



The Half Shekel Journals of 2023 by Pastor Ed Rice
#23024 Mon 27 Mar Negev, Judean Date Palm, Timna Park

After a good night of rest, a superb kosher breakfast among friends, the dawn packing of all our worldly possessions into the belly of the King-Long tour bus, and a superb devotional by Pastor Henry Penner, the bus pulled away from the Dead Sea, and headed toward the Red Sea. As we drove past spectacular salt and rock formations, and a huge industrial complex, Eli, our Israeli guide, took the mic and began, with an excited zeal, to pour out pages of encyclopedic information.



The water of the Dead Sea is 58% magnesium chloride, 37% potassium chloride, and 8% salt or sodium chloride. The salt plant you see on our left extracts minerals from the Dead Sea. Large amounts of potash are extracted, 95% is used for, or in, fertilizers, but it is also

used in detergents, and ceramics. And we saw how the Dead Sea minerals are used in cosmetics¹; it is curious that when God rained down fire and brimstone for the destruction of Sodom, its aftermath makes a healing cream; when he destroyed the world in a flood its aftermath makes fossil-fuels.

Incidentally, Potassium is often called potash because it



was once leached out of wood ash in large iron pots, and the name “Pot-Ash” stuck. “Wood ash may generally be 20% calcium and only 5% potash, but both are important plant nutrients.”² Potash predominantly comes from

dried seafloors. Seafloors of long ago dried up very large bodies of sea water.

- 1 “Do Dead Sea minerals really work?” The minerals are naturally anti-bacterial, anti-inflammatory, and contain antioxidants that can help reduce the appearance of wrinkles and promote skin healing. Dead Sea minerals also have a gentle exfoliation effect that helps to remove dead skin cells, making them great for acne treatment. (From “The Anti-Ageing Benefits of Dead Sea Minerals in Skin Care” www.thedeadseaco.com Apr 26, 2023).
- 2 Wood ash and Potash insights from crop nutrition.com, accessed 01/10/2024.

Consequently Canada has the largest output of potash: when you understand the Biblical world flood of 2348 BC, you can understand why, but if you are an evolutionist, all you have is a wild hypothesis involving millions and millions of (unsustainable) years.



Recall also that Eli already explained the mixing Red Sea into Dead Sea made large quantities of “gypsum”³ turning all this barren valley into a large chunk of Plaster of Paris (see the footnote for that to make sense). We will be driving 4 hours through the Negev, Israel's southern area of desert or semi desert, well known for its unique geological features and amazing desert landscapes. It amounts to about 2/3 of the 8,500 sq. mile country of Israel, which is

roughly the size of New Jersey's 7,353 sq. miles. The Golan heights area is about 460 sq. miles, while the Negev is 5,000 square miles of desert.

Also, since you asked, the minimum wage in Israel is ₪ 5,572 (shekels) per month, \$1,476 USD (₪ 1 (shekel or NIS⁴) = 0.27 \$ USD), average wage is ₪ 12,454 NIS per month, \$3,300 USD. Gasoline is \$7 per gallon and a four room apartment in Tel Aviv is ₪ 7,140 NIS per month, about \$2,000 USD per month. Despite a nice apartment in Tel Aviv costing about a million dollars a year, our economy is robust, and this Negev holds a gold mine of minerals, ... no gold, however.



- 3 Gypsum is a soft sulfate mineral composed of calcium sulfate dihydrate, with the chemical formula $\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$. It is widely mined and is used as a fertilizer and as the main constituent in many forms of plaster, drywall and blackboard or sidewalk chalk. Crude gypsum is used as a fluxing agent, fertilizer, filler in paper and textiles, and retarder in portland cement. About three-fourths of the total production is calcined for use as plaster of paris and as building materials in plaster, Keene's cement, board products, and tiles and blocks. “Gypsum | Definition, Uses, & Facts – Britannica”, www.britannica.com Earth Sciences Dec 7, 2023
- 4 The new Israeli shekel (NIS) was introduced in September 1985 to replace the earlier Israeli shekel. The government and central bank introduced this measure as part of a successful economic stabilization policy that helped control a rate of inflation that had grown steadily since the 1950s. cf Britannica Encyclopedia.



Pastor Lee Pickert with Methuselah, a BC Judean Date Palm

After about an hour the bus pulled off the main road and started down a drive towards what appeared to be sort of a desert oasis. The Ancient Judean Date Project was to be our refreshing and informative first desert stop today.

It is hard to imagine that date palms could be germinated from seeds that are more than 2,000 years old, seeds excavated out of the top of Masada in the mid 1960s, but that is just how it happened. In 2005 several such seeds were secured by Louis L. Borick Natural Medicine Research Center, and given to Dr Elaine Solowey, at the Center for Sustainable Agriculture. She was the first to successfully germinate one of these seeds, and she named the young date palm sprout Methuselah.

Today our bus pulled into the Arava Institute Research Park on Kibbutz Ketura where Methuselah, a male tree, now lives. He was transplanted here from his greenhouse pot in 2011, and 12 years later we are making a house call. Following Dr Solowey's success, six additional date seeds were grown and the Ancient Date Project, sprouting *Phoenix dactylifera* date palms, became an important symbol for Judaism.

Methuselah is the species of desert date-palm grown in ancient Judea, it was prominent during the time of Christ, its image appeared on coins and in synagogues as a symbol of the region, and its fruits were famous for taste, large size, and medicinal properties. This was a big deal in Israel.



Judean Date Palms: a Fascinating Heritage & First Fruits

In 2005, the germination of "**Methuselah**," a date seed radiocarbon dated to the 4th - 1st century BC, showed it was possible to wake up ancient seeds which had been dormant for 2,000 years.

From 2007 to 2012, **Dr. Sarah Sallon**, leader and founder of the ancient Judean Date Project, procured 32 additional ancient seeds discovered during excavations of Masada and Judean desert caves. Of these, 6 were successfully germinated by **Dr. Elaine Solowey** including: 2 females "**Hannah**" and "**Judith**" (4th - 1st century BC) and 4 males "**Adam**" (2nd - 1st century BC) and "**Boaz**", "**Uriel**" and "**Jonah**" (1st - 2nd century AD). These trees possess a fascinating heritage.

Using sophisticated generic tools, scientists from the Date Palm Unit at the prestigious Institute of Research in Montpellier, France showed these ancient date palms have connections to Arabian, Iraqi, and North African varieties of date palms. However their seeds are significantly larger than the modern varieties of these dates.

Says Dr. Sallon, "... these finding mirror the Jewish Diaspora and trading links around the Mediterranean thousands of years ago - an ancient 'snapshot' of history and migrations at the crossroads of continents."

Dr. Solowey: "After years of effort, these very special trees have been 'reborn'. A real connection to our past history. Germinating and nurturing them has been an Impressive challenge."

Currently "Hannah", "Jonah", "Adam" and "Judith" have been planted out in this special ancient date palm grove. In 2020 Hannah was pollinated by "Methuselah", producing **the first Judean dates in 2,000 years!**

Dr. Sallon: "In this age of climate change and species loss, these unique trees show nature's incredible resilience, a beacon of light in difficult times."

METHUSELAH

Methuselah, the historic date palm you see in front of you, was sprouted in 2005 from a date seed over 2,000 years old. It was the oldest seed ever germinated!

Discovered in the 1960s during excavations of Masada, the fortress built by Herod overlooking the Dead Sea, this ancient date seed was found buried under rubble at the entrance to the Northern Palace, near the ruins of the food stores.

In 2005 **Dr. Sarah Sallon**, founder and director of the Louis L. Borick Natural Medicine Research Center at Hadassah Hospital, Jerusalem, initiated a project to germinate ancient seeds recovered from local archaeological sites as part of a program to study Israel's medicinal flora. Her "Ancient Seed Project" aimed to restore species once found in this region but now extinct.

Dr Sallon turned to **Dr. Elain Solwey**, founder of the Center for Sustainable Agriculture at the Arava Institute, who had extensive experience cultivating desert plants growing under extreme conditions. She decided to accept the challenge. Astonishingly one of the 3 Masada seeds planted by Dr. Solowey germinated. Named after the oldest person mentioned in the Bible, Methuselah grew and developed as a male date palm tree and was planted into the ground in Kibbutz Ketura in 2011.

Published in 2008 by Dr. Sallon in the prestigious journal "Science", Methuselah quickly became a celebrity, written about widely in the media, and earning a place in the Guinness Book of World Records.

In August 2021 Arava Institute harvested three bunches of dates from a world famous ancient date-palm, in its second year of production, from this previously extinct tree. Hannah, sprouted from one of the 2,000 year old date seeds, produce 700 dates (111 in its first year) after being pollinated by Methuselah, and two other ancient date palms, Adam and Jonah. The three named ancient palms were moved from their greenhouse home to the Arava Institute's Research and Visitor Park in 2019. Much more info is at the arava.org website.



Beverly with Hannah at Arava Institute's Visitor Park Negev, Israel, 27 Mar 23 0940

There was a great Wonder unfolding in this place, some have called it a miracle. Pastor Lee Pickett gathered the group together under a palm tree and opened our Bibles to Isaiah 35:6, he led us through some of Eli's Negev details, summarized some of the wonder of a germinated 2,000-year-old date palm seed, and then pointed out and detailed a greater wonder, a greater hope, a greater promise. "Streams in the desert"...

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. 2 It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the

glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon,

they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.

3 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. 4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. 5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. 7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes (Isa.35:1-7).

Brother Lee continued, God made some promises to Israel and the Lord is not slack concerning his promise. God has shown us here, in the germination of a 2,000-year-old



date tree, only a shadow of what is to come to this land. There is coming a day, that great day when Jesus returns, when “no lion shall be there, ... but the redeemed shall walk there.” Off in our future, God says he will keep his promise.

No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: ... (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. ... 25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be

ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: 27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins

(Isa.35:9, Rom.11:8,25-27).

What a day that will be.

As Costia pulled our tour bus away from this Oasis of



great hope and expectation, my mind went to more of the Bible's great hope and expectation for this dry and thirsty land wherein the Negev will flourish with springs of living water:

Isa.35:7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. ... 41:18 I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. ... 49:10 They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them (Isa.35:7, 41:18, 49:10).

The tour bus carried us down route 90 as outstanding desert landscapes flashed across bus windows. It lulled some of us into a numb nap, and I was off in another dimension when suddenly the bus erupted with excitement and chatter. Joe Ville made an audacious claim of seeing an ostrich out his window and several around him were trying to calm him down and assure him he was just confused, mistaken, or hallucinating. Joe would not be quieted but had no corroboration. I saw Eli smiling wryly, and stayed awake considering it. Suddenly, again the bus erupted with excitement and chatter, as two others said, "Look there's an ostrich." Now no one slept on the bus, we were all busy pointing out ostrich sightings right up to the time we pulled into Timna Park.



In the sprawling Negev of Southern Israel there is a 15,000 acre horseshoe shaped valley surrounded by steep cliffs. Mount Timna stands tall in its center, and it is the site of the world's first ever copper mine. "First ever copper mine" makes Timna Park a gold mine of archaeology; so much so that all copper mining in this massive valley was halted and banned until archaeologists were done digging in the valley. They are still digging.

The Mushroom

In the valley below you is the Mushroom rock and an ancient copper smelting camp that dates back to the Egyptian activity period at Timna (from the 14th to 12th centuries BC) General view: (1) Mushroom, (2) smelting furnace, (3) local shrine, (4) industrial courtyard.

There are ancient copper mines and mining shafts throughout the park and the remains of smelting furnaces date back to

ancient imperial Egypt. But wait, anyone with a Bible knows that Edomites were here before ancient imperial Egypt was, and sure enough, when you give archaeologists enough time, they will eventually substantiate God's truth. And they did find Edomite copper mining that predated Egyptian smelting of copper here.

Archaeology does not prove the Bible; only God does that. The unbelieving world is so consumed with prehistoric cavemen evolving through a bronze age into an iron age, that they will never discover Lamech's son Tubalcaine, “*an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron*” (Gen.4:22). God said Tubalcaine was in the 7th generation from Adam. Tubalcain, a decedent of Cain, and Methuselah, a descendant of Seth, were both 7th generation from Adam, and were possibly born around the same time.



Methuselah was born in 3317 BC, in a 687 year old earth, 969 years before the world flood (Methuselah died the day before it started to rain!) (see the table of the ages of the “Sons of God” at the end of this journal).

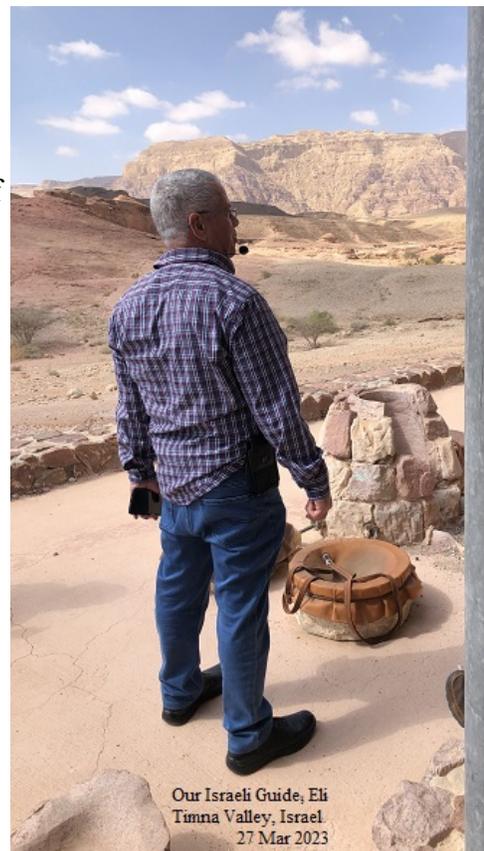
Although much of the archaeological findings pointed to Egyptian mining operations of the 14th century, findings of their temples and shrines, they're hieroglyphics, sculptures, and jewelry, totaling thousands of artifacts, the Timna Valley is today designated “Solomon's Copper Mines.”

Eli explained how dating olive and date pits brought us to Solomon's 1015 BC time frame and the abundance of 'kosher' food remains that indicated the Hebrew presence. In 1930 scientific and public interest in Timna copper mining was attributed to King Solomon by dated discoveries of Nelson Glueck, and pretty much the whole Timna Valley was named “King Solomon's Mines,” with the southern area labeled “Solomon's Pillars”.

In 1959 Professor Beno Rothenburg of University College, London, led the Arabah Expedition, and by 1990, 10,000 copper mines and smelting camps with furnaces and rock drawings were being excavated.

Eli confided that Solomon's camps had 10,000 workers living here and working these mines. The Bible speaks of this land of mines as, “*a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass*” (Deut.8:9). (Brass is an alloy of copper (Cu) and zinc (Zn) in proportions which can be varied to achieve different colours and mechanical traits and hardness).

Also Job says in the Bible, “*Surely there is a*



Our Israeli Guide, Eli
Timna Valley, Israel
27 Mar 2023

vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they fine it. Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone” (Job.28:1-2).

Although there is no Bible mention of Solomon and copper, we know that his Temple construction had great quantities of brass.

We wandered through a small portion of the park, read the signs and pondered the immensity of it all. We took notice of The Mushroom, surrounded by copper or smelting sites. The mushroom was a red sandstone rock formation curiously wrought by erosion. Back in the bus we were now headed to the Tabernacle Replica in the Timna Valley. I was eager to see it, I had spent hours building a model of the Tabernacle, and exploring its features.



	Table of the ages of the "Sons of God"	BC Date to	BC Date	Birth Yrs Before Flood	Died Yrs Before Flood	Earth Age at Birth	Earth Age at Death	Cain's Kin
Creation	4004			1656	0	0		Gen 4:16-
1 Adam	4004 to	3074 _{BC}		1656	726	0	930	Cain
2 Seth	3874 to	2962 _{BC}		1526	614	130	1042	Enoch
3 Enos	3769 to	2864 _{BC}		1421	516	235	1140	Irada
4 Cainan	3679 to	2769 _{BC}		1331	421	325	1235	Mehujael
5 Mahalaleel	3609 to	2714 _{BC}		1261	366	395	1290	Methusael
6 Jared	3544 to	2582 _{BC}		1196	234	460	1422	Lamech
7 Enoch	3382 to	3017 _{BC}		1034	669	622	987	Jabel, Jubal
8 Methuselah	3317 to	2348 _{BC}		969	0	687	1656	Tubal-cain
9 Lamech	3130 to	2353 _{BC}		782	5	874	1651	
10 Noah	2948 to	1998 _{BC}		600	-350	1056	2006	
Flood	2348 to	2347 _{BC}		0	-1	1656	1657	

Note: *Jude 1:14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,*

Note: *Gen 4:19 ¶ And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. ... 22 And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.*

Note: God said Tubal-cain was



an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron, and that he was 7th generation from Adam. Methuselah was 7th generation from Adam, was born 3317 BC, into a 687 year old earth, and died just before it started to rain in the world flood of 2348 BC (in an earth only 1,656 years old!). To a Bible believer there is no prehistoric time, no Bronze Age or Iron Age, just Bible truth.





Msg #2312 Visiting Israel HS#02 Journal Excerpt

What The Bible Says Good Sam's Penny Pulpit by Pastor Ed Rice

While Pastor Rice and Bev are touring Israel with Pastor Lee Pickett from March 16th – March 31st, here is an entry from their journal of last years trip: (view the whole journal by visiting our website and clicking “Journaling a Preacher's Pilgrimage to Israel”) From Half Shekel Journal Entry #02:

Being careful about who was listening in, (on the very restrictive, Muslim controlled Temple Mount) Pastor Charlie continues. Another page of HisStory was written beneath this Temple Mount we are standing on. Solomon built the first temple on this very spot. Pastor continued to carefully expound God's documentation about Mount Moriah. King David accumulated the resources and designs for his son's miraculous construction of the temple. No chisel or hammer sounded on this site during the whole seven year construction (1Kng.6:7,38). But the Psalmists sure sounded out a lot about Solomon's Temple that stood here. Read here from Psalm.⁵

It is hard to envision Solomon's temple as we stand here on a huge platform built by King Herod. The foot print of Solomon's temple is dwarfed by the platform that Herod built. Solomon's temple was glorious just the same. The Bible gives the dimensions for artist to imagine the pictures shown. There are also the models seen at the Israeli Museum.

Solomon's temple was gutted when Nebuchadnezzar ransacked the city in 606 BC (2Chr.36:6, 2Kng.24:14) and then completely destroyed when he came back in 595 BC (2Chr.36:13-21, 2Kng.25:1-17). Israel was thrust into the Babylonian captivity for 70 years as God said (2Chr,36:21, Jer.25,27,29), and, consequently, the Jews returned exactly 70 years after 606, in 536 BC (Ezra 1:1-4), and the rebuilt temple was finished twenty years later in 515 BC (Ezra 6:15)⁶. God runs a pretty exacting calendar.

Standing on Mount Moriah and reviewing events the Bible records 2,600 years ago added a depth to our worship here. Noah Webster defines a "pilgrimage" as “a long journey, particularly a journey to someplace deemed sacred and venerable (worthy of reverence), in order to pay devotion to relics of some deceased saint.” We were not here for deceased saints, but for a living Savior. This was a pilgrimage just the same, and God said that this place where we stood was indeed sacred. The slides shown here are from a Temple History presentation assembled by the author in 2015.

Pastor Charlie pulled us from 600 BC back to the present, Look at this great platform that Herod built, that dome and the mosque are each laden with demonic symbols and represent Satan's presence here, but look back to visualize the temple that stood on this ground. Herod's temple, the temple where Jesus overthrew the tables of the money changers, stood right here. Pastor laid before us the very presence of Jesus in this place; and the authority he always displayed with his presence in this temple. Always? Yes always! It was as if he owned the place.

An Essay for week #12 - Mar 19, 2023

A Holy Land Tour Journalled at www.GSBaptistChurch.com/israel22

5 Online Bible Verse List: Ps 5:7, 11:4, 18:6, 27:4, 29:9,48:9,65:4, 68:29, 138:2

6 Dates given are according to Ussher's very Biblical dating calculations which often differ from modernist "scholar" dates. James Ussher (1581-1656), Archbishop of Armagh, but genius believer.