

# Dr. Jeffrey Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 16, Archaeology and the Historical David Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 16, Archaeology and the Historical David, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

**Dr. Jeffrey Hudon's lecture** on Biblical Archaeology, Session 16, examines the **archaeological evidence** for the existence of King David. The lecture discusses various archaeological finds, including the **Tel Dan Stele**, which mentions the "House of David," and the **Khirbet Qeiyafa** site, offering insights into David's reign and kingdom. Furthermore, it explores the **locations significant** to David's life, such as Bethlehem and Jerusalem, presenting different interpretations of the evidence and addressing scholarly debates about David's historicity. Finally, the lecture highlights the complexities of archaeological excavation in Jerusalem and the ongoing **research** on David's era.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 16 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Introduction & Languages → Archaeology).**



**Hudon\_BibArch\_Session16.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided lecture excerpts on "Archaeology and the Historical David":

#### Briefing Document: Archaeology and the Historical David

**Introduction:** This document summarizes key information presented by Dr. Jeffrey Hudon in his lecture, "Archaeology and the Historical David," focusing on archaeological evidence related to King David's life, kingdom, and impact. The lecture analyzes various archaeological discoveries, texts, and interpretations, addressing both confirmation and challenges to the biblical narrative of David.

#### Key Themes and Ideas:

##### 1. David's Rise to Power and Jerusalem:

- **Strategic Choice:** After Saul's death, David first ruled Judah for seven years from Hebron. He then became king over all Israel and chose the neutral city of Jebus (Jerusalem) as his capital. This was a "very wise tactical decision" since Jerusalem was not aligned with any particular tribe.
- **Conquest of Jerusalem:** David, with Joab as his general, conquered the Jebusite city, renamed it "Tzion," and made it his royal domain, transforming it into the "Washington DC of ancient Israel." This was a critical period in Israel's history for archaeological study.

##### 1. Archaeological Sites and Their Significance:

- **Khirbet Qeiyafa:** This site, possibly dating to the reigns of Saul or David, overlooks the Elah Valley, where David fought Goliath. Its features, such as four-room houses and two gates, suggest it may be the biblical site of Sha'arim, the "two gates."
- **Quote:** "These features make a lot of scholars believe this is biblical Sha'arim, which means two gates that were in this immediate vicinity."
- **Gilo:** Located overlooking the Rephaim Valley, this poorly preserved Iron I site is believed to have been a defensive outpost used by David's army against the Philistines. It potentially belonged to David's family and may have been part of a royal estate. The lack of a water source at Gilo, and thus dependence on Jerusalem, points to the existence of a Jerusalem with a stature to supply water.

- **Timna & Edom Lowlands:** These areas show evidence of extensive copper mining operations during the 10th century (David and Solomon's time), implying centralized control of resources and a regional power.
- **City of David:** Eilat Mazar's excavations uncovered a monumental building dating to the early Iron II period, believed to be the walls of David's palace. The revetment wall found during her dig is still in existence.
- **Tunnels in the City of David:** These tunnels are posited by Hudon and other scholars as possibly being the remains of royal tombs of the Davidic dynasty, as described in Nehemiah's account of the wall repair. They may have been repurposed as cisterns later.

#### 1. **The Tel Dan Stele and Historical Verification of David:**

- **First Contemporary Mention:** The Tel Dan Stele, discovered in 1993, contains the inscription "House of David" (Beit David), the first known mention of David in a contemporary, non-Israelite source.
- Quote: "That's the first known mention of David in a contemporary document."
- **Challenging Minimalist Views:** This discovery refuted the claim by scholars like Philip R. Davies, who argued that David was a mythical figure, "about as historical as King Arthur."
- Quote: "He suggested in this book that, in quotes, King David is about as historical as King Arthur. He argued that David was legendary, that it was a myth. He never even existed."
- **Aramean Text:** The stele is an Aramean text from King Hazael, mentioning his defeat of Israel and the "king of the house of David", confirming the existence of a Davidic dynasty.

#### 1. **Additional Inscriptions Supporting Davidic Dynasty:**

- **Mesha Stele (Moabite Stele):** Possibly mentions the "Heights of David," erected by the king of Moab, Mesha, around 840 BC.
- **Karnak Temple (Shishak List):** British Egyptologist K.A. Kitchen believes the inscription there mentions the "Highland of David."
- **Bethlehem Bulla:** This seal impression, found in Jerusalem, is the oldest inscription that mentions the city of Bethlehem (c. 700 BC).

### 1. David's Military and Political Acumen:

- **Exploiting Power Vacuum:** David took advantage of the weakened state of Egypt and Mesopotamia to expand his influence. He expanded his power through “warfare and treaties” and created a strong regional kingdom and “mini-empire”.
- **Military Success:** David successfully defeated the Philistines in the Rephaim Valley by using the Gilo site as a strategic point to ambush them. His success is attributed to his cunning generalship and the strategic positioning of his forces.
- **Strategic Capital:** Choosing Jerusalem, a foreign enclave on the border between Judah and Benjamin, as the capital ensured its neutrality.

### 1. The Debate on David's Kingdom:

- **Minimalist arguments:** Some scholars, in the absence of much archaeological evidence before the Tel Dan stele, argued that David’s kingdom was either minimal or completely fictional.
- **Archaeological support for monarchy:** The discovery of sites such as Khirbet Qeiyafa has forced a reevaluation of minimalist arguments, showing evidence of centralized power, urban planning, and fortifications associated with a more substantial kingdom.
- **Quote:** “All of a sudden, you've got Judahite control over the lower Elah Valley because it's clearly a Judahite site. And that tells us it's not some small chieftdom or David ruling from some Bedouin tent. This is a real kingdom.”

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Hudon's lecture highlights the significant role archaeology plays in illuminating the historical context of the biblical narrative of King David. The Tel Dan Stele and other archaeological findings, such as the sites at Khirbet Qeiyafa, Gilo, Timna, and the City of David, challenge minimalist interpretations and provide compelling evidence for the existence of a historical David, a powerful regional kingdom, and an organized state. While some aspects of David's life and kingdom remain open to scholarly debate, the archaeological evidence confirms the general historical accuracy of the biblical portrait of David as a central figure in ancient Israel. The lecture emphasizes the importance of examining not just the Bible, but also the material remains from the time period to better understand the history.

This briefing document provides an overview of the key points in the lecture. Further research into the specific archaeological sites and inscriptions mentioned will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the historical David.

## 4. Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 16, Archaeology and the Historical David

### Archaeology and the Historical David: A Study Guide

#### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What was the significance of David choosing Jerusalem as his capital, and what was its pre-Israelite name?
2. Describe the key features of Khirbet Qeiyafa and its importance in understanding the period of Saul and David.
3. What is the Tel Dan Stele, and why was it a significant discovery related to the historicity of David?
4. How did the reigns of other contemporary powers such as Egypt and Mesopotamia provide an opportunity for David's rise to power?
5. What was the argument of Philip R. Davies regarding King David, and how did the discovery of the Tel Dan Stele challenge this argument?
6. Besides the Tel Dan Stele, what other inscriptions may mention the "House of David"?
7. Describe the location and strategic importance of the site known as Gilo.
8. What was the unique challenge of excavating in Jerusalem as explained in the lecture, and what did this mean for researchers?
9. What did Eilat Mazar discover in the City of David that is believed to be connected to King David, and how does it relate to biblical accounts?
10. How did archaeological discoveries at Khirbet en-Nahas and Timna shed light on the scale and organization of Israelite society during the reigns of David and Solomon?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. David chose Jerusalem as his capital because it was a neutral city between the tribal territories of Judah and Benjamin. Its pre-Israelite name was Jebus. This

strategic choice prevented any single tribe from claiming the capital as their own, solidifying David's authority.

2. Khirbet Qeiyafa is characterized by a large four-room house, possibly a governor's residence, and two gates, leading scholars to identify it as biblical Sha'arim. Its discovery sheds light on the administrative capabilities and Judahite control of the area during this period.
3. The Tel Dan Stele is a basalt fragment with an inscription mentioning the "House of David," found in 1993. It is the first known contemporary, non-biblical mention of David's dynasty, thus bolstering the historicity of the biblical figure.
4. The decline of powers like Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon created a power vacuum in the Levant, allowing David to expand his influence and build a regional kingdom through warfare and treaties, establishing Israel as a dominant force.
5. Philip R. Davies argued that King David was a mythical figure, about as historical as King Arthur. However, the discovery of the Tel Dan Stele, mentioning the House of David, undermined this argument and demonstrated David's historical existence.
6. Besides the Tel Dan Stele, both the Mesha Stele and the Shishak inscription at Karnak may mention the House of David. These inscriptions, found outside of Israel, add further non-biblical support to David's historical presence.
7. Gilo is located overlooking the Rephaim Valley, south of Jerusalem. Its location provided a strategic vantage point, enabling David's army to descend and attack the Philistines in the valley below. Its construction also suggests this area may have been family territory.
8. Excavating in Jerusalem is difficult because of the continuous occupation over millennia. This creates complicated layers of artifacts, making stratigraphy challenging, and sometimes, forcing researchers to do it away from the excavation site.
9. Eilat Mazar excavated a large monumental building in the City of David which she believes to be David's palace, as its data and location align with the biblical descriptions. This discovery helps researchers to better understand Jerusalem's layout and development during David's reign.
10. Archaeological discoveries at Khirbet en-Nahas and Timna indicate large-scale, well-organized copper mining operations, dating to the early 10th century. This

indicates the significant economic and organizational power of the Israelite kingdom during the reign of David and Solomon, refuting theories of a small chiefdom.

## Essay Questions

1. Discuss the impact of archaeological discoveries on the understanding of King David's historicity and reign. How have these discoveries reshaped our understanding of the biblical narrative?
2. Analyze the political, economic, and social factors that contributed to David's success in establishing a kingdom in the Levant.
3. Compare and contrast the perspectives of minimalist scholars, such as Philip R. Davies, with those of scholars who embrace archaeological evidence supporting the historicity of the biblical accounts of David.
4. Evaluate the significance of Jerusalem's transition from a Jebusite city to the capital of a unified Israel under David. What strategic and political factors made this choice advantageous?
5. Assess the role of archaeological sites like Khirbet Qeiyafa, Gilo, Khirbet en-Nahas, and Timna in understanding the administrative, military, and economic organization of the early Israelite kingdom.

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Jebus/Jerusalem:** A Canaanite city that became David's capital; its pre-Israelite name was Jebus.
- **Tzion:** A pre-Israelite name for the city of Jerusalem.
- **Khirbet Qeiyafa:** An archaeological site possibly dating to the time of Saul or David, which may be biblical Sha'arim, and overlooks the Elah Valley.
- **Sha'arim:** Biblical name for a city with two gates.
- **Tel Dan Stele:** A basalt fragment inscription mentioning the "House of David," discovered in 1993 at the site of Dan.



- **House of David (Beit David):** A term referring to the dynasty of King David, first mentioned in the Tel Dan Stele.
- **Mesha Stele:** A Moabite inscription that may contain a reference to the "Heights of David."
- **Karnak Temple:** An Egyptian temple containing a list of conquered territories, which may include a reference to the "Highland of David".
- **Gilo:** An Iron I Israelite site overlooking the Rephaim Valley that may have belonged to David's family and served as a military outpost.
- **Rephaim Valley:** A valley south of Jerusalem, a battleground between David and the Philistines and an important breadbasket for the city.
- **Gibeah of Saul:** The location where David served in the court of Saul before his kingship.
- **Gath:** Philistine city of Goliath, and a place where David went to escape Saul.
- **Mount Gilboa:** The site of the battle where Saul and Jonathan were killed, after which David became King of Judah.
- **Gihon Spring:** The main water source of Jerusalem, which made it a strategically important location.
- **City of David:** The original core settlement area of Jerusalem, conquered by David.
- **Mount Moriah/Temple Mount:** The location of the Temple built by Solomon, which expanded the original city of David.
- **Melo:** A saddle-like formation north of the city of David.
- **Kidron Valley:** A valley east of the City of David.
- **Tyropoeon Valley:** Also known as the Central Valley, a valley that runs down the middle of Jerusalem.
- **Khirbet en-Nahas:** An archaeological site in the Edomite lowlands, revealing evidence of elaborate copper mining operations, likely under David and Solomon.
- **Timna:** A site on the Israel side of the Aravah that has copper mines that also date to the time of David.

- **Slaves Hill:** A location near Timna associated with copper mining during the time of David and Solomon.
- **Stratigraphy:** The study of rock and soil layers to understand the history of an archaeological site.
- **Revetment Wall:** A retaining wall, possibly part of David's palace structure in the City of David.
- **Minimalist:** Scholars, like Philip R. Davies, who view much of the Old Testament as legendary or mythical.

## 5. FAQs on Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 16, Archaeology and the Historical David, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### FAQ: Archaeology and the Historical David

1. **What was the significance of David choosing Jerusalem as his capital?** David strategically chose Jerusalem, then a Jebusite city, as his capital because it was a neutral location between the tribal territories of Judah and Benjamin. This prevented any one tribe from claiming the capital as being in their territory, thus fostering unity. Additionally, its position, though not on a major trade route, offered a defensible location with access to a vital water source, the Gihon Spring.
2. **How does the Tel Dan Stele contribute to our understanding of King David?** The Tel Dan Stele, discovered in 1993, contains the phrase "House of David" (Beit David), making it the first known contemporary mention of David outside of the Bible. This inscription, from an Aramean king roughly a century after David's reign, validates that a dynasty associated with David existed, countering claims that he was merely a legendary figure.
3. **Besides the Tel Dan Stele, are there other archaeological findings that support David's existence?** Yes, there are other potential references to David's house. While the interpretation is debated, some scholars believe that the Mesha Stele and the Shishak list at Karnak may also refer to David or his kingdom, indicating that his legacy was recognized by other cultures and kingdoms of the era.
4. **What is the archaeological significance of Khirbet Qeiyafa?** Khirbet Qeiyafa, overlooking the Elah Valley, is a significant archaeological site that dates to either the time of Saul or David. Its four-room style house, likely a governor's residence, and double-gated design, lead scholars to identify it as the biblical Sha'arim. It is seen as evidence of the emergence of the Israelite kingdom and a potential administrative center under either Saul or David, showing it was not just a small chiefdom.

5. **What archaeological discoveries have been made in the areas of Bethlehem and the Rephaim Valley related to David?** A bulla (seal impression) dating to approximately 700 BC was discovered in Jerusalem with the name "Bethlehem" written on it, making it the oldest inscription mentioning this city name. In the Rephaim Valley, a site called Gilo, an Iron I settlement with an associated tower overlooking the valley, provides evidence of a strategic location that David possibly used for military operations. It's theorized that Gilo might have been part of David's clan territory.
6. **What evidence supports the idea that David was more than a small tribal leader?** The discovery of complex copper mining operations in Timna and Khirbet en-Nahas, radiocarbon dated to the 10th century BCE, suggests the presence of a well-organized regional kingdom capable of large-scale industrial activity. The control needed to organize and run these sites indicates David's kingdom was sophisticated and not simply a group of tribes under a chieftain.
7. **What challenges are involved in excavating Jerusalem, and how does this impact the search for Davidic-era evidence?** Jerusalem is an exceptionally challenging site to excavate due to its continuous occupation since before the time of Abraham. This layered history means that archaeologists can find Roman-era remains just above bedrock, skipping over many intervening layers. This makes stratigraphy very complex and requires careful examination, sometimes even requiring stratigraphy on the pottery table, not on the excavation site itself.
8. **What are the ongoing debates surrounding the interpretation of archaeological finds related to David?** Interpretations of the Tel Dan Stele, Mesha Stele, and Shishak list at Karnak remain points of scholarly discussion, specifically whether some of these may refer to another historical figure or deity. There is also debate about the exact function of the excavated tunnels in the City of David, whether they were royal tombs or later used as cisterns. Additionally, the interpretation of the monumental structure excavated by Eilat Mazar, as David's Palace, continues to be evaluated.