

Archaeologists to Excavate Ancient City Where Ark of the Covenant May Have Rested

Researchers are preparing to excavate Kiryat Ye'arim, an ancient biblical site believed to be where the Philistines kept the ark for a time after capturing it in battle (1 Sam. 5).

Kiryat Ye'arim, translated Kiriath Jearim, is known in the Bible as a Judean town near Jerusalem during the time of Israel's ancient judges, according to reports.

The archaeological project in Kiryat Ye'arim, led by Tel Aviv University and College de France, will last Aug. 7-Sept. 1, reports say.

Israel Finkelstein, one of the project's overseers, hopes the dig will unearth important information about the city's ancient people.

The site has been largely untouched before now, reports the *Times of Israel*. Some believe the site once contained an ancient pagan temple, the remains of which may still rest underground.

The book of 1 Samuel recounts the ark of the covenant was kept at Kiryat Ye'arim for 20 years after the Philistines returned it. The Philistines had stolen the ark after defeating the Israelites in battle, but the Lord inflicted them with plagues until the ark rested in Israel once again (1 Sam. 5-6).

But Jeremiah prophesied a day in which God's people would forget about the ark of the covenant.

"It shall come to pass when you are multiplied and increased in the land in those days, says the Lord, they will say no

more, 'The ark of the covenant of the Lord.' And it will not come to mind, nor will they remember it, nor will they call for it, nor will it be made any more. At that time they will call Jerusalem, the Throne of the Lord, and all the nations will be gathered to it, to Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord; nor will they walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil hearts" (Jer. 3:16-17).

What does this excavation mean prophetically? Sound off in the comments below! {eoa}