

Dr. Jeffrey Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 17, Archaeology and Solomon

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This is Dr. Jeffrey Hudon in his teaching on Biblical Archaeology. This is session 17, Archaeology and Solomon.

Okay, we move now from the reign of David to the reign of his son, Solomon.

One of the early finds attributed to roughly the period of Solomon is what's known as the Gezer calendar. This is a very small tablet of very soft limestone that was used probably as a school exercise to say kind of a rhyming phrase regarding the harvest dates and the times, the different harvests, periods of harvests in the season. And that was found by Macalester, believe it or not, at Gezer, and still an important piece of epigraphic evidence from the time of Solomon.

You can see here that it was kind of like an ancient etch-a-sketch, the way what we used when I was a boy, is you would scratch and size an inscription and then scrape the tablet and erase it and then try it again, because you can see earlier letters from earlier inscriptions underneath that. Palimpsest is the proper term for that. And this is an example of one of those.

I want to leave archaeology here for just a moment and talk about the two great histories of the Old Testament. And the first of these was the Deuteronomistic history, a history that's sweeping history from the book of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings. Now, this is a historical work, a great historical work, but it's also, most importantly, a theological history.

And so, when you study the biblical text relating to the monarchy, you are given a selected history. It's not a complete history, overall history. It is a history that relates the relationship between God and the people of Israel.

That must be understood when you study these important events, geopolitical events, may or may not be mentioned, or they may be mentioned in passing when they're actually very, very important. Why? Because they don't necessarily have a great bearing on the theological history of the people. Now, the book of Kings was written and distributed during the exile.

And the children of Israel, who were in exile in Babylon, were asking questions. Why are we here? What in the world happened? And so, the book of Kings is written to answer that question. This is your history.

This is what you did. This is what you did to disobey the Lord. And this is what happened.

Now, the book of Kings uses sources. And these are mentioned, like any good historical source, mentioned in the text. And these are the chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah.

These are the royal annals. And unfortunately, they have been lost. Now, there's a question whether they were lost when the temple and Jerusalem were destroyed, or they were lost later in history.

Josephus, in writing his Antiquities of the Jews, seems to use the biblical text rather than these chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah. He does have other sources that clearly show in his writing of the history, but whether or not he had these is quite doubtful. There's a royal formula for each king.

It usually means a brief account of a reign, the name of his mother, theological assessment, and death and burial details. Anything else is, again, written and included for primarily theological reasons. Now, the theology of kings, and there is a theology of kings, is what we call cumulative retribution.

That is, the sins of the ancestors are gathered together and continue to mount until the straw breaks the camel's back, and then judgment comes for their descendants, not necessarily for them. For instance, during the reign of Manasseh, the die was cast.

Jerusalem and Judah would fall. But Manasseh did not live to see that. That happened about a century after his death.

Okay, so we come to Solomon's reign. Here's a beautiful picture of Jerusalem from the time of Solomon. You can see that the Islamic shrine called the Dome of the Rock dominates the temple mount.

But under that dome are evidences in the form of cuttings in the rock and foundational cuttings that show evidence of Solomon's temple. Okay, Solomon was not the first to be coronated after the death of David. His brother Adonijah was coronated by a group of people south of Jerusalem at a place called Ein Rogel, which was a spring that later dried up, probably after the earthquake during the reign of Uzziah.

And so Adonijah, with his followers, was coronated here, closer up to Jerusalem. This, again, is a temple mount, a very old picture, probably from the 19th century, at the Gihon Spring, the water source for Jerusalem. And then Adonijah's short attempted reign failed.

We talked about Nabi Samuel in an earlier slide, and this is again the high place of Gibeon where Solomon prayed for wisdom. And that can be seen very, very far to the north on the northern skyline, north of Jerusalem. Okay, let's look at Jerusalem itself at this time.

We mentioned before that Jerusalem has a very long history going back into the Copper Stone Age. But let's look at first of all the topography of the city. Jerusalem is a city of hills and valleys.

The psalmist tells us that the Lord protects his people like the mountains and surrounds his people like the mountains around Jerusalem. So, Jerusalem is up in the hill country. It's mountainous.

It's about 2,500 feet, but it's surrounded on all sides by higher hills. To the east of Jerusalem, again, unfortunately off this picture here, is the Mount of Olives, which is a long ridge ending in a cut and then extending farther south as the Hill of Offense. And then, to the south of Jerusalem is what we know as the Hill of Evil Counsel.

This traditionally was a site where the Sanhedrin met to decide the fate of Jesus Christ. I'm not sure if that was the site or not, but that's what it's called. Over here on the east, again off the picture, is the Ridge Route, the watershed ridge where the Route of the Patriarchs follows.

And that is higher. This equates with modern King George Avenue and Karen Ha'Yisot in West Jerusalem. The ground also goes up, climbs up, and ascends to the north of the city.

Again, Jerusalem is in a bowl, so to speak, and surrounded by higher hills on every side. Now, between those hills and Jerusalem are valleys. The first valley I want to mention is Wadi al-Jawz, or the Kidron Valley, which starts up here, just opposite the old city today, and gets very deep before coming down and joining two other valleys.

And those valleys first are the Central Valley, starting up here and going down and joining the Kidron Valley. And then over to the west is the Hinnom Valley, which starts on the west side of the city near Jaffa Gate and comes down and winds around the south and then east and joins together with the Kidron and Transversal or rather Central Valley and then goes down and ultimately empties out at the Dead Sea. There are other valleys as well.

This is the Transversal Valley here that was used as a defensive line for Jerusalem during the Old Testament period and also the early New Testament period. The early Hasmonean rulers built a wall there. Okay, the city itself has, first of all, the Eastern Hill.

And this is the oldest part of Jerusalem that was inhabited. Again, back to the Chalcolithic period, the oldest houses we found are dated to the time of Abraham or the early Bronze Age. In the Middle Bronze Age, it was fortified for sure, and fortifications continued there throughout most of its history.

To the north of that is Mount Moriah or Mount Zion. This is the sacred precinct or the site of the temple. Initially, David placed the Tent of Meeting or the tabernacle there, and then Solomon built the temple which served as the site of the temple both under Solomon, Zerubbabel, Herod's remodeling, and then until the final destruction in 70 AD.

And then, finally, we have the Western Hill, which is actually the highest point in ancient Jerusalem, is the Western Hill. Notice the flat topography here. Many early explorers looked at Jerusalem and assumed that the earliest part of Jerusalem was here, not here.

So, this became known as Mount Zion rather than the real Mount Zion, which is Mount Moriah. However, later and continued research clarified and corrected that. Now, the wall line you see here on this map dates back to 1517.

This is the original Ottoman walls. When the Ottoman Turks came in and conquered this area, they rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, and those walls remain today, 400 years later. However, the Ottomans failed to include the southern part of the Western Hill and the Eastern Hill, the oldest part of Jerusalem, within their walled city.

The first Ottoman ruler, Suleiman the Magnificent, apparently was very angry about this, and those architects paid for their mistake apparently with their lives. What is ancient along this Turkish wall is the temple platform, which again is built upon the Herodian platform, a kind of trapezoid-shaped platform where Solomon's temple and later the temple, the second temple, Zerubbabel and Herod, were built. So, some of this wall, for instance, this western line here, the temple mount and bits and pieces here, date to the biblical period.

Not necessarily all of the Old Testament, but some of it dates to the New Testament. Now we come over to the other drawing here and this is what Jerusalem looked like in the Old Testament. We've already seen artist's reconstruction of Jerusalem at the time of David and Solomon.

This is the city of David. This is the ancient core of Jerusalem, the Eastern Hill here. And then when Solomon became king, he included the Ophel, the Milo, and then the temple mount or Mount Moriah, not using again the later Herodian platform, but just simply a wall around a mountaintop.

The later kings of Judah, I believe, in the very early eighth century under Jehoash and maybe even earlier, expanded Jerusalem to include the Western Hill. So, Jerusalem, at the time of the later kings of Judah, came out here along the southern edge of the transversal valley around modern-day Jaffa Gate and included the Western Hill down here, including the Pool of Siloam and hooking up to the city of David wall. So this is what Jerusalem looked like from the time of, say, the prophet Isaiah all the way down to the prophet Jeremiah and the fall of the city in 586 BC.

Again, here are some pictures of Jerusalem during the Old Testament period. This is Jerusalem as it appeared at the time of Solomon. Notice the Siloam pool is outside of the city.

That may or may not be true, but they also have an extension here to protect the Gihon spring with a defensive tower or towers guarding that water source of Jerusalem. This is David's city here. David's palace, you see the wall here and then the encircled wall over Mount Moriah.

The topography here is quite accurate, depicted quite accurately, actually, even though this may or may not be accurate here. A picture of Solomon's temple, which we'll unpack in a few moments. And again, this tower and pool, extramural tower and pool that protected the Gihon spring.

Very awkwardly bulging the wall there, but that's what the Canaanites apparently did. Now, some scholars argue that this all happened in the Iron Age. So that's debated.

The excavator, though, dates that to the Middle Bronze Age, the age of the later patriarchs. This is the water gate here. That was one of the entrances to the royal quarter of Jerusalem.

This was originally found or discovered by Charles Warren in the 19th century but later excavated by several people, most notably Eilat Mazar. And she found a royal gateway into the Ophel, the place between Mount Zion and the city of David. And this is probably built or fortified during the reign of Uzziah.

This is part of the wall that extended around the temple mount that Eilat Mazar uncovered. You're looking at stones placed there by masons, possibly Phoenician masons, during the reign of Solomon. That is a Solomonic wall fragment that has survived.

Pretty incredible. Now, Solomon had royal gardens and those royal gardens were on the terraces of the Kidron. Here's a modern picture of the Kidron Valley.

This is the city of David here, the eastern slope of the city of David. This is the Arab suburb of Silwan, ancient Siloah in the Bible, and the hill of offense above. This is the hill of evil council, the southern ridge facing the city of Jerusalem.

But on the slopes of these, both of these slopes over the Kidron Valley, were terraces. And this was, we believe, part of the King's Valley, again, watered by the Gihon Spring, probably farther south, not quite this far north. This would have been an idea that Solomon perhaps explains in Kohelet, where he talks about building gardens and parks and probably referred to these.

And any time a king built a garden or a park or beautiful terrace gardens as Solomon did, it was, again, an attempt to recreate or recapture Paradise Lost, meaning the Garden of Eden. And you've got this meeting again earlier between Abraham and Melchizedek in the Vale of Shaveh, Valley of Bet HaKarem, the King's Valley, possibly in this vicinity right here. So, this has a special significance, even though today it's very much populated and built over.

In antiquity, this was possibly a sacred area. Solomon continued David's empire, although pressures mounted and weaknesses were seen by surrounding kingdoms, and Solomon's hold quickly disintegrated after his death. But it was still a very powerful empire, mostly not through warfare as under David, but under economic prosperity under Solomon.

Control of the trade routes and trading with other kingdoms brought in a lot of wealth. We talked before about Solomon's administrative districts, and these were roughly equivalent to tribal territories. There were 12 districts and, of course, 12 tribes.

There were differences, though, and these were, again, given in turn. These districts helped finance Solomon's immense bureaucracy during his reign and were the subject of some complaints and pushback because of the heavy taxation and the mass Oved given to Solomon's subjects during his reign. Ashlar masonry, very finely carved square or rectangular stones placed in header-stretcher fashion walls.

You can see here from Samaria, from Megiddo, and here from Heshbon, again, are characteristic of Solomon's reign. This is, again, a step forward in architecture where you have not just field stones or roughly carved and chipped field stones but very nicely carved masonry that are fitted together tightly to build walls for royal compounds and royal cities. Solomon had many wives, mostly as a result of treaties with other nations other kingdoms, and one of these, of course, was the daughter of Pharaoh, his first wife. and this is a tomb, a monumental tomb in Silwan that remains from the period of the monarchy, believe it or not, and that was carved out of bedrock and originally had a pyramid on top that was quarried away for stone and the entrance to this tomb was enlarged sometime in antiquity, perhaps when a monk

lived there, but the cornice here and the fact that there was just evidence of the beginnings of a pyramid gives it an Egyptian type architectural influence. Hence it's called the tomb of Pharaoh's daughter.

Only one and a half letters of an inscription have been preserved on one side of the door. Unfortunately, we can't make anything out of that, but at one time, the name of the deceased was carved over the door and cut away. Speaking of Solomon's wife, the Shulamite girl that's mentioned in Song of Songs was probably from this village here on the base of the Hill of Moreh in the Harod Valley, and there are theories that perhaps his Egyptian daughter of Pharaoh he met up at Beit Shan, which still had Egyptian influence there during that time, and perhaps that's how the two met.

It's just speculation. What we do know from the period of Solomon is that there was a flourish, a great advance in culture. Older, again, Israelite potter from the period of judges, period of the early monarchy, was pretty bland and basic, but at the time of Solomon you see red burnish and very much nicer forms of pottery.

These actually were found in the wet sifting projects of the Temple Mount that were done by my former professor Gabi Barkay, the Muslim religious authorities had been removing soil from the Temple Mount illegally, hauling it off as they were building an underground mosque right on the Temple Mount, and Gabi and his students have reclaimed that dirt and brought it to a different location and wet sifted it with the help of hundreds of volunteers and found artifacts from the Temple Mount, which before has not been available for excavation. So, these are out of situ, but they can be dated because of what they are, for their style and what they are, and these are clearly hand-burnished red slip pottery from the time of Solomon. Recently discovered ostrakon, also from Solomon's reign, perhaps can be rendered as cheap wine.

It was from a storage jar, which looks like a rimless storage jar, possibly issued to Solomon's troops or one of his administrators. Now 1 Kings chapter 6-8 gives very, very detailed information about how Solomon built the Temple. David wanted to build the Temple, but God said, no, let that be done by your son, and it was Solomon who built this lavish temple to place the Ark of the Covenant and the furniture and temple objects or objects from the Tabernacle in a proper permanent home.

There are measurements and descriptions of the temple given in the 1st Kings, but no, none of it exists today, knowingly exists today. So, we have to look for parallels. And here's a one of an artist's reconstruction of what the temple looked like.

You have two columns, we're not sure if they were engaged or freestanding, and then you have the hekel, the hall, and then ultimately the debir, the holy of holies, and the temple furniture, as well as the auxiliary storage rooms and priest quarters, the altar of incense, the laver, and so on. It must have been a beautiful building, but

again it's subject to, the details are subject to interpretation. So, looking for parallels, archaeologists have found several, all later, slightly later, a century or more later, but the closest parallel was found and excavated in the 1980s at a site in northern Syria called Ein Dara.

This is a massive temple, a pagan temple, but it had almost incredible similarities to Solomon's temple, and we'll look at some of these in a minute. First of all, it was the same type of floor plan, two columns, an antechamber, a hall, and a holy of holies. It also had auxiliary rooms surrounding it, and Solomon's temple did as well, but very, very similar in many ways, and we'll, again, see some of these.

Here's a sphinx or cherub figure at Ein Dara. Again, cherubs were guarding the Ark of the Covenant, so that same motif was used. Strangely, there are huge footprints at the base, or at the entrance to the Ein Dara temple, one, two footprints here, one here, and then one on the, on the, on the platform in the background, and that apparently is a footstep of this god that this temple is for entering the temple.

And so, you have the idea in Solomon's temple, this is the dwelling place of Yahweh, and so Yahweh would walk in just like these large footsteps of this pagan god would at Ein Dara. There are a lot of Hebrew words and terms, architectural terms, used for Solomon's temple that scholars were not certain exactly how to translate. One was lattice, and look at this stone lattice carving here in the Ein Dara temple, and these swirls here, probably very similar to what was at Solomon's temple, and this again confirms some of the readings of that text that lattice was the proper word to use.

Now, other than Ein Dara, there are examples at the Turkish site of Tell Tayinat, and here's the palace of the king, Bit Hilani palace, where you come in through an entrance, a pillared entrance, and then turn to the throne. You always don't come in straight, and the throne is in the back; you always turn and face the throne in the throne room. Adjacent to that palace was a small royal temple, very close in, again, like Ein Dara, very close to Solomon's temple in the floor plan.

Now, we don't know the walls extent around the Mount Moriah. Here's the bedrock that can be determined of what it looks like underneath the Herodian platform, which is here, but Solomon's platform may have been smaller here, maybe a square platform or maybe a rounded platform. Again, this is what Wilson and Warren uncovered in the 1860s and 70s, while you could still explore underneath the Temple Mount.

Now, of course, that is forbidden. Leen Rittmeier, who is a believer and a published author of several books, has studied the Temple Mount for nearly 50 years, and he has done incredible work in determining exactly where the Temple of Solomon and, thus, the Temple of Zerubbabel and Herod stood on the Temple Mount. If you look at the early atlases and histories of Jerusalem, you have Solomon's temple in every

possible conceivable location on the Temple Mount, with different theories and different positions.

But Lien Rittmeyer, I believe, has solved that problem clearly by his research, which uses the exposed bedrock in the Muslim shrine of the Dome of the Rock. Now, I was 1985 able to actually enter the Dome of the Rock and see this exposed bedrock, which supposedly Muhammad's horse leaped off of. But now, unless you're a Muslim, you cannot go into the Muslim shrine here at the Dome of the Rock.

It's forbidden. But Rittmeyer was able to do this earlier when I was able to study this bedrock facing. And he has recognized the foundation courses, and the foundation cuts in the bedrock for two of the walls of the Holy of Holies.

And more than that, he's actually identified a rectangular depression, exactly the dimensions of the Ark of the Covenant, exactly where it would be in the center of the Holy of Holies. So, this bedrock, exposed bedrock here, is, for all intents and purposes, clearly the actual site of the Holy of Holies of the Jewish Temple of Solomon and later kings. Now, you will see in a lot of publications, popular publications, other alternative sites for the temple to the south and all over that temple mount and even off of it.

But if you study the way that Lien Rittmeyer did in his book, *The Quest*, it is a superb treatment of what he has found out looking at all the historical sources, Josephus, the rabbinical sources, and archaeological work. He was an architect for one of the digs south of the Temple Mount. He has done his homework, and this is, I think, indisputably correct.

So, very, very exciting here. Now, interestingly enough, underneath this bedrock, in the dome of the rock, is what's a cave called the Well of the Souls. Here's a cut into the roof of that cave.

What is that cave doing there and how do we date that cave? What was it for? Well, Rivka Gonen wrote a very, very provocative article in *Biblical Archaeology Review* in 1983, 40 years ago, and she argued that this was a Bronze Age tomb, probably of a prominent Jebusite, Jerusalemite family during the later periods of the patriarchs. And it's controversial because this is the holiest site in Judaism and one of the three holiest sites in Islam, and you've got a tomb in the bedrock underneath the holiest site, which is, of course, very uncouth and wrong. But, again, she gives a very interesting theory.

But it is on a hilltop. It was definitely a threshing floor. Arun of the Jebusite gave it to David, or David bought it from him.

So, there could have been tombs there as well. That's a question that must be left open for now. Underneath the temple mount are large cisterns that were carved out for water storage and for washing.

The constant progression of animals for sacrifice at the temple needed a tremendous amount of water, and so these were hewn out to hold water for that purpose. Now, a lot of archaeological study relating to Solomon, apart from Jerusalem, is based on this text in 1 Kings 9, because this describes Solomon's activities, building activities. And these, again, give indications or give evidence of places archaeologists can look at and see if they can find evidence of these building operations done by Solomon.

So, let's look at see what they say, what it says here. At the end of 20 years, during which Solomon built these two buildings, the Temple of the Lord and the Royal Palace, King Solomon gave 20 towns in Galilee to Hiram king of Tyre, because Hiram had supplied him with all the cedar, juniper, and gold he wanted. And, of course, this is related to the land of Kabul, which we talked about earlier, and we'll see some slides in a moment relating to that.

Okay, and then it talks about the forced labor that Solomon used to build the temple, his own palace, the terraces, again, Shadmote Kidron, the walls of Jerusalem, and Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. Then there's a kind of a footnote here. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, attacked and captured Gezer, set it on fire, killed its Canaanite inhabitants, and then gave it as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon's wife.

And Solomon rebuilt Gezer. Now, this is almost proof of the existence of archaeology because you should be able to go to these sites and find buildings in construction that are similar to and dated to the time of Solomon. And Gezer, again, has the added impetus of being destroyed and then immediately rebuilt during Solomon's reign.

He also built up Lower Beit Horon, which is a city in the Aylon Valley going up to the hill country, Baalath, and Tadmor in the desert. Tadmor may be Tamar, and that could be in southern, the south of the Dead Sea in the Aravah. Within his land, as well as all of his store cities and the towns for his chariots and for his horses, whatever he desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and throughout all the territory, he ruled.

Okay. Finally, down at the bottom, we have King Solomon also built ships at Etzion Geber, which is near Eilat in Edom, on the shore of the Red Sea, Gulf of Eilat, Gulf of Aqaba. And Hiram sent his men, sailors who knew the sea, to serve in the fleet with Solomon's men.

They sailed to Ophir and brought back 420 talons of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon. So, there were a lot of foreign sailing adventures to exotic ports to get

exotic goods and treasuries or treasures. So, great, great amount of information here that, again, should be able to be confirmed by archaeology.

Well, the sites of Gezer and Hazor have both been excavated. Again, Hazor by the Israelis, as we know, under Yadin, and later, more recently, by Ben-Tor and his students. And they have found, halfway across the upper city, that's shaped like a bent coke bottle, 20 acres side of the upper city, a six-chamber gate with gate towers on the outside.

A gateway was also found at Gezer and recognized as such, partially excavated by Macalister, and partially by the later excavations under Wright and Dever. This also was a six-chamber gate, similar and almost with the same measurements as the one at Hazor. More than that, the University of Chicago excavated another six-chamber gate at Megiddo, that third city that was fortified by Solomon, with the same dimensions.

Here are some reconstructions of what those were. Here's what they would have looked like. And so, you've got the same architect working on all three sites.

Clearly, and of course, dated to the time of Solomon, by pottery, clearly you've got what are called Solomonic gates here at Gezer, Hazor, and Megiddo. And here's again the gatehouse as it appeared reconstructed. The text in First Kings mentions Tadmor in the desert.

This could be Palmyra in the Syrian desert, but more likely Tamar in the Aravah. And Tamar, certainly enough, has a fortification and gateway that's dated to the 10th century, and then a later one built over that 150 years later. And that's still being, it's been excavated and still being written up for publication as we speak.

But there's definitely a fortified complex there from the time of Solomon. Why is this important? All of these cities are important strategically. Megiddo covers the Jezreel Valley, the southern entrances to the Jezreel Valley, and protects the interior of Israel from perhaps seaborne invasion from Akko.

Hazor protects Israel from the north. It's situated right on the coastal highway that goes up to Damascus, so it protects Israel from the north. Gezer protects Israel again from the west, from the Aylon Valley, and it protects the approaches to Jerusalem.

Tamar protects Israel from the south and from the east. So, all of these play an important strategic role in the defense of the kingdom. Now along with those gates, Solomon and the kings after him built storehouses and some believed stables in these store cities to store probably royal taxation in the form of foodstuffs and supplies for the military.

This is a reconstructed storehouse at Megiddo, and you can see feeding troughs here for donkeys or horses. Again, there's been a long debate whether these were stables or storehouses, probably used for different things in different time periods. Sometimes, perhaps, they served as stables, but most likely, they were storehouses.

Some of these have been found with clear jars and storage jars, and not definitely for storehouses, articles for storehouses, not for stables. And this is the one at Hazor reconstructed, again two views of the one at Megiddo. Solomon also had a relationship with the Queen of Sheba and this was an economic relationship.

Of course, the movies will turn this into a romantic relationship, that may or may not have happened. But Sheba was a kingdom south of Arabia in Yemen, ancient Saba, and you can see some of the terrain and cities of Yemen today. And there was recently found an 8th century inscription mentioning trade between the kingdom of Saba with Judah.

And so, the Queen of Sheba, perhaps she wasn't as pretty as this actress here that portrays her, but she came up to trade with Solomon and to learn of his wisdom and to talk with him and learn from him. But that was probably a guise for trading relationships. Okay the cities of Ophir and Tarshish, these were the destinations of Solomon's fleets, Solomon's fleets with Hiram of Tyre's sailors.

Where were these? Again, we're not sure for certain. Locations have been suggested as far away as Spain, India, Mozambique, and Africa. But Solomon's ships plied the Red Sea, certainly down to the bottom of Arabia and perhaps around the Horn of Africa and to ports farther away.

Tarshish may be in Spain, or it may be Tarsus, as in the hometown of Saul or Paul in the New Testament; we don't know. But we do know that this ostrakon was found that mentions Ophir as well. So an interesting historical question that still needs an answer.

Okay to summarize, we've talked about the site of Etzion Geber, perhaps being Coral Island or Pharaoh's Island in the Red Sea. And then Khirbet En-Nahas, Solomon's copper mines in the Aravah. This is the gatehouse of that fort at that site.

And this is a picture of Tom Levy here and again a video made about his work in Khirbet En-Nahas and Aravah. The Wadi Finan, which is where this copper operation, copper mining operation took place. More than that, Amin Mazar has excavated the site of Tel Rehov, ancient city of Rehov in the Beit-Shan Valley, close to Beit-Shan, south of Beit-Shan, and found enormous, an enormous beehive, beekeeping operation going on there.

Now, why would that be important? Were they making honey? No, this is for the production of wax, beeswax. Beeswax was used to form molds for copper objects. So, in the northern part of the Kingdom of Israel, you've got this huge operation making beeswax, while to the south of Israel, in the Aravah, in Edom, you've got extensive mining operations.

What kingdom is sitting right between these two or encompassing these two? Kingdom of Israel in the 10th century under Solomon. So you put the puzzle together, and you clearly see a major operation from a major kingdom. And then we come back to the site of Tel El-Khalifeh.

Again, Solomon, Solomon's seaport was again, probably Coral Island, but this other fort right close to the shore of the Gulf of Eilat, which was excavated by Nelson Glueck in the 1930s, also deserves mention. My guess, it was probably Biblical Eilat. Since Etzion Geber is near Eilat, as the text mentions, this was Eilat and the Coral Island was Etzion Geber.

So again, Nelson Glueck was partially right, but he made some mistakes regarding how the fort was used and its name. But there is, again, an ongoing debate about exactly what happened here. And his work was reassessed by Gary Practico, who published Glueck's findings from Tel El-Khalifeh about 30 years ago.

And we leave that with another picture of Coral Island and picture Solomon's ships leaving that port, heading for exotic destinations to get trading goods for the kingdom. Okay, and one final mention is a group of settlements. We mentioned this before when we were talking about the geography of the Bible.

The Negev Highlands, south of the southern part of Israel, have a whole series of Iron I, Iron IIa sites, fortified sites, walled sites. And this is what they look like. Some of them are oval.

Notice the casemate walls here. Some of them are square. Various styles of fortresses, but they all seem to have a date within the 11th, 10th century.

What are they? Could they be some sort of an agricultural group of agricultural settlements, fortified settlements that Solomon established in this area, at least to have hegemony over this arid region, or to perhaps try to grow crops and make it useful? We don't know. And some of these are difficult to date. Some may predate Solomon and David.

Certainly, they don't post-date him. But were they Israelite or some other entity, some other group of people? And that's another question that remains to be conclusively answered. Okay, and then finally, the land of Kabul.

We saw scenes of this before: the land that Solomon traded to the Hiram king for his services. And this is, of course, the ruins of Rosh Zayit, another 10th-century fortress.

Is it Phoenician, or is it Israelite? A question that again remains open. So that again wraps up the reigns of Solomon and David. And we look now ahead to the divided monarchy.

Thank you.

This is Dr. Jeffrey Hudon in his teaching on Biblical Archaeology. This is session 17, Archaeology and Solomon.