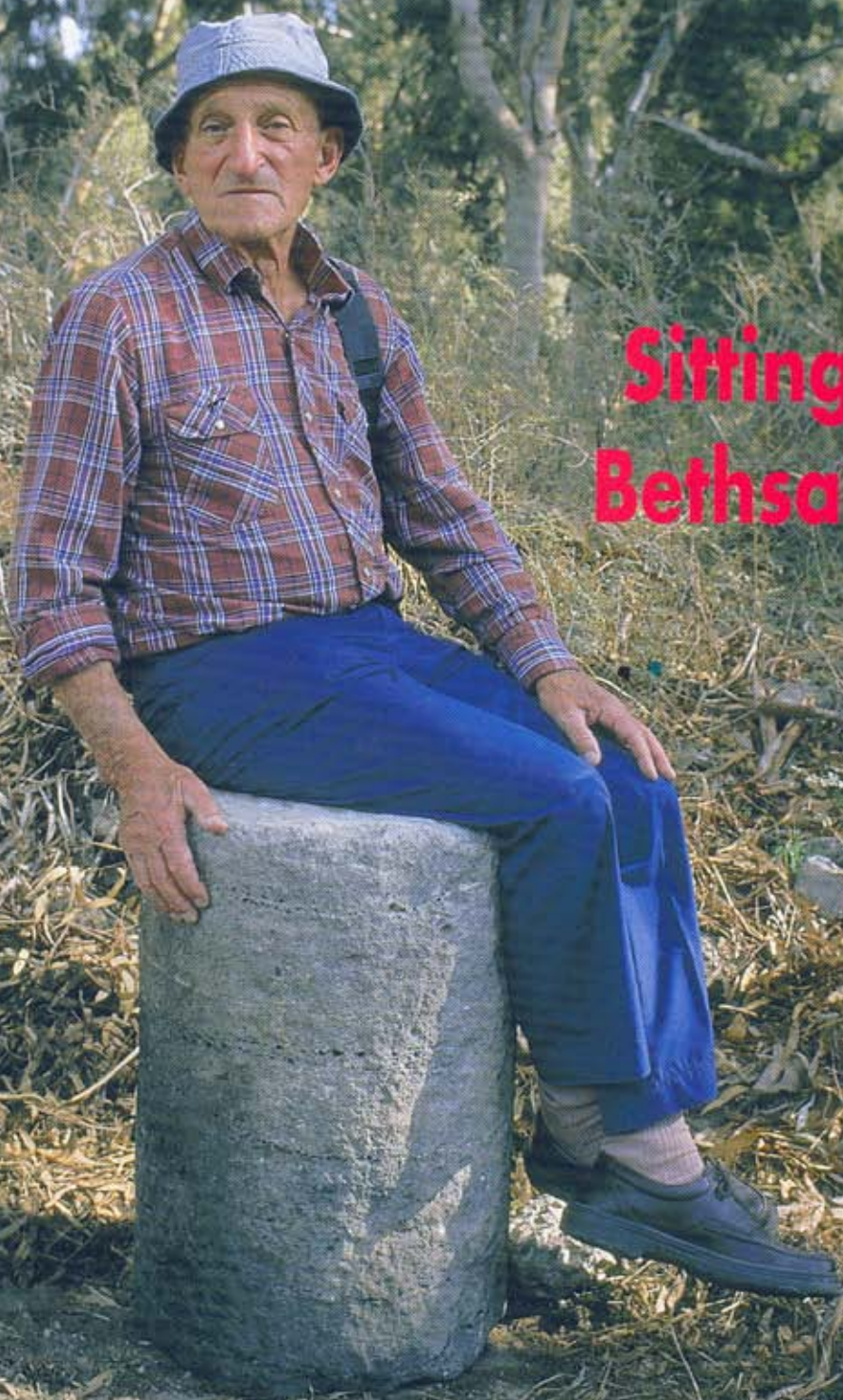


July – September 1998 • Number 54

Jerusalem

P E R S P E C T I V E

**Sitting on
Bethsaida?**



Perspective on This Issue

Mendel Nun
rejects the
conclusions of
the Bethsaida
archeological
expedition. For
the results of his
investigations at
el-Araj, turn to
page 12.

A colleague and contemporary of pastor-scholar Robert Lindsey, this long-time Jerusalem resident (1957–1968) was for years skeptical of Lindsey's synoptic theory. However, once he began his own independent investigations, he became convinced of the soundness of Lindsey's approach. In "The Jerusalem School and Its Theory," p. 32, **Risto Santala** explains his reasons for accepting Lindsey's hypothesis.

Santala was ordained as a minister in the Finnish Lutheran Church in 1953. He has written twenty books. The best known are *The Messiah in the Old Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings*, *The Messiah in the New Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings* and *Paul: The Man and the Teacher in the Light of Jewish Sources*.

From 1968 until 1975 Santala was principal of the Bible School of Helsinki, then returned to Israel where he continued his research and writing until 1987. Santala retired from the ministry in 1992 after serving as vicar of Joutjärvi parish in Lahti, Finland.

■ While preparing Magen Broshi's article for publication in this issue of JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE, we received an update from him:

It is almost twenty years since "Allegro to Zeitlin" appeared in *The Jerusalem Post* [Israel's English-language daily newspaper], and hardly anything has changed. Indeed, the alphabetical list of non-consensual scholars, some of them plain cranks, has grown considerably. The Gresham-Broshi Law is still as valid as it was a generation ago!

Recently, I conducted a lecture tour of the United States, Germany and South Africa. The questions most frequently asked by audiences were: "Is it true that the Vatican and the State of Israel were in cahoots to suppress publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls?"; "Is it true that members of the Dead Sea sect were really Christians?"; and the like.

These questions are, of course, absurd. For example, recent radiocarbon tests done in two laboratories (Switzerland and the U.S.A.) have proven that the texts on which the authors of "Christian" theories rely were composed long before the ministry of Jesus.

In "From Allegro to Zeitlin," p. 34, **Magen Broshi** explains his view that the output of cheap, pseudo-scholarship has driven legitimate, serious scholarly information from the marketplace of ideas.

Broshi is an Israeli archaeologist. He has participated in many archaeological expeditions and directed the excavations at Tel Megadim (1967–1969), Mount Zion (1971–1978), The Holy Sepulchre (1976) and Qumran habitational caves (with Hanan Eshel, 1995–1996). Broshi devotes much of his time to study of the Dead Sea Scrolls—from 1964 to 1994 he was curator of the Shrine of the Book, the wing of the Israel Museum in which the major Dead Sea Scrolls are housed. He recently prepared a new edition of the Damascus Covenant—*The Damascus Document Reconsidered* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992)—the only one of the Dead Sea Scrolls that was known before 1947.

■ "Time is money." So goes the old adage. A person may use time to amass wealth, or place that time at God's disposal. In "The Best Long-term Investment—Making Loans to God," p. 36, **Joseph Frankovic** explains that Jesus drew inspiration for his homily about laying up treasure in heaven from Psalm 39, Ecclesiastes 5, Psalm 24 and Proverbs 19. To be merciful to the poor is to lend to God.

Frankovic is a student at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, where he is pursuing a Ph.D. in Midrash under the direction of Professor Burt Visotzky. A regular contributor to JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE, Frankovic has worked closely with Dr. Robert Lindsey and Prof. Brad Young.

Most people think the search for Bethsaida is over. Archaeological excavations have taken place at et-Tell for ten years, and they continue this summer. Many scholars, too, have accepted Bethsaida Excavations Project director Dr. Rami Arav and his associates' conclusion that et-Tell is the Bethsaida of the New Testament. So has the Israeli government. Since 1989 Bethsaida has been located at et-Tell on all maps produced by the State of Israel. Even the Vatican has accepted this identification: the Vatican's committee on holy sites has recognized et-Tell as Bethsaida.

Among archaeologists, however, there is growing skepticism about the claims of the et-Tell expedition. Mendel Nun, an authority on the Sea of Galilee and its environs, believes Bethsaida was located at el-Araj, a site on the Sea of Galilee's northeastern shore near the Jordan River—the lake's ancient fishing villages were always located on its shores. Nun rejects outright Arav's contention that he has found the ancient site of Bethsaida. Nun thinks the et-Tell excavation results do not support Arav's claims, but, in fact, disprove them. Nun calls for a thorough excavation at the el-Araj site, where surface remains are especially impressive.

Now Nun has written his objections to the et-Tell identification in detail, and JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE is privileged to publish his article. We commissioned artist and photographer Janet Frankovic to photograph remains at el-Araj in 1995. This year we sent master photographer Joel Fishman on assignment to el-Araj. In our opinion, Frankovic and Fishman's photographs, together with photographs from the archives of Beit Ha-Oganim, the Sea of Galilee museum at Kibbutz Ein Gev, and two stunning photographs we obtained from aerial photographers Duby Tal and Moni Haramati of

Albatross, plus drawings by Helen Twena, provide the necessary graphic accompaniment to Nun's breakthrough article.

I hope you, our readers, enjoy the article. Bethsaida is one of the few places visited by Jesus that is mentioned by name in the New Testament. Its identification is extremely important to students of the Gospels, and I think Nun's article is a significant step forward in finding this lost city. Keeping our readers informed with the most accurate and up-to-date information about textual and archaeological discoveries in Israel relating to the Gospels is the aim of JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE.

David Bivin
Editor



Author Mendel Nun (on left) and editor David Bivin working at Nun's kitchen table. Bivin questions Nun about his "Has Bethsaida Finally Been Found?" as they prepare it for publication.

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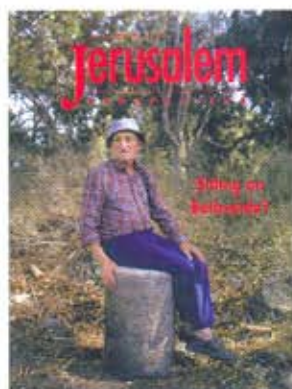
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Jerusalem

PERSPECTIVE

Exploring the Jewish Background
to the Life and Words of Jesus



COVER: Fisherman and author Mendel Nun takes a break during a visit to elAraj. Nun's seat is a limestone column drum, one of many architectural elements scattered across the surface of the elAraj site. Photograph by Joel S. Fishman.



36

12 ▶



Contents

July–September 1998 • Number 54

■ Has Bethsaida Finally Been Found? *Mendel Nun* 12

Kibbutz member, author and foremost expert on the Sea of Galilee, Mendel Nun strongly disagrees with the Bethsaida Excavations Project's identification of et-Tell as Bethsaida. "Bethsaida should be located at el-Araj on the Sea of Galilee's coast and not three kilometers inland at et-Tell," Nun emphatically states.

Nun's arguments, published here for the first time, will create a stir in archaeological circles. In his article, Nun spells out his reasons for rejecting the et-Tell identification. He maintains that the et-Tell site was not a fishing village in ancient times, as BEP archaeologists claim. Based on the excavation results, et-Tell "fishermen" were not professional fishermen, but "simply residents of et-Tell who occasionally fished in the Jordan River for food and for their own pleasure." The BEP excavators also claim they have found a Roman temple at et-Tell. Not so, says Nun. In his opinion, the structure never served as a temple. Furthermore, Nun believes that most of the fishing implements found at et-Tell are not fishing implements—the fishing hooks are not fishing hooks and the fishing needles are not fishing needles—and the "Fisherman's House" is not a fisherman's house.

■ The Jerusalem School and Its Theory *Risto Santala* 32

A Finnish minister, scholar and Bible College head takes a look at the theory of the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research. In his view, this theory "challenges scholars to reexamine that which was formerly considered self-evident," such as "the working hypothesis—ossified in the minds of theologians—that Mark was the earliest evangelist."

■ *From Moses' Seat:* From Allegro to Zeitlin *Magen Broshi* 34

According to a well-known theory of Economics, "bad" money (of lesser intrinsic value) will eventually drive "good" money (of greater intrinsic value) out of circulation. Apparently, this theory can also be applied to the world of learning, where sensational, pseudo-information tends to dominate genuine, serious scholarship.

■ The Best Long-term Investment— Making Loans to God *Joseph Frankovic* 36

A person may choose obedience to Jesus' exhortation to "lay up treasure in heaven," or he or she may choose to amass and hoard wealth. Joseph Frankovic explains why obedience to Jesus' radical challenge is a good long-term investment.

Departments

- 2 Perspective on This Issue
- 6 Readers' Perspective
- 9 Jerusalem School
Affiliates
- 38 The Jerusalem School
- 39 Glossary
- 39 Transliteration Key

Readers' Perspective



■ Galileo Would Like It

What a beautifully produced publication JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE is! I do not mean just the excellent art-work. I really am very impressed with the clarity of presentation of ideas, and especially the fantastic use of diagrams. The whole approach is like an elegant proof in mathematics, or a great piece of reasoning in physics. I can imagine Galileo, if he were alive today, liking the approach, and reading with great interest.

Brian E. Wilson
Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire, England

■ JP Penetrates Bulgaria

JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE is unique in its profile, scope and methodology and its high standard of analysis must be sustained. It is a wonderful and enriching privilege to be one of its readers. Unlike other religious magazines, it can be read and reread for new insights into the life and thought of one of the world's most influential figures.

Hieromonk Dr. Pavel St. Georgiev
Shoumen University
Shoumen, Bulgaria

■ German Subscriber Profits from JP

I am looking forward to the next edition of JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE, and I am glad that I have the privilege of supporting your research into the life and words of Yeshua by means of my subscription, and at the same time profiting greatly from your wonderful teaching and from the Torah which is going out from Jerusalem into the rest of the world.

Wolfgang C. Schuler
Duisburg, Germany

■ Enjoyed JP 53

Thank you for the magazine JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE which I have regularly and enjoy reading, particularly the language studies and cultural background. These provide a clearer understanding of the Scriptures.

I especially enjoyed the last issue with the article explaining how our Lord's oral teaching was remembered exactly in its Hebrew and translated into Greek written gospels. This explains a lot and is very helpful in unravelling a lot of complicated questions.

Brian Keatley
Enfield, Middlesex
England

■ Subscriber Takes Issue with Penfold

I do not think that Mr. Penfold's letter (JP 53, p. 6) can be allowed to pass without comment.

Mr. Penfold writes: "Zechariah warns that Israel 'shall look on me whom they have pierced' (12:10), which they will do from every nation under heaven to which the Lord God has driven them." It is hard to see how any straightforward reading of Zechariah 12 could support such an interpretation. The first half of verse 12 (not quoted by Mr. Penfold) says, "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication." Reading the whole of chapter 12, and particularly from verse 7, it seems clear that the most natural understanding of "the house of David" is that they are among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In verses 11 and 12 the mourning of Jerusalem and "the land" (i.e., Israel or Judah) is referred to. There is absolutely no reference to mourning from among the nations.

I have always been taught that a fundamental principle of interpretation is to go for the natural and obvious meaning first. Mr. Penfold's letter

seems to include a classic example of using part of a text to fit a predetermined eschatological viewpoint.

It is for the very purpose of making us think that magazines such as yours should be read. We should be stimulated to go back to Scripture with fresh eyes and take another look.

I do not always agree with you, but I read every issue of *JP* from cover to cover and will continue to do so.

Rosemary Capon
St. Albans, Hertfordshire
England

■ Plea to Penfold and Montgomery

My plea to Mr. Montgomery and Mr. Penfold is not to run away from challenges to their doctrines, but to embrace them with the full faith that the Holy Spirit is our teacher and will teach us new things that our fathers never even dreamed of. We can't allow ourselves to act like children and throw little tantrums whenever our faith is tested with new looks at the Scripture. If you run and hide then who will raise up your voice of opposition in the Body. No one has a corner on the market of biblical exegesis. Your viewpoint is welcomed and encouraged. But if your tantrum causes you to terminate your subscription, then you are cut out of the process. Not only do you lose, but we all lose as well. We need your challenges and criticism when they are given with love and not threats. So, Mr. Montgomery and Mr. Penfold, please don't cancel your subscriptions. I look forward to your challenging letters as I am certain many others do.

James Gibson
Sante Fe, New Mexico
U.S.A.

■ Upsetting the Evangelical Applecart

Thank you for publishing Derek White's letter and Steven Notley's response in issue 53. I must agree with Mr. White to some extent, but only in so far as agreeing with his understanding of the problem. Derek White is, of course, totally correct in seeing a challenge to "the usual Evangelical understanding of 'verbal inspiration.'" Evangelical theology shies away from textual and form criticism, and for some good reasons; however, the problem remains that the issue is not with Scripture

itself, but with one's view of it.

If I may be so bold, I would suggest that most Evangelical believers have a view of Scripture that seems very close to the Sadducees. They, too, only took the written Torah as "inspired" and denied any function or inspiration to the Oral Torah. In the light of recent understandings, this *sola scriptura* position [that for Christians the Protestant Bible alone is the sole rule for doctrine and morals] is indeed under threat. We need not, indeed should not, be afraid of this. A lot of prevailing Evangelical thought about the nature of Scripture would not have been understood by our Rabbi and Messiah Yeshua two thousand years ago. As has been well presented by David Bivin and others, Yeshua would have been at home in the Pharisaic community, including their views regarding Torah (Written and Oral). Some examples may help to illustrate: In John 7:38 Yeshua mentions the "Scriptures"; however, his quote does *not* come from the Written Torah, but the Oral! The disciples, too, continued the use of Oral Torah (see Jude 9). In many other places we see this acceptance of both Written and Oral Torah in the teaching and practices of Yeshua and his followers. If everything contained in Scripture is factually correct and inspired, then so too is Titus 1:12-13: "Cretans are always liars..."! Before some of your Evangelical readers write this off as nonsense, it may help to show that the *sola scriptura* position is not as *sola* as it appears. The moving of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, for which there is no scriptural command, is a Christian oral tradition, as is Christmas, Easter, aspects of communion and the doctrine of the Trinity, and many more. I believe that it is a good thing that this view of the Scriptures is being challenged. When the understanding of the New Testament as Messianic Oral Torah, interpretation rather than new teaching, is made clear, many problems are solved. This in no way undermines the inspiration of the Scriptures, rather it is a plea to reevaluate how we view the nature of the written (and oral) Scripture, to bring it more into line with the more Jewish, flexible view.

In reply to Dr. Notley, I would encourage him, and everyone at the Jerusalem School, in their research. However, Dr. Notley makes the claim that "according to Mark, Jesus would not allow anyone to carry anything through the Temple precincts." This is incorrect. In Greek the word used in Mark 11:16 is "vessel." It seems clear that Yeshua was again upholding the Oral Torah in who or what or when certain vessels used for sacrifice were to be carried in the Temple. He in no way was "intending to signal the end of the sacrificial system," at least, not in *that* verse!

While I would not agree with all the conclusions

JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE welcomes letters, faxes and email messages to the Editor. We will use this column to share as many of our readers' comments, queries and requests as possible.

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edited for clarity or space.

drawn by the Jerusalem School, I do applaud the overall direction of the research. Please keep on upsetting the Evangelical applecart!

Andrew Sheldrake, Leader
Beit Shalom Messianic Synagogue
Norwich, Norfolk
England

■ "I Am a Goy of the Goyim"

Although I have only received two issues of the PERSPECTIVE, I am already taken by it, and it is the impartial stance which I find so refreshing. I am a Christian and I follow Yeshua as Messiah, but there is so much that we can learn from a magazine such as yours. I hope that you go from strength to strength.

I love that cover! What a gorgeous sight Mt. Hermon is in the background.

I would like to thank Gloria Suess for sorting out my thistles for me. I photographed several when on holiday in the lower Golan and elsewhere, and have never been able to have them identified. Now I know what they are.

I am interested in the correspondence between Derek White and Steven Notley. I rather take Professor Flusser's view that Jesus was quoting Scripture, for surely His greatest battles were won using Scripture—take the temptations as an example, or His refutation of the rabbinic Mishnah over and against the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount. I am afraid that I don't see any great point in comparing Luke in the light of Mark. They were different men with different backgrounds, presumably writing for a different audience. From the text, as I understand the gospel story, neither of them was there at the time. There are bound to be differences of opinion. It is, in fact, the very differences that make them more credible.

Like you, I am sorry that David Montgomery is not going to write more letters. It seems a pity to launch such a fine broadside and then slam the door to preclude any answer. Does this indicate some uncertainty on the part of the writer? What is wrong with a pursuit of a Hebrew "Life of Jesus"? It is by just that, that my eyes have been opened wider without in any way affecting what I believe. So keep it up, please. This is what I was hoping to find when I subscribed.

Although I am a goy of the goyim, what the Christian church so palpably fails to do is realise that Jesus came as a Jew to Israel. The apostles and early writers were all Jews, the early church was Jewish and God only included the Gentiles after Peter's trip to Cornelius. We Gentiles have the honour to be included in the church through

the grace of God, not from our own worth. The way we hijack the Jewish Scriptures is disgraceful, and then we get all stropky when someone suggests that we might have the wrong end of the stick. When you consider the way that the Gentiles have treated the Jews down through history, it always amazes me that they are so nice to us. We don't deserve it.

R. M. Kitchingman
Chideock, Dorset, England

"THE 'DESERT' OF BETHSAIDA"

■ Midbar Akin to Village Common

I enjoyed Mendel Nun's article, "The 'Desert' of Bethsaida." Would the use of *midbar* here denote land that is not owned by any individual, and is therefore not ploughed? This would make it akin to the village common of old, where everyone from the village was free to graze their sheep or cow. Jesus would then have been meeting the villagers on "common ground."

Mendel Nun notes (p. 37) that "in the Hebrew and Aramaic of Jesus' time the word for 'desert' had two meanings." Could he provide some references for this second meaning, as my searches have proved fruitless. Thank you for your efforts to help us understand the Hebraic background to the New Testament.

Colin Barnes
Brassall, Queensland, Australia

Not only is "a pasturing place" a possible meaning for midbar in the Hebrew Bible (271 occurrences), it is its primary meaning (see Avraham Even-shoshan, Ha-Millon He-Hadash [Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1972], p. 630). For an example of this usage, note Jeremiah 2:2 (compare Bava Kamma 7:7 in the Mishnah).

Professor Shmuel Safrai has pointed out to me in a private conversation a good example of the use of midbar in the sense of "a pasturing place" or "the common grazing land of a settlement." In a story found in rabbinic literature (Ecclesiastes Rabbah 1:1 and Song of Songs Rabbah 1:4), a poor Hasid, Hanina ben Dosa, so poor he has nothing to take as an offering to Jerusalem, goes out to the midbar of his village (midbarah shel iro), the lands in public domain, or the "village common" suggested above by Mr. Barnes, to search for a stone that he can dress and take to Jerusalem as his offering. For details of the story, see Shmuel

(continued on page 10)

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■ Center for Judaic-Christian Studies

The Center for Judaic-Christian Studies, directed by Dwight Pryor, is a nonprofit organization that seeks to cultivate among Christians an appreciation of their Hebrew heritage. The Center has produced a 13-part television series, "The Quest: The Jewish Jesus," and published books, such as the award-winning *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (Mazar, Doubleday), and the best-selling *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Wilson, Eerdmans).

■ Centre for the Study of Biblical Research

The Centre for the Study of Biblical Research, directed by Dr. William Bean, was founded in 1984 to augment the work of the Jerusalem School. The Centre's initial focus was to generate funds to purchase computer equipment for the School. CSBR is the publisher of *Fluent Biblical and Modern Hebrew*, a home-study Hebrew course, and acts as JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE's U.S. subscription office. CSBR has established several synoptic gospel study groups that meet monthly in Southern California.

■ Christian Friends of Israel - U.S.A.

Christian Friends of Israel is an international organization based in Jerusalem that seeks to educate Christians about the Jewish roots of their faith and about modern Israel. CFI works to counter anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism embedded in Christian preaching. CFI-USA, directed by Hannele Sorensen, is the U.S. office of Christian Friends of Israel. It publishes a monthly newsletter and digest of current events in

on the New Testament. To learn more about the work of HaKeshet, visit its Web site at <http://www.hakeshet.org>.

■ CSBR New England

CSBR New England, a branch of the Centre for the Study of Biblical Research, is directed by Jeanne Miterko. Jeanne is a member of the Connecticut Bar Association and practiced law until 1993 when she decided to focus all her attention on her two young sons, ages three and one. Jeanne's



Jeanne Miterko enjoying the warmth of her fireplace and family (husband Ron, and sons Michael and Joe (on right)).

Israel and the Middle East, and offers a large selection of Israel-related audio and video cassettes. Learn more about CFI-USA through a visit to its site on the Internet (<http://www.cfi-usa.org>).

■ HaKeshet

HaKeshet (Hebrew for "the Connection") is directed by Ken and Lenore Mullican. Lenore, the daughter of Jerusalem School pioneer Dr. Robert Lindsey, grew up in Israel and is fluent in Hebrew. HaKeshet's principal objectives are to foster awareness of the Jewish roots of the Christian faith, promote teaching of the Hebrew language and culture in the local church as an aid to in-depth Bible study, and serve as a clearinghouse of information for people and organizations interested in a Hebraic perspective

husband, Ron, is an investment portfolio manager for Peoples Bank in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

■ CFI Communications

CFI Communications, directed by Derek White, is the U.K. office of Christian Friends of Israel. CFI seeks to express friendship and solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people, and stimulate Christians to pray for Israel. CFI directs much of its energies towards educating Christians about the Jewish roots of their faith and about modern Israel, publishing a bimonthly newsletter and a monthly digest of current events in and around Israel, and producing video and audio cassettes. CFI has also developed a wide range of practical assistance projects in Israel.

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Readers' Perspective

(continued from page 8)

Safrai, "Jesus and the Hasidim," JP 42, 43 & 44 (Jan.-Jun. 1994), 15. The events in this story took place before 66 A.D. while the Temple was still standing. - DB

■ "Desert" Near Commercial Centers

Mr. Nun makes a useful contribution to understanding the enigma implied by the words "desert" and "grass" in the Synoptic accounts of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. On that enigma, I would make the following comments and observations:

1. I agree that the Hebrew word *midbar* does legitimately have the double meaning of "desert" in the popular conception of such an arid area and "the area of pasture for flocks." The second meaning can be readily attested from the Hebrew Bible. A couple of examples will illustrate the point:

a. Joel 2:22. "Do not be afraid, beasts of the field; for the meadows of the desert will grow green" (my trans.). *NEB* omits "desert," rendering the verse "for the pastures shall be green," thus avoiding the apparent paradox of "desert" and "green growth."

b. Psalms 65:13 (12). "The pastures of the desert will be moistened (or, become fertile)" (my trans.). *NEB*: "The pastures in the wild are rich with blessing." *RSV*: "The pastures of the wilderness drip."

The entry *midbar* in the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon (p. 184) verifies this usage: "Tracts of land, used for pasturage of flocks and herds."

2. It is apparent from the Synoptic accounts that the "desert" could not have been any great distance from the "cities" and/or "villages." Both Matthew and Mark state that people arrived at the scene on foot.

The disciples, according to Matthew 14:15 and Mark 6:36, were willing to go and buy food in the surrounding villages, and, according to Luke 9:12, the possibility of the crowd's returning to nearby villages to buy food for themselves is not ruled out. The evidence is consistent: the "desert" was not far from inhabited commercial centres.

The Rev. Raymond Harris
Swaton, Lincolnshire, England

■ "Uninhabited Grassland" is Correct Meaning

Your readers may not fully understand Mendel Nun's "The 'Desert' of Bethsaida" unless they use the *King James Version*. Nun said, "Mark and

Matthew both refer to it as a 'desert place,'" but he failed to give specific verse numbers. Matthew 14:15 and Mark 6:35 do indeed say "desert place" in the *KJV*. Other translations say "desolate spot," "desolate place" and "lonely place." The extremely popular *New International Version* says "remote place." A closely related word from the same root is used in the famous phrase, "the abomination of desolation" (Mt. 24:15).

My Greek dictionary defines the word as "a place abandoned, empty, desolate...desert, grassland, wilderness (in contrast to cultivated and inhabited country)." As Nun implies, "uninhabited grassland" is the correct meaning in this passage.

James W. Fox
Houston, Texas, U.S.A.

■ Could Bethsaida Be West of the Jordan?

The recent issue of *JP* (No. 53) got me to thinking about an interesting question that came up during a trip we took to Israel: Is it possible that the Bethsaida mentioned in the New Testament as the home of Philip, Andrew and Peter (Jn. 1:44) was really a small fishing village just east of Capernaum, but west of the Jordan River? One reason for this suggestion is that at the time these fishermen lived on the lake the territory east of the Jordan was basically a Gentile area. It is unlikely that these observant Jews would have lived there.

Glenn Gero
Dakar, Senegal

Shmuel Safrai responds:

The Jordan River was not the border of the land of Israel in the time of Jesus. According to early halachot dating from before the destruction of the Temple, the land of Israel was composed of 1) Judea, 2) Beyond Jordan and 3) Galilee (e.g., Tosefta, Shevi'it 7:10; Ketubot 13:2). For almost all of the century preceding the destruction of the Temple, the Sea of Galilee's northeastern coast and the Golan (Gaulan) were governed by Jewish rulers, Herod the Great and his descendants. A majority of this territory's population was Jewish. Certainly, the vast majority of the rural population, residing in villages such as Bethsaida and Kursi-Gergesa, was Jewish. Even the area's larger cities—Gamla, for instance—were Jewish. Excavations in Gamla revealed a beautiful, first-century synagogue. One of Gamla's sons, Yehoshua ben Gamla, was high

priest from 62 to 64 C.E. One later resident of the eastern coast of the Sea of Galilee, Rabbi Ya'akov of Korshai, or Kursi (Gergesa), was a teacher of Rabbi Yehudah ha-Nasi, compiler of the Mishnah. This Ya'akov was a native of the same village as the Gergesene demoniac.

David Bivin adds:

Based on the Gergesene demoniac's request to "be with" Jesus (Lk. 8:38), I assume the demoniac was Jewish. Though possible, it is unlikely that a Gentile would make such a request. Furthermore, if the request had come from a Gentile, we would expect Jesus at least to hint at the impossibility of the Gentile's accompanying him.

"THE DISCOMPOSURE OF JESUS' BIOGRAPHY"

■ Jerusalem School Methodology Not Altered

Your piece on oral transmission seems to be stimulating lots of discussion. I have received three different e-mails about it already! Your proposal seems plausible enough to me. But in any case, it doesn't alter the more important issue, on which you and Lindsey are in agreement—that Jesus discoursed in Hebrew, that his original words were faithfully preserved, and in that form were taken rather literally into Greek and subsequently incorporated into our present Synoptics. The crux of the matter for the Jerusalem School methodology is the premise that behind the Greek Synoptics lies a Hebrew undertext, that when excavated sheds enormous light on the original sayings of Jesus. Whether there was an actual Hebrew document (as Eusebius reports) or preservation of an oral tradition, later rendered into Greek (as you propose) is not critical to the validity of the Jerusalem School hermeneutic.

Dwight Pryor
Center for Judaic-Christian Studies
Dayton, Ohio
U.S.A.

■ Lutheran Traditions and Values

I am a Lutheran pastor and an American. I received my training in Minneapolis, Minnesota,

and I feel a total lack of education in the roots of my Jewish Bible, Jewish roots of Christianity, etc. Now that I am living in Finland, I am taking some study courses through the Theological School of the Lutheran Church. It seems to me that all these courses are too colored by the theology of the Church and Finnish religious traditions and values. Your JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE has given me hope again in my Scriptures away from this colonization.

David Puline
Heinola, Suomi (Finland)

See the article by Finnish Lutheran pastor and scholar Risto Santala in this issue (pp. 32–33). –Ed.

■ Prisoner Is Praying for Prof. Flusser

I would like to say that I fully enjoyed the last issue of JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE. I am sure that Dr. Lindsey, bless his soul, smiles upon the work that you have all done. Keep it up!

I have studied almost all the good work that you and your colleagues have produced to date. I have coupled that knowledge with the studying of, and the walking in, His Word. And I must tell you that my life has truly become a blessing. Blessed is He!

Last night I was reading your new publication listings and noticed that David Flusser's book *Jesus* is now available. You will find enclosed a check for the book plus postage. I have known about the writing of this book for quite some time now, and I have been "chomping at the bit" to read it.

I was listening to one of Dwight Pryor's tapes the other night, and Dwight stated that Prof. Flusser has fallen ill. Will you please tell Prof. Flusser that I will always keep him in my daily prayers.

Joel Patrick McKeag
Fort Madison, Iowa, U.S.A.

We sent Mr. McKeag a copy of Jesus autographed by Prof. Flusser. Joel is a prisoner at Iowa State Penitentiary in Fort Madison, Iowa. He earns about US\$30.00 per month. Though we provide JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE free of charge to prisoners, Joel refuses to accept this gift. Not only does he pay for his subscription from his meager income, he also sends regular donations to support the Jerusalem School's work. Joel is one of more than a dozen prisoners scattered across the United States with whom we regularly correspond. As a group they are the Jerusalem School's most diligent and outstanding students. –Ed.

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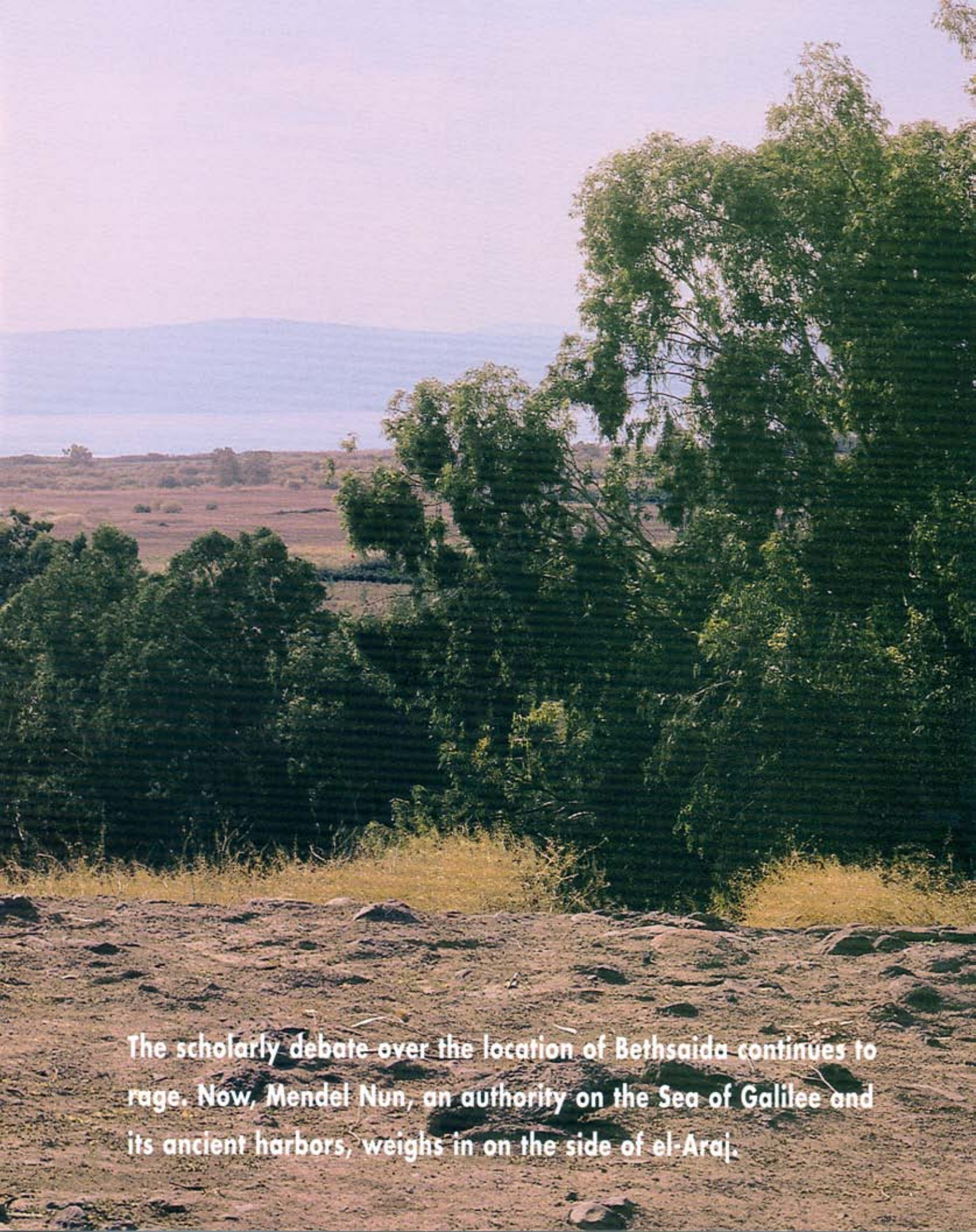
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Has Bethsaida Finally Been Found?

by Mendel Nun





The scholarly debate over the location of Bethsaida continues to rage. Now, Mendel Nun, an authority on the Sea of Galilee and its ancient harbors, weighs in on the side of el-Araj.

The fishermen's village of Bethsaida on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee is one of the most important holy sites of the Christian world. Yet the question of its exact location in Jesus' time has long been a troubling and disputed issue.

Some basic clues are provided by the Gospels. According to John, three of Jesus' apostles—Simon Peter, Andrew and Philip—came from Bethsaida (Jn. 1:44; 12:21). We also know that Jesus performed miracles in Bethsaida: When a blind man was brought to him, Jesus took him to the outskirts of the village and there healed him (Mk. 8:22–26). The miracle of the loaves and fish was performed near Bethsaida, when from two fish and five loaves Jesus provided ample food for a multitude of five thousand (Lk. 9:10–17).

The site of Bethsaida was certainly somewhere on the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, near the inlet of the Jordan River. Opposite Bethsaida, on the northwestern shore about four kilometers across the water, was the ancient city of Capernaum. Four kilometers north of Capernaum was the city of Chorazin. Most of Jesus' Galilean ministry took place in the region of these three cities; hence

Thus we see that family and fishing relations connected the two cities of Bethsaida and Capernaum.

Opinions differ as to the length of Jesus' stay in Capernaum. There are those who believe it was a short time, while others argue that it extended to three years. The sayings and parables of Jesus point to an intimate knowledge of the lake and of the fishing profession, indicating that he stayed in this region for a significant length of time. At Capernaum he healed the sick and performed miracles, and preached in the synagogue on the Sabbath (Mt. 8:16–17; Mk. 1:21–28, 32–34; Lk. 4:31–37, 40–41). Therefore, Capernaum is known as the "City of Jesus."

Next to Jerusalem and Capernaum, the city most frequently mentioned in the Gospels is Bethsaida. However, we know nothing of Jesus' works there, except for the miracle of the healing of a blind man. But his presence in Bethsaida was significant on another level: Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, viewed Jesus with suspicion fearing he would stir political unrest among the Jews in the area, whereas Philip, the more liberal ruler of the neighboring Golan, which had a mixed population, was not troubled by Jesus' activities.

Jesus' work in Chorazin is not mentioned in

Pages 12–13:

The view southwest from the top of et-Tell. The grove of tall eucalyptus trees at the lake's shore serves as a landmark for el-Araj. In the hazy background are the hills above Tiberias. Photograph by Joel S. Fishman.



Above: View to the east across the Plain of Bethsaida. On the horizon stands the plateau known today as the Golan Heights.

the term "Evangelical Triangle." Of the three cities, Capernaum, with its fishing suburb Tabgha, was the very center of Jesus' activities. From Capernaum he traveled to other towns and villages in Galilee, and from Capernaum's harbor he sailed to cities on the other side of the lake.

Capernaum is mentioned thirteen times in the Gospels. Jesus stayed there with Simon Peter, who lived with his family in the house of his mother-in-law (Mt. 8:14–15; Mk. 1:29–31; Lk. 4:38–39). From this we may understand that because of the sons' marriages, the family had moved from Bethsaida to Capernaum.

the Gospels. Since most of the Jewish inhabitants of the Evangelical Triangle did not accept his teachings, he cursed them in a famous reproach:

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. (Mt. 11:21; Lk. 10:13)

From this we may conclude that Jesus performed his "mighty works" in both Chorazin and Bethsaida, even though we are not explicitly told this.

A roll of land topped by a clump of eucalyptus trees (right center) is all that remains of Bethsaida (el-Araj). Over the last millennium the rising waters of the lake have gobbled up large parts of this ancient city. Directly below us in this aerial view the wide Meshushim Stream flows into the Sea of Galilee. When the lake's water level is high, the depression behind el-Araj creates a lagoon that covers still more of Bethsaida. Beyond the clump of trees the Jordan River enters the lake, winding its way through a huge deposit of silt.

The Beteiha: The Bethsaida Plain

The plain to the northeast of the Sea of Galilee, where the various disputed sites for the “lost” city of Bethsaida are located, was for centuries—up until the last generation—called by its Arabic name, Beteiha. This plain was created many thousands of years ago, at the time the lake was formed, by erosion carried by streams flowing down from the Golan. In this, the Beteiha Plain resembles the Gennesaret Plain to the west, although the Beteiha is smaller and richer in sources of water.

The natural borders of the Beteiha Plain are: to the southwest, the shore of the lake (five

later built on the foundations of such Jewish settlements. One settlement, a city with the ruins of a synagogue and a stream nearby was known by the Arabs as “Yehudiyeh” (village of the Jews), which indicates that this Jewish settlement existed at least until the Early Arab Period (seventh–eighth centuries C.E.).

The Arabs probably took the name Beteiha from the Jewish residents of the area. The name Beteiha is mentioned for the first time by the tenth-century C.E. Arab geographer et-Tabari, and in a Crusader source of the twelfth century as “Putaha.” It is also mentioned in fourteenth-century Mameluke sources. The name “Beteiha” has a Semitic sound. In Hebrew and Arabic, the consonant root *b-t-h* can mean “to fall” or “to stretch out,” thus “Beteiha” probably refers to the levelness of the plain. (Compare Jeremiah 12:5, “If you *fall* in open country.”) For the last twenty years Israelis have called the plain Bik’at Bet Tsaida, the Valley of Bethsaida.

Bethsaida Renamed Julias

In his *Antiquities* Josephus tells us that Philip, son of Herod the Great, “elevated the village of Bethsaida on Lake Gennesaritis [the Sea of Galilee] to the status of city by adding residents and strengthening the fortifications” (*Antiq.* 18:28, Loeb edition). According to Josephus, Philip renamed the city Julias after Julia, the daughter of the Roman emperor Augustus. There appears to be an error on Josephus’ part: the newly elevated city was named not after the daughter, but after the wife of Caesar Augustus, the mother of Tiberias. The renaming took place in the year 30 C.E.

This means that while Jesus was active in the area, until about 30 C.E., Bethsaida was still a village. The Gospels do not mention the name Julias at all. Bethsaida appears both as a “village” and as a “city.” Josephus’ identification of Julias with Bethsaida is not made elsewhere in ancient literature.

Philip was particularly fond of Julias-Bethsaida and made it his winter capital. Here he built himself a grand mausoleum in which he was buried when he died in 34 C.E.

The name Julias was not accepted by the Jewish population—in the Talmud “Saydan,” the shortened form of Bethsaida, is used. However, Saydan was also the name of the city of Sidon on the Mediterranean and it is not always easy to know to which city the sources refer. Only two citations in rabbinic literature are unequivocal references to our Bethsaida on the lake. Both are from the second century C.E.,



Above:
The Meshushim Aqueduct at the point where it spans the Yehudiyeh Stream (see map on page 23). This is one of the Roman aqueducts that carried water to the Plain of Bethsaida.

Page 17:
In the foreground lies the rubble-strewn artificial mound or tell known in Arabic as et-Tell. This tell is identified as Bethsaida by the Bethsaida Excavations Project. On the other (southwest) side of the Beteiha Plain at the Sea of Galilee’s shore (right edge of photo) is the clump of eucalyptus trees that marks the el-Araj site.

kilometers) and, to the west, the Jordan River (three kilometers). The slopes of the Golan Heights are the borders to the east and north. The maximum depth of the plain is about three kilometers.

Since Roman times, two large aqueducts were used to water the Beteiha Plain. One brought water from the Jordan River, from four kilometers upstream near ed-Dikkeh. The other took water from the Meshushim Stream to the southern end of the plain. These aqueducts were repaired during later periods in which the plain was cultivated. They were repaired for the last time early in this century, and were in use until 1967, the year the Six Day War brought Arab agriculture in the area to an end.

In the Roman and Byzantine Periods, the plain was densely populated by Jewish villages; their presence has been verified by many ruins. The remains of synagogues discovered in the plain and on the Golan ridge facing the lake point to the prosperity of local Jewish communities during these periods. Arab villages were

and both point to the agricultural and fishing character of the surrounding plain.

According to Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah 2:8, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Hanina brought to the Emperor Hadrian “pheasants from Saydan” as one of three proofs that the land of Israel was not lacking in any luxury. (Introduced from Asia, pheasants became a part of the advanced local agriculture.) And in the Jerusalem Talmud, which was written in Tiberias, the Patriarch Shim’on ben Gamaliel recounts how one day in Saydan, he was given “a bowl containing three hundred species of fish” (Jerusalem Talmud, Shekalim 50a, chpt. 6, halachah 2).

Bethsaida was a city of Talmudic sages, among them Abba Yudan (Gurion) of Saydan, and Rabbi Yose of Saydan (fourth century C.E.), a fisherman by profession. He was known as Yose Hahorem, that is, Yose the Dragnet or Yose the Dragnet Fisherman. The *herem*, or dragnet, was a type of net much in use for Sea of Galilee fishing, especially fishing along the coast of the Bethsaida Valley.

Julias-Bethsaida is also mentioned in non-Jewish sources. The first-century C.E. Roman historian Pliny the Elder refers to Julias and Hippos as “lovely cities on the eastern side of the lake.” But Pliny is not always reliable. Pliny’s reference to Tarichaea (biblical Magdala) being at the southern end of the lake—actually, it was on the lake’s northwestern shore—is not readily forgiven by geographers.

The second-century C.E. geographer Ptolemy places Bethsaida among the cities of Galilee. (Note that the Evangelist John refers to “Bethsaida in Galilee.”) This is not surprising since in that period the residents of the land considered the eastern shore of the lake as part of Galilee. For the same reason, the Gospels refer to the lake as the “Sea of Galilee.”

The Two Bethsaias Theory

Bethsaida is mentioned thirteen times in the Gospels and nine times in the writings of Josephus. Despite the relatively large number of references, these sources do not provide conclusive identification of the location of Bethsaida. Sometimes the references are even contradictory. They cannot help us determine where to place Bethsaida on the map.

Luke is the only one of the four Gospels that clearly associates the miracle of the loaves and fish with Bethsaida. According to Luke, Jesus gathers his disciples “and took them and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida” (Lk. 9:10). When

evening comes, the disciples ask Jesus to “send the multitude away” to the nearby villages to find food and lodging. Instead, however, Jesus multiplies the loaves and fish.

According to Mark, this story has a different,



DUBY TAL AND MONI HARAMATI, ALBATROSS (AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY)

and confusing, sequence. Jesus and his disciples sail to a “deserted place” to rest. When evening comes, the disciples suggest that Jesus send the multitudes who had followed him into the nearby villages to buy food. After performing

the famous miracle of the loaves and fish, Jesus tells his disciples to “get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida” (Mk. 6:31, 32, 45). The disciples sail off and while at sea they encounter a dangerous storm. Jesus, praying alone on a mountain, sees them in peril rowing desperately against the opposing wind. Jesus walks to them across the water, enters the boat and tells them not to be afraid. The storm subsides and the boat arrives safely. Where? To the land of Gennesaret on the western shore of the lake.

Because of these conflicting accounts, the theory of “two Bethsaidas” was born. Apparently, there was a Bethsaida on the eastern shore, as in Luke, and another on the western shore, as in Mark. This theory has been accepted by many researchers until today.

Josephus describes Bethsaida as “a village on the Sea of Galilee” (*Antiq.* 18:28). But elsewhere, Josephus states that the Jordan flows into the Sea of Galilee “after passing the city of Julias” (*War* 3:515), implying that Julias was not right on the shore. Still elsewhere (*Life* 406), he tells us that reinforcements for the

they spread their trammel nets. Their catch was bountiful. The name Bethsaida is a transliteration of the Aramaic *bet tsaida* (place of the fisherman) and means fishing village.

During the last third of this century the Sea of Galilee’s northern coast has changed beyond recognition. Beginning with the floods of 1969, the Jordan River brought huge quantities of silt to the lake’s northern shore. Consequently, that shore has “grown” one kilometer to the south. Today el-Araj is no longer on the shore of the lake, but, for most of the year, several hundred meters to its north.

Around the middle of the last century, the Kurdish pasha who owned the land around el-Araj, and who lived in Damascus, built a large stone granary for storing the portions of grain he received as rent from his tenant farmers. The Arabs, therefore, called the place el-Hassel, meaning “the granary.” Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the pasha constructed a two-story, stone residence on the shore. This structure became known in Hebrew as Beit ha-Bek (house of the pasha). For some unknown reason local Arabs called this site Khirbet el-Araj, which means “ruins of the lame man.”

Et-Tell, located at the northern end of the Valley of Bethsaida, is a mound strewn with ruins. The site is about 250 meters east of the Jordan and about three kilometers from the lake. Its ancient name is not known. Et-Tell means simply “the tell,” or “the mound.” It rises to a height of twenty-five meters and dominates the Jordan River and the Bethsaida Valley. It is 400 meters long and 200 meters wide and covers an area of twenty acres. At its foot are two springs: Ein Musmar (spring of the nail) in the southwest and Ein et-Tell (spring of the tell) in the southeast. Until the middle of the twentieth century, the mound was used as a winter camp and cemetery by a tribe of Bedouin who took their name from it and were called “Arab et-Tellawiyeh” (Arabs of the tell).

Christian Pilgrims Visit Bethsaida

Bethsaida was a recognized site of pilgrimage for early Christians. The oldest known pilgrim itinerary that mentions Bethsaida is that of Theodosius (sixth century C.E.). It describes the route of holy sites on the western shore: “Two miles from Tiberias is Magdala; two miles further are the Seven Springs [Tabgha]; two miles further is Capernaum; six miles from Capernaum is Bethsaida.” These distances, however, are not completely accurate.

The pilgrim Theodosius comments in his

The pasha's Arab fishermen working their dragnets along the immaculate el-Araj beach. In the background, next to the eucalyptus trees, can be seen the pasha's two-story residence, Beit ha-Bek. From Rudolf de Haas, Galilee, The Sacred Sea (Jerusalem, 1933), p. 226.



Zealot troops came to Julias from Magdala by boat. The question of the location of Julias has fueled scholarly debate for generations.

El-Araj and et-Tell

The ruins of el-Araj are located on the shore of the Sea of Galilee between the outlet of the Jordan River and the outlet of the Meshushim Stream. In antiquity this shore was one of the lake’s best fishing grounds. During the day, fishermen worked their long dragnets. At night

journal that Bethsaida was not only the hometown of Simon Peter and Andrew, but also of James and John.

Around 725 Willibald, a native of England who became a bishop in Germany and was later canonized, also visited the holy sites around the lake. Fifty years after his visit, he told his recollections to a nun, who wrote them down. Willibald spent a night at Bethsaida. He claims he saw a church at Bethsaida on the site of the house of James and John, but this detail is not mentioned in other sources. Perhaps Willibald was mistaken about the name of the place where he spent the night—according to his route, it must have been Capernaum.

The pilgrim Theodoric wrote in 1172 that the River Jordan flows between Bethsaida and Capernaum, and a twelfth-century map shows Bethsaida on the eastern shore of the lake.

From this time on, most pilgrims refrained from visits to the site because it was difficult to reach and the region was inhospitable.

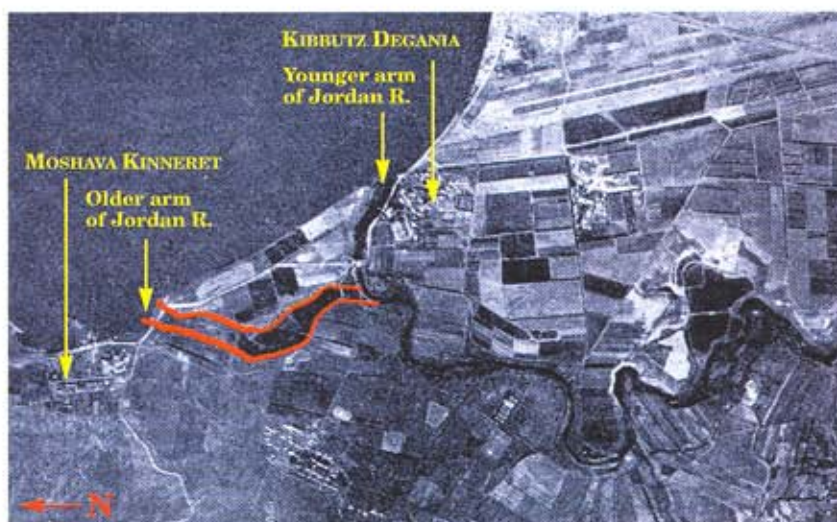
As knowledge of the site faded, thirteenth-century travelers were shown a "Bethsaida in Galilee" on the western shore of the lake near Tabgha. In 1564 a Portuguese traveler, Pantaleo d'Aveiro wrote that he went from Tiberias to Bethsaida and there found a small settlement of Jewish fishermen. A Jewish immigrant from Portugal was his host, and gave him a meal of fish. D'Aveiro followed the shore from Tiberias to "Bethsaida," so we may assume that the site he visited was actually Tabgha, an excellent fishing ground and a meeting place for fishermen.

On the Palestine Exploration Fund map drawn by Major Claude Reignier Condor about a hundred years ago, two Bethsaidas are shown, one on the eastern side of the lake and the other just southwest of Tabgha on the site of Khan Minya where today the pumping station of Israel's National Water Carrier is located. Condor, however, was cautious enough to place a question mark next to the second place-name.

About the same time an additional two-city theory was proposed, this theory placing both candidates for Bethsaida on the eastern shore. When explorers began coming to the eastern shore in search of Julias-Bethsaida's ruins, they found at el-Araj only a small site. Therefore, they suggested two Bethsaidas (both on the eastern side of the lake): the fishing village at el-Araj; and the city of Julias, with its acropolis and Philip the Tetrarch's palace, at et-Tell. This theory would not have arisen if scholars had been aware of the great changes that had taken place in the shoreline of the lake during the last millennium.

Changes in Water Level and Shorelines

To investigate the location of the much-debated site of ancient Bethsaida, we must "enter the waters" of the Sea of Galilee. We



need to consider what the lake's water level was two thousand years ago, a question on which opinions have also long differed.

The Sea of Galilee's water level begins to rise at the beginning of the winter rains, and reaches its maximum level in the spring. In the summer no rain falls in the lake's water basin; therefore, in the fall the lake's water level is at its minimum.

Since the lake came into existence about 18,000 years ago until approximately one thousand years ago, the sole outlet of the lake (the beginning of the Sea of Galilee-Dead Sea stretch of the Jordan River) has been at the site of today's Moshava Kinneret. The palm grove named after the poet Rachel is within the old riverbed.

Of the lake's coastline, the southern coast is the most unstable. A ten-meter-high wall, it is made of very soft, alluvial soil. For thousands of years, waves pounded this vulnerable, unprotected area, with the result that the shore eroded at the average rate of ten centimeters a year. This erosion continued until it was halted by the construction of a low concrete wall in the 1930s and, finally, a massive stone rampart in the 1970s.

About a thousand years ago, the "aggression" of the pounding waves breached the lake's coast near Kibbutz Degania and the lake's waters burst southward until, after a distance of about 600 meters, they joined the Jordan River. The new outlet was about one and a half kilometers to the south of the older outlet. In

Aerial photograph (1943) of the Sea of Galilee's southwestern corner. Visible are the lake's two outlets: the silt-filled, older arm (outlined in red) beside Moshava Kinneret, and the flowing, younger arm (to the south) near Kibbutz Degania.

the year 1106 a Russian pilgrim named Daniel saw these “two arms” flowing from the lake. The two streams continued to flow for hundreds of years, competing for the waters of the

The devastation can be clearly seen at Kefar Akavya, maritime Hippos (Susita) and maritime Gadara. Bethsaida also fell victim, shrinking in size dramatically. The destruction of Bethsaida’s coast was especially great because the soil of the lake’s northeastern shore is soft and alluvial and because Bethsaida had two beaches—one to the southwest, on the lake, and one to the northeast bordering the swamp along the lagoon, the village’s natural harbor.

Explorers Come to See... and Disagree

By the nineteenth century, conditions in Palestine had become safer, and travelers and scholars came to the area north of the lake to search for the long-lost city of Bethsaida. This period marks the beginning of modern historical geographic research into the land, bringing with it a stream of travelers’ books and articles, and bringing also a debate about Bethsaida’s identity.

The American theologian Edward Robinson came to the area in 1838. (Due to his multitude of discoveries, Robinson is today known as the Father of Biblical Geography.) He identified et-Tell as Julias-Bethsaida, but he also

MENDEL NUN



Above:
Low-angle shot of the 50-meter-wide strip of eroded coast adjacent to el-Araj (view to the southeast). The row of trees (upper left in photo) marks today’s shoreline. Note the many building stones covering the strip. They are all that remains of this area of Bethsaida.

Right:
Mendel Nun stands within what appears to be the foundations of a round tower (photographed from the edge of today’s shore). These el-Araj ruins are under water except during the lake’s periods of low water. For a close-up of this structure, see page 21.

lake. The younger stream was deeper, and, therefore, whenever the lake’s water level rose, the younger stream was the first to carry away the overflow. In the course of time the older stream’s activity decreased because it flowed mainly when the lake’s water level was at its highest. The older stream filled with silt. The younger stream, however, had a smaller capacity—though deeper, it was only forty meters wide compared with the 200-meter width of the older stream. The younger stream’s smaller capacity led to the continuing rise of the lake’s water level. The original outlet had been able to handle quickly sudden increases in the lake’s water level, thus preventing the lake from rising significantly. The new outlet was unable to do this.

To summarize, over the course of the last thousand years, the phenomenon of the two outlets caused a gradual increase in the lake’s maximum level—to about one meter above the earlier maximum. The rising waters destroyed wide stretches (up to fifty meters) of the settlements along the lake’s sandy shores. Hardest hit were the ruins of ancient fishing villages.



JANET FRANKOVIC

firmly maintained the existence of a second “Galilean Bethsaida” at Tabgha.

The French scholar Victor Guérin came to el-Araj in 1875. He found a few very poor farmers living in miserable huts. He continued on to et-Tell and there found an impoverished village whose houses were built of stones collected from the mound. He agreed with Robinson in identifying et-Tell as Julias-Bethsaida, but

added that el-Araj had been the maritime suburb of the city.

In 1884 Laurence Oliphant, an English Christian Zionist and mystic who settled in Haifa, visited both sites. He described the ruins at el-Araj as consisting of "foundations of old walls and blocks of basaltic stone, cut and uncut, which have been used for building purposes. The ruins cover a limited area." Writing from Haifa in January 1885, Oliphant noted that he was unable to identify el-Araj with any known biblical site, and that the "only house worthy of the name" was the granary of the landowner. With respect to et-Tell he wrote only that it was "a mound strewn with blocks of stones."

Some years after Oliphant's visit, the German explorer of the Golan, Gottlieb Schumacher, wrote that el-Araj was "a large, completely destroyed site close to the lake in the Beteiha. The building stones of basalt are unusually large; also the foundations, which are still visible, and are built in part with a white mortar." He also saw a stone-paved "Roman road" that crossed the swamp and connected the village of el-Araj with et-Tell, which he presumed had been the residence of Philip. In his view a fishing settlement could not have been located at et-Tell, a distance of over a mile from the lakeshore.

In 1891 George Adam Smith, the Scottish scholar of the Bible and Holy Land geography, wrote that he was aware that the site of Bethsaida was north of the lake, "though where exactly," he asked, in a phrase perhaps expressing discouragement, "who can tell?"

Around 1912 Gustav Dalman, the distinguished German scholar and writer on numerous aspects of the Holy Land, visited the area. In his opinion the mound of et-Tell was the acropolis of Bethsaida and the site of Herod Philip's palace. The lake's lagoons, he thought, must have reached et-Tell, thus providing a connection for marine transport between et-Tell and el-Araj on the shore. He also believed that there must have been a Roman road that skirted the swamp and connected both parts of the city.

In 1929 Rudolf de Haas, a Swiss priest residing in Tiberias, visited el-Araj and was hospitably received by the Arab manager of the pasha's estate. Together they inspected "a splendid Roman mosaic to the left of the flight of stairs leading up to the house, at a depth of about two meters." The Arab manager had discovered it, and "as it stretched far underneath the main building, he could not properly examine it and had to cover it up again." De Haas saw many Roman remains in the vicinity of

the house: "A sarcophagus not very far away and all sorts of broken columns, capitals and a mass of building stone testify to the wealth still hidden below the surface."

De Haas did not accept the assumption that the original Bethsaida, the fishing village, stood on the mound of et-Tell. Rather, De Haas thought it was located at el-Araj where the house of the pasha stood. But he agreed with Dalman that the lagoon had reached et-Tell, and agreed further concerning the maritime connection between et-Tell and the shore.

In 1946 the German pilgrim and writer Karl-Erich Wilken visited the northern area of the lake. In the introduction to his book, *Biblical Experiences in the Holy Land*, published in 1953, Wilken recalls the great influence of his late teacher Gustav Dalman. During his two-day visit to el-Araj, Wilken "found" with little difficulty, at a depth of about a meter, coins, oil lamps and potsherds "from the time of Jesus." In Wilken's opinion, Philip did indeed enlarge the fishing village of Bethsaida, but built his palace at et-Tell. For this reason, he surmised, the New Testament refers to the site sometimes as a village, sometimes as a city.

The debate continues to this day. I have by no means included all the participants here. Some authorities have sided with Robinson believing et-Tell to be the site of Bethsaida, others have sided with Gottlieb Schumacher believing el-Araj to be the site, while still others have concluded that ancient Bethsaida had two sites. Only a modern archaeological excavation at both sites will settle the question.

Close-up of the circular structure pictured on page 20 (lower photo). Photographed from the opposite side of the circle of stones north toward today's shore.

YOEL BEN-YOSEF



A lookout built by the Syrian army in the early 1950s on the el-Araj shore. Today, when the Sea of Galilee reaches its maximum level, the lake's waters lap at the foundations of this building.

MENDEL NUN



El-Araj and et-Tell at the Beginning of the 20th Century

An unsuccessful attempt to renew Jewish settlement in the Beteiha was made in 1905 by a group of Russian immigrants. Sixteen families managed to remain for about a year under

very difficult conditions such as malaria and internal dissension as tenants of the pasha. They harvested only one crop, planted trees, fished a little and left. The only remaining witness to this episode are the huge eucalyptus trees still growing along the lakeshore.

COURTESY OF MENDEL NUN



Aerial photograph (1967) of the Sea of Galilee's northeastern sector, including the outlet of the Jordan River, the Beteiha and the el-Araj coast.

Following World War I, the Beteiha was included in French Mandated Syria, which in 1947 became the Republic of Syria. In 1934 a further attempt was made by Jewish institutions to purchase the Beteiha, but Syrian nationalists in Damascus intervened. After Kibbutz

Ein Gev was founded in 1937, attempts were made to reestablish the connection with the pasha, the Beteiha's owner: the kibbutz bought from him the concession for transporting by boat the basalt sand used in Tiberias for building construction; and kibbutz members helped harvest the pasha's hay and rice.

With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the lake's northeastern shore, the border between Syria and Israel, became the site of continual tension. The Syrian army built fortifications at el-Araj and from there its soldiers would snipe at Israeli fishermen working the rich fishing grounds in that part of the lake. In a 1956 retaliatory raid, the Israeli army blew up the pasha's house (Beit ha-Bek). The Syrians also fortified the mound of et-Tell, crisscrossing it with trenches and bunkers, in the process damaging many of the site's archaeological remains.

In 1967 the Israeli government created a nature reserve in the Beteiha Plain and the pasha's deserted granary became the home of the reserve's supervisor. In the same year the government established the Jordan Park west of et-Tell as a recreation area.

The BEP Excavations at et-Tell

The latest attempt to settle the long-standing controversy over the location of Bethsaida is being made by Dr. Rami Arav. In the spring of 1987 he initiated archaeological excavations at et-Tell, and these excavations are ongoing. (The next excavation season was scheduled for June 1–July 31, 1998.) Arav heads a consortium of American and European universities known as the Bethsaida Excavations Project (BEP). The consortium is administered by the University of Nebraska and is funded by private and public sources. The Israeli government has also supported this project with a grant from the Israeli Tourist Corporation. In 1995 the BEP published the first volume of its findings and conclusions, *Bethsaida: A City by the North Shore of the Sea of Galilee*, ed. Rami Arav and Richard A. Freund (Kirksville, MO: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1995), a 338-page collection of essays covering every aspect of the BEP's research at et-Tell—archaeology, history, geology, culture, theology, and more. A second volume is currently being prepared for publication.

The first stage of the et-Tell excavations were exploratory probes sponsored by the Golan Research Institute and the University of Haifa. Two probes at et-Tell, one in the center and one on the southern side of the tell,

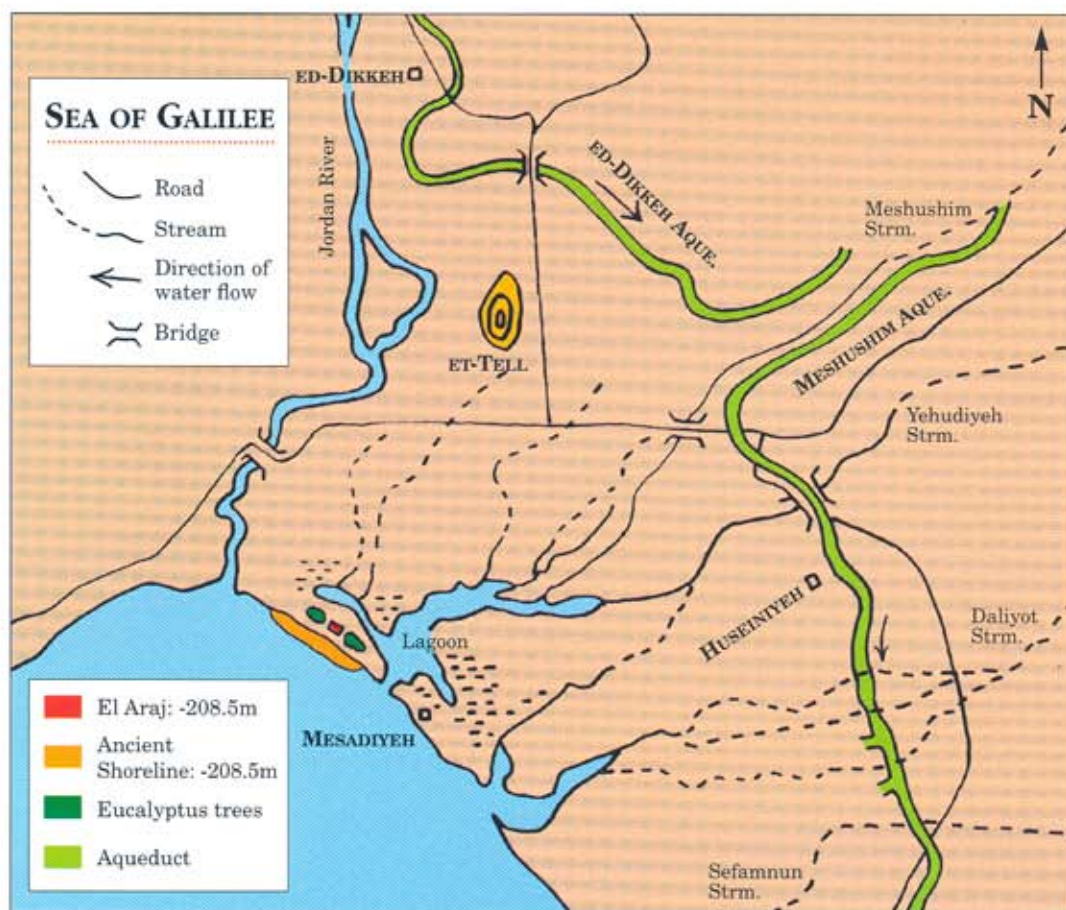
provided evidence for three periods of occupation: Early Bronze Age, Iron Age and Late Hellenistic-Early Roman Period. A third probe carried out at el-Araj extended over one randomly chosen square of four by four meters. The el-Araj probe brought to light remains from the Byzantine Period and later periods. No remains of earlier periods were discovered.

The el-Araj probe was carried out in March and April of 1987. Since this happens to be the season of the year when the water level of the Sea of Galilee is at its highest, the excavators saw only a narrow strip of ruins surrounded by water to the southwest and northeast. Consequently, they came to the conclusion that the el-Araj site covers only two and a half acres, one-eighth of et-Tel's twenty acres.

BEP geologist John F. Shroder, Jr. (University of Nebraska) and BEP geographer Moshe Inbar (Haifa University) suggest that in Jesus' time the shoreline of the Sea of Galilee was about two kilometers closer to et-Tell, and that at the edge of et-Tell there was a dock facility (*Bethsaida*, pp. 85–86). At that time, therefore, the el-Araj site would have been under water, rising above the lake's waters only following later geological events.

According to this theory, an earthquake in 115 C.E. caused landslides that choked the Jordan River canyon north of the lake and blocked the river. The river's flow was thus stopped for some years and a lake was formed. Later, the obstruction gave way to the water's pressure and the lake's contents burst into the bay southwest of et-Tell bringing with it huge quantities of silt and stones. As a result of this fill the site of el-Araj emerged from the lake.

Shroder and Inbar's theory contradicts the accepted geological explanation of how the shore of the lake was formed. It also contradicts the archaeological evidence. The creation of plains around the lake was in fact a result of erosion—mud and rocks were carried by streams through valleys to the lakeshore. This is a process that began long ago, before history began to be written. It is, therefore, inconceivable



Map of the Bethsaida Plain and its surroundings.

that the Meshushim Stream, the largest of the Sea of Galilee's streams, did not create a delta as did the other streams around the lake, but instead left a hole in the Beteiha Plain that was filled only during the second century C.E. following some major geological event. The Beteiha Plain was created not by some catastrophic geological event, but by the erosion deposited by the Meshushim, Yehudiyeh and Daliyot Streams, the three streams that flow into the plain.

The BEP excavators excluded el-Araj as a possible site for biblical Bethsaida and concluded that et-Tell is "geologically and geographically the only logical site in the region to be considered as the lost city of Bethsaida" (*Bethsaida*, p. 65). All subsequent archaeological efforts of the BEP have been concentrated at et-Tell. The BEP excavators have ruled out el-Araj as a candidate for Bethsaida based on the results of one random exploratory probe at el-Araj, the assumption that the el-Araj site covers only two and a half acres, and the above-noted geological theory. It seems curious that BEP scholars have not seen the need to extend the basis of their project, nor realized that such a long-standing debate—of more than one and a half centuries—cannot be settled so easily.

The main reason the et-Tell theory was born is because several nineteenth-century explorers visited el-Araj and decided that the site was too small to be Bethsaida. What was not widely known in the nineteenth century, nor still today, is that the site of el-Araj is not smaller than et-Tell. Nineteenth-century explorers erred about the size of the el-Araj site because they did not realize that due to changes in the lake's water level its shoreline had changed during the second millennium C.E.

eastern coast conducted after the 1967 Six Day War and the exodus of the Syrian army from the Beteiha Plain was carried out in July and August of 1973 by Dan Urman, the secretary of the Israel Archaeological Survey Association, with the participation of the author. In the Association's newsletter (No. 2, 1974, p. 3)

When Was el-Araj First Settled?

The results of several surface surveys conducted at el-Araj since 1973 contradict the theory of et-Tell excavator Rami Arav. His conclusions based on the exploratory probe he carried out at el-Araj in 1987 caused him to assume that el-Araj could not be the site of Bethsaida. New evidence, however, indicates that a settlement existed at el-Araj in the early first century C.E.

The first survey of the Sea of Galilee's north-

Right:

A limestone column drum found at el-Araj.

Below:

Mendel Nun surveys the Bethsaida Excavations Project's work on the mound of et-Tell.



JANET FRANKOVIC



JOEL S. FISHMAN

Urman wrote: "Beit ha-Bek and the building around it...stand on the ruins of structures dating to the Hellenistic and Roman Periods. At the site one can distinguish the tops of walls, architectural elements including those of a public building. A lovely Corinthian capital was also discovered on the site."

A more recent surface survey of el-Araj, on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority, was carried out in the fall of 1990 by a team of ten members (including the author) headed by Yosef Stepansky. The survey team found potsherds and architectural elements dating to the Late Hellenistic and Roman Periods. In his report Stepansky noted:

There are ancient remains on the hill [mound] in the center of this site (Hellenistic to Crusader periods), which have been surveyed and described many times. The present survey recorded architectural elements



JANET FRANKOVIC

which had not been reported previously, including a piece of a basalt frieze. Ancient building remains were recorded north and northwest of the hill [mound] and sherds were collected from the Early Roman (Herodian lamp and eastern *terra sigillata* bowl) and Late Roman periods. These finds indicate that the continuing identification of the site with Bethsaida cannot be excluded.

Additional lines of building remains can be traced along 200–300 meters of the 25–30-meter wide strip of beach exposed by



JOEL S. FISHMAN

the receding waters. Visible next to the mound on the south are the foundations of a round structure (about five meters in diameter), similar to a building located about thirty meters west of the hill [mound], above the exposed beach. The ancient site probably extended over an area of some tens of dunams [4 dunams = 1 acre], encompassing the hill [mound], the center of which probably contains remains of a public building. A path of unknown date paved with small stones leads from Bet Habeq to the northeast. ("Kefar Nahum Map, Survey," "Excavations and Surveys in Israel, 1991," *Atiqot* 10 [1992], 87)

As noted above, Urman and Stepansky were not the first to observe remnants of the ancient site; nineteenth-century explorers also saw these antiquities. Recent survey teams, of which this writer has been a member, did not, of course, see exactly the same remains that these early explorers saw. However, with little effort we found numerous antiquities—Roman-Hellenistic Period remains of buildings, a heart-shaped column of limestone, and a capital base and frieze that may have been part of the local synagogue. Even in an area that today is a swamp during the winter months, we found stone columns and other building

Above:

A beautiful, embossed, basalt stone discovered on the surface of the el-Araj site. The stone is identical to the one found in situ at Zavitan, a site located about thirteen kilometers northeast of el-Araj. The Zavitan stone was part of a synagogue entrance doorjamb.

Left:

The basalt threshold of a door, a remnant of a public building that was perhaps the village synagogue. A stick is inserted in the socket in which the doorhinge rested.

remnants, and in my capacity as Antiquities Trustee of the Israel Antiquities Authority I saved some of these from the usual fate of looting by bringing them to my kibbutz where a small archaeological collection is maintained.

MENDEL NUN



Above: Three ornamental architectural elements found on el-Araj's surface: (from left to right) a limestone pillar base, a limestone Corinthian capital, a basalt frieze decorated with "eggs and darts" design. These objects are now displayed on the grounds of Kibbutz Ein Gev. Perhaps they once were part of the ancient synagogue of Bethsaida.

Right: The lower half of a basalt, "donkey" millstone (also pictured on page 29; see Mk. 9:42). Upon this base an upper millstone rested. The upper millstone was turned by a large animal such as a donkey. The much smaller "household" millstones were turned by hand.

I might add that in 1995 when I visited el-Araj and its vicinity with Dr. Arav, we found Hellenistic-Roman potsherds but disagreed as to their origin. In his opinion the sherds were carried to el-Araj by flood waters.

One of the most important discoveries at el-Araj was made on February 21, 1978 by Moshe Shaharabani, a government hydrologist. He informed me by letter that while digging a three-meter-deep drainage ditch at el-Araj he found dressed basalt stones of various dimensions. It appeared to him that these had once been part of a building.

The above evidence of construction over a wide area would appear to show that el-Araj was an important ancient settlement. Obviously, surface remains alone are not sufficient to date the settlement with absolute certainty. That would require an extensive excavation. However, the scattered ancient remains at el-Araj make it clear that the debate over Bethsaida's location is far from over.

What Was Discovered at et-Tell?

After ten years of excavations at et-Tell three levels of habitation have been uncovered. The earliest settlement dates from the Early Bronze Age (3,000–2,700 B.C.E.) when the mound was surrounded by a massive wall whose ruins may still be seen. The second is from the Iron Age (1,000–600 B.C.E.). The inhabitants during this period were probably Geshurites, mentioned in the Bible as the kingdom that established close ties with Israel, especially during the reign of King David. The third period begins in the second century B.C.E. (Hellenistic Period) and ends in the year 67 C.E. (Roman Period)

at the beginning of the Jewish war against the Romans.

In the two lower levels ruins of large fortified cities were discovered. These ruins provided important additional information concerning the cultures of those periods. But the main interest of the archaeologists was in the uppermost level, which dates from the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman Periods, where it was hoped to find the fishing village of Bethsaida from the time of Jesus, and also the city of Julias built by Herod Philip. This level, however, did not fulfill the excavators' expectations.



MENDEL NUN

Excavations of Hellenistic cities in the land of Israel usually reveal remains such as public buildings, colonnades, and so on. However, no such remains were found at this site. There were only a few dressed basalt stones, one column base of limestone and the end of a small column. As for public buildings, only the foundations of a building of basalt stones were found (dimensions: 6 by 20 meters). According to the excavators, the building was erected in the year 30 C.E. and remained in existence until the end of the second century. In their opinion the building was a Roman temple dedicated to Julias, the wife of Caesar Augustus, after whom the city was named. There is no real support for this suggestion, however. The few ornamental basalt stones found on the mound—a basalt lintel with meandering and floral motifs, and two stones decorated with rosettes resembling stones found in the nearby ed-Dikkeh synagogue—were assumed to be part of this temple. This assumption is

also open to question since none of these stones was found in situ. The above constitute the sum total of the Hellenistic-Roman architectural elements found at et-Tell.

The reader may compare the et-Tell remains with the far more bountiful Hellenistic-Roman architectural remains found at el-Araj. It should also be noted that at et-Tell no Roman fortifications have been found. Josephus tells us that "through further expansion of strength" the village of Bethsaida was elevated to the rank of a city. Therefore, we would expect to find fortifications and towers at Bethsaida. At el-Araj the foundations of several towers are visible on the surface waiting the excavator's spade (see photos on pp. 20-21). In addition, to date neither the mausoleum mentioned by Josephus nor Philip's palace have been found at et-Tell.

I would also question the identification of another structure discovered by the et-Tell archaeological expedition, the so-called "dock facility." This structure lies at the foot of the tell. In the et-Tell excavation report (p. 85), Shroder and Inbar state: "A few meters from the spring at the edge of the pool an ancient wall occurs that may be part of an old dock facility." The top of this wall is at an altitude of minus 204 meters, making it seven to eight meters higher than the Hellenistic-Roman breakwaters around the lake (e.g., Gergesa, Hippos and Gadara), which are all at an altitude of 211-212 meters below sea level.



The most impressive house was uncovered in Area B. This is a private residence built in typical local Hellenistic style. Its large courtyard (7.1 by 13.5 meters) is located at the center of the house. The whole house covers an area of 486 square meters (18 by 27 meters). Its rooms are spacious and one of them is a kitchen containing two ovens. In this house excavators found what they mistakenly identified as a netting needle and an iron hook, and also a few



JOEL S. FISHMAN

lead net weights. Because of these finds the house was labeled the "Fisherman's House." However, the "Fisherman's House" at et-Tell is one of the largest Hellenistic buildings ever discovered in Israel, similar in size to a large house found at Gezer, and larger than the 280-square-meter house found in the Greek city of Philoteria (Beit Yerah) located at the southern end of the Sea of Galilee.

Next to the "Fisherman's House" (in Area C) was another Hellenistic-Early Roman Period house. It had a courtyard of 150 square meters and an adjoining 50-square-meter kitchen! (Compare this room with the 8-12-square-meter rooms of the houses in the fishing suburb of Capernaum.) The et-Tell excavators found appended to this house a wine cellar with the remains of large wine jars, each 40 by 60 centimeters (15 by 24 inches) in size.

The Area C house, the "Fisherman's House"

A heart-shaped, limestone column drum found on the surface of el-Araj (above and left). The column drum now stands on the lawn of the Beteiha Plain Nature Reserve supervisor's home.

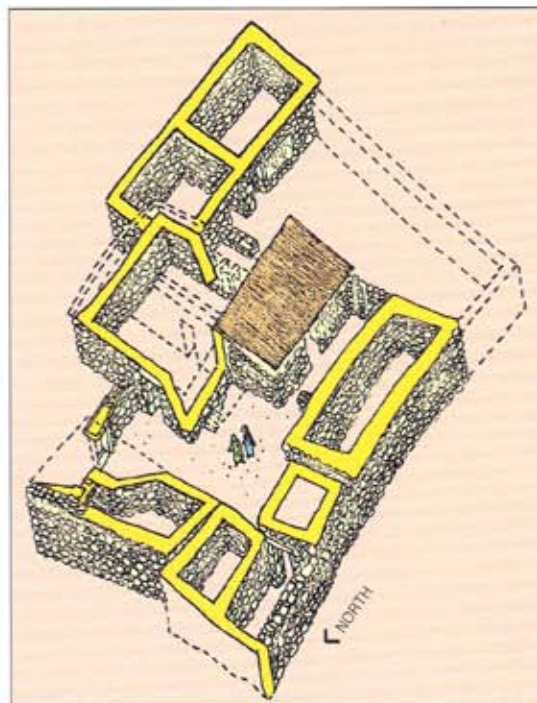
The excavations at the top of the et-Tell mound were in three areas: A, B and C. The excavators uncovered a residential quarter of large houses built of small basalt fieldstones.

and other houses in the Upper City of et-Tell are no doubt the houses of the upper crust of ancient et-Tell. These are not houses of perennially poor fishermen, although it is quite possible that these affluent citizens of ancient et-Tell may have occasionally engaged in fishing for pleasure. The large et-Tell houses can in no way be compared to true houses of fishermen, such as those excavated at nearby Capernaum.

The Fishermen of Capernaum

When one thinks of a fisherman's house, what comes to mind are the small houses excavated at Capernaum. In the 1960s and 1970s the Franciscan archaeologist Father Stanislaw Loffreda excavated an area just south of Capernaum's ancient synagogue. At the conclusion of these excavations he published a booklet called *A Visit to Capernaum* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1978). Based on what he dug up, Loffreda could describe the life of a typical Sea of Galilee fisherman.

The area Loffreda excavated is near the shore of the Sea of Galilee and is Capernaum's oldest suburb. The houses in this suburb were built in the first and second centuries B.C.E. The neighborhood is also the poorest in the village: houses were built of undressed basalt fieldstones held in place by mud and pebbles. Because of the poor construction, the walls of houses were too weak to support an upper story—houses had only a light-weight roof of mud mixed with straw. (This discovery is relevant to the story in Mark 2:1–12 of the removal of a house roof in Capernaum by friends of a paralytic to lower



HELEN IWENNA

Above right:
Isometric reconstruction drawing of the first-century fisherman's house found in Level I of the Stanislaw Loffreda excavations at Capernaum.

Below:
Aerial photograph of the excavated ruins of the fisherman's neighborhood at Capernaum.



him through the roof to be healed by Jesus.) A house's flat roof was reached by a staircase leading from the house's courtyard. Based on the remnants of staircases found in the excavation, Loffreda estimated the height of the rooms at less than three meters. Houses of the simple Capernaum fishermen had no drainage system or toilets.

Simon Peter lived in just such a house, and it was probably in Peter's house that Jesus lodged during his stays in Capernaum. On the floor of Peter's house two ancient, iron fishing hooks were unearthed.

The focal point of a first-century house in the land of Israel was the courtyard. Here was the center of family life. Here the cooking was done—many grinding stones, hand mills and ovens for cooking and baking of bread were found in the fishing suburb of Capernaum. It was in the courtyard that families gathered to discuss the weather and the latest catch. The courtyards discovered at Capernaum range in size from 20 to 60 square meters. We might compare these courtyards with the 96-square-meter courtyard of et-Tell's so-called "Fisherman's House" and the 150-square-meter courtyard of its next-door neighbor.

Several families, no doubt related, lived in each of Capernaum's humble houses. The families shared the courtyard and the single exit to the street; Loffreda found that only doorways leading from house to street had doorjambs—there were no doors between the interior rooms of the houses. In Loffreda's opinion, the lives of these Capernaum fishermen and their families

were not easy, and he wondered how, packed into such small rooms and covered by such flimsy roofs, they endured the extreme heat of the Sea of Galilee summers.

The Fishing Implements Found at et-Tell

Before discussing the subject of fishing implements, there are several general comments that need to be made. It is well known that fishing is one of humankind's oldest occupations. When prehistoric people began to move into agricultural settlements and cities, some of the residents continued to engage in fishing as a full-time or part-time occupation. Many engaged in fishing as a means to provide additional food for personal consumption. Others fished solely for pleasure. Evidence of this are the fishing implements that surface in archaeological excavations all over the world.

The most ancient type of fishing—and the most popular—was fishing with hook and line. Thus, it is common to find fishing hooks in excavations. To increase their catch, professional fishermen used mainly nets. Because they rapidly deteriorate in damp climates, nets have rarely survived from antiquity—exceptions are the nets that have been found in tombs in Egypt and in caves near the Dead Sea. Usually, all that remains of a fishing net are the weights that were attached to it. Some of these weights are unworked, natural stones that were selected because of their shape and the hole, or holes, running through them. Other stone weights

were crafted by hand. Lead net weights appeared for the first time 4,000 years ago in Egypt. Netting needles, which are evidence of the existence of professional fishing, are also found in excavations.

Fishing implements have been found in all the excavations conducted around the Sea of Galilee and along the Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers. The number of such finds in a particular excavation depends on the type of settlement being excavated, on the excavators' knowledge of marine archaeology, and, often, on pure chance.

In a Neolithic Period (about 6,000 B.C.E.) site on the banks of the Yarmuk River near Kibbutz Sha'ar Hagolan, stone net weights by the dozens were found. These weights have holes that were drilled by the fishermen of this ancient settlement. In Chalcolithic Period (about 4,000 B.C.E.) sites in the Jordan Valley south of the Sea of Galilee (Tell Ali, Tell Munhata), stone net weights of the grooved and hourglass types were unearthed. Tell Dover, on the banks of the Yarmuk River at the point where it exits its gorge, was excavated in the summer of 1997. In the excavations one and a half kilograms of lead net weights (about 60–70 weights) were found in the site's Roman stratum. These weights have not yet been counted and recorded (private communication from Elah Nagorsky, area supervisor). Stone net weights have also been discovered by the author at ed-Dikkeh near the Jordan River north of et-Tell, and at el-Mahjar east of et-Tell.

"The Fishing Implements and Maritime Activities of Bethsaida-Julias (Et-Tell)," a preliminary report on the fishing implements found at et-Tell, was prepared by Sandra Fortner,

With enough manpower, even a huge millstone can be righted. This "donkey" millstone (see photo and accompanying caption on page 26) was found on its side at el-Araj.



JANET FRANKOWICZ

associate collaborator of the BEP. Fortner, who is not a marine archaeologist, did not write independently, but in preparing her report relied on information supplied by the BEP directors. The BEP staff permitted me on a number of occasions to view and handle their inventory of finds, which are kept at the Beit Yigal Alon Museum at Kibbutz Ginosar. (Some of the finds I did not see because they have been taken to the United States.)

More than one hundred items were assumed by the excavators to be fishing implements. I believe that any marine archaeologist would in all likelihood disagree with the et-Tell excavators on the classification of most of these implements as fishing implements. After viewing these finds, here are my impressions and observations:

1. Fishing hooks. Thirteen of the et-Tell finds were classified as fishing hooks. Some of these objects are apparently fishing hooks, but the remainder are questionable.

2. Anchors. I have not seen all the objects that have been classified by the excavators as anchors; however, it should be noted that of the tens of thousands of basalt stones at the et-Tell site, basalt being a very porous stone, many could be found that have natural holes that would allow them to serve as anchors. Only a few of the anchors classified by the excavators as anchors have rope holes that appear clearly to have been made by human hand. For the most part, the basalt anchors found at et-Tell appear to be naturally formed and not man-made.

3. Stone net weights (sinks). It must be remembered that ancient fishermen used one or two sinks for every meter of net. This means that every net operated by ancient Sea of Galilee fishermen had two to three hundred sinks attached. One would have expected to find groups of sinks in the "Fisherman's House," which was destroyed in the year 67 C.E. and never again rebuilt. In the surface survey I conducted in 1971 around the foundations of a house near the ancient harbor of Gergesa, I found more than one hundred lead sinks of the ring type. In the 1997 archaeological excavation season at Sha'ar Hagolan a group of stone net weights were found in a house dating from the Neolithic Period (about 6,000 B.C.E.), proof of the existence of fishing nets that have since decayed. However, no such groups of sinks were found in the "Fisherman's House" and, altogether, in the whole of the et-Tell excavations, only about thirty objects were found that were classified as stone net weights, including net weights that were found on the surface of the tell. The et-Tell net weights were not concentrated in any one area or building,

but were distributed all across the site in Hellenistic-Early Roman Period strata.

Fifteen of the thirty objects classified by et-Tell excavators as stone weights are round, perfectly symmetrical basalt stones, each with a hole drilled exactly in its center. They are of various sizes, some of them weighing one-half kilogram or more. Similar objects have been discovered at sites throughout the land of Israel and are identified as agricultural tools or domestic utensils dating from the Iron Age or earlier. These objects are not stone sinks; ancient fishermen did not expend such energy crafting stone sinks.

Most of the sinks used by the Sea of Galilee's ancient fishermen were limestone and flint sinks. According to Fortner's report, eight of the stone weights are of limestone, half of them naturally formed. No flint weights at all have been found in the excavations.

A few grooved basalt weights are described by the excavators as "perhaps used for measuring the depth of water" ("The Fishing Implements," p. 8). Such sounding stones were not in common use on the Sea of Galilee. The shallow boats used by the lake's fishermen did not require the taking of soundings. Here, also, the excavators' identification must be questioned.

4. Lead net weights (sinks). Lead sinks have not changed in shape for thousands of years and it is impossible to distinguish between today's lead sinks and ancient lead sinks. Twenty "folded" lead sinks were unearthed at et-Tell. Such sinks are commonly found in excavations along the Mediterranean coast and in ancient Egyptian tombs, but few have been found along the Sea of Galilee's coast.

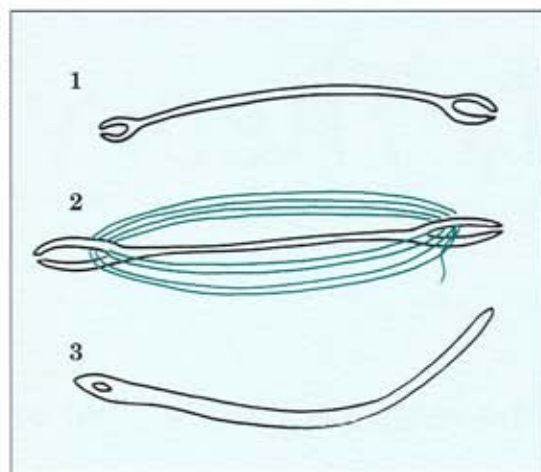
5. Netting needles. These are common finds in marine excavations around the world. A netting needle has a definite form, an open eye at both ends of the needle, in contrast to the common sewing needle, which has a closed eye at one end and the needle point at the other. The only thing these two implements have in common is the word "needle." One can repair nets with a netting needle, but one cannot sew with it. One cannot, for instance, repair sails with a netting needle.

Seven objects found in the et-Tell excavations were classified as netting needles, six of iron and one of bronze. The bronze needle was found in the "Fisherman's House" in Area B. It is a sewing needle, not a netting needle. Two of the six iron needles have closed eyes at one end, indicating they are sewing needles. The other four needles cannot be identified as to type.

I have investigated the history of ancient fishing on the Sea of Galilee for decades. I have collected and analyzed thousands of sinks

and hundreds of anchors from around the lake. I never cease being amazed at the technology of the lake's ancient fishermen, as exemplified, for instance, by the holes so precisely drilled in stone sinkers and anchors. I can testify, therefore, that the fishing implements found at et-Tell are not of the type made and used by professional fishermen on the lake 2,000 years ago,

HELEN TWENA



and they in no way point to the existence of a fishing village at et-Tell. The relatively meager quantity of fishing implements found at et-Tell does not support the BEP archaeologists' contention that there was a connection between the "fishermen" of et-Tell and the Sea of Galilee. These "fishermen" were simply residents of et-Tell who occasionally fished in the Jordan River for food and for their own pleasure.

Epilogue

The first time I saw the shore of el-Araj was on a summer morning in 1942. I arrived as a young, novice fisherman on the kibbutz fishing boat, and already from a distance I could see Beit ha-Bek, the large, stone house of the pasha. After more than half a century I can still remember well standing on that immaculate beach covered with basaltic sand and gazing at the surroundings.

That morning we Jewish fishermen watched the pasha's Arab fishermen hauling their dragnet from the water on to the beach. They had a very good catch, as I recall—several hundred kilograms of nice, shimmering barbels. In the afternoon a typical Sea of Galilee storm blew in from the west, and our boat, together with all the other boats in the area, entered the inlet of the Meshushim Stream and took shelter in the lagoon.

All this happened, of course, long before I

began learning about the history and archaeology of the Sea of Galilee. But even then I said to myself: "This is surely the best place for a fishing village along this stretch of the coast." At the time I assumed the fishing village of Bethsaida was on the shore at el-Araj and, like nineteenth-century explorers of the region, that the Hellenistic city of Julias was built at et-Tell. Today, however, I believe that both the fishing village and the Hellenistic city were located at the same site—el-Araj.

In those long-past, difficult days of the 1940s I dreamed of being able to visit et-Tell, that "lovely city," as Pliny called it, just three kilometers away, but in Syrian territory. However, before that dream could be fulfilled the War of Independence broke out. I had to wait many years—until the end of the Six Day War in 1967—before I could return to the area and visit et-Tell. When it was safe, I again walked along the el-Araj coast, but this time I observed it with the discerning eye of an archaeologist-historian.

Naturally, then, as the excavations at et-Tell began in 1987, I eagerly awaited the results. When meager Hellenistic-Roman architectural remains were unearthed, I was quite surprised. And when, after further study, I found that the water level of the lake had been lower and thus the shores wider in ancient times than today, I realized there once had been ample room on the shore at el-Araj for both Bethsaida and Julias.

During periods when the water level of the lake was down, I discovered at el-Araj what I believe to be traces of previously unnoticed parts of the site—a 300-meter-long, 50-meter-wide, ruin-covered strip of land adjacent to el-Araj on its lakeside, and a parallel, 300-meter-long, 100-meter-wide, ruin-covered strip on el-Araj's inland side. The first area has been "conquered" by the sea during the past millennium, and during the same period, the second area also has been covered by water due to the expansion of a swamp as the water table rose.

Modern maps do not show Bethsaida at what is, in my opinion, the authentic site. Instead, Bethsaida has been moved about three kilometers away from the lake, to et-Tell. It seems unfortunate that contemporary archaeologists have made the same false assumption as nineteenth-century travelers who did not realize the shores of the Sea of Galilee 2,000 years ago were different than the shores that exist today. In my opinion, the search for Bethsaida has not ended. The long-standing debate over the location of Bethsaida can be resolved only by an extensive dig at el-Araj carried out during periods when the lake is at low water level. Bethsaida still awaits the archaeologist's spade. **JP**

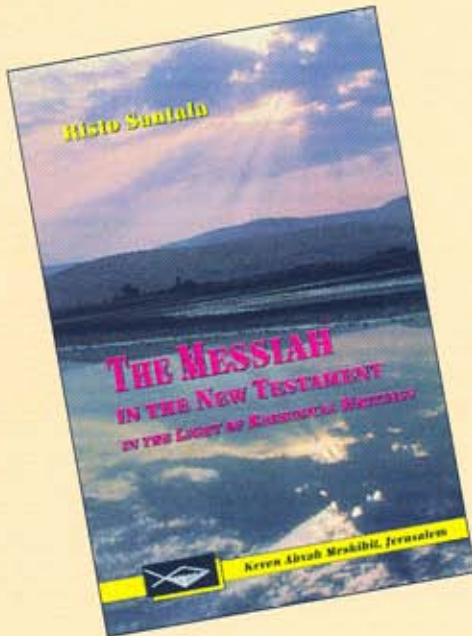
Left:

1. Roman-period netting needle found at Magdala. 2. 14th-century B.C.E. netting needle found at Gaza. A netting needle is used to make and repair fishing nets. It also holds the fisherman's reserve—as much as several meters—of netting cord. 3. Bronze needle found in the "Fisherman's House" at et-Tell.

The Jerusalem School and Its Theory

by Risto Santala

In *The Messiah in the New Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings*, Finnish scholar Risto Santala appraises the theory of the Jerusalem School and its importance for New Testament studies.



The question as to how the Gospels were put together has occupied scholars for the past two hundred years. It is generally thought that the accounts of Jesus and his acts were transmitted orally until they were written down in Greek between the years 70–100 A.D. This puts the Gospel of John at an even later date.

These assumptions are certainly no more than working hypotheses by means of which attempts have been made to establish the relationship of the Gospels to one another. At the beginning of the fifth century A.D. Augustine concluded that the order of writing of the Synoptic Gospels was Matthew, Mark and Luke, with Mark using Matthew, and Luke using both Matthew and Mark. The originator of the “synoptic” concept, J. J. Griesbach, considered Matthew’s Gospel to have been written first, Luke’s second and Mark’s last, with Luke using Matthew, and Mark using Matthew and Luke (see B. C. Butler, *The Originality of St. Matthew* [Cambridge, 1951]).

What conclusions have been reached by the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research? In

answering this question, it must be borne in mind that the Gospels were originally communicated orally to the people in Aramaic and even, it would appear, recorded in a written form in both Aramaic and Hebrew. The church fathers Papias, Irenaeus, Origen and Eusebius, leaning on tradition, record sayings to the effect that Matthew wrote his Gospel initially “in Hebrew,” “among Hebrews,” “for those of the Jews who became Christians” and “in their mother tongue” (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* III 39, 16; V 8, 2; VI 25, 4 and III 24, 6). Critics often consider “Hebrew” to mean “Aramaic.” Comparative linguistic studies ought, however, to be capable of revealing which language’s structure and concepts best correspond to the Greek phraseology.

About thirty years ago Professor David Flusser of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Dr. Robert L. Lindsey, a Baptist pastor in Jerusalem, began to study the syntactic peculiarities of the Greek New Testament. They observed that in hundreds of places the sentence structure betrayed Semitic influence and

that it was easier to restore a possible Hebrew original than an Aramaic one. No passages were found which could have been expressed only in Aramaic.

Lindsey was surprised to observe that Mark quoted Luke and not the other way around. Hundreds of proofs of this accumulated. In addition, there appeared to be about 150 places in Mark which were the result of the influence of the Acts of the Apostles, and some showed that Mark also knew the letters to the Thessalonians, Corinthians, Romans, Colossians and the letter of James. Based on this evidence Lindsey came to the conclusion that Mark had "amplified" Luke's account.

It is interesting to note that the antecedence of Luke with regard to Mark was also pointed out by E. A. Abbott and W. Lockton. Lockton collected around 600 proofs of the earlier date of Luke, concluding: "Mark used Luke, which is the earliest of our gospels, and Matthew drew upon Luke and Mark" (see A. H. McNeile, *An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament* [London, 1953], p. 64).

As a friend of Dr. Lindsey I had the privilege of following the development of his theory, but for some time I remained detached from his opinions. When, however, I began to examine his theory more closely, its basic soundness became more and more apparent. Three things in particular seem to me to be clear:

1. If it is true that the shortest version of the Gospels is to be considered the earliest, then Mark cannot be prior to Luke because Mark especially is fond of the kind of *ribuyim* or "amplification" typical of the Midrash literature—even though Mark as a whole is the shortest, his individual stories are longer. This is apparent in, for example, the account of the attempt by Jesus' mother and brothers to see him (Mt. 12:46–50; Mk. 3:31–35; Lk. 8:19–21).

2. If it is true that Mark knew Acts and six of Paul's letters, and that seems quite possible, then again there is no doubt that he borrowed from Luke, as the Jerusalem School argue.

3. The texts of the Gospels betray several written sources; therefore, there is good reason to reject the idea—fashionable today—of the compelling significance of oral tradition.

David Flusser points out that Lindsey's theory can be verified only when at least two conditions are met: "The investigator must first study most, if not all, the relevant Gospel materials in the light of the theory and, secondly, he must know enough Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic to understand the argument" (Robert L. Lindsey, *A Hebrew Translation of the Gospel of Mark*, 2nd ed. [Jerusalem, 1973], p. 2).

The Jerusalem School's theory challenges

scholars to reexamine that which was formerly considered self-evident, and to study the Jewish roots of the Gospels. It may well be that these ideas will change the theories of Gospel origins as radically as the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls changed attitudes regarding the Jewish character of the Gospel of John. At the same time they make possible an early date for the Gospels' composition. If the Greek form of the Gospels originated, as John A. T. Robinson supposes, within ten to thirty years of Jesus' death (*Redating the New Testament* [London, 1976]), we can join with Paul in exclaiming: "This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance!"

[In the concluding chapter of his *The Messiah in the New Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings*, Santala writes:] What fruit, then, has this New Testament study yielded? Probably the most important thing is to recognize that the Aramaic Targum of Jonathan and the Midrash contain a powerful messianic theme. And this theme is still reflected in Mediaeval rabbinic exegesis, particularly in the commentaries of Rashi. Secondly, the Gospels and Paul's letters display a mode of presentation and way of thinking typical of the synagogue preaching literature. Furthermore, we can see today just how powerfully the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has affected scholars' understanding of the Gospel of John and Pauline theology. Even critical and unprejudiced scholars such as John A. T. Robinson have had to date the origin of the Gospels earlier than even a writer branded as a fundamentalist could ever have dreamed. And the Jerusalem School has begun to shake the working hypothesis—ossified in the minds of theologians—that Mark was the earliest evangelist. For these reasons, it might turn out, as Robinson reckons, that the "Introductions to the New Testament" used as textbooks in theological seminaries will have to be revised.

JP

**Abridged and adapted from Risto Santala, The Messiah in the New Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings (Jerusalem, Israel: Keren Ahvah Meshihit, 1993), pp. 50–53, 56, 251, and used by permission. The book was originally written in Hebrew. From the Hebrew original, the author later prepared a Finnish version of the book. The English translation by William Kinnaird was made from the Finnish version.*

The Messiah in the New Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings can be ordered for \$15.00 (including shipping and handling) from Keren Ahvah Meshihit, P.O. Box 311, 53154 Jerusalem, Israel. Allow 7–10 weeks for delivery.

Risto Santala, Finnish teacher, pastor and scholar.



From Allegro to Zeitlin

by Magen Broshi



Gresham's Law: Economics. The theory that if two kinds of money in circulation have the same denominational value but different intrinsic value, the money with higher intrinsic value (called good) will be hoarded and eventually driven out of circulation by the money with lesser intrinsic value (called bad). (From *The American Heritage Dictionary*, expounded by Sir Thomas Gresham [1519?–1579], English financier.)

Gresham-Broshi Law: Gresham's Law ought to be applied also to the world of scholarship, and then it may be called the Gresham-Broshi Law. This law asserts that false, sensational and "light" pseudo-information tends to drive genuine, serious and good information out of circulation.

There is little doubt that any intelligent reader will be able to marshal convincing evidence in defence of our law. I shall therefore bring only two examples, both from the field of archaeology (not only because it is the subject with which I am best acquainted, but also because, it seems, it is the branch of knowledge suffering most from the effects of this law).

Example one: For every one hundred persons who know (and quote) Erich von Deniken, there are barely ten who know who William Foxwell Albright, the Nestor of Biblical Archaeology, was, and hardly one who knows the name of Henri Frankfort, one of the most profound and original students of the Ancient Near East.

This is certainly a sad fact, because von Deniken is not only a silly, unscrupulous ignoramus, but is also a man who has been convicted twice for fraud. As everybody knows, he has advanced absurd theories employing creatures from outer space and spacecraft in order to solve archaeological quasi-problems. His books have sold in the hundreds of thousands of copies (in many languages) and the millions who did not read his books could benefit from movies that were made to propagate his theories. Von

Deniken, we are told, is one of the most sought-after and best paid lecturers in Germany.

Example two: The search for Noah's Ark. There is hardly a year in which we are not informed by the news media about an expedition leaving for or returning from Mount Ararat, or about some frozen logs found on one of the ice caps in northeastern Anatolia—logs that someone or other says are the remains of Noah's Ark. Not long ago I was asked by a radio reporter to comment on one of those Ararat reports, and I answered that my hunch is that most of the expeditions are on the payroll of the CIA. That could be true, but it is more likely they are simply seeking to make headlines, out to bamboozle a bored world.

Of all the archaeological finds in the land of Israel, the most important are undoubtedly the Dead Sea Scrolls. Since their discovery some fifty years ago, they have been the subject of wild theorizing, heated debates and irresponsible rumors. This unwholesome situation is due partly to the consistent avoidance by the authors of the Scrolls of historical names (with two or three glaring exceptions) and identifiable historical events (again with just two exceptions). It can also be attributed partly to the shock of novelty. For almost a century archaeologists working in the Holy Land were extremely happy to find an inscription with a couple of lines, and here they were confronted with the remains of a whole library.

To a great extent the Scrolls have been a victim of the Gresham-Broshi Law, both when scholars offered poor speculations in good faith and when fantastic conjectures were offered and malicious rumors spread. The gullibility of the public proved the said law to be quite valid.

The list of the scholars who issued "bad currency" is quite long, and to discuss all of them and their theories would require a bulky, book-length treatise. So here I will deal with only two: the one that opens the alphabetical list,

John Allegro, and the one that closes it, Solomon Zeitlin.

Let us start with the latter, the elder of the two, the late Solomon Zeitlin (1892–1976), professor of Rabbinics at Dropsie College in Philadelphia.

After the Scrolls were brought to the world's attention in 1949, Zeitlin devoted himself doggedly to the task of proving that they were really forgeries, or, at best, just late Medieval manuscripts. With erudition, acuteness and unusual zeal, and mincing no words, he pursued his goal of demonstrating that the Scrolls were a hoax.

Zeitlin used not only unconventional language, but also unconventional methods, unheard of in serious scholarly circles. When the first Bar-Kochba letter was discovered, he, of course, called it a forgery. His main argument was that the opening formula of address was unknown among the Jews, Hellenes and Romans.

Scholars were quick to point out to Zeitlin that this very same formula was to be found in midrashic literature. Zeitlin's unusual answer is worth quoting: "...my purpose in not mentioning the supposed letter in the Midrash being to see if the Jewish writers dealing with these matters would investigate Midrashic literature critically and historically."

The late John Marco Allegro (1923–1988) belongs to another opera. He did not argue that the Scrolls were forged. Rather, he spread wild hypotheses and pernicious rumors. Professor Allegro, who taught comparative Semitic philology at the University of Manchester, was in the 1950s a member of the international team that studied and edited the Scrolls assembled in the Rockefeller Museum. He wrote quite a few mediocre books and papers on the Scrolls. His major publication, on material from Qumran Cave 4 (*Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, Vol. V), was so full of errors that the critical review article by John Strugnell (120 pages) was longer than the book reviewed (91 pages).

Allegro gained immense popularity in the 1950s and 1960s owing to sensational broadcasts he made over the BBC and interviews he gave to the press. One of his "conjectures" that stirred great commotion was that the Teacher of Righteousness, the leader of the Dead Sea Sect, had been crucified. According to Allegro, the Sect expected a Messiah and was looking forward to the return of the dead leader in this role.

This is, of course, sheer nonsense, as there is not even the slightest evidence in the Scrolls to suggest that the Teacher of Righteousness did not die a natural death. Allegro's attempt to discredit the originality of Christianity by making the Teacher a precursor of Jesus Christ

found many credulous listeners.

A later work by Allegro was his book *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross*. One of its basic theses is that the Semites always worshipped the mushroom as a symbol of male and female fertility. Of this book Prof. Strugnell said, "[Allegro], once a promising young scholar, has been turned into a babler of sciolitic bawdry by an overdose of the hallucinogenic mushroom *amanita muscaria*."

I recently returned from the United States where I delivered a dozen lectures on the Dead Sea Scrolls. No one could ask for better audiences than I had—well educated, earnest and very sympathetic. The question-and-answer sessions were a lecturer's delight: people eager to know asking quite intelligent questions. Unfortunately, however, many questions were products of Allegro and Zeitlin: What about the claims that the Scrolls are a forgery? Is it true that the Catholic Church is keeping some disturbing material secret?

Proof of the correctness of the Gresham-Broschi Law.

JP

The above is a revision of an article that appeared in The Jerusalem Post of November 2, 1979.

From 1964 to 1994 Israeli archaeologist Magen Broschi was curator of the Shrine of the Book, the wing of the Israel Museum in which the major Dead Sea Scrolls are housed. Currently, he is working on the Scrolls and is preparing new editions of a number of them for publication.



A young John Allegro at work on the Dead Sea Scrolls in the "Scrollery" of Jerusalem's Rockefeller Museum. Allegro is aligning fragments of the Qumran Nahum Commentary.

The Best Long-term Investment—Making Loans to God

by Joseph Frankovic

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. (Mt. 6:19–20)

These two famous verses from the Sermon on the Mount belong to a homily on resource management. In all likelihood, Jesus would have endorsed the cliché, “Time is money.” Each man has been allotted twenty-four hours in a day, and with these precious few hours, he may choose to amass and hoard wealth, and if he is fortunate, retire in good health and spend it for a brief time. Or he may choose radical obedience to God’s redemptive agenda and place

himself, his time and money at God’s disposal.

Jesus’ exhortation to lay up treasure in heaven challenges the rich to put their wealth in perspective. It also challenges the common wage earner, who has become ensnared in the pursuit of riches, to reorder his priorities. And for the poor, laying up treasure in heaven remains a boon, because God has rated it a wise investment.

Jesus’ homily draws inspiration both from

the biblical text and the important strides forward which Jewish faith and piety had made in the late Second Temple period. From Scripture Jesus tapped Psalm 39: "Man walks about like a shadow, the hustle and bustle is in vain; he amasses wealth, but does not know who will eventually collect it.... With reproofs for iniquity, you discipline man, and you consume like a moth what he holds dear."

One is also reminded of what the Preacher said: "As a man exits his mother's womb, naked he will be again when he departs, just as when he came, and through his toil he will gain no benefit which he can take with him."

Elsewhere, the Psalmist boldly proclaimed: "The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains." This verse impressed the rabbis, the spiritual heirs of the Pharisees. Following the Psalmist's lead, they taught that any person who derives benefit from the earth without first giving thanks to God is a thief. The implication of this comment is simply that man plays the role of a custodian. God owns everything in the world, and to us he has delegated its management, including the distribution of its resources.

When Rome ruled the Mediterranean world, her subjects enjoyed the art of telling fables. Jesus (cf. Lk. 12:16-20) and the rabbis after him were no exceptions. The rabbis had heard and repeated to their audiences the famous fable about the famished fox, which slipped through a narrow hole into a vineyard. After dining sumptuously, the fox attempted to exit by the same way he had entered, but discovered he could not until he had once again become lean from hunger.

Rabbi Meir made the same point with a more authentically Jewish approach: "When a person enters the world both hands are clenched tight, as if to say, 'The whole world belongs to me.' But when he departs from the world, both hands remain open, as if to say, 'I have inherited nothing from the world.'" In

light of the fact that a person enters and departs the world stripped of material gain and that while walking the earth he merely fulfills the role of a steward and not the owner of his riches, wisdom dictates that he manage his wealth in a way that pleases God.

A final factor in the equation is Proverbs 19:17: "He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what he has done." This verse contains the final ingredient for inspiring the concept of laying up treasure in heaven. Like Isaiah 57:15, 58:6-10 and Psalm 34:18, this proverb establishes a close identification of God with the poor. To be merciful and beneficent to the poor is to lend to God. Will God repay the kindness? By all means! God will reward those who act charitably toward the poor. In essence, this constitutes laying up treasure in heaven.

Looking backward in time, we can see that Jesus' teaching on laying up treasure in heaven stands in harmony alongside traditional Jewish thinking on the same subject. Moreover, Jesus did not coin the expression "laying up treasure in heaven." More than a century before the Christian era, Ben Sirach penned these words: "Lose your silver for the sake of a brother or a friend, and do not let it rust under a stone and be lost. Lay up your treasure according to the commandments of the Most High, and it will profit you more than gold. Store up almsgiving in your treasury, and it will rescue you from all affliction...." Jesus' homily, which has been preserved in Matthew 6:19-24, contributes a small but priceless piece to a larger canvas—stewardship in the faith and piety of late Second Temple-period Judaism.

In our day, the 20th-century disciple of Jesus feels the challenge of his call to lay up treasure in heaven more than ever. In the face of an emerging global society drunken with consumerism and materialism, Jesus' words shatter the silence: "You cannot serve God and mammon!" JP



The Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research

The Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research is a consortium of Jewish and Christian scholars who are examining the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) within the context of the languages, land and culture in which Jesus lived. This Jewish-Christian collaboration is unique and unprecedented historically. The results of these scholars' research confirms that Jesus was an organic part of the diverse social and religious landscape of Second Temple-period Judaism. He, like other Jewish sages of his time, taught in Hebrew and used specialized teaching methods to teach foundational Jewish theological concepts such as, for instance, God's abundant grace. Nevertheless, Jesus' teaching was revolutionary in many aspects, particularly in three areas: his radical interpretation of the biblical commandment of mutual love; his call for a new morality; his idea of the kingdom of Heaven (David Flusser, *Jesus*, p. 81).

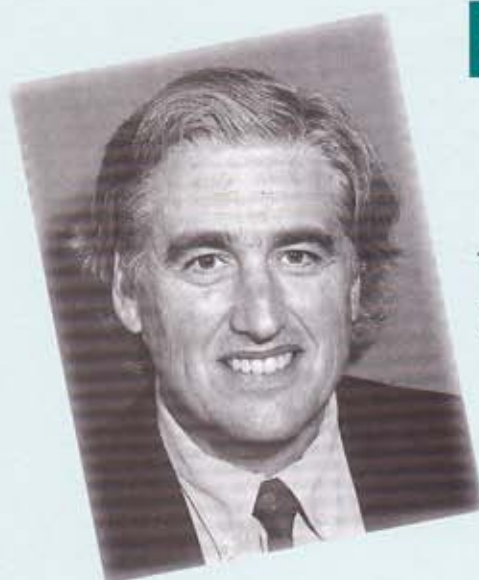
Future publishing projects of the Jerusalem School include: 1) a series of academic volumes, the first of which will deal with the School's distinctive methodology; 2) an idiomatic translation of the Gospels

and Acts with annotations highlighting the text's Hebraic nuances and briefly explaining the significance of Jesus' words and deeds; 3) the *Jerusalem Synoptic Commentary*, a detailed commentary on the Synoptic Gospels. Current research of Jerusalem School members and others is regularly reported in the pages of JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE.

The Jerusalem School was registered in Israel as a non-profit research and educational institute in 1985. Its members are Prof. David Flusser, Prof. Shmuel Safrai, David Bivin, Dr. Randall J. Buth, Dr. Weston W. Fields, Dr. R. Steven Notley, Dwight A. Pryor, Halvor Ronning, Mirja Ronning, Prof. Chana Safrai and Prof. Brad H. Young.*

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*Dr. Robert L. Lindsey (d. May 31, 1995), a founding member of the Jerusalem School, pioneered, together with Prof. Flusser, the methodology upon which the School's synoptic research is based.



RANDALL BUTH TO EDIT *SYNOPTIC GOSPELS*

Dr. Randall Buth has agreed to serve as Editor of *Synoptic Gospels*. Buth, a member of the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research, lectures in Hebrew and Greek studies at Jerusalem University College. For twenty years he worked as a translation consultant in Africa with both SIL and the United Bible Societies. Buth received his Ph.D. in Semitic Languages from UCLA in 1987, writing his dissertation on Aramaic word order under Stanislav Segert.

Synoptic Gospels (ISSN 0793-8926) is an English-language journal devoted to better understanding the New Testament's Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) and to solving the "Synoptic Problem." Published by Jerusalem Perspective Publishing, the journal will be a semi-annual, appearing in March and September: its inaugural issue will appear in September 1998.

Each issue of this new periodical will contain 96-160 pages.

The journal's Editorial Board includes internationally acclaimed scholars such as David Flusser, Shmuel Safrai, James Strange and Emanuel Tov.

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Glossary

B.C.E. — abbreviation of "Before Common Era," corresponding to B.C. in Christian terminology. JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE uses B.C.E. and C.E. in articles by Jewish scholars.

C.E. — abbreviation of "Common Era," corresponding to A.D. in Christian terminology.

halachah — (הלכה, *ha-la-KAH*; plural: הלכות, *ha-la-KOT*, halachot) law, regulation; the legal ruling on a particular issue; the body of Jewish law, especially the legal part of rabbinic literature, thus often the opposite of aggadah.
halachic (hā-lāk'ik) — pertaining to halachah.

Hasid — (חסיד, *ha-SID*, pious one; plural: חסידים, *ha-si-DIM*) member of a sect of charismatic sages who shared the Pharisees' ethical and religious values, but also were characterized by an extreme familiarity with God and a greater emphasis on deeds than study of Torah.

kibbutz (kē-būts) — a collective farm or settlement in Israel.

Mishnah — (משנה, *mish-NAH*, "repetition," from *shanah*, to repeat) the collection of Oral Torah compiled and committed to writing around 200 A.D. by Rabbi Yehudah ha-Nasi. It records the sayings of sages who lived and taught during the previous several hundred years. The Mishnah primarily reflects spoken rather than written language. In its narrow sense, "mishnah" (not capitalized) refers to an individual saying or ruling found in the Mishnah. In its wider sense, "Mishnah" refers to the work composed by Rabbi Yehudah ha-Nasi.

Second Temple period — literally, the period from the rebuilding of the Temple (536–516 B.C.) to its destruction by the Romans in 70 A.D. However, the term usually refers to the latter part of this period, beginning with the Hasmonean Uprising in 168 B.C. and often extending to the end of the Bar-Kochva Revolt in 135 A.D.

tell — (תל, *tel*) a mound created by the debris of successive levels of human occupation.

Tosefta — (תוספתא, *to-sef-TA'*, the addition) a collection of Oral Torah supplementing the Mishnah. Compiled about 220–230 A.D., a generation after the Mishnah.

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Transliteration Key

HEBREW & ARAMAIC

Syllables of transliterated words are separated by dots. Capitalization is used to indicate the accented syllable in words of more than one syllable. See p. 11 of *JP* 23 (Nov/Dec. 1989) for a full description of the transliteration system used in JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE.

Consonants

- א — silent
- ב — b (like b in bed)
- בּ — v (like v in very)
- ג — g (like g in gold)
- דּ — d (like d in day)
- ה — h (like h in horn, or silent)
- וּ — v (like v in very)
- ז — z (like z in zeal)
- ח — h (voiceless guttural [no English equivalent])
- ט — t (like t in tip)
- י — y (like y in yard, or silent)
- כּ — k (like k in kite)
- ךּ, ך — k (like ch in Scottish *loch*)
- ל — l (like l in let)
- מ, ם — m (like m in met)
- נ, ן — n (like n in net)
- ס — s (like s in sit)
- ע — c (voiced guttural [no English equivalent])
- פּ — p (like p in port)
- ף, ף — f (like f in fit)
- צ, ץ — ts (like ts in nets)
- ק — k (like k in kite)
- ר — r (a trilling or gargling r sound)
- ש — sh (like sh in shell)
- ז — s (like s in sit)
- ת — t (like t in tip)

Vowels

(The א is used here as a point of reference.)

- א — a (like a in father; rarely like o in oh)
- א, א — a (like a in father)
- א, א — e (like e in net, or e in prey, or somewhere in between)
- א, א — e (like e in net)
- א, א — i (like i in ski)
- א, א — o (like o in oh)
- א, א — u (like u in flu)
- א — e (silent, or as short as e in happening, or as long as e in net)

Diphthongs

- א — ai (pronounced āh-ee)
- א — oi (pronounced ōh-ee)
- א — ui (pronounced ōō-ee)

GREEK

Unlike Hebrew, Greek has upper and lower-case letters. The letter h represents the rough-breathing sign (῾). The smooth-breathing sign (῿) is not transliterated. The *iota* subscript (the letter *iota* [ι] written beneath α, η and ω—α, η and ω) is omitted in our transliterations. The combinations γγ, γκ, γξ and γχ are transliterated "ng," and pronounced like the "ng" in "angle."

- Α α — a (like a in father)
- Β β — b (like b in bed)
- Γ γ — g (like g in gold)
- Δ δ — d (like d in day)
- Ε ε — e (like e in net)
- Ζ ζ — z (like dz in adz)
- Η η — ē (like e in prey)
- Θ θ — th (like th in thin)
- Ι ι — i (like i in ski)
- Κ κ — k (like k in kite)
- Λ λ — l (like l in let)
- Μ μ — m (like m in met)
- Ν ν — n (like n in net)
- Ξ ξ — x (the ks sound, like x in wax)
- Ο ο — o (like o in oh)
- Π π — p (like p in port)
- Ρ ρ — r (like r in run)
- Σ σ, ς* — s (like s in sit)
- Τ τ — t (like t in tip)
- Υ υ — y (like French *u* or German *ü*)
- Φ φ — ph (like ph in graphic)
- Χ χ — ch (like ch in Scottish *loch* or German *ach*)
- Ψ ψ — ps (like ps in dips)
- Ω ω — ō (like o in oh)

Diphthongs

- αι — ai (like ai in aisle)
- αυ — au (like ou in our)
- ει — ei (like ei in feign)
- ευ — eu (pronounced ēh-oo [no exact equivalent in English])
- ηυ — ēu (pronounced ēh-oo [no exact equivalent in English])
- οι — oi (like oi in oil)
- ου — ou (like ou in group)
- υι — ui (like ui in quit)

*The form of the letter when it is the last letter of a word.



Just remove a bit of grass anywhere on the surface of el-Araj, and the tops of stones become visible. Are these the remains of an ancient wall, an ancient street?

Photograph by Joel S. Fishman.