

Return of the Temple

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BEN GURION GEARING UP TO BRING ALL 70 NATIONS STRAIGHT FROM THE AIRPORT TO THIRD TEMPLE

BY ADAM ELIYAHU BERKOWITZ

Israel is upgrading its already impressive international airport. The government is also working on a railway infrastructure that will bring international travelers directly from the airport to the Temple Mount. This will enable all 70 nations to come to worship God in Jerusalem's House of prayer, a vision that the government has already hinted is their true intention.

The Director General of the Airports Authority, Hagai Topolansky, announced that in 2023, Ben Gurion International Airport will open a new mega-terminal.

“In the western part of Terminal 3 at Ben Gurion Airport, another advanced terminal will be built that will combine innovation and efficiency and expand the services available for passengers going abroad. Starting next year, Terminal 3 will go through a digitization process that will make it possible for passengers to manage their departures abroad easily and independently,”

Topolansky said.

The new terminal will be 30 meters wide and 130 meters long, adding 22 check-in counters, a security check system, and conveyors connected to the HBS systems (hold baggage screening).

“Our main goal is to improve the services provided to passengers through a strategy based on investments, innovation, and long-term vision that digitalize and improve the airport and, thus, improve services at Ben Gurion Airport and the flight experience for passengers,” added

Topolansky.

It was also announced that with the approval of the Authority's board and management, the engineering division began to plan the construction of the fifth wing for aircraft parking in the airport, adding areas for checking passenger baggage, connecting baggage conveyors, establishing additional food complexes, and establishing additional VIP rooms.

Israel National News reported that two million passengers will pass through the airport during September. In October, approximately 2 million more passengers are expected to pass through on international flights. In 2019, Ben Gurion handled 24.8 million passengers. The airport is considered among the five best airports in the Middle East due to its passenger experience and high level of security.

Recently signed normalization agreements with neighboring Arab countries have increased air routes for Israel and opened up Israel to Arab tourists.

In 2020, Israel's Transportation Ministry said that it would move ahead with plans to build an extension of the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem high-speed line that would directly connect Tel Aviv's Ben-Gurion International Airport to the Western Wall in Jerusalem. A proposal was made to name the future Temple train station after Donald Trump.

The plan is experiencing stiff opposition from the Palestinian Authority, which wants Jerusalem as the capital of an Arab state inside Israel. The PA also denies that the Jewish Temples described in the Bible ever existed.

Transportation infrastructure will play an essential role in the Third Temple as a “House of Prayer for All Nations.” This was clearly in the minds of the Jerusalem municipality when they distributed brochures in the Ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods of Jerusalem in July to address

concerns about increasing the light rail system. The brochures featured religious Jews riding the light rail to the Third Temple, bearing animal and vegetable sacrific

Rabbi Yekutiel Fish, who writes a geula and Kabbalah blog in Hebrew called Sod HaChashmal (the secret energy), explained:

“Hashem (God, literally ‘the name’) is preparing the way for the pilgrims to arrive at the Temple,” Rabbi Fish told Israel365 News. “Practically, a train is the best means since it can carry many more people without the dangers or traffic jams associated with highways.” He related an anecdote in his blog about Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin, a leading rabbi in Jerusalem, in the late 19th century. Fish related that Rabbi Diskin heard the whistle of the first train to arrive in Jerusalem in 1892 and said, “They are clearing the way for Moshiach (Messiah), and the geula (redemption) is on the way.”

Fish sees this pre-Messiah train phenomenon being played out to an even stronger degree with the new high-speed track that will bring travelers directly from Ben Gurion International Airport to the Western Wall in Jerusalem. The train is expected to begin service in April, just in time for the Passover holiday.

“A high-speed train is precisely what is needed for Passover, when all of Israel is required to bring their sacrifice to the Temple,” Fish told *Breaking Israel News*. “Hashem (God, literally ‘the name’) is preparing the way for the pilgrims to arrive at the Temple.”

Fish explained that a train has unique characteristics that make it the most fitting means of transport for pilgrimage.

“Practically, a train is the best means since it can carry many more people without the dangers or traffic jams associated with highways,” Fish said.

“In Gematria (Hebrew numerology), ‘rakevet’ equals 622, precisely the same as ‘har HaBayit’ (the Temple Mount),” Fish said.

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Rare First Temple-era document repatriated to Israel

“We are retrieving lost treasures from the past.” Ancient document addressed to 'Ishmael' returned to Israel in joint intel operation.

In a joint intelligence operation, the Antiquities theft Prevention Unit of the Israel Antiquities Authority, and Professor Shmuel Ahituv, recipient of the Israel Prize for Biblical Studies, with the help of the Ministry of Culture and Sport and the Ministry of Jerusalem and Heritage, succeeded in repatriating a First Temple-period document, dated to the late seventh or early sixth century BCE. The document is written in ancient Hebrew script on papyrus, and it was probably found in the Judean Desert caves.

The extremely rare document is composed of four torn lines that begin with the words “To Ishmael send...”, the text hinting that it is a fragment of a letter containing instructions to the recipient.

Based on the writing, it is proposed to date the ‘Ishmael Papyrus’ to the seventh to sixth centuries BCE, joining only two other documents from this period in the Israel Antiquities Authority Dead Sea Scrolls collection. All three papyri come from the Judean Desert, where the dry climate enables the preservation of the papyri.

The story began when Dr. Ada Yardeni, scholar of Ancient Hebrew Script, passed away in June 2018, and Prof. Shmuel Ahituv was asked to complete the publication of a document she was

working on. Ahituv was surprised to encounter the photograph of a rare and, until then unknown, document from the First Temple period, together with Yardeni's preliminary decipherment. This led to a joint campaign by Ahituv and the Antiquities theft Prevention Unit of the Israel Antiquities Authority to locate the whereabouts of the original document.

The intelligence mission succeeded, and the person who owned the papyrus, a resident of Montana, USA, was located.

He explained that the papyrus was given to his mother when she visited Jerusalem in 1965, by Joseph Sa'ad, Curator of the Rockefeller Museum, and Halil Iskander Kandu, a well-known antiquities dealer from Bethlehem, who many years ago sold thousands of Dead Sea scroll fragments.

Back home, his mother hung the framed scroll fragment on the wa

In order to persuade the owner to transfer the fragile document to Israel, where it would be conserved in climate-controlled conditions, he was invited to visit the Israel Antiquities Authority Judean Desert Scroll Department's Conservation Laboratory in Jerusalem.

After the visit, the owner was convinced that here were the best conditions to conserve and research the rare document, and he generously gave it to the Israel Antiquities Authority.

The Dead Sea Scrolls Unit conserved the papyrus and documented it with the modern multispectral system used to monitor the state of the scrolls.

In order to confirm that the document was genuine, a small sample was radiometrically dated in the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot. The sample provided a date similar to that determined by the paleographic evaluation (based on the letter forms), thus consolidating the dating towards the end of the First Temple period.

The document was researched by Prof. Ahituv, and his findings will be presented next Thursday at the Israel Antiquities Authority's First Judean Desert Conference at the Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem.

According to Professor Shmuel Ahituv, "The name Ishmael mentioned in the document, was a common name in the Biblical period, meaning 'God will hear'. It first appears in the Bible as the name of the son of Abraham and Hagar, and it is subsequently the personal name of several individuals in the Bible, including Yishmael ben Netanyahu, who murdered the governor Gedaliah ben Ahikam."

"It also appears as the name of officials on paleographic finds such as bullae (clay stamp seals) used for sealing royal documents in the administration of the Kingdom of Judah, for example the bulla reading, 'To Yishmael, son of the king'. The present document probably certified a dispatchment either to, or from, Yishmael."

"Towards the end of the First Temple period, writing was widespread," says Dr. Joe Uziel, Director of the Israel Antiquities Authority Judean Desert Scrolls Unit.

"This is evident from many finds, including groups of ostraca (documents written on pottery sherds) and stamp seals with writing, that have been discovered in many ancient urban settlements, including in the royal capital of Jerusalem. However, First Temple-period documents written on organic materials—such as this papyrus—have scarcely survived. Whilst we have thousands of scroll fragments dating from the Second Temple period, we have only three documents, including this newly found one, from the First Temple period. Each new document sheds further light on the literacy and the administration of the First Temple period."

According to Dr. Eitan Klein, deputy director of the Antiquities theft Prevention Unit of the Israel Antiquities Authority, "Returning this document to Israel is part of ongoing efforts undertaken by the Antiquities theft Prevention Unit of the Israel Antiquities Authority to protect

and preserve the cultural heritage of the State of Israel, a heritage that belongs to all its citizens, playing a role in the story of the historical heritage of the country and its inhabitants over the centuries. The legal and worthy place for this artifact is in the Israel Antiquities Authority Dead Sea Scrolls Unit, and we are making every effort to retrieve additional fragmentary scrolls located abroad, and to bring them to Israel.”

Hili Tropper, Minister of Culture and Sport: The Israel Antiquities Authority, together with the Ministry of Culture and Sport and the Ministry of Jerusalem and Heritage, is initiating the discovery of impressive antiquities, and continues to surprise us with their success in locating lost archaeological treasures. The Antiquities theft Prevention Unit of the Israel Antiquities Authority acts vigorously to uproot the phenomenon of antiquity looting, with the aim that the entire population can appreciate the national heritage and deepen our roots.”

Zeev Elkin, Minister of Construction and Housing, and Minister of Jerusalem Affairs and Heritage: “This important discovery joins an impressive array of archaeological discoveries exposed in recent years in the Judean Desert area.”

"Since I was appointed Minister of Jerusalem and Heritage a year and a half ago, the office has allocated about 4-million shekels to the Antiquities theft Prevention Unit, has initiated the survey of the Judean Desert together with the Israel Antiquities Authority, and has set up an inter-ministerial committee to deal with the destruction of heritage sites in Judea and Samaria."

"We are taking continuous action and investing millions of shekels to develop, preserve and save heritage sites throughout the country. We will continue to strengthen the bond between the public and the national heritage of the Jewish people, as it is coming to light in the desert caves, in the Golan and throughout Israel.”

According to Eli Eskosido, Director of the Israel Antiquities Authority, “Repatriating this rare document is part of an extensive process led by the Israel Antiquities Authority, aiming on the one hand, to prevent the illegal sale of the ancient scrolls that were plundered from the Judean Desert in the past, and on the other hand, to prevent further plundering of the cultural heritage finds extant in the desert today. In this context, the Israel Antiquities Authority initiated the Judean Desert Survey, which reestablished Israeli control of the area, spread a blanket of legal enforcement, and propagated research activity on the items of cultural heritage found in the Judean Desert caves.”

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