

## Bible Study from an Archaeological Perspective

### Lesson Four

#### **The Iron Period (1200 – 586 B.C.)**

Part One: The Iron I A – II B Period (1200 – 800 B.C.) – From the Judges unto King Hazael of Damascus.

#### **Scripture reading:**

Deuteronomy 6:10-12 – Beware lest thou forget the Lord

Deuteronomy 7:1-2; 9:4-6 – The wickedness of these nations

#### **Archaeological evidence:**

Michal Dayagi-Mendels, Curator of Israelite and Persian Periods, Israel Museum wrote, “It is clear from archaeological evidence that the decline of the Canaanite culture and the appearance of the Israelites in the country were not discrete historical events but were rather a historical process that lasted for roughly two hundred years” (Michal Dayagi-Mendels, *Treasures of the Holy Land, Israelite Period/ Iron Age*, 1986, p. 137).



Merneptah Stele. Egyptian Museum, Cairo. Discovered in western Thebes, Egypt, in 1896

The inscription says it was carved in the 5th regnal year of Pharaoh Merneptah (1208 B.C.) of the 19th dynasty and contains the earliest reference to “Israel” outside of the text of the Bible. **Most of the text glorifies Merneptah's victories over enemies from Libya and their Sea People allies**, but the final three lines (out of twenty-eight) mention a campaign in Canaan, where Merneptah says:

“Now that Tehenu has come to ruin, Hatti is pacified. Canaan has been plundered into every sort of woe. **Ashkelon** has been overcome. **Gezer** has been captured. Yano’am was made non-existent. **Israel is laid waste – his seed is not.** Hurru has become a widow because of Egypt. All lands have united themselves in peace. Anyone who was restless, he has been subdued by the King of Upper and Lower Egypt...” (*Biblical Archaeology Review*, 16:05, Sept/Oct 1990).

- This Israel was well enough established by around 1200 B.C. among the other peoples of Canaan to have been perceived by Egyptian intelligence as a possible challenge to Egyptian authority. Israel was no less significant than Ashkelon and Gezer, two of the more important city-states in Palestine at the time.

#### **Scripture reading:**

Judges 2:8-10 – Another generation which knew not the Lord

Judges 2:16 – The Lord raised up judges which delivered them

Judges 7:1-4, 7, 12, 16-23 – Gideon (ca. 1180 B.C.)

#### **Archaeological evidence:**



Single-spouted lamp from Iron Age I with traces of burning. Found in Hebron – Amiran – Plate 100, #7. Purchased in 1984 from Omar Kahyam Museum – Old City, Jerusalem.

**Scripture reading:**

Judges 15:20 – *and he (Samson) judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.*

Judges 16:28-31; 21:24

I Samuel 3:19-20

I Samuel 8:4-9; 19-22 – Israel's demand for a king

I Samuel 9:15-17 – ...thou shalt anoint him...

**Archaeological evidence:**



**Black juglet** – Israel Grey ware with burnished black slip. Handle stretching from the middle of the straight neck to the shoulder, an ovoid body, and a button base (type C3). Used to contain anointing oil and may be synonymous with a “horn of oil.” Amiran – Plate 86, #12. Purchased in 2016 from David Axlerod, David Street 89, Jerusalem.

I Samuel 10:1, 23-25 – Saul anointed and made king

The use of fragrant oil in cultic ritual entailed the pouring of sacred oil on a person or object, which symbolically designated the person or object as set aside for sacred service or use. This sacred anointing was reserved for the priests and kings of Israel, who were designated to serve these roles by having sacred fragrant oil poured on their heads by a holy man at the behest of the deity (e.g., Exodus 29:7). In 1 Samuel 10:1 the expression *pak ha emen*, “juglet of oil,” is used in the narrative of the anointing of Saul as the first king of Israel by the prophet Samuel, an event set in the late Iron Age I. This narrative provides a glimpse into the use of an oil juglet during the time that black juglets were in vogue.

- The black juglets have played a prominent role in recent excavations in the dating of stratigraphy and material remains.

Referring to the black juglet found in Jerusalem, Jane Cahill wrote, “The juglet itself is a type traditionally dated to the tenth century B.C.E. that is commonly found only at northern sites demonstrating connections with the Phoenician coast” (Jane M. Cahill, *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology, Jerusalem at the Time of the United Monarchy: The Archaeological Evidence*, 2003, pp. 68-70).

### Scripture reading:

I Samuel 13:13-14 – First mention of David

I Samuel 16:1-3, 10-13 – David anointed

I Samuel 31:6-7 – Saul’s death

II Samuel 1:11-12 – David mourned Saul’s death

II Samuel 2:3-4, 11 – David anointed king over Judah (1010 B.C.) 70 yrs. after Gideon

II Samuel 5:1-5 – David anointed king over Israel

II Samuel 5:6-10 – Jerusalem conquered

II Samuel 5:11 – *And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house.*

### Archaeological evidence:



This **Phoenician-style capital** was found by Kathleen Kenyon among a tumble of large ashlar in her site XVIII, which is just north and east of the Stepped-Stone Structure. It had fallen from an important building on top of the ridge and, according to Kenyon, dates to the time of David and Solomon.



I Kings 1:9-10 – Adonijah by En-rogel

I Kings 1:32-49 – Solomon anointed king



Cave entrance to **Gihon Spring** (Credit: Bud Chrysler 1984)



**View to the south from the area of the Gihon Spring.** En-rogel lies at bottom of the Kidron Valley in the distance. (Credit: Bud Chrysler 1984)



View to the north from the area of En-rogel in the Kidron Valley (Credit: Bud Chrysler)

**Scripture reading:**

I Kings 6:1 – *And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord.*

1446 – 480 = 966

- If the fourth year of his reign was 966 B.C., then **Solomon became king in 970 B.C.** (966 + 4).

I Kings 2:11 – *And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.*

- **David became king in 1010 B.C.** (970 + 40).

I Kings 11:42 – *And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years.*

- 970 – 40 = **930 B.C. Rehoboham became king**

I Kings 11:29-32, 34-36, 40, 42-43





*So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David (I Kings 2:10)  
And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son  
reigned in his stead (I Kings 11:43). Credit: Bud Chrysler 1984.*

*(I Kings 14:25-26) – And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboham, that Shishak king of  
Egypt came up against Jerusalem: And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD,  
and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of  
gold which Solomon had made.*

The majority of scholars agree that Shoshenq I was Pharaoh in Egypt from 945-924 B.C. and that the Egyptian ruler referred to in the Bible as Shishak (I Kings & II Chronicles) is, in fact, Pharaoh Shoshenq I. He was the first Egyptian king to be mentioned by name in the Bible (I Kings 11:40; 14:25; II Chronicles 12:2-9).

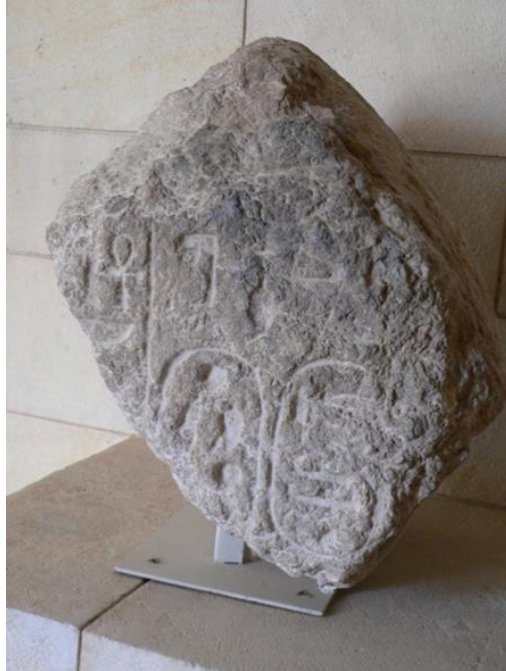


The archaeological evidence suggests that Shishak (Shoshenq I) was Pharaoh from 945-924 B.C.E.

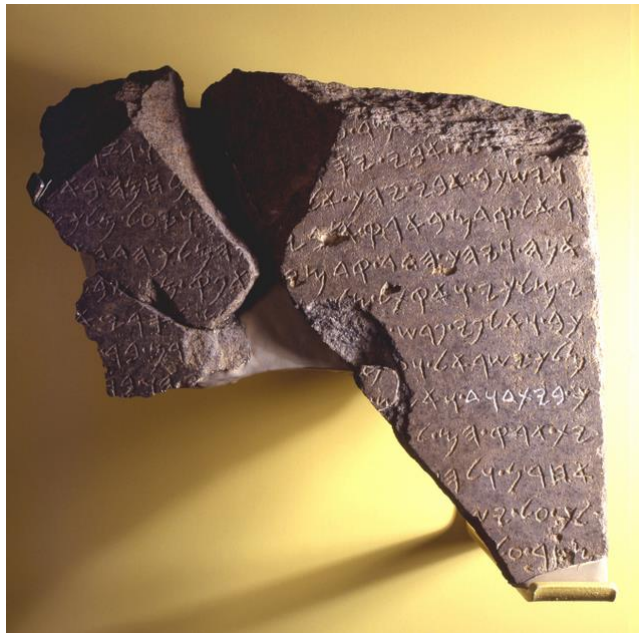
Pharaoh Shishak (Shoshenq I) left an account of his campaign on a wall in the temple of Amun at Karnak, in Upper Egypt. The Bubastite portal includes a large, weathered relief in which the pharaoh lists more than 150 towns (including Megiddo) he conquered during his military campaign into Israel and Judah.

“Today the vast majority of scholars believe that the Bubastite Portal records a real Egyptian campaign by Pharaoh Shoshenq in the mid-to-late tenth century B.C.E. As concluded by Israel’s leading Biblical geographer Anson Rainey: “This inscription can only be based on intelligence information gathered during a real campaign by Pharaoh Shoshenq.” Kenneth Kitchen has called the reality of Shoshenq’s campaign during the reign of Rehoboam “beyond reasonable doubt.” If this campaign occurred in 925 B.C.E. and, as the Bible says, this was the fifth year of Rehoboam’s rule in Judah, Rehoboam would have become king, and Solomon’s reign would have ended in 930 B.C.E. (925 + 5)” (Yigal Levin, *Did Pharaoh Sheshonq Attack Jerusalem?*, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, July/August 2012, pp. 48-49).





At the site of Megiddo a portion of a **commemorative stela of Shishak (Shoshenq I)** was found by the University of Chicago Oriental Institute excavations in 1926. His name can be clearly read, and the stela is undoubtedly related to the 925 BCE campaign. Photo: D. Ellis/P. Van der Veen



**The Tel Dan Stele, ca. 840 B.C. containing the House of David inscription** was discovered in 1993 at the site of Tel Dan in northern Israel in an excavation directed by Israeli archaeologist Avraham Biran. Photo courtesy of Israel Antiquities Authority.

The writing on the stones is dated through paleography to the mid-9th century B.C. Although the Aramaic king's name is not found in the surviving text, the most likely candidate is Hazael of Damascus, whose rivalry with Israel is recorded in the Bible (II Kings 8:7-15).

The most notable feature of the inscription is the use of the expression "House of David" (Hebrew, *BYT DWD*) in line 9, making it the earliest known extra-biblical mention of David and the dynasty he founded. This is crucial for corroborating the biblical account, since many scholars have at least minimized the importance of the actual David, if not relegated him to fictional myth. The expression "House of David" is used repeatedly in the Bible for the Davidic Dynasty (for example, I Kings 12:19, 13:2; Isaiah 7:2; Psalm 122:5). It reigned over all Israel in the period of the United Monarchy (10th century B.C.) and over Judah during the Divided Monarchy until the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.

The identification of the Aramaic king who authored the stele as Hazael fits well with the Bible's account (II Kings 10:32-33; 13:3, 22) of his frequent attacks on Israel.

**NEXT – Lesson Five – The Iron Period – continued (Iron II C Period – ca. 700 B.C. thru 586 B.C.)**  
– From Sennacherib's Assyrian campaign unto Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian campaign.

Bud Chrysler, July 2022 – [www.biblicalarchaeologytruth.com](http://www.biblicalarchaeologytruth.com)