

Jeanette Concepcion

Professor Notley

Parables NA

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In this presentation, two fantastic speakers, Professor Notley and Dr. Mordechai Aviam, discussed "The four lost Cities of the Bible." They both presented the historical and religious implications of the fifth to eighth-century basilica excavated at the Khirbet el-Araj (Bethesiada) in the year that they started from 2019- 2022. Dr. Mordechai was not interested at first when Professor Notley asked if he would be interested in digging, but later on, it became a focus of his last six years that took some hours of his night sleep.

At the beginning of the presentation, Professor Notley explained that people ask, "How do we lose a city?" He states that when people visit Israel, they visit sites with signs like Megiddo, Ekron, Capernaum, and Chorazin; For Hundred and fifty years, no one knew about these sites, and most of the sites were destroyed, abandoned, and forgotten, and it has been through a period of about hundred and fifty years of rediscovery. Nevertheless, some of the cities mentioned in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, which are in their last stages, are now available for us to visit.

A few of Professor Notley's students participated in the field trip to Israel this year in 2023, and ten of us students have seen these Biblical sites live, which is what he presented today.

Notley studied the Biblical Jewish history and background, and because it was in Israel, he had to engage the physical reality of the story. Dr. Notley states that modern innovation stands

in the face of centuries of Christian tradition that primarily identifies Peter's home in Bethsaida and not in Capernaum, as Gaudensio Orfali called it.

Dr. Notley shared "The two tales of Bethsaida at Et-tell." Notley also spoke about Edward Robinson (1841) and when archeology began in the Holy Land. He states that Robinson's speculation was correct and, at times, not in Bethsaida. Another man named Gottlieb Schumacher suggested an alternate site, which he spent little time talking about. It is so interesting that as Professor Notley visits every year except in 2020 because there was nothing open due to the Pandemic, they would find more and more evidence of the church that existed 200 years prior, which no one seemed to talk about until the eighth century.

Dr. Mordechai Aviam's presentation was about the exhibits of their digging, which he says are not rooms but squares that they cut to the ground. The first layer they hit was from the thirteen century CE Crusader period. Professor Notley and Dr. Mordechai reused pillars from the Roman-Byzantine period in the medieval structure, and the place was identified as a sugar industry facility. The local sugar came from India, and when the Muslims conquered the East and met this good stuff, they brought it with them to the Western side of their empire to the land of Israel, Jordan; sugar needs two things, water and heat. Dr. Mordechai excavated seventeen Byzantine churches so he could hear the sound of a church only from the stones that they again found.

In conclusion, Dr. Notley and Dr. Mordechai worked together for these seven years, discovering the layers of what they believe is the house of the Apostle St. Peter and Andrew.