

Joseph Diaz

Dr. R. Steven Notley, Ph.D.

Parables: BIB 336 NO

Byzantine Bethsaida and the House of St. Peter Summary

January 27, 2023

On January 26th Dr. Notley and Dr. Aviam gave a presentation on “Byzantine Bethsaida and the House of St. Peter at the Museum of the Bible. Dr. Notley who is a professor of the New Testament and Christian origins at the New York City campus of Alliance University and director of the graduate programs in ancient Judaism and Christian origins spoke about the history and the religion in the fifth to the eighth century. Dr. Notley talk about the “lost city of the Bible which is considered Bethsaida. He also mentions that there were two sites fighting for the title of the real Bethsaida’s which is El-Tell and El-Araj. Dr. Notley also mention that El-Araj was closer to the water called Lake Kinneret, and El-Tell was about 1 ½ miles away. I also hear that Bethsaida disappears from the pages of History to the end of the 3rd century. What was also mention was the El-Araj excavation was a construction site which was called “House of the Bey.” Bethsaida was the city of Andrew, Peter, and Philip which was in Galilee next to the lake of Gennesaret. Dr. Notley says the literature was unknown to the Rabbinic. What they said is that they’ve have found a Church that emerges into Sunlight. They called it also the Mosaics from the Church of the Apostles. Dr. Notley talk about 2021 dig continue the Apse. While Dr. Notley and Dr. Aviam continue digging they found the Octagon at Capernaum, a Church which is called

Basilica which was from the 4th century. Dr. Notley says that Peter always associated with Bethsaida and never with Capernaum.

Dr. Aviam who has many years of experience accomplishing field surveys. He has excavated many salvage excavations. He is also the director of the excavations at El-Araj which is Bethsaida on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. He mentions in his lecture that “where there is hot water the people are blessed.” He showed many pictures of many findings of artifacts. What Dr. Aviam found was many of coins, pottery dated from first to the third century. He also uncovered a layer dated to the Roman period. Dr. Aviam also showed a picture of about 1.5 below Byzantine floor a rich Roman period level. They also found an inscription that mentions, “the chief and commander of the heavenly apostles,” a reference to St. Peter. The question was asking “Is it the “Church of the Apostle?” Out of all the artifacts that he found alone with Dr. Notley, he says that the fenestrated tubuli only exist in Roman tiles and the Marble slab only exist in the cities. In one of the pictures that Dr. Aviam showed which had area A, B, C, and D, says that the area A was the church. Many evidences were given showing that there was a church. Dr. Aviam also showed more pictures of 12th century sugar industry, El-Araj architectural fragments from the site and a coin of Philip the “Founder” suggested top mint for the founding of Julias in 30/31 CE. I really enjoyed watching this lecture about the Byzantine Bethsaida and the House of St. Peter. I see that the church was always around and never forgotten. History tells us that God is always in charge of everything and that we in this world could never get rid of it because God will always hide it until it is time to revealed it for His Glory.