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Fall 2018

## **Fall 2018 DigSight Newsletter**

Southern Adventist University

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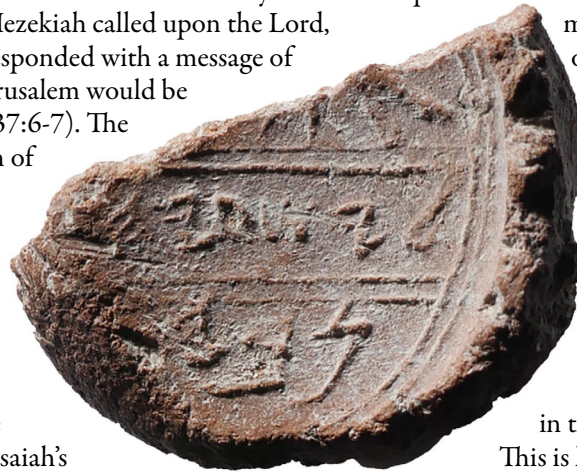


## THE SEAL IMPRESSION OF “ISAIAH, [THE] PROPHET”

On February 22, 2018 the Hebrew University of Jerusalem announced a significant discovery, a seal impression (bullae) with the inscription “(Belonging) to Isaiah [the] prophe[t]” ([see News, last page](#)). The seal impression was found in 2009 during the Ophel excavations in Jerusalem directed by Dr. Eilat Mazar. It was first identified during the preparation of the final report volume of the excavations published this year. The seal impression was found near the Royal Building with 34 bullae. The left side of the bulla is damaged. The full name of Isaiah is present except for the last letter. Also missing is the definite article, as one could expect. The word *navi*’ is missing the final *’aleph*. This may be for two possible reasons. The three letters all occur on the left side of the seal impression, which has not been preserved. There is room for the *’aleph*, while there is also the possibility that the *’aleph* was never there. The excavators have discussed different possibilities and suggest that, despite some damage, this is very likely the seal impression of Isaiah the Prophet. Fewer than ten feet away, archaeologists discovered the seal impression of King Hezekiah. According to the biblical account, Isaiah, son of Amos, the prophet, lived during the reigns of Uzziah (= Azariah), Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Isa. 1:1). Isaiah received his vision and accepted the prophetic call in the year that king Uzziah died (Isa. 6:1-10) in 739 BC. He would witness the destruction of Israel’s cities and their subsequent captivity at the hand of the Assyrians in 722 BC. During Hezekiah’s reforms, which were largely

encouraged by Isaiah, the Assyrian king Sennacherib attacked the cities of Judah in 701 BC, with the intent to destroy Jerusalem. Hezekiah called upon the Lord, and Isaiah responded with a message of hope that Jerusalem would be spared (Isa. 37:6-7). The continuation of Jerusalem as capital of Judah and the death of Sennacherib at the hands of his sons indicates the accuracy of Isaiah’s prophecies. Later, Isaiah would prophesy of Cyrus, king of Medo-Persia, who would be sent as God’s “shepherd” to give the order to restore Jerusalem (Isa. 44:28) and, as “His anointed (*meshiach*),” would “subdue nations before him” (Isa. 45:1-2). The prediction naming Cyrus as the one conquering Babylon and releasing the Jews from their captivity has caused some discussion concerning the date of Isaiah. Critical scholars who do not accept divine prophecy have attempted to redate the book, dividing Isaiah into two (Deutero-Isaiah) or three (Tritto-Isaiah) parts. The later chapters 40-66 are said to have been written after the events (*ex eventu*) of the Babylonian conquest by the Medo-Persians. In this way, predictive prophecy is no longer found in Isaiah, and the portions written about Cyrus

the Great occur after the events themselves took place. There are several important observations that can be made by the new discovery of Isaiah’s seal impression. First, if this reading is correct, this is the first evidence found in the archaeological record of one of the prophets of the Bible. Isaiah was one of the most important prophets and wrote the longest prophetic book contained in the Old Testament canon. This is highly significant and may be one of the greatest biblical archaeology finds of the last half-century. Second, the fact that the impression was found in Jerusalem fewer than ten feet away from the seal impression of “Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, king of Judah” should not be underestimated. It indicates the important role that Isaiah played in the political and religious affairs of Jerusalem during this time. For Isaiah’s personal seal impression to exist alongside Hezekiah’s confirms the close association between the two individuals during the end of the eighth century BC. Finally, the discovery raises new questions about the date of Isaiah. Since the seal impression was found in a clearly dated context within the Royal Building in Jerusalem, there is no question that the prophet Isaiah was a contemporary of the king, just as Isaiah 37:1-2 and many other passages assume. This means that the



Isaiah Seal  
Photo credit: Ouria Tadmor / Eliat Mazar

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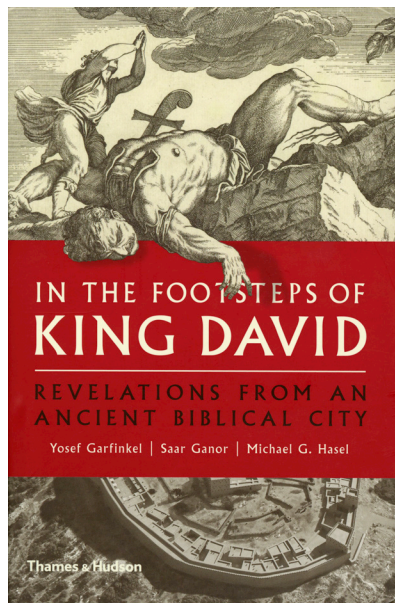
# IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF KING DAVID

## NOW PUBLISHED

A popular new book highlighting the extraordinary discoveries of the Khirbet Qeiyafa Archaeological Project has now been published by Thames and Hudson. In this firsthand and highly readable account, the excavators of Khirbet Qeiyafa in the Valley of Elah, where the Bible says that David fought Goliath, reveal how seven years (2007-2013) of exhaustive investigation have uncovered a city dating back to the time of David. This has revolutionized our understanding of the early kingdom of Judah. The site is surrounded by massive fortifications, with impressive gates, a clear urban plan, and an abundance of finds that tell us much more about the inhabitants, including a pottery sherd with the earliest known inscription. The three directors of the project, Yosef Garfinkel, Saar Ganor, and Michael G. Hasel, clearly describe the methods of the excavation, new technologies in cyber-archaeology employed, and the evidence that was discovered by hundreds of staff and volunteers from around the world over the course of the expedition.

More than simply an excavation report, the book also explains the importance of these discoveries and how the site sheds new light on David's kingdom, as well as forming the unique meeting point between the methodology, history, historiography, and archaeology of King David. This topic continues to be at the center of a controversy that has raged for decades, with some scholars disputing the historicity of the Bible and the chronology of the events recounted in it, an approach that is convincingly challenged here.

The significance of the oldest Hebrew inscriptions ever uncovered in the land of Israel, three sanctuary rooms and their contribution to the religious practices of ancient Judah, and a shrine



model that suggests architectural features found in the description of Solomon's Temple in 1 Kings and 1 Chronicles are among the features that provide an up-to-date synthesis of the significance of how the early kingdom of Judah can now be understood in light of these important discoveries.

To order *In the Footsteps of David: Revelations from an Ancient Biblical City* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2018), please contact the Institute of Archaeology or visit our website for more information on this and other books produced and available for purchase.

## RECENT REVIEWS

"An engaging glimpse into the ancient past [and] a worthwhile work on a number of counts. Though sometimes a bit technical, the book is a fascinating glimpse into the methods, rigors, and rewards of archaeology. On another level, the authors add to a larger conversation about the historicity of the Bible while describing a find of true significance."

### Kirkus Reviews

"The parts of the book that are not detailing the archaeological findings summarize the sometimes-conflicting biblical tradition regarding David's life and past archaeological study of the region."

### Publishers Weekly

"An armchair archaeologist's delight."

### Booklist

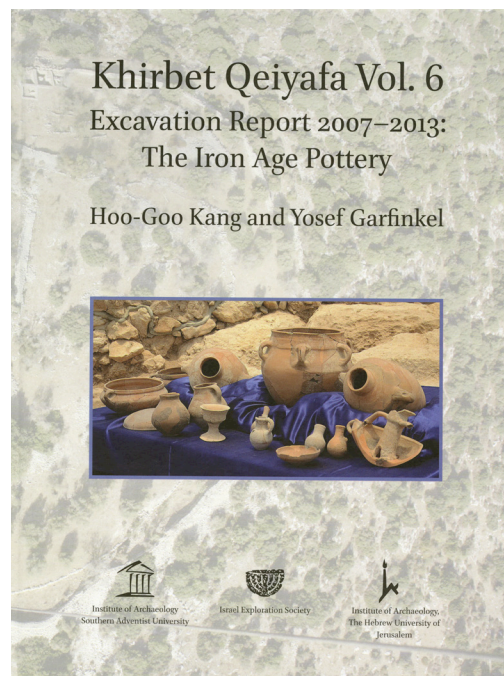
"This study provides one very important strand for the tangled story of Palestine/Israel. It exhibits the virtues of committed scholarship in a land where anger and assertion frequently crowd out careful qualification and a willingness to consider varied arguments. It is restrained in its claims, avoids triumphalism and guards its sanity."

### London Review of Books

# ANNOUNCING: KHIRBET QEYAFI, VOL. 6: THE IRON AGE POTTERY

*Khirbet Qeiyafa, Vol. 6: The Iron Age Pottery* is the final publication of the Iron Age IIA pottery from the early Judean site located on the northern edge overlooking the Valley of Elah. The principal author, Hoo-Goo Kang of Korean Jangsin University, received his PhD from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, specializing in the Iron Age pottery of Khirbet Qeiyafa. In this expanded work, Dr. Kang lays out the evidence for understanding the significance of the Iron Age pottery of Khirbet Qeiyafa.

The Khirbet Qeiyafa final publication report series has set new records for the publication of archaeological excavations in the Middle East. The directors from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Southern Adventist University have been committed to timely publications of sponsored excavations. The eight-volume series consists of the scientific report documenting the discoveries of Khirbet Qeiyafa (2007-2013). Vol. 1 was published immediately after the first two seasons in 2009. Vol. 2 on architecture and stratigraphy was published within a year after the close of the excavations in 2014. Vol. 5 on the coins and other metal objects was published in 2016. Vol. 6 was published this summer. This is in contrast to many other expeditions that often take decades to produce reports of the excavations.



## NEW MUSEUM COORDINATOR

Angela Edwards joined the Institute of Archaeology staff as the new museum coordinator in August 2018. Ms. Edwards is a native of Michigan. She studied Classics and minored in Archaeology at Grand Valley State University, as well as Museum Studies and Archaeology at Southern Adventist University. Before taking on this new position, Edwards worked at the Purchasing Department at Southern Adventist University. Her primary tasks are (1) coordination of the participation in independent assessment programs in order to improve policies and procedures and the safety and security of its collections, facilities, and staff; (2) marketing plans that will promote the museum's lecture series, exhibition openings, open houses, and fundraising events; (3) design and layout of newsletter, website, and promotional materials; (4) educational outreach programs and resources for visitors; (5) development of temporary exhibits, including the planning of exhibit content, display, and graphics and the installation of the exhibit; and (6) oversight of the accession and deaccession of objects in the collections, and maintenance of the proper

storage of artifacts in archival quality settings. One of her major responsibilities this coming year is to remove the current exhibit, "A World in Miniature: Creation, Cosmos, and Ecology on Seals from the Biblical World" and coordinate a new exhibit on the history of the Bible which will open in the fall of 2019. Edwards brings a wealth of experience and a new level of training with her museum studies degree, and we welcome her to our staff.

We bid farewell to Cherie Lynn Olsen, who served ably in the capacity of museum coordinator from 2016 to 2018. During her tenure, she supervised a growth in museum attendance with the new exhibit "A World in Miniature" that opened in 2016. She assisted in developing a new virtual reality exhibit on the same topic that will be released early next year. We also offer congratulations, as she and her husband, Thomas, have welcomed a new son into their home, Silas Tucker Olsen, who was born May 2. We wish them well in this new and important step in their journey!

# RECENT FINDS



Photo credit: New York Post

## 3,000 YEAR OLD FIGURINE FOUND

Haaretz.com announced a 3,000 year old figurine was found in Israel “The 5-centimeter sculpture is an exceedingly rare example of figurative art from the Holy Land during the 9th century B.C.E., — a period associated with biblical kings. Exquisitely preserved but for a bit of missing beard, nothing like it has been found before. Nineteenth-century archaeologists identified the site, then home to a village called Abil al-Qamh, with Abel Beth Maacah mentioned in the Book of Kings.”

<https://www.haaretz.com/archaeology/one-of-a-kind-royal-figurine-found-in-israel-1.6158138>

## ANCIENT SCROLL FINALLY DECIPHERED

Earlier this year Bible History Daily.com published this find. “A burnt ancient scroll found in 1970 has finally been deciphered thanks to advanced digital technology. Four and a half decades after its discovery, the scroll was recently revealed to contain a passage from the Book of Leviticus 1:1-8. Excavated from the Torah ark of a Byzantine-period synagogue at Ein Gedi in Israel, the scroll had been victim to a fire that raged through the entire village. The scroll is considered to be the oldest Hebrew Bible scroll discovered since the Dead Sea Scrolls. Furthermore, the discovery represents the first time a Torah scroll has been excavated from an ancient synagogue.”

<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/hebrew-bible/book-of-leviticus-verses-recovered-from-burnt-hebrew-bible-scroll/>



Photo credit: Sciencemag.org

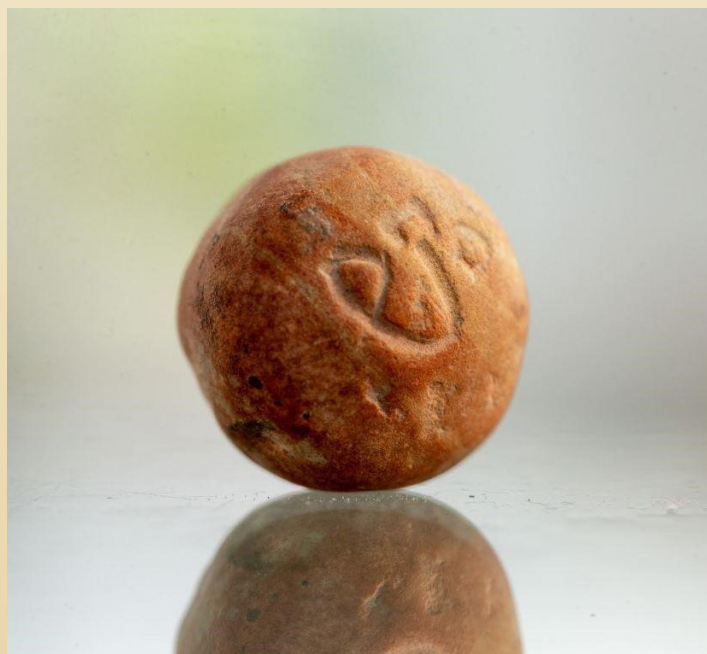


Photo credit: Eliyahu Yanai, City of David

## BEKA WEIGHT FOUND IN JERUSALEM

The Times of Israel released an article titled Straight from the Bible: Tiny First Temple stone weight unearthed in Jerusalem “An extremely rare, minuscule biblical stone weight inscribed in ancient Hebrew script with the word “beka” was discovered in rubble taken from excavations at the foundations of the Western Wall. Only a handful of similar stone beka weights have been unearthed in Jerusalem, said archaeologist Eli Shukron, who directed the excavations on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority. He told The Times of Israel that none had previously been found with this exact inscription. The “beka,” a First Temple-period weight measure used by pilgrims paying their half-shekel tax before ascending to the Temple Mount, was recently discovered by a volunteer in the City of David’s wet sifting project in Jerusalem’s Emek Tzurim National Park.”

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/straight-from-the-bible-tiny-first-temple-stone-weight-unearthed-in-jerusalem/>

# RECENT FINDS



Photo credit: Ouria Tadmor / Eliat Mazar

## ISAIAH'S SEAL FOUND

The Isaiah bulla was revealed to the world for the first time in the special March/April May/June 2018 issue of Biblical Archaeology Review honoring longtime BAR editor and founder Hershel Shanks. Bearing a Hebrew inscription that reads “[Belonging] to Isaiah nvy,” the bulla is damaged and missing its upper left section. Eilat Mazar, director of the Ophel excavations in Jerusalem, proposes that the impression reads, “[belonging] to Isaiah the prophet.” Mazar thus suggests that the bulla was associated with the Biblical prophet Isaiah.

<https://members.bib-arch.org/biblical-archaeology-review/44/2/7>

## 1,500 YEAR-OLD MOSAIC

In its eighth dig season, the vibrant mosaic flooring of a fifth century synagogue excavated in the small ancient Galilee village of Huqoq continues to surprise. The 2018 Huqoq dig has uncovered unprecedented depictions of biblical stories, including the Israelite spies in Canaan. With its rich finds, the Byzantine-period synagogue busts scholars’ preconceived notions of a Jewish settlement in decline. “What we found this year is extremely exciting,” University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Prof. Jodi Magness told The Times of Israel, saying the biblically based depictions are “unparalleled” and not found in any other ancient synagogue.



Photo credit: Jim Haberman

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/mind-blowing-1600-year-old-biblical-mosaics-paint-new-picture-of-galilean-life/>



Photo credit: Jacob Dahl

## CRACKING LONG-DEAD LANGUAGES

Broken and scorched black by fire, the dense, wedge-shaped marks etched into the ancient clay tablets are only just visible under the soft light at the British Museum. These tiny signs are the remains of the world’s oldest writing system: cuneiform. Developed more than 5,000 years ago in Mesopotamia, the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers where modern-day Iraq now lies, cuneiform captured life in a complex and fascinating civilization for some three millennia. From furious letters between warring royal siblings to rituals for soothing a fractious baby, the tablets offer a unique insight into a society at the dawn of history.

<http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20181207-how-ai-could-help-us-with-ancient-languages-like-sumerian>

# FALL SEMESTER MUSEUM LECTURES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...

eighth-century date of Isaiah is now more strongly supported than ever before. This raises new questions for those who would date the Book of Isaiah to the post-exilic period hundreds of years later. It is now possible to suggest that Isaiah's predictions about the future, as recorded in his book, not only speak to the future events of the Babylonian conquest by Cyrus, but also that they speak with accuracy of the Messianic visions of the future Saviour of humanity. He would be "pierced for our transgressions" and "crushed for our iniquities" so that "by His wounds we are healed" (Isa. 3:5). ✍

## MESUEM LECTURE: DR. MICHAEL G. HASEL

On October 6, 2018, Dr. Michael G. Hasel, Professor of Near Eastern Studies and Archaeology, and Director of the Institute of Archaeology presented the first Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum Lecture of the 2018-19 academic year. The title of the lecture was "The Rise of the Kingdom of Judah in the Tenth Century: The Emerging Picture from the Ancient Past." Hasel focused on two recent developments in the archaeological record for ancient Judah: (1) the growing number of sites dating to the early tenth century BC, and (2) the increasing number of inscriptions dating to the period. Together, these two lines of evidence have dispelled some of the arguments made over the last two decades by some scholars who have suggested that Judah developed much later in the eighth century BC.

Hasel began with an overview of the historical geography of the Shephelah region, where the most recent excavations have taken place with several new projects developing. He pointed out that the Valleys of Aijalon, Sorek, Elah, Zephethah, and Qubeiybah were the focus of special attention as the

kingdom was initiated in the eleventh-century transition. These valleys contained the major roadways leading up to the hill country where first Hebron and later Jerusalem served as the capitals of the kingdom. Along these routes, cities were established as an outer buffer along the borders of the kingdom to provide protection and to delimit the area. One of these cities that did not come under the control of Judah until the reign of David's son Solomon (1 Kgs 9:15-16) was Tel Gezer. Renewed excavations at the site provides new evidence for the occupation of Gezer during the tenth century BC, including a massive gate and casemate walls. These fortifications were already discovered in earlier expeditions. But the renewed excavations solidified the dates which correspond well to other developments in the region. In the first expedition of the site under the direction of P. A. Macalister, the Gezer Calendar was discovered, which contained the earliest tenth-century text in Hebrew. More recently, in excavations at Khirbet Qeiyafa overlooking the Elah Valley, excavators have found two Hebrew inscriptions dating at least 30 years earlier. These inscriptions provide the earliest evidence for Hebrew in the entire region. In an extensive survey directed by Southern Adventist University in 2010 at the site of Socoh, situated across from Khirbet Qeiyafa on the south side of the valley, additional evidence was found for occupation in the early tenth century. Future excavations may reveal more evidence for writing during this period. Excavations by Dr. Ron Tappy at Tel Zayit in 2005 uncovered a 22-letter inscription bearing the oldest known securely datable example of the complete linear alphabet. Although it is not possible to say the precise language the alphabet was written in, it provided important evidence for literacy during the early tenth century. The pottery and architecture of the site suggests it was Judean and not Philistine or Canaanite. New excavations at Tel Burna/Bornat and now Khirbet el-Rai also reveal cities with pottery similar to that uncovered at Khirbet Qeiyafa. This includes a number



Photo credit: Seth Shaffer

of the typical finger-impressed handles and storage jars found at the site. Khirbet el-Rai has great promise to understand the extension of Judah to the south. In the extreme southwest, located in the Wadi Shikmah, is Khirbet Summeily, excavated by Jeff Blakely and Jimmy Hardin. This site likewise exhibits strong affinities to the Judahite culture. Finally, ongoing excavations in Jerusalem itself by Eilat Mazar have recently produced the Ophel inscription that dates back to the late eleventh-early tenth centuries BC.

Hasel concluded that the last 13 years of work in the kingdom of Judah have greatly expanded our understanding of its earliest history and its first kings. The evidence for literacy has gone from one inscription known prior to 2005 to five inscriptions known today. This is an increase of 500%. Together with the cities described, the growing evidence suggests a robust kingdom early in the tenth century that later gave rise to many other cities in the region, including Tel Lachish, where Southern Adventist University has been excavating from 2013 to 2017. These new and developing projects promise a bright future for research in this region and in this period. ✍

# DIRECTOR'S LETTER



For the past 15 years we have been in the field excavating almost every summer for thirteen seasons. After the conclusion of the excavations of *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish* we have entered into a phase of publication and successfully published three books this year. Over this past year we began intensive work on the Lachish publication project and are well underway for our goal to have one volume out in about two-year's

time. Eventually we will be back in the field excavating, but the publications of our previous projects now are taking top priority.

Since we were not in the field this summer, I was able to spend some quality time in Israel working on the Lachish publications and also had the opportunity to visit other excavation projects in the field. It is important to keep up with what is taking place by periodically visiting sites that are active. Many times the data does not get published until years later and in this way one can keep abreast of the latest developments. That is much more difficult when we ourselves are excavating and touring with students on the weekend.

Over the course of ten days a board member and I had the opportunity to visit nine different sites where we were hospitably received and given tours and updates on the most recent discoveries. Directors from a variety of institutions welcomed us and shared with us there findings. Some highlights include the new data on the chronology of the Middle Bronze-Late Bronze

transition at Lachish as part of a larger project focusing on chronology synchronisms in the Mediterranean world. Thanks to Felix Höflmeyer and Katherina Streit who direct that project. It was especially rewarding to see the growth and recognition of early tenth century ceramics at a number of key sites, a field that has now been opened with the publication of our work at Khirbet Qeiyafa. Yosef Garfinkel and Kyle Keimer showed us their work at Khirbet el-Rai, a site west of Lachish that promises to provide additional insights into the early monarchical history of King David's Judah. The huge Late Bronze Age palace near the entrance of Lachish was shown to us by Shlomit Bechar who directs the project with Amnon Ben-Tor for the Hebrew University. It was fascinating to see what progress has been made in the last ten years since we dug at the same site. Another highlight was the underwater excavations at Tel Dor where Assaf Yasur-Landau of Haifa University was exploring the harbor.

Each year brings new discoveries that enhance and expand our understanding of the ancient biblical world. We want to thank you for your part in making this possible and hope that the encouraging articles contained here will lift your spirits in the coming season where we can be thankful of so much. May you enjoy this season and the blessings God brings! ✍

Michael G. Hasel, Ph.D.  
Director, Institute of Archaeology

## I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT THE INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY, SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY, IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- Institute of Archaeology (donations will be applied to areas of greatest need)
- Archaeological Excavations Fund
- Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum
- William G. Dever Research Library

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- I'm not prepared to give at this time. However, I would like to commit to a financial gift in the area marked above. Please contact me for payment arrangements.





## UPCOMING EVENTS

LYNN H. WOOD ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
MUSEUM LECTURE SERIES 2018-2019

### February 18

Museum Lecture: Thomas Davis, "St. Paul in Cyprus: Out of the Comfort Zone," Southwestern Baptist Seminary

### April 1

Museum Lecture: Scott Stripling, "Go Now to Shiloh: Have We Found the House of God?," The Bible Seminary

The museum lecture series is free and open to the public. For more information, or to view previous Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum Lecture Series presentations, visit [southern.edu/administration/archaeology/lecture\\_series.html](http://southern.edu/administration/archaeology/lecture_series.html)

## SYMPOSIA AND CONFERENCES

### November 14-17

American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) Annual Meeting, Denver, Colorado

### January 16-19

Astonishing Discoveries meetings, Hong Kong

### February 15-16

Astonishing Discoveries meetings, Greeneville, Tennessee

### February 4

Archaeology Lecture, American Jewish University, Los Angeles, California

### March 20-22

2019 Tennessee Association of Museums Annual Conference, Clarksville, Tennessee

### March 26

Merenptah Symposium, Southwestern Baptist Seminary, Dallas, Texas

### March 29-30

Astonishing Discoveries meetings, Fremont, Nebraska

### April 7-11

The Tenth Century BCE in the Southern Levant, Conference, Israel

### May 19-22

American Alliance of Museums Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo, New Orleans, Louisiana

# DIG SIGHT

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