

Archaeologists Uncover Potential Proof of Hebrew Judge Gideon

On Monday, July 12, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced the discovery of a unique piece of pottery dating from 3,100 years ago with a famous biblical name written in ink.

The jar handle was discovered in a storage pit in the ground in Khirbet el-Rai—the possible location of “Ziklag”—and bears Gideon’s nickname of “Jerubbaal,” which is first mentioned in Judges 6.

“Therefore on that day he called him Jerub-Baal, saying, ‘Let Baal fight him, for he tore down the altar of Baal’” (Judg. 6:32).

After destroying the altar of Baal, Gideon and his small band of 300 men went on to defeat the Midianites and save Israel from their oppressors.

“This is the first time we have an inscription from the time of the Judges with a meaning,” professor Yosef Garfinkel of the Israel Antiquities Authority said. “And in this case, the same name appeared both on the inscription and on the biblical tradition.”

Although they don’t have definitive proof that the ink writing refers to the Gideon in the Bible, it is important because it was ink letters, and it highlights the historical connection to the biblical text.

Normally 100 volunteers would be assisting with the dig, but due to COVID restrictions, only 25 university students were able to assist in the hands-on research.

One of the first-year students commented about the discovery,

saying this archaeology is “proving that the Bible is actually a historical story, not just mythology.”

This archaeological dig, that started in 2015, was intended as the last excavation season at this site. But if they find more, officials said, they may keep digging. {eo}

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