

I want to do a research on the site of Bethel. The reason why I chose the site of Bethel specifically is because I have been curious about this site for a while now and this site specifically is pretty significant to learn about because all throughout the Bible, especially in the New Testament, Bethel was a biblical site full of many things and it has a long history dating back to the Promised Land. Bethel also had its beginnings in Genesis where Abraham pitched his tent and where Jacob had a vision of a ladder that reached up to Heaven. Bethel comes from the Hebrew word *Beth-El* meaning, "House of God". Bethel also has a connection with the nation of Israel being that it was one of the sites where the golden calves were made by Jeroboam.

In order to find the origins of Bethel, you need to take it back to where it was originally located and how Bethel came to be. To start off, "Bethel is an ancient city of Palestine located just north of Jerusalem" [1]. "Originally called Luz and in modern times Baytin, Bethel was important in Old Testament times and was frequently associated with Abraham and Jacob. Excavations, carried out by the American School of Oriental Research and the Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary, suggest that Bethel may have been the actual scene of the events described in the Old Testament as having taken place at Ai during the Israelite conquest of Canaan" [1]. Bethel even had biblical events surrounding the people of Israel, which also adds to its significance. As stated before, studying about the land is important because when the Bible talks about a specific location, you would be curious to know where it came from and how the location was meant to be and how does Bethel or any location of the Bible for that matter show any significance for the people of Israel who were living there at that time.

When it comes to looking at biblical sites, it is also important to look at the historical events that happened. For example, at Bethel, there were some significant events that went on in that location like the encounter that Jacob had with the Lord. “In Gen 28:10-22, Jacob experiences a dream theophany at Bethel on his way from Beersheba to Haran. In verses 13-15 of that passage, God promises him land and protection and in the following verses, Jacob recognizes how holy the site was and he named it Bethel” [2]. The Biblical evidence shows how Bethel can also be very significant and how it is portrayed as holy place. Bethel was also the site in the Promised Land where Joshua and the Israelites entered in to try and conquer. “It may be notable that, in renewing the covenant between God and the people of Canaan, Joshua bypassed the ancient altar at Bethel in favor of constructing a new shrine at Mount Ebal, opposite Mount Gerazim, near Shechem. Bethel was also a place where oracles from Yahweh could be received according to the Book of Judges” [3].

Even though Bethel itself was described as a place of holiness to God, there have been people who corrupted God’s Holy Land and used it for their own evil purposes. Even though the Lord wanted Bethel to be a site where God wants His people to seek Him, often times the Israelites would do what is evil in the sight of the Lord so that they provoke Him to anger. For example, Jeroboam used it as one of his two primary locations where he set up his golden calves and that costed Israel their right to live in the Promised Land. “While Jeroboam clearly intended the shrine to be devoted to Yahweh, the biblical account portrays Bethel, from this point on, to be the center of idolatry” [3]. “After the conquest of the Northern Kingdom by Assyria in the eighth century B.C.E., the shrine of Bethel retained its importance as a center of devotion to the God of Israel” [3]. As we can see biblical locations are not without their history.

In conclusion, the reason why I chose Bethel is that this site for me is because there is some significant history surrounding this site. Bethel is a place where God chose to reveal Himself to His servants and this is also a place where God's Holiness may dwell. Even when there are people who would abuse this site as a way to spread idolatry, there is still a sense of reverence to God in this site. It is also where a lot of the history with the Kingdom of Israel happened as we can see how there are people who tried to use it for their own purposes instead of using it the way God wants them too. Bethel, like any other biblical site has a significance to its history which should be studied cover to cover and should be understood more in depth because it is one of the places where God has continually revealed Himself to His people and worked through them.

Works Cited

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