

The Surprising Spiritual Battle Over Biblical Archaeology

One of the great resources available to those interested in learning from the past is the *Biblical Archaeology Review* magazine.

The *BAR*, as it is affectionately known, provides current information on historical and archaeological finds which impact the biblical lands. But the *BAR* is not the sedate scholarly magazine you might expect. Instead, interspersed between discoveries, the religious and political fault lines of the Holy Land are played out in the scholarly and legal controversies covered in the *BAR*.

One of the major fault lines comes between the religious and the secular world views of scholars. The secular scholars are constantly attacking the work of earlier Christian and Jewish archaeologists, with a "Minimalist" school which argues that such biblical giants as David are mythological. Another line of attack comes from Palestinians who, for political reasons, want to deny Jewish history and try to prevent archaeologists from digging up the Jewish past. There is also an occasional conflict between Jewish and Christian acceptance of findings.

While the *BAR* is a secular, not religious, publication, they do try to fairly present the issues. They gleefully reported an artifact which substantiated the existence of the "House of David", to the chagrin of the Minimalists. In their January/February 2014 issue, they published an article which proves that the site of David's palace in Jerusalem has been found. Some years back the *BAR* demolished Palestinian political arguments by proving that the very name of Palestine was derived from the Greek word for "wrestler," which

translates into the national Hebrew name of "Israel". In their January/February 2016 issue they exposed a *New York Times* article which falsely cast doubt on the historicity of the Jewish temples, a favorite technique of Palestinian propaganda. Now, in the May/ June 2017 issue, eminent archaeologist William G. Dever expose the fallacies of the "minimalist" view in his article entitled "Whom Do You Believe—the Bible or Archaeology."

Our prayer is that secular, political and religious attacks of biblical archaeology will not be allowed to obscure the truth of God's word. We pray for the *BAR* and biblical archaeologists who will fearlessly stand up to those who want to rewrite history to suit their agendas.

And we thank the Lord that He has left us plenty of evidence to confirm the veracity of the Bible as the solid rock on which our faith can rely. {eoa}

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