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MOTB January 26 Lectures

Dr. Steven Notley started the lecture by explaining how they came to excavate the site at El Araj and what went into it. Finding the lost City of the Apostles. People asked, how do you lose the city? Lost cities of the Bible, Megiddo, Ekron, Capernaum and Charazin. A hundred and fifty years ago no one knew where any of these sites were. Most sites were destroyed and abandoned.

Edward Robinson came up from New York City and identified a city called ET-Tell, and one of the problems with ET-Tell is it is too far from the Sea of Galilee. All the sources describe it as being on the Lakeshore. Jesus disciples is coming from there, the fisherman, and the fishing industry. Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter, John 1:44:

Bethsaida disappears from the pages of history at the end of the third century. "Bethsaida", the city of Andrew, Peter, and Phillip. It is located in Galilee next to the lake of Gennesar. When digging and nothing is to be found, that is because it has been abandoned. Bethsaida is unknown in Rabbinic Literature from about the third century CE. The important thing is Bethsaida is once again on the map. From Tiberias it is two miles from Magdala, where Lady Mary was born. From Magdala it is two miles to the Seven Fountains [Ein Tabgha] , where the Lord Christ baptized the apostles, and where he satisfied the people with five loaves and two fish. From the Seven Fountains it is two miles to Capernaum. From Capernaum it is six miles to Bethsaida where the apostles, Peter, Andrew, Philip, and the sons of Zebedee were born.

In 2016 a church emerges into sunlight and little glass stones build in gold for walls in a church. The church was identified by Willibald, bishop of Eistatt, Bavaria (725C.E.) From Capernaum, they went to Bethsaida from which came Peter and Andrew. There is now a church (ecclesia), where previously was their house, Peters house was identified there.

When looking at the tradition regarding Peter's house, when you come into Christian tradition for 2000 years Peter was never ever associated with Capernaum. He was always from Bethsaida. Peter was form Bethsaida but had married a woman from Capernaum, for the two places are not far apart.

Pope Benedict XVI quotes in a sermon about Peter,"Bar-Jona, Son of Jona, Simon was from Bethsaida a little town to the east of the Sea of Galilee, from which Philip also came and Andrew, the brother of Simon.

What tradition lies behind the Martyrium of Capernaum? In light of the textual variant "and then" in the account of the Pilgrim's visit to a "basilica" that commemorated St Peters house and the weight of over whelming Christian testimony for almost two millennia in the Greek, Latin , and Syriac fathers regarding the location of Peter's home, the Piacenza Pilgrim should now be considered the earliest historical witness to the Byzantine basilica built at El A'raj, which remembered the home of St Peter at Bethsaida.

Dr. Mordechai Aviam spoke on Finding Bethsaida from a Biblical Jewish Village to the church of the Apostles. He started out by saying, "We picked out evidence from the ground no one had seen before and asked Professor Notley what it means in history and gave him some hints. He goes to his computer and checks it out and comes with answers.

He spoke about a small geographical area in the land of Israel, which is a large delta of river. In the area is the Jordan River. The people are of ancient times, it's very hot there and the water is blessed. The Rabbi said the land of Israel is heaven because there is no air conditions.

As they began to dig the first layer, they found layers that were from the 13th century CE. Bethsaida Period. Below surface, 12th century sugar industry. Sugar came in Cuba and was not local. Sugar came India. Evidence of a church was found . On the floor was found pottery and coins from early periods going to the 8th century.

Is the discovery of the church, the “church of the Apostles”? After the walls of the church were identified hiding in between the Bethsaida wall. The most important part of the description was gone. All of Bethsaida was taken away from inside the church. In the North East corner you could see a round red circle. The last day of the dig a young fellow was cleaning and found letters and not one letters was missing and it read Apostles. It was a moment of fun, joy and smiles. It was the church dedicated to Peter . We did not hear his name but the title, the Chief of the Apostles, the description read. The site was identified as Bethsaida. As the stone was lifted up coins were found . An electromagnetic survey was performed, and we got the answer.