

DIG SIGHT NEWSLETTER



Five years of excavating the site of Tel Lachish came to a climax during the final season that transpired June 18-July 28, 2017. This season a total of 82 participants from several different countries (including Brazil, England, Germany, Israel, Korea, and the United States) took part as staff and volunteers. The joint project of the Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Institute of Archaeology, Southern Adventist University set as its original research design to expand the understanding of Levels IV and V, which correspond to the ninth and tenth centuries BC. This was an ambitious goal and one that was not without difficulties. Several questions confronted the team when we began: (1) Where would be the best place to excavate in order to expose these levels? (2) What strategy could be employed to ensure that our five-year time span would be met? (3) What would happen if the areas

we chose would not produce Levels IV and V? Archaeological excavation is a risk, and it does not always produce the data to answer the research design. This project was no different.

Area AA. The expedition began in Area AA with the goal of following the sequence of Levels I-VI uncovered by Yohanan Aharoni in his 1966-68 excavations on behalf

dug through earlier material. Nevertheless, over the course of five seasons, students and staff from Southern Adventist University and other consortium institutions carefully excavated and documented these difficulties, and this season, for the first time, reached Level V in five different squares. "We found a major Level V destruction with burnt material, ash, and many whole vessels and

other smaller artifacts on the floors and throughout the destruction debris," said Michael G. Hasel, co-director of *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish*. "This provided new evidence that the tenth century city of Lachish, at least in Area AA, came to a fiery destruction. The question, of course,

is by whom and under what circumstances."

Area BB. In Area BB the massive fortification system of the northeast area of Lachish was investigated by The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. A series of fortification walls dating back to the Middle Bronze Age, Late Bronze Age, and Iron Age were uncovered. This season a small area to the



The Fourth Expedition to Lachish team, staff, and volunteers at Tel Lachish this past summer. Photo Credit: Caleb Cook/*The Fourth Expedition to Lachish*

of Tel Aviv University. In the end, evidence was uncovered from all six levels. However, the process was difficult because of the slope that extended in two directions above a massive depression on the northeast quadrant of the site. In the course of excavating, significant disturbances were discovered in the area from Level I and II pits that were

IN THIS ISSUE

1-3

Lachish 2017 & Student Responses

4

Ancient Seals

5

Museum of the Bible Opening

6

Director's Letter

7

Recent Sightings

8

Upcoming Events

southeast produced evidence for Level V with what appeared to be a small sacred area with an altar and several other important objects, including a stunning scarab seal. Very little material from the Iron Age was discovered here due to excessive erosion and later disturbances.

Area BC. In Area CC in 2016, a complete sequence of outer fortification walls of Lachish was exposed dating to Levels I-VI. A floor abutting the Level V outer wall contained olive pits, which were sent for dating to Oxford University. The results indicate that this floor dates to the end of the tenth century BC. This year the fortifications uncovered in Area CC from 2014 to 2016 were extended into Area BC by a team from Seoul Jangsin University. The Level V wall, though severely eroded, extended to the east. A series of pillared houses abutting the wall to the south were uncovered during the course of the season.

This clearly established that there was settled occupation along the fortification system of the site. Area CC and Area BC produced, for the first time, evidence for the fortifications of Lachish in Level V. Why is this important?

One of the major research goals of *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish* was to investigate how the Kingdom of Judah expanded during the early monarchy—the reigns of David, Solomon, and their immediate successors. In the previous expeditions to Khirbet Qeiyafa and Sochoh, it was established that Saul and David could have founded these ancient cities and that there was now new evidence for the establishment of Judah in the region. But what about later in the kingdom? Lachish could hold those answers. Now, after the 2017 season, a case can be made that the city was refortified in the late tenth century and that there was a continued occupation through Levels V, IV, III, II, and I. Even though the city was destroyed during several major campaigns, the history of the site appears to date back to at least the



Picture towards the northwest of Area AA. Photo Credit: Caleb Cook.

time of King Rehoboam, Solomon's son. Interestingly, it is precisely this king who is said to have refortified Lachish and a number of additional Judean cities in 2 Chronicles 11:9. Is it possible that we have now found the wall of Rehoboam? If so, this would have been the first time in history. The fact that Level V was destroyed also raises the question of who would have done this.

Now that the excavation has been completed, the difficult stage of *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish* begins. The processing of millions of pieces of data collected in the field will occupy the course of several years. As the team of researchers assess that data, conclusions may be reached that will answer some of these intriguing questions. In the meantime, hundreds of staff and volunteers have benefitted from the hands-on training this major project provided. Their stories express the many facets of what makes a project like this so exciting and what draws people back into the dusty and grueling experience of archaeological excavation year after year. 🍷

STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE ARCHAEOLOGY TRIP

Caleb Cook: Up at 4:00 AM, gather camera gear, photograph a day of hard work, attend lecture, edit photos until 9:00 PM, call home. Repeat. I have never experienced anything like it. It was exhausting. By the end, I didn't want to see another piece of pottery. But I knew there was a deeper purpose than just unearthing sherds of brittle clay. As the expedition photographer, I had a backstage pass that offered me a fuller understanding of our opportunity to discover truth with evidence.



Caleb Cook
Photo Credit: Caleb Cook

The expedition promised education, adventure, and photography dreams come true. However, beyond these simple things, the higher purpose was clear. Dr. Hasel explained that our mission was to uncover biblical history, something that if neglected would lend an argument against Christ. We were there as ambassadors for Christ with our influence and our research.

With the expedition behind me, the impact still lingers. As a visual learner, seeing the places of Bible events laid a tangible framework to hang my understanding of Scripture upon. Beyond the places, the people left a lasting impression. I knew that prominent religions lay claim to Jerusalem, but I was not prepared for the passion and determination of each group. On the first Friday evening at Jerusalem's Western Wall, I saw firsthand the dedication and joy of a people who still seek their Savior as they sang, prayed, and danced. It reminds me to guard against complacency in my own faith in the Savior who has come and is coming again.

David Runnels: “Hey, David, how was Israel?” I got this question from my fellow students many times as I returned to Southern Adventist University this school year from the five-week 2017 season of Southern’s archaeological excavation at Tel Lachish, and it was a question that was hard to answer. How could I describe experiencing such a new, exotic, and fascinating culture? “It was great!” I would exclaim, and then I would launch into a detailed description of the trip that somehow could not do justice to the experience.



David Runnels
Photo Credit: Caleb Cook

Thinking back on my time in Israel made me realize that my five weeks there digging and touring was the most memorable five weeks of my life. I had never been out of the country before, and being able to go on an archaeological dig to get a taste of my future profession was so valuable. While it was hard work, it was amazing to see everyday items that had been made and last used by people thousands of years ago. Every pottery sherd, arrowhead, olive pit, and animal bone was a piece to the puzzle of life in ancient Lachish and having the opportunity to uncover these puzzle pieces was exciting.

Equally valuable, and arguably even more valuable, were the opportunities I got to visit some of the sites where biblical events took place. Visiting these places has brought new meaning and context to the Bible for me, because I now have a visual representation of the setting of many biblical stories. As I took communion next to the tomb of Jesus, sailed on the Sea of Galilee, and walked the streets of the Old City in Jerusalem, the biblical stories became more than just stories for me—they came to life in a whole new way.



Catalina Hannah
Photo Credit: Caleb Cook

Catalina Hannah: As a history enthusiast, thrill seeker, and young adult trying to understand the Bible in a personal way, the opportunity to unearth ancient Lachish challenged me in the best ways possible. The captivating mysteries lying beneath the dry dirt and the untold stories of this ancient city that were slowly being uncovered consumed my attention to such a degree that one summer of excavating just wasn’t enough. I

returned to Lachish for a second time the following year, expecting to encounter a summer similar to the one before, with work beginning at dawn, finding more dirt in my nose than I thought could ever fit, and dreading the abrupt passing of what became the most cherished days of my life. Though all of those aspects did remain true, I quickly discovered that no two trips can ever be the same. My first summer in Israel was spent frantically absorbing and recording every bit of information we were taught while on the dig site, in the nightly lectures,

and on our numerous tours. Everything about the experience was so foreign for me. I was challenged to better understand the culture, the religions, and even the Bible (which I thought I had known pretty well before!), but didn’t find time to connect with Israel itself, with the Israeli people. I already had a basic understanding of archaeology and the geography of the land, but I didn’t completely understand the culture. The second summer, though, provided for me the opportunity to connect with six local Jewish girls my age, who were finishing their time in the National Service. Spending the evenings with those girls put my life and my religion into perspective. Though there were extensive differences between us, we bonded with the surprising amount of things we found in common. They taught me so much about their faith, and I shared all that I knew about mine. It is the life-enriching opportunities like making friends with the most unlikely people that have made the expeditions to Lachish so invaluable in my life. These experiences have taught me abundantly more than simply history and biblical archaeology, but also about humanity, and have reinforced the most important thing in life that I believe in, the Bible.

Pamela Acosta Torres:

During the excavation, every pick we swung, every bucket of pottery we collected, every laugh we shared, and every gasp we chorused brought Lachish to life. My experience was enlightening, inspiring, and moving. One day, as I meticulously unearthed a clay oil lamp that had been buried for thousands of years, a story formed in my mind. I saw a woman walking through her home towards her



Pamela Acosta Torres
Photo Credit: Caleb Cook

baby, nestled in a wooden crib, guided by the light of a flickering flame emitted by this very lamp. Stories like this emerged in my mind throughout the season. I was humbled by the immensity of every moment I experienced in Israel. I was enlightened with a perspective gained only through personally witnessing the nation’s distress. The pain was deeply rooted in the words, “It’s not you they are worried about, it’s us,” from a young Muslim man by a barricade prohibiting him from crossing the street. I met two Messianic Jews, both of whom shared inspiring stories that opened my eyes to new perspectives. I enjoyed listening to their journey of coming to know, love, and follow Christ. It was electrifying to dip my toes in the Sea of Galilee. Had that same drop of water once dripped off Jesus’s robe? Seeing, hearing, feeling, and tasting the land of Scripture gave His words new meaning. This experience moved me to ask more questions and to know Jesus more intimately. Since returning to the United States, I have realized how much my experience helped me broaden my perspectives. I love to share how Israel came to life right before my eyes. ✍️

“HAVE DOMINION OVER... EVERY LIVING THING” (GENESIS 1:26): ECOLOGY ON ANCIENT SEALS FROM BIBLICAL TIMES

My colleague, Michael Hasel, and I were sifting for the second consecutive day through the ancient seal collections of the Yale Babylonian Collection at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut.

We felt a bit like two boys in a candy shop, opening drawer after drawer in huge wooden cabinets that were filled to the brim with ancient artifacts, cylinder seals, scarabs, stamp seals, seal rings, etc., shining in all kinds of different colors and materials, mostly made from beautiful semi-precious stones. After all, this is one of the oldest and largest collection of seals and textual materials from the ancient Near East in the United States and beyond. We were coming to the end of a selection process that put together a unique assemblage of seals from biblical times centered around the themes of creation, cosmos, and ecology, which are currently on display in the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum until May 2018. Yet, I was still looking for one last piece, a piece that would just perfectly complete our exhibit. What made things complicated was that I had only another thirty minutes before I needed to run with my luggage across New Haven, Connecticut, to catch a train that would take me to the airport for my flight back to Tennessee.

My final search at Yale produced a beauti-



Photo 1: Slate cylinder seal from the Yale Babylonian Collection.
Photo Credit: Yale Babylonian Collection

ful black slate cylinder seal measuring 38 x 21mm from ancient Uruk, a city in Southern Mesopotamia, dated to 3300-3000 BC, making this a more than 5,000-year-old artifact. It has been deeply incised with a scene that provides us with a meaningful glimpse into the ideas of ancient ecology. Looking closely, one can clearly make out an animal combat scene: There is a cow lying on the ground. A lion, raised on its hind legs, is facing the cow in a menacing gesture, ready to kill and devour its prey. A scantily dressed man with a spear in his hand is desperately defending his

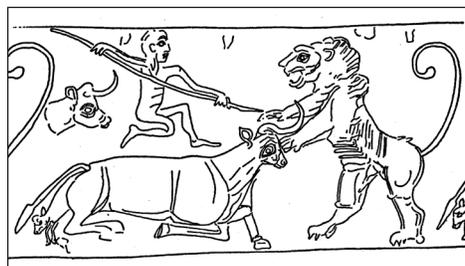


Photo 2: Line drawing of the cylinder seal.
Photo Credit: BIBEL+ORIENT Museum

animal against the lion. However, there is one small detail that can easily be missed: The cow is giving birth at that very moment, and a little calf is emerging from the rear of the cow. The domesticated animal is in its most defenseless state, and its only hope for rescue lies in its human master. In more general terms, this seal expresses the ambivalence between humankind and the animal world. The domestication of animals in husbandry as an expression of culture, expressed by the cow that is giving birth to a calf, had to be defended against the wild and uncultured nature, represented by the attacking lion on its hind legs. The whole composition polarizes the contrast between human culture and wilderness within the context of ancient ecology.

The relatively modern term “ecology” comes from the Greek *oikos* “house, household, dwelling place, family.” It was originally coined by the German zoologist Ernst Haeckel and refers to the science of the relation of organisms to one another and their physical surroundings. With the awakening of the ecological movement in the latter part of the 20th century, archaeology and biblical studies have increasingly asked the question of how

people in the ancient Near East interacted with their environment in terms of living spaces, natural resources, flora, and fauna. Our seal illustrates human interaction with the last of these categories.

People kept animals in biblical times, but the relationship between humankind and animal went beyond the mere economic sphere. Domesticated animals formed an integral part of the ancient household, even family (e.g., Nathan’s parable about the ewe lamb in 1 Sam. 12:1-4), but they also became religiously significant within the sacrificial system (e.g., Lev. 16). There is even a Sabbath rest prescribed for animals (e.g., Ex. 23:10-12; Lev. 25:2-7; Deut. 5:12-15). However, wild animals also instigated fear in humankind and demanded subjugation (e.g., lion imagery in the Bible and ancient Near East). In subjugating animals through domestication (e.g., the cow on our seal), the responsibility of caring for these animals becomes part of the equation of stewardship.

Time had definitely moved on, and after speaking to Agnete Lassen, the associate curator of the Yale Babylonian Collection, who assured me that the seal must be somewhere among the other 45,000 objects (!), I went for one last examination of the large display cases. Not that this was the first time I had searched for the seal in these cases! Finally, minutes before I was to leave, I noticed an object label at the back of a case that had fallen over and was covering an object. And there it was, the black slate cylinder I had been looking for! The cow giving birth and the human defending it against the ferocious lion. It is still on display until May 2018 at the Lynn H.



Photo 3: Neo-Assyrian stamp seal with animal sacrificial scene and ritual feast.
Photo Credit: Tal Rogovski

SOUTHERN FEATURED AT THE MUSEUM OF THE BIBLE

The much-anticipated grand opening of the Museum of the Bible in Washington, DC, took place on November 17.

The \$500 million Museum of the Bible has been in the planning process for almost ten years. Six floors and 430,000 square feet focus on various aspects of biblical history and the story of the development of the Bible, its influence on the world and on America. Exhibits by the Vatican Museum and Archives and the Israel Antiquities Authority are integrated into the plan of the museum.

Opening ceremonies included speeches by the mayor of Washington, DC, the minister of tourism for the country of Israel, and the chaplain of the U.S. Senate. Special attention was placed on the common heritage that Christians and Jews share as the Bible has shaped these religious movements over the years.

The basement floor contained the special exhibit “In the Valley of David and Goliath,” focusing on the groundbreaking contributions of the Khirbet Qeiyafa Archaeological Project that took place from 2007 to 2013 at the ancient fortified garrison city on the border between Judah and Philistia, southwest of Jerusalem. Khirbet Qeiyafa overlooks the Elah Valley, where the Bible recounts the story of David and Goliath.

The Khirbet Qeiyafa excavations were co-sponsored by the Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Institute of Archaeology, Southern Adventist University. “Based on the extensive data from the excavation project, we believe that Khirbet Qeiyafa may be ancient Shaaraim mentioned in 1 Sam. 17:52 within the context of that story,” states Michael G. Hasel, Institute director at Southern and a director of the project. “The site dates back to the time of Saul and David, and the two gates at the site

match the biblical name of Shaaraim, which means ‘two gates’ in Hebrew.”

In 2008 the oldest Hebrew inscription was found at the site, and in 2013 another inscription dating to the tenth century BC mentions the name Ishbaal, the name of one of Saul’s sons. The name incised on the storage jar is the same and dates to the same time period, but this was someone else, as he is designated as the “son of Beda.” Both discoveries made international headlines and will be featured in Washington, DC. “The significance of these inscriptions cannot be underestimated,” says Hasel. “They show that literacy was well established by the early tenth century, the time of Judah’s first kings. David could indeed have written the Psalms that are attributed to him.”

Khirbet Qeiyafa also gave important evidence for religious practices, particularly in regard to the Solomonic temple. A small temple model was found at the site which has several architectural features similar to the temple descriptions found in the Bible. The model dates about 40 years earlier than Solomon. “The temple model was found in one of three sanctuary rooms, together with other cultic artifacts and gives very significant parallels,” says Dr. Martin G. Klingbeil, associate director of the Institute of Archaeology at Southern.

The Museum of the Bible is a state-of-the-art institution with interactive exhibits that highlight the history of the biblical text as well. The collections of ancient biblical manuscripts and the Bibles include Martin Luther’s personal Latin Bible with his annotations and a complete original King James Version Bible from 1611. “Located in the heart of Washington, DC, near the Capitol building, the Smithsonian, and the national monuments near the mall area, it will be a landmark institution in the capital of the United States, where millions of visitors can benefit from its exhibits,” says Hasel. ✍️



Dr. Yosef Garfinkel (left) and Dr. Michael Hasel (right) at the Museum of the Bible opening.
Photo Credit: Michael Hasel.



As we close this year, it is important to focus on a culmination moment for the Institute of Archaeology. It was the final season of *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish*, part of an ongoing project that has transpired over the last eleven years (2007-2017) as, together with the Hebrew

University of Jerusalem, we have explored a regional approach in our investigation of the early development of the Kingdom of Judah. During our final celebration at the site this summer, here are a few excerpts of what I shared with the guests and participants of those projects that gathered at Tel Lachish on July 17:

Archaeology is full of unknowns and mystery. There is the thrill of discovery, the promise of research questions that might be answered, and new ones that can inevitably emerge once excavation begins.

In 2007, when Prof. Yosef Garfinkel and Saar Ganor invited Southern Adventist University to join a new project at a relatively unknown site called Khirbet Qeiyafa as the senior American partner, all of us were taking a risk, a risk that we might not find anything significant or relevant to the questions faced in archaeology, history, and biblical studies. Looking back today after a decade and after completing three projects together at Qeiyafa, Socoh, and Lachish, we have no doubt that we have made important new contributions to questions that have changed how we look at the early Kingdom of Judah and its development. We now know that there were major fortifications in the early 10th century BC, that literacy existed, and that there undoubtedly existed a system of administration with a center that reached to the periphery of the Shephelah, even to the very borders of Philistia. But how did that administration and the kingdom of Judah grow? How did it emerge as the kingdom that controlled a vast territory with cities from Jerusalem to Beersheva?

Professor Yossi Garfinkel will share the contributions of our five-year project here at Lachish. I would like to focus on the people that made it happen.

In the end, archaeology is more than finding walls, inscriptions, and pottery. It is about people. First, reconstructing the life of the ancient peoples who inhabited these cities and, secondly, building teams of modern people that will make those discoveries. These men and women endure the work of 16-hour days in the field, managing temperatures of up to 110°F in the sun. People who come back from the field each day covered in fine dust, sweaty, exhausted, and looking forward to waking up the next morning at 4:00 a.m. People who wash the pottery and the bones. Square supervisors who record. Survey teams who map and draw plans. Camp managers and staff who arrange pottery and objects to be read. Each one of these individuals makes up the colorful mosaic that allows the results we are celebrating today.

Together, over the last eleven years of fieldwork at Khirbet Qeiyafa, the Socoh survey, and Lachish, nearly 1,000 staff and volunteers participated from 18 different countries. During the past five years of *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish* alone, we have had nearly 500 participants. In addition to the Institutes of Archaeology of The Hebrew University and Southern Adventist University, we have been fortunate to have a number of very faithful consortium institutions. These include Seoul Jangsin University, led by Prof. Soonhwa Hong and Prof. Hoo-Goo Kan; Oakland University, led by Prof. Jon Carroll and Prof. Mike Pytlik; and Virginia Commonwealth University, led by Prof. Jon Waybright. In addition, a number of other institutions have joined us in Area AA, including Helderberg College, South Africa; Adventist University of Bolivia; the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies in the Philippines; and Seminar Schloss Bogenhofen in Austria.

We cannot express enough our gratitude for these institutions and their representatives, the volunteers and staff that have made this all possible.

Finally, we want to thank our sponsors here in Israel and the United States that have provided the funding that made these goals possible. They include corporations, research foundations, and private donors. We thank you for investing in the heritage of this country, a heritage that both Christians and Jews share together. It is in cooperative efforts like these that much can be gained for the future. For it is only as we understand the past and where we have come from that we can gain a sense of where we are going.

With my co-directors, Yosef Garfinkel and Martin Klingbeil, let me say that it has been a privilege to share this experience with all of you! We trust that while this is the end of *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish*, it will provide many new beginnings to the students, volunteers, and others who will carry forward the work that was begun here and in previous generations at Khirbet Qeiyafa, Socoh, and Lachish. It is with this view to the future that we began these projects that have investigated the past. Thank you! ✍

Michael G. Hasel

Michael G. Hasel, Ph.D.
Director, Institute of Archaeology

RECENT SIGHTINGS

BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY'S TOP 10 DISCOVERIES OF 2017 *(Christianity Today)*

“Each year, on an almost daily basis, archaeological discoveries help us better understand the Bible and affirm its details about people, events, and culture.

Below are the top excavation findings reported in 2017 which have increased our knowledge of the biblical world and the early history of Christianity.”

[Click here to read more](#)



Photo Credit: Wikimedia Commons.



Photo Credit: Huffington Post.

HOW RESEARCHERS ‘UNWRAPPED’ THIS ANCIENT, DISINTTEGRATING TORAH SCROLL *(Huffington Post)*

“More than 40 years ago, archaeologists discovered what appeared to be a hunk of scroll at the site of En-Gedi, an ancient Jewish community in modern-day Israel. The fragment was charred and crushed, and every touch seemed to hasten its disintegration.”

[Click here to read more](#)

ARCHAEOLOGISTS FIND DESTRUCTION LEFT BY BABYLONIAN CONQUEST OF JERUSALEM *(Haaretz)*

“A thick destruction layer featuring storage jars with marks typical of sixth century B.C.E., and a remarkable ivory statuette of a nude woman ,were unearthed beyond Jerusalem city walls.

A bizarrely uneven but unmistakable destruction layer dating from the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. has been found by archaeologists...”

[Click here to read more](#)



Photo Credit: Haaretz



Photo Credit: Reuters.

ISRAELI ARCHAEOLOGISTS FIND 2,700-YEAR-OLD ‘GOVERNOR OF JERUSALEM’ SEAL IMPRESSION *(Reuters)*

“Israeli archaeologists unveiled on Monday a 2,700-year-old clay seal impression which they said belonged to a biblical governor of Jerusalem.

The artifact, inscribed in an ancient Hebrew script as “belonging to the governor of the city”, was likely attached to a shipment or sent as a souvenir on behalf of the governor, the most prominent local position held in Jerusalem at the time, the Israel Antiquities Authority said.”

[Click here to read more](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS

LYNN H. WOOD ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM LECTURE SERIES 2017 - 2018

Monday, February 12, 2018, 7:00 p.m.

“Seals Hidden and Seals Revealed: Seals in Ancient and Modern Display”

Agnete W. Lassen, Ph.D. (Yale University)

Lynn Wood Hall Chapel

Monday, March 26, 2018, 7:00 p.m.

“Ancient Egyptian Tomb Painting and Identity”

Melinda Hartwig, Ph.D. (Emory University)

Lynn Wood Hall Chapel

The museum lecture series is free and open to the public. For more information or to view previous Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum Lecture Series presentations, visit southern.edu/archaeologylectures

Saturday, March 31, 2018

SonRise Resurrection Pageant

Collegedale, TN

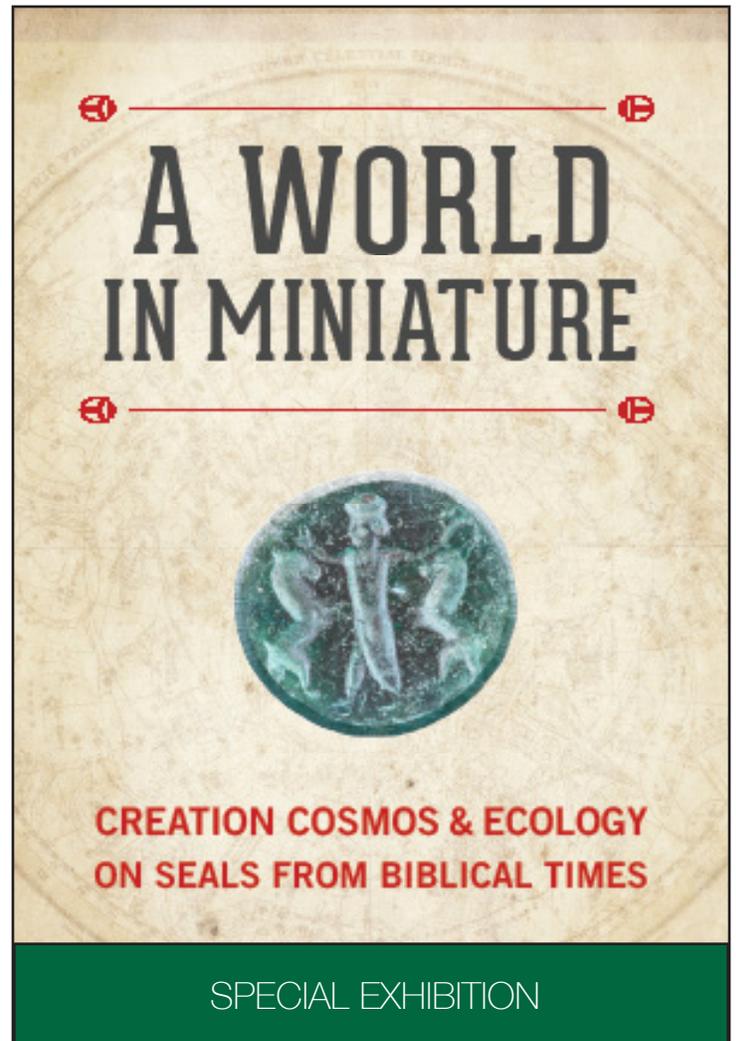
The Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum will be open extended hours during the SonRise Resurrection Pageant.

June 11 to 21, 2018

Fourth International Bible Conference

Rome, Italy

Theme: “Biblical Eschatology from an Adventist Perspective”



DIG SIGHT

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