



**EXPLORATIONS
IN ANTIQUITY CENTER**

Explorations in Antiquity Center

Winter Newsletter, 2011-12

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Needs for funds to complete the Biblical Life Artifacts Gallery are more pressing as our gallery fundraising efforts continue into their third year.



Before: Five-year-old tan roof originally designed for viewing from a maximum 13 row high stepped theater obscures some archaeological reconstructions from higher seating areas.

In the five months since our last newsletter in May, we have been able to prepare for constructing the upper walls of the Biblical Life Artifacts Gallery. We have raised the roof of the shaded pathway covering the archaeological reconstructions in the outdoor display area. The roof previously had slanted down-ward, towards the theater seats (*above*). By raising the roof of the displays behind the colonnaded stage, the upper semicircular rows of seats will be able to view the many reconstructions under it. These will serve as props in future dramatizations and musical offerings which will be performed (compare *above*, *right* photo).

Phase 1 of the Biblical Life Artifacts Gallery (*as seen in the foreground above*) has been completed. This includes the bottom seven rows of the stepped theater beyond the semi-circle. Note that the colonnaded stage is located in the exact center of the archaeological reconstructions that illustrate the life of shepherds, farmers and villagers.

It is now time to move on to **Phase 2** of the project. With your help we must continue raising funds for the ***Biblical Life Artifacts Gallery and Educational Fund***. We appreciate the Israeli Antiquity Authority's difficulty in understanding how slowly our fund-raising efforts have progressed. It has been three years since they approved our museum as a recipient for a collection of biblical artifacts.



After: This summer we raised the roof six feet higher enabling viewing of archaeological reconstructions from rows 14 and 15 planned for additional seating in the stepped theater.

The list of artifacts we have requested cannot be assembled to come to our museum until the building is roofed, climate controlled and equipped with steel doors and a security system. We were encouraged, nevertheless, by a recent visit to the gallery's partial construction (*below*) from enthusiastic representatives of the Israeli Consulate in Atlanta.

Last May we prepared an eight page newsletter to explain the worthiness of the project. Gifts so far this year have been sufficient only to raise the outdoor protective roof enabling space for further construction of the upper theater steps and roof of the gallery. **We are now ready to begin the construction and the Callaway Foundation, Inc. is ready to match your contribution as you consider your end of the year donations.** For more information on how to contribute, please carefully read the enclosed page, on how you can help us realize these possibilities immediately.



A Gift to the Biblical Life Artifacts Gallery and Educational Fund will also help the educational ministry of your church.



Photo-montage showing the concept of “living settings” for the planned displays of furniture from the Old and New Testament Periods projected for the new gallery.

The EIA’s museum staff and Board of Directors have been encouraged ever since the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) promised to permanently loan us a collection of authentic archaeological artifacts from excavations in Israel. This collection would propel us into a category that would include world-wide recognition and future accreditation with *the National Association of Museums*. The exhibit would bring a new level of importance to both our museum, and to biblical collections in the United States. The significance of this collection can be illustrated by understanding that fewer than two dozen museums throughout the world have garnered such a collection from Israel.

A main purpose of our efforts to acquire this collection of artifacts is to use it as a source of **authentic “props” for visual educational productions**. There is a need for new well-researched, creative and educational visual materials for schools, churches, synagogues and mosques around the country and world on the meaning of the texts within the original biblical writer’s culture.

The traditional method of displaying artifacts has been on shelves in cabinets behind glass. One of the truly unique aspects of the Explorations in Antiquity Center is that ours is an interactive museum with full scale replicas from daily life in antiquity. We want our visitors to experience discoveries as they relate to the lives of biblical characters.

For people who do not have an opportunity to visit our museum, we want our replicas and our anticipated collection of authentic artifacts from biblical lands to reach them as well through our exciting new educational materials. As you receive this newsletter, even if you live too far from LaGrange, GA to be able to visit us frequently, or at all, we have good news. Your gift has the potential of helping biblical history come alive in new ways to your church or educational institution.

How is this possible? We have just now begun to produce our first of what has the potential of being hundreds of educational materials which will help the Bible come alive to the 21st Century. Every archaeological reconstruction we have made during the past five years, as well as each artifact we have requested from the IAA can illustrate in very practical ways lessons expanding the meanings of the biblical texts.

For example, let us illustrate by using a simple disc-shaped ancient stone weight. We have included several of them on our list of artifacts requested from Israel. They often have a Hebrew letter on them indicating the amount of the weight. Examples of some can be seen on the left-hand scale plate (*below*).

Our new educational teaching materials will illustrate a practical example of the meaning of the important word, *hessed*, in the Hebrew texts of the Old Testament. This word is normally translated into English as “loyal love” or “grace.” Perhaps one of the most important theological texts in the Bible is found in Exodus 34:6-7. “The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, ‘*The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love (hessed) and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...*’”

An interesting and practical lesson can be drawn from customs at a vegetable stand in many Middle East market places today. When a customer asks to purchase two and a half weights of carrots, the vendor puts the weights on the plate on one side of the scale and begins to place handfuls of carrots on the other side. The purchase would be fair at the point the two plates are evenly balanced.



Museum Chief Operations Officer Derrick Lewis, D.Min. shows being gracious to “the customer’s side” of the balance at our new market street “weights and measures” area.

There is an ancient custom that continues to the present where the customer can ask in Hebrew, “*Kitsat hessed, be-vakasha*” (a little grace, please). If the vendor has a special regard for the customer he will often put an additional handful of carrots on the customer’s side of the balance.

The Bible postulates the existence of a God so full of loyal love and mercy for people that God is happy to offer forgiveness and grace. The Lord is characterized

as offering a huge handful of grace on “our” side of the just balance! This, perhaps, was the most important aspect of a covenant making God for the ancient Hebrews. With all their human weaknesses, there was no way they believed they could keep their side of a covenant with a just God. This would only be possible if God favors humanity on our side of the scale. Perhaps Jesus of Nazareth’s followers would have agreed that his relationships with those around him could be characterized as “*abounding in steadfast (hessed) love.*”

Museum exhibits being used for production of Educational Materials



These two scenes (*above, right*) are being filmed at our replicas of a threshing floor and an Israelite altar. They are part of our first DVD using museum replicas and artifacts. This first program is about Jerusalem in the time of Jesus. Here (*below*) you can see three of our museum staff (Barbara Herlan, Cindy Moon and Joyce Freeman) who have worked on a detailed scale model of the city. The model is based upon ancient written sources and archaeological excavations, reflecting the way Jerusalem would have looked in the First Century.

There is practically no limit on the number of educational materials we will be able to produce...particularly when we receive the collection of archaeological artifacts promised upon completion of our gallery.



- Future DVDs in the N.T. Jerusalem set will be:**
1. Introduction to New Testament Period Jerusalem (done)
 2. Palm Sunday and Messianic Expectation
 3. Jesus’ Teachings in the Temple Courtyards
 4. Passover and the Last Supper
 5. The Jewish Inquiries and Roman Trials of Jesus
 6. The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus

New EIA Brochure features 59 pictures

With this newsletter you should also receive a copy of our new museum brochure. If you already have a brochure please think of someone interested in biblical history to whom you might pass it along.



New Comments from our Visitors:



Summer, 2011

Mrs. Joyce,
The students, parents, and teachers at Veritas Christian Academy truly enjoyed having you as our tour guide on Thursday. Thank you for helping us understand and enjoy learning about the ancient world's history and culture. We will never forget the bread-making and the archaeological dig!
Thank you.

The Veritas Family
Columbus GA



Summer, 2011

Dear museum staff:

I have been to Israel and this brought back precious memories to me. It was as good to reflect back thru Kathy's comments as it was when I went to Israel 25 years ago. I feel like I've been again!

Peggy Campbell
Opelika AL



Summer, 2010

To the EIA Center;
Elizabeth and I want to thank each and every one of you for helping make our dream wedding happen at Explorations in Antiquity. The setting could not have been more beautiful (*at the 4th Century Christian church altar*). Thank you Dr. Lewis for performing the ceremony. Blessings and prayers to each of you.

Scott & Elizabeth

Museum 2011-2012 Calendar of Coming Events

2011

Mon, Nov 12- Wed, Nov 14 Conference: *The Meaning of the Ancient Autumn Feasts of Israel*



Dec 2-3, 9-10, 16-17, 23-24 *Follow the Shepherds Christmas Walks* at 6:00 pm



Fri, Dec 9-10 Dec 16-17, 23- Dec 24 Fri-Sat evenings: *Under the Bethlehem Star Sound and Light Show*, 7:30 at the Roman Theater



2012

Mon, Mar 12- Wed, 14 Spring Conference: *"Principles of Guidance from the Book of Acts"*



Mar 20- Apr 7 *Follow the Cross Walks* for groups daily



Sun, April 8 Sunrise Celebration: *"Tears and the Tomb of the Resurrection"*



Thu, Apr 19 *Holocaust Remembrance Ceremony* at 7:00 PM



Sat, May 5 Roman Soldier Encampment of the XI Legion, with live interaction



Jun 6-8, 13-15, 20-22, 27-29, Jul 5-6, 11-13, 18-20, 25-27 *Bible Land Adventure* for children (days on Egypt, Israel and Rome)



Mon, Nov 12- Wed, Nov 14 Conference: *Sea and Fishing Stories from the Bible*



Thu, Dec 6 Live animals in the LaGrange Christmas Parade

