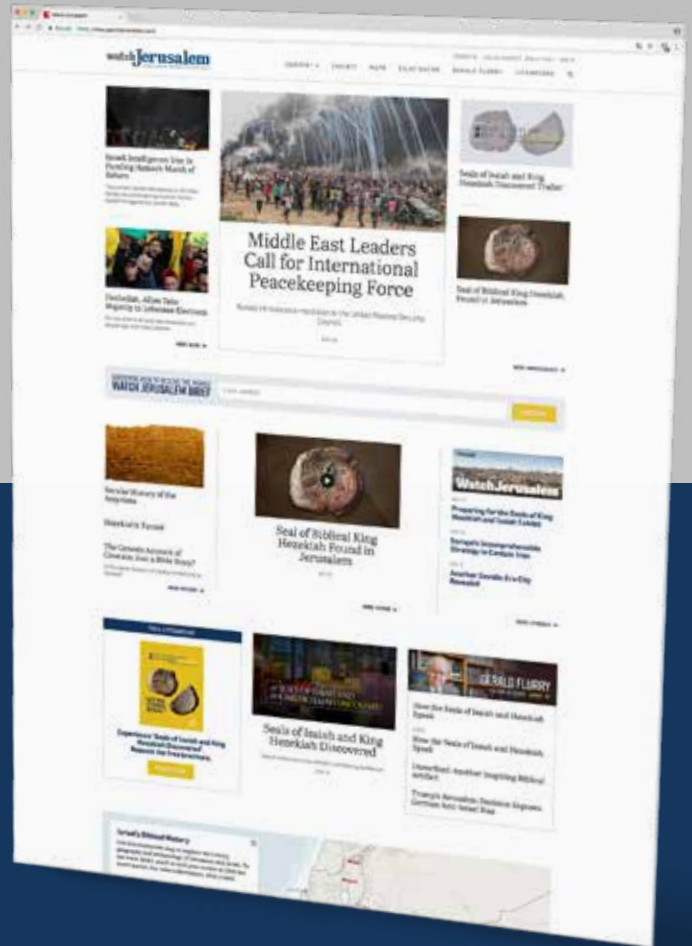
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