Bethsaida Excavations

Twenty years of Excavating
Bethsaida
A forgotten Biblical Kingdom of Geshur

Bethsaida is located at the North-East of the Sea of Galilee

It was identified by E. Robinson in 1838

Since 1987 it is being excavated and since 1991 by the Consortium for the Excavations of Bethsaida headed by the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Its location, size (20 acres), strength suggests that it was the capital of the Kingdom of Geshur
Capital Cities in Southern Levant
Stratum 6, mid 10th to mid 9th centuries BCE

Granary

City Gate

Palace
A Section at the Outer City Gate, strata 5, 6
The Façade of the outer city gate
The King of Assyria Shalmaneser III visited Bethsaida twice, in 842 and 838 BCE
Outer City Walls

City Wall debris

Paved Road

Outer City Walls
Inner City Gate reconstructed with wood beams
THE DECORATED STELE AS WAS LEFT AT 732 B.C.E.

BASIN

NOTICE THESE STONES
The moon-god from Bethsaida
The Stepped High Place
A Direct Access High Place
Sacrificial High Place

A pit filled up with Sacrificial left over. All animals were Kosher Animals
Chamber 4

To the name of The Moon God Symbol
The Siege of Bethsaida 732 BCE
A Revival in the Hellenistic Period

- In the 3rd BCE Bethsaida was resettled as a colony of Tyrians.
- The Bethsaida inhabitants provided Tyre with linen garments.
- They made “good living” and were able to purchase their wine from the Island of Rhodes which was considered to be the best wine in the market.
Hellenistic weaving set from Bethsaida
Gold Earrings – a sign of wealth
Bethsaida in the Hellenistic Period

- In about 100 BCE, Bethsaida was conquered by the Hasmoneans.
- The town declined.
Bethsaida in the Roman Period

- Bethsaida was resettled by the Herod as these coins demonstrate.
- Herod populated Bethsaida with Jews as these fragments of a limestone vessel indicates.
- The site thrived once more.
Bethsaida under Philip the son of Herod

- In 30 CE Bethsaida was elevated to a status of a “Polis” – Greek city
- This coins was minted by Philip in commemoration of this act.
- Philip renamed Bethsaida Julias after Augustus’ wife, Livia, Julia
The Temple for Julia/Livia

Philip built a temple for the Roman Imperial cult and dedicated it to Julia/Livia
Decorated Stone from the Temple Mount in Jerusalem
Favisa, Sacred Deposits near the Temple
Utensils from the Temple

Simpulum

Strigilis
Bethsaida as Jesus saw it

The “Wine Maker” House

Wine cellar

Remnants of a Private house

The “Clinic”

Houses next to the city wall

Open courtyard

Dining room (Triclinium)

Kitchen

A lane

A lane

Open courtyard

Remnants of a Private house

The “Wine Maker” House

Wine cellar
The “wine maker’s House”
The “Wine Maker’s House”
Fishing Gear
Limestone Vessels a hallmark of Jewish presence
Private Homes at Bethsaida
A Gem Stone
A group of Roman Nails Left by a Carpenter
Digging west of the gate
A Hellenistic Juglet
A Roman Bronze Bowl (Patera) from the Temple Area
A Decorative Nail from perhaps from the door of the temple
Breakfast
Some of our attentive students
Tension is built up
THANK YOU