

Archaeologists Unearth Strange Christian Artifact That Give Insights Into Early Church Baptisms

An ancient baptismal font was unearthed near the Sea of Galilee, providing new insights into how early Christians practiced baptism in the region.

The marble block, found in an ancient baptismal hall, had a cross engraved on the side as well as three bowl-shaped basins, according to a report from Fox News last month.

The artifact is 1,400 years old and was uncovered in Hippos, a city that existed during the Byzantine era.

At one point, Hippos was the only Christian city on the Sea of Galilee, overseeing territory where some of Jesus' earthly ministry occurred.

The cathedral in Hippos was home to two baptismal halls.

One was used for adults, and the other was for infants and children.

The new object was found in the latter hall, which was built in 591 AD but destroyed during an earthquake in 749 AD, per a release shared with Fox News.



Order Dinesh D'Souza's New Book, "The End of Time" on !

The earthquake "buried the marble and bronze artifacts beneath the rubble, preserving them until their recent discovery," according to the release.

The object, beyond having an eventful history, is largely unique in history, as far as archaeologists can tell.

“After extensive examination and comparison, the scholars concluded that no known parallels to the artifact exist,” the release added.

Researchers said the artifact is “a rectangular block bearing three hemispheric cavities, found beside a baptismal font in a newly revealed ceremonial hall.”

The artifact appeared to hold three separate oils used during threefold baptismal immersion – hence the three basins.

University of Haifa archaeologist Michael Eisenberg, who published the results of the excavation, said that other “remarkable liturgical objects” were uncovered at Hippos.

Those included a bronze candelabrum, which was used to hold candles.

“Only after careful research did we realize how unique they are for understanding Christian ritual practices in the cradle of Christianity by the Sea of Galilee,” Eisenberg said.

“Realizing that it is a one-of-a-kind artifact that may fill unknown regional and perhaps wider lacunae in one of the most ancient and sacred Christian ceremonies was a complete surprise.”

Because “distinct liturgical traditions developed” in various regions – not all of which were documented in writing – archaeology provides key insights.

“This find offers a rare glimpse into how the baptismal rite was shaped and practiced in the Byzantine Christian community of Hippos,” Eisenberg said of the discovery.

This article originally appeared on The Western Journal and is reposted with permission.