

17th Cheshvan 5769/15th November 2008

Minister: Rabbi Lionel Rosenfeld

Emeritus Chazan: Rev. Moshe Dubiner

Parashat Vayera

Hertz Cohen Stone Gutnick

Sedra	63	86	78	94
Haftarah	76	113	1134	1379



Shabbat Begins 3.58pm

Shabbat ends 5.02pm

'Oldest Hebrew writing found near Jerusalem'
THE JERUSALEM POST October 30th 2008

An Israeli archaeologist digging at a hilltop south of Jerusalem believes a ceramic shard found in the ruins of an ancient town bears the oldest Hebrew inscription ever discovered, a find that could provide an important glimpse into the culture and language of the Holy Land at the time of the Bible.

The five lines of faded characters written 3,000 years ago, and the ruins of the fortified settlement where they were found, are indications that a powerful Israelite kingdom existed at the time of King David, says Yossi Garfinkel, the Hebrew University archaeologist in charge of the new dig at Hirbet Qeiyafa. Other scholars are hesitant to embrace Garfinkel's interpretation of the finds, made public on Thursday. Hirbet Qeiyafa sits near the city of Beit Shemesh in the Judean foothills, an area that was once the frontier between the hill-dwelling Israelites and their enemies, the coastal Philistines. The site overlooks the Elah Valley, said to be the scene of the slingshot showdown between David and the Philistine giant Goliath, and lies near the ruins of Goliath's hometown in the Philistine metropolis of Gath.

A teenage volunteer found the curved pottery shard, 15cm. by 15cm, in July near the stairs and stone washtub of an excavated home. It was later discovered to bear five lines of characters known as proto-Canaanite, a precursor of the Hebrew alphabet. Carbon-14 analysis of burnt olive pits found in the same layer of the site dated them to between 1,000 and 975 B.C., the same time as the Biblical golden age of David's rule in Jerusalem. The script, which Garfinkel suggests might be part of a letter, predates the next significant Hebrew inscription by between 100 and 200 years. (History's best-known Hebrew texts, the Dead Sea scrolls, were penned on parchment beginning 850 years later.)

The shard is now kept in a university safe while philologists translate it, a task expected to take months. But several words have already been tentatively identified, including ones meaning "judge," "slave" and "king."

The Israelites were not the only ones using proto-Canaanite characters, and other scholars suggest it is difficult - perhaps impossible - to conclude the text is Hebrew and not a related tongue spoken in the area at the time. Garfinkel bases his identification on a three-letter verb from the inscription meaning "to do," a word he said existed only in Hebrew. "That leads us to believe that this is Hebrew, and that this is the oldest Hebrew inscription that has been found," he said.

Other prominent Biblical archaeologists warned against jumping to conclusions. Hebrew University archaeologist Amihai Mazar said the inscription was "very important," as it is the longest proto-Canaanite text ever found. But he suggested that calling the text Hebrew might be going too far. But if Garfinkel's claim is borne out, it would bolster the case for the Bible's accuracy by indicating the Israelites could record events as they happened, transmitting the history that was later written down in the Bible several hundred years later. It also would mean that the settlement - a fortified town with a 30-foot-wide monumental gate, a central fortress and a wall running 700 meters in circumference - was probably inhabited by Israelites.

The finds have not yet established who the residents were, says Aren Maier, a Bar Ilan University archaeologist who is digging at nearby Gath. It will become clearer if, for example, evidence of the local diet is found, he said: Excavations have shown that Philistines ate dogs and pigs, while Israelites did not. The nature of the ceramic shards found at the site suggest residents might have been neither Israelites nor Philistines but members of a third, forgotten people, he said. If the inscription is Hebrew, it would indicate a connection to the Israelites and make the text "one of the most important texts, without a doubt, in the corpus of Hebrew inscriptions," Maier said. But it has great importance whatever the language turns out to be, he added.

Saar Ganor, an Israel Antiquities Authority ranger, noticed the unusual scale of the walls while patrolling the area in 2003. Three years later he interested Garfinkel, and after a preliminary dig they began work in earnest this summer. They have excavated only 4 percent of the six-acre settlement so far.

Archeology has turned up only scant finds from David's time in the early 10th century B.C., leading some scholars to suggest his kingdom may have been little more than a small chiefdom or that he might not have existed at all. Garfinkel believes building fortifications like those at Hirbet Qeiyafa could not have been a local initiative: The walls would have required moving 200,000 tons of stone, a task too big for the 500 or so people who lived there. Instead, it would have required an organized kingdom like the one the Bible says David ruled.

The dig is partially funded by Foundation Stone, a Jewish educational organization, which hopes to bring volunteers to work there. "When I stand here, I understand that I'm on the front lines of the battle between the Israelites and the Philistines," said Rabbi Barnea Levi Selavan, the group's director. "I open my Bible and read about David and Goliath, and I understand that I'm in the Biblical context."

Contributed by Rabbi Lionel Rosenfeld
Shabbat Shalom

Next Shabbat - Chayei Sarah

21st — 22nd November 2008

Commences 3.49pm Mincha & Kabbalat Shabbat 3.45pm

Announcements

A warm welcome to all those attending the Bnei Akiva Israel Machane Reunion who are staying with us over Shabbat and taking part in the services

Kiddush Sponsor

The Honorary Officers and Board of Management invite the congregation to Kiddush in the Hartog Gallery in honour of David and Gideon Schmidt in recognition of their continued support and contribution to Friday night, Shabbat morning and Yom Tov Services

Breakfast Sponsor

Breakfasts this week are sponsored by Lorna Larn to commemorate the Yahrzeit of her husband Nathan Larn z"l

Birth Announcement—Mazal Tov

To Annabelle & Mark Sorrell on the birth of a son and Ruth & Bernard Fellowes on the birth of a grandson

Birthdays—Mazal Tov to:

Chloe Rapp	Helaine Gordon
Gabriella Hershman	David Harouni
Sara Shasha	Philip Zajac
Philip Kremen	Colin Howard
David Sandground	Stanley Kalms
Nat Winsor	Helene Bull
Helen Roodyn	Sonia Caplan

Wedding Anniversary— Mazal Tov to:

Selina & Paul Beresford
Katie & Timothy Lipton
Danielle & Sam Lipton
Philippa & Richard Mintz
Nadia & Michael Moosah
Ruth & David Coffey
Evelyn & Morrie Neiss
Angela & Harvey Soning

Refuah Shelemah

Nat Winsor	Noach ben Miriam Chaya
Gertie Endfield	Rachel bat Yehudit
Raphael Etesami	Raphael ben Michal
Seymour Freed	Shmuel Ze-ev ben Sara Rivka

Friday 14th November

7.30 am Shacharit followed by breakfast & Haftarah Shiur by Ervin Landau
4.00 pm Mincha, Kabbalat Shabbat & D'var Torah by Rabbi Lionel Rosenfeld

Shabbat 15th November

8.45 am Shiur with Alan Goldberg
9.15 am Shacharit
4.00 pm Mincha, followed by Seudah Shlishit, & D'var Torah by Rabbi Lionel Rosenfeld
5.02 pm Maariv & Havdalah

Sunday 16th November

8.30 am Shacharit followed by breakfast and Thought for the Day by Alan Goldberg
10.00 am **Cheder Age 4 – 12 years.** Contact Batsheva Burns for further information on 0796 88 555 96 or email cheder.marblearch@gmail.com

Monday 17th November

7.30 am Shacharit followed by breakfast & D'var Torah by Michael Milston

Tuesday 18th November

7.30 am Shacharit followed by breakfast & Shiur by Rabbi Yosef Vogel

Wednesday 19th November

7.30 am Shacharit followed by breakfast and Parsha Shiur by Ervin Landau

Thursday 20th November

7.30am Shacharit followed by breakfast & D'var Torah by Bernard Silver

Friday 21st November

7.30 am Shacharit followed by breakfast & Haftarah Shiur by Ervin Landau

**Mincha & Ma'ariv through the week
Sun 16th - Thurs 20th November 4.00pm**

Security Rota

David Harouni. Mark Pasha

Kiddush Rota

Linda Sharpe

We are delighted to inform all members that the refurbishment of the Bloomstein Hall and kitchens began earlier this week. They will be out of service for the next several weeks. We apologise for any inconvenience caused and thank you all in anticipation for your understanding and on going support.

*Very best wishes & Shabbat Shalom
Ruth & Linda*

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Rabbi Rosenfeld's Parsha Shiur for Ladies

A weekly series. New participants are most welcome. **Next Shiur will be held on Thursday 27th November at 10.30am**

Rabbi Rosenfeld's Hebrew Reading & Understanding the Siddur Class

This class is scheduled to begin on Tuesday December 2nd at 5.30pm. However, only 2 members have registered for the class Those wishing to join should email Rabbi Rosenfeld on rabbilr@marblearch.org.uk or call the office.

AJEX Parade & Service, Sunday 16th November at 2.30pm at the Cenotaph, Whitehall

This will be attended by veterans in the presence of the Chief Rabbi. Please show your support by attending. There will also be a service at St. John's Wood Synagogue on Shabbat 15th November

Monday 24th November at 7.45pm

"Ethics , Jews and Embryos" with Baroness Ruth Deech

Ruth Deech was chair of the UK Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority from 1994-2002, HFEA is a national committee charged with monitoring all IVF clinics and laboratories in the UK, and with approving assisted reproductive treatments and embryo research. In the period of her chairmanship to 2002 the HFEA oversaw the introduction of preimplantation genetic diagnosis and stem cell research. For further details please see our website www.marblearch.org.uk

Friday Night 5th December— Friday Night Live at Marble Arch

Another singles dinner in conjunction with Rabbi Israel Lew of Chabad Bloomsbury. For full details go to website

Choral Kabbalat Shabbat & Shabbat Morning Service, 5th - 6th December:

We are delighted to welcome world-renowned Composer and Choir Director Stephen Glass together with Chazan Gideon Zelermeyer and choir from Montreal, who will join Rabbi Rosenfeld for Choral Friday night and Shabbat morning Services

Luncheon Club Shabbat 6th December

Please make your reservation through the office to avoid disappointment.

**Monday 19th January 2009 at 7.45pm
Medical Ethics by Rabbi Dr. Akiva Tatz**

Further details to follow in due course. Keep the date free.