CYPRUS
ITS HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

The Tomb of Lazarus

How Iron Changed Warfare
Worship Services Today
12:10
All Are Invited

I T WAS A SIMPLE SIGN, one that stood like a capital “A” on the sidewalk in front of a church. When I saw it, I was surprised. Why? Well, “Today” was Thursday, not Sunday—and worship was planned for 12:10. Not 11:00 or noon. What an odd time—12:10 on Thursday.

I was downtown and surrounded by huge and impressive office buildings, mostly government and banking in nature. At 6:30 A.M., already the sidewalks were teeming with people. Some wore suits and slacks. Some moved quickly, as if late for a meeting. Others had obviously spent the night on benches or in doorways. Many were not well-groomed; their clothes were dirty. Some moved with no sense of urgency. Young and old, rich and poor, different heights and sizes, multiple races, all with different agendas, were on the streets at 6:30.

Still, 12:10, on Thursday—what an odd time. Why then? Aha! It dawned on me, that’s lunch time! People in these offices would be stopping about noon for lunch. They would have time to leave their offices. Others could mosey. But all were invited to worship at 12:10, today.

The sign’s presence meant someone had gotten up early that day and set it there. It meant someone some time back had seen the sidewalks teeming with people and had been impressed—we can minister to these people. Somebody had concern. Someone had expressed their concern to the church leadership. The sign meant the church had approved an idea. Out of concern, someone today would prepare music, Scripture, and a message—so all could worship on Thursday. The 12:10 was for convenience; the church wanted to make it easy for the greatest number of people.

Make it easy for her, the bride, the church—it’s part of our goal at LifeWay. And that’s why we prepare this unique resource. We want to make it easy for you to hear from leading scholars and thinkers every quarter. At your fingertips is in-depth information that enhances your Bible study. And we want to do that in the most convenient way possible for the greatest number of people. It’s a sign that we want you to have a strong Bible study experience, enriched by what you find on these pages, any time, even at 12:10 on a Thursday.

Book reviews are limited to those the Illustrator staff feels confident to recommend, based on ease of reading, quality of content, and doctrinal viewpoint. Each book is reviewed within LifeWay’s doctrinal guidelines. The 1 to 10 scale reflects overall quality and usefulness.

On a scale of 1-10, this book receives a rating of 7 camels.

This book’s editor, James H. Charlesworth, serves as the George L. Collard Professor of New Testament Language and Literature at Princeton Theological Seminary. Charlesworth offers in his book nine chapters (or articles) on an assortment of topics of interest to those who want to know more about the Jewish temple in Jerusalem during the days of Jesus’ ministry. The first five chapters address key topics that pertain to the way people of Jesus’ day thought about the temple. For example, one chapter provides a vivid description of the temple in the first century. Another offers insights into the value God’s people placed on Jerusalem and the temple as the center of their spiritual and national development. Other topics include the history of the temple prior to the first century, the use of Psalms by God’s people in worship, and the reverence for Jerusalem and the temple among Galileans.

Two chapters explore insights concerning the temple that Jesus gave His followers. These chapters address how the disciples thought about the temple before and after His death and resurrection. One chapter traces the changes in how Jesus’ disciples viewed the temple across the 40 years from His resurrection until A.D. 70 when the Romans destroyed it. Another article explores Jesus’ ministry as a believer’s High Priest. This article sheds light on the way Jesus’ disciples came to understand His priestly relationship with them.

The book’s chapters reflect extensive research by prominent and well-respected biblical scholars. One of the strengths of the book is the wide range of issues the contributors address. Another, the drawings, diagrams, and photographs assist the reader to visualize what the writers are saying. The lack of detailed information, though, regarding the roles of the Levites, priests, guards, and the Sanhedrin within the temple system weakened the book somewhat. Overall, though, readers will find the book to be useful and assist them in learning more about the role of the temple for Christians of the first century—and now.

Argile A. Smith, Jr. is pastor of Parkway Baptist Church in Biloxi, Mississippi.

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CAESAREA
BY THE SEA

By T. J. Betts
CAESAREA WAS ONE OF THE MOST important cities in Judea during the first century. Many call the city *Caesarea Maritima*—which in Latin literally means “Caesarea by the Sea”—in order to distinguish it from the city of Caesarea Philippi and from another Caesarea, one in Cappadocia. A number of significant events in the Book of Acts are connected to Caesarea by the Sea.

For instance, Acts 10 depicts Simon Peter’s journey from Joppa to Caesarea where he met the Roman centurion Cornelius, who was of the Italian Regiment stationed in Caesarea. Cornelius became the first Gentile convert of the early church. After the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, Philip the evangelist preached in all the towns he entered on his way back to his home in Caesarea, where he lived with his four daughters. After Paul’s third missionary journey, a number of believers, along with Paul, visited and lodged with Philip (Acts 8:40; 21:8-9). At that time the prophet Agabus came to them and prophesied that Paul would be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles (21:10-12). Paul appears to have been in Caesarea on a number of occasions, most notably as a prisoner for at least two years (9:30; 23:23–26; 32). Further, the Lord fatally struck Herod Agrippa—at Caesarea—because he failed to give glory to God (12:23).

Deepening our knowledge of Caesarea in the first century will help us better understand Acts 10, and for that matter the Book of Acts and its historical context. What might we know about this harbor city’s history and geography? What importance did it have to the region? And what have archaeological discoveries contributed to our understanding of this ancient city?
Just as Herod had used his building the temple in Jerusalem as a way of gaining the support of the Jews, he used his building of Caesarea to strengthen his position with the Romans and the rest of the Gentile world abroad.

**History and Geography**

Located on Israel's northern coast of the Mediterranean Sea about 65 miles northwest of Jerusalem, Herod the Great began the construction of Caesarea in about 22 B.C. The work was completed and dedicated about 12 years later in 10 B.C. covering about 165 acres. Up to that time, the major structure on the site was Straton’s Tower, which probably served as a lighthouse and a place for ships to anchor offshore as they traveled along a major shipping route along the eastern Mediterranean coastline connecting Alexandria, Egypt, to Phoenicia and eventually skirting the coast counter-clockwise to Athens and Rome.

The Romans took control of the location in 63 B.C. After Octavian defeated the forces of Mark Antony and Cleopatra in 31 B.C., Octavian (who became Caesar Augustus) gave the site to Herod. Herod recognized how the location could potentially benefit his kingdom.

**Harbor and Trade**

According to Josephus, the only historian to describe the beginnings of Caesarea by the Sea, the city was “magnificent,” constructed with expensive imported materials and boasting a harbor that was larger than that of the renowned “Pyraeum” (Piraeus) harbor in Athens. The construction of Caesarea and its harbor had both practical and political significance to Herod and the surrounding region. Practically speaking, Israel’s coastline, with the exception of Haifa Bay, was basically straight. Haifa Bay, however, provided no protection for ships on the shoreline. The cities of Dora to the north and Joppa to the south both served as small ports, but most of the time the ships had to anchor at sea because of south winds that beat upon them and brought sand up...
against the shore. This prevented ships from coming ashore. In any case, neither of them was large enough to accommodate Herod’s aspirations. Herod hoped Caesarea would become a major port on the important shipping route that went by it. Having a substantial port at Caesarea would provide opportunity for expanded trade, given that the international coastal highway connecting Egypt to Mesopotamia and Asia Minor was located on land next to Caesarea. Also, that region produced a great deal of grains and fruits, which provided more opportunity for trade and a boost to the Judean economy. Five roads went out of Caesarea connecting it to the immediate countryside and to important interior Judean cities.

The construction of Caesarea had political significance to Herod as well. Even though Herod’s leadership faced opposition in Judea, the Romans had supported Herod and appointed him king of Judea.
As a result, he wanted to demonstrate his allegiance and gratitude to Caesar Augustus, so Herod named his spectacular port city Caesarea in the emperor’s honor. Rome experienced a severe famine in 23-22 B.c. When he came to power, Augustus took direct control of the grain supply and relieved the city. The fact that construction of the harbor at Caesarea began less than a year after the famine is probably no coincidence. Just as Herod had used his building the temple in Jerusalem as a way of gaining the support of the Jews, he used his building of Caesarea to strengthen his position with the Romans and the rest of the Gentile world abroad.

Archaeological discoveries attest to the grandeur of Caesarea by the Sea. Hydraulic concrete, incorporating volcanic ash from Italy mixed with gravel and poured into wooden frames, formed massive blocks. These were part of the two major breakwaters that formed the completely man-made harbor. Large warehouses near the harbor helped support the trade. Aqueducts stretching over eight miles of sand dunes, swamps, and rock, originating from springs near Mount Carmel, provided water for the city. Also impressive was Caesarea’s sewer system that utilized a series of underground passages that were flushed out by the sea. At the southern end of the city stood a theater that faced west to the sea and accommodated 3,500 to 4,000 spectators. Archaeologists have uncovered an inscription referring to “Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea” at the theatre. They also have discovered an amphitheater to the north. East of the city was a magnificent hippodrome that could accommodate 10,000 spectators who witnessed chariot races, gymnastic competitions, gladiatorial combat, and the like. Of course, Herod had an impressive palace including baths, built for himself, which looked out to sea, and the magnificent Temple of Augustus stood at the center of the city.

In 4 B.C., Herod died, and the city came under the control of his son Archelaus. Unrest in the region, however, led the Romans to take control of the city in A.D. 6. It became the Roman capital of Judea for the next 600 years. The Roman procurator, Pontius Pilate, resided there from A.D. 26-36. Unrest between the Romans and Jews intensified and came to a head in A.D. 66 when the Romans desecrated the synagogue at Caesarea. When the Jews revolted, the Romans killed 20,000 of them. This became the catalyst that led to the Jewish-Roman War of A.D. 66-73. Caesarea was the primary Roman base during this war, and General Vespasian was in Caesarea when he became the emperor of Rome. Shortly after, he elevated the city to a Roman colony, a status it maintained throughout the remainder of the first century up and until the fall of the Roman Empire nearly five centuries later.

1. LaMoine F. DeVries, Cities of the Biblical World (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 256.
4. Ibid.
Jesus’ “I Am” Statements in John’s Gospel offer one of the most significant components in establishing His preexistence, messiahship, and deity. The emphatic Greek phrase *ego eimi* (“I am”) occurs in two distinct forms in the Fourth Gospel. Seven “I am” sayings include an explicit predicate noun; and in a series of seven sayings, the “I am” stands by itself without a predicate. This latter formula is known as the absolute use. The background for the sayings is the revelatory formula “I am” in the Old Testament, most importantly Exodus 3; Deuteronomy 32:39; and Isaiah 40–55. In these texts, God disclosed His unique identity as the one and only God, creator, and sovereign Ruler of all that exists. While the “I am” sayings are not unique to the Fourth Gospel, they have a significance that far outweighs their limited use in Matthew, Mark, or Luke.

**The Sayings**—The seven “I am” sayings followed by a predicate noun highlight Jesus as the divine Giver of salvation and life. In the initial occurrence, Jesus stated, “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35,41,48). Jesus’ earlier feeding of the multitude provided a tangible sign of His unique ability to provide for the most-essential human needs. In John 8:12, Jesus declared, “I am the light of the world” (cf. 9:5). Jesus’ restoring the blind man’s sight in John 9:1–12 provided the concrete sign that Jesus is the light of salvation. “I am the door of the sheep” (10:7,9) illustrates Jesus as the only entry point for salvation. “I am the good shepherd” (10:11,14) highlights His sacrificial death for humanity. The fifth saying, “I am the resurrection and the life” (11:25) provided the focal point for Jesus’ concrete action of raising Lazarus from the dead. “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (14:6) once again highlighted Jesus as the sole means of access to the Father. The seventh and final “I am” in this series affirmed Jesus as “the true vine” (15:1,5). In Jesus alone “the life of the new Israel, the true vine, has come to birth.”

**The Absolute Sayings**—In the second series of sayings, those known as the “absolute sayings,” the “I am” stands alone without a predicate to complete the saying. Like the earlier series, John includes seven “absolute” sayings as well. To begin, as the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman neared its conclusion, the woman asserted that when the Messiah came he would answer all her questions. Jesus responded, “I am” (4:26). English translations, including the HCSB, typically render the simple phrase *ego eimi*...
“I am” as “I am He,” in an attempt to smooth it into English. The Greek text, however, contains no predicate “He.” The second saying occurred when Jesus walked on the water in a storm. When the disciples saw Jesus, they were afraid. Jesus attempted to calm them by identifying Himself as “I am” (6:20). The next three absolute “I am” sayings occur in John 8. Following Jesus’ assertion that He was “the light of the world,” He referred to His coming death and the necessity of believing “I am” in order to avoid dying in sins (8:24). He then added, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am” (v. 28).

Later, in a contentious dialogue with Jewish antagonists, Jesus uttered one of the most theologically significant statements in all of Scripture. Jesus affirmed both His preexistence and His deity when He stated: “I assure you: Before Abraham was, I am” (v. 58). The fact that His adversaries picked up stones to kill Him revealed their recognition that this was a claim to deity. In foretelling His betrayal at the hands of Judas, Jesus stressed that even that event was part of God’s redemptive purposes: “I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am” (13:19). As in John 8:58, Jesus made evident that He was making a claim to divine identity. The last three absolute uses of the formula occur in John 18:5-8, but in reality it is the same saying repeated three times for emphasis. Three times Jesus questioned the Jewish officials/soldiers, “Who is it you’re looking for?” They responded, “Jesus

**JESUS’ “I AM: SAYINGS**

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**JESUS’ ABSOLUTE “I AM” STATEMENTS**

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* All Texts Are from the Gospel of John, HCSB
Exterior of the Church of the Multiplication in Galilee, which is the traditional location where Jesus fed the 5,000. Inside is a mosaic with two fish and a basket containing four loaves. The fifth loaf is not missing; it’s highlighting the fact that Jesus is the bread of life (John 6:35).
the Nazarene.” Each time, Jesus replied, “I am.” While it is possible to read theego eimi as mere self-identification similar to “it is I” in English, the fact that Jesus’ arrestors “stepped back and fell to the ground” indicated either that they fell down to worship the true God, or much more likely, they were outraged at the audacity of any man to refer to Himself in words reserved for the Almighty God.4

British New Testament scholar Richard Bauckham captures the significance of these absolute “I am” sayings, stating they “express [Jesus’] unique and exclusive participation in God’s unique and exclusive deity. Just as ‘I am he’ in the Hebrew Bible sums up what it is to be truly God, so in John it identifies Jesus as truly God in the fullest sense.”5

Finally, in reflecting back over these two types of “I am” sayings, the fact that John reported both in a series of seven is not insignificant. It is a number of completeness, divine perfection, and of a finished work. In the Old Testament the completion of the creation event is a seven-day process. Joshua led the Israelites around Jericho seven times while seven priests blew seven trumpets before the walls came crashing down. And Elisha commanded Naaman to dip in the Jordan seven times in order to be healed of his leprosy. The Book of Revelation contains letters to seven churches, a scroll with seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls.

John’s Gospel also narrates seven “signs,” beginning with Jesus turning the water to wine and concluding with the raising of Lazarus. The seven signs, like the two sets of seven “I am” sayings, indicate the completeness of God’s ability to give life, His divine perfection, and His finished work of salvation.

In the “I am” sayings in John, Jesus openly and unapologetically identified Himself with the true and eternal God. He was asserting that He alone was able to offer eternal life and reveal fully God’s glory. No one in Israel’s past had ever spoken so brazenly. Jesus’ bold use of the ego eimi formula left His hearers to decide whether He was the Son of God in whom they should believe, a lunatic to be pitied, or a blasphemer to be condemned. Two thousand years later, His claims continue to challenge us with the same decision.

3. In my translation of the absolute “I am” sayings, I omit the “He” in order to highlight the fact that the Greek text adds no predicate.

Bobby Kelly is the Ruth Dickinson professor of Bible at Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, Oklahoma.
HOW IRON CHANGED WARFARE

Shown, village on Mount Lebanon, Syria. Aside from the limited supply of iron ore in Mount Lebanon (Deut. 8:9), probably no iron was unearthed in Syria or Israel. Instead, it was brought from Tarshish, Vedan, and Javan (Ezek. 27:12,19), and probably Egypt (Deut. 4:20).
Evidence is prevalent from the Neolithic cultures onward illustrating the rise of man working various metals. As early as the eighth millennium B.C., people worked native copper, bitumen, and obsidian into items such as decorative pins, pendants, and religious iconography. While copper was the earliest metal to be mined, smelted, and cast—due to its prevalence and ease of working—one should not discount meteoric iron. As early as the second millennium B.C., the ancient Near East knew and most likely made use of meteoric iron, “the iron from heaven.”

The Scriptures witness iron’s dramatic rise from humble beginnings. Genesis 4:22 explains that Tubal-cain worked as a metal worker. Some believe that Tubal-cain’s metallurgy included weapons as well as agricultural tools.

The shift from bronze to iron came about for reasons of practicality and utility. While bronze is much easier to work than iron, the necessary element for bronze, namely tin, is extremely rare. Due to an abundance of ore and improvements...
in smelting, iron became the prevailing utilitarian metal from approximately 1200 to 800 B.C. Once iron (and later steel) weapons became dominant, they remained the choice of armies throughout the ancient Near East, mainly due to the ease of use, maintenance, and the edge-holding ability inherent to this ferric metal.

The Hebrew text of the Old Testament distinguished types of iron as well as bronze. Ezekiel mentions the concept of “wrought iron,” which was a commodity brought to the wealthy city of Tyre. This phrase is quite difficult to translate due to its occurring only here in the Hebrew Old Testament. Some biblical scholars have argued that the prophet intended this phrase to mean an approximation of “workable iron,” or a “consolidated bloom iron.” The prophet Jeremiah likewise knew of hardened iron and contrasted its superiority over bronze (Jer. 15:12).

Archaeology clearly shows that by the 12th century B.C., Israel was making vast use of iron weapons. Surveys from Israelite sites during this era show 37 arrowheads, 5 knife/blades, 5 daggers, 5 spearheads, 1 spear butt, 7 javelin heads, and 2 lance heads. In contrast, this same survey explored commonly held Philistine sites, which yielded an equally impressive assortment of weapons. As expected, archaeologists uncovered a greater number of Philistine blades—13 to the Israelite 10. The infrastructure required for metallurgy was slightly more tilted toward the Philistines’ favor than the Israelites. Likewise, the biblical account indicates that the Philistines often fought from the mounted chariot position rather than as dismounted infantry. A cursory examination of the bulk of Israelite weaponry appears to indicate that the Hebrews preferred standoff weapons (metal-tipped arrows, shafts, and lances) that would afford the infantry distance from the chariots.

Judges 4 gives an impressive window into the mindset of early Israel and their preference for range weapons. The text illustrates the writer’s appreciation of Canaanite warfare, namely the iron chariot. The writer explains that Canaan’s King Jabin had utilized his vast numbers of iron chariots to oppress Israel for over 20 years. Likewise, the Canaanite commander Sisera used 900 iron chariots in his battle against Israel. Undoubtedly, the iron chariot was a paradigmatic shift in warfare of the ancient Near East.
as a D-shaped floor (for quick mount-chariot construction. Elements such
have provided ample insights into
Egypt’s New Kingdom (1550–1070
b.c.
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improved ability to charge enemies,
and was not uncommon. 10 Details from
impressive finds associated with char-iot of the ancient Near East. The
shift in mobile warfare platforms was
gradual due to the technology associ-
ated with making these war machines.
Ancient Egyptian and Asiatic imag-
ery highlights the importance of iron
chariots as mobile firing platforms,
as well as flanking and harassing
dismounted infantry. To find chariots
equipped with bow cases, quivers of
arrows, axes and even long swords
was not uncommon. 10 Details from
neighboring Near East sites have yielded ample insights into
chariot construction. Elements such
as a D-shaped floor (for quick mount-
ing and dismounting), hip-high sides
(for shield mounting), and ample
storage for battle weapons made the
iron chariot a highly desirable com-
modity. 11 Iron Age chariots eventually
spread throughout the entire Near
East (Hattai, Egypt, Canaan, Assyria,
and Babylon).

As this platform grew, the key to
effective deployment was reconciling
speed and maneuverability with
fire power and security. The bite of
iron swords, arrows, javelins, and
spears necessitated a triple function
within the charioteer corps. Three
soldiers were required to effectively
fight a concerted battle—a driver, a
fighter, and a defender (often depict-
ed as deploying a shield covering
the fighter). 12

Iron and the technology that it
brought to the ancient Near East was
a double-edged sword. On the
one hand it was a meteoric jump
in offensive weapons (sword, arrow,
spear, and lance). This advantage
was offset, however, by the develop-
ment and usage of the iron chariot as
seen in Judges 4. Truly elements such
as geography and maneuverability
would hamper the iron chariot in the
hill country of Israel. However, once
iron weapons became commonplace
in the field of martial combat, nations
would never again embrace a lesser
metal for blood or conquest.

1. See Paul T. Caodick, “Metallurgy: Metallurgy in the
Old World” in The Oxford Companion to Archaeology,
2. Thomas Zimmermann, Latif Özen, Yakup Kalayci,
and Rukiye Akdogan, “The Metal Tablet from Bogazköy-
Hattuša First Archaeometric Impressions,” Journal of
Near Eastern Studies vol. 69, no. 2. (October 2010),
226-29.
3. See Kenneth A. Matthews, Genesis 1-11:26, vol. 1 in The
New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 287. Matthews sug-
gests that Tubal-cain most likely worked meteoric
iron.
4. One distinct impediment was the tem-
perature and equipment necessary to smelt
ores. For example, to smelt copper, the
temperature has to reach no less than
1,981°F and silver, 1,762°F–versus iron at
2,786°F. Even when iron was smelted,
it often had to be worked by hammer
(e.g. forging) and then shaped in a
much more labor intensive process.
5. See J. D. Muhly, “Metals: Artifacts of the Neolithic, Bronze,
and Iron Ages” in The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the
Near East [OEANE], ed. Eric M. Meyers (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press,
1997), 13.
A Catalogue with its Linguistic and Cross-Culture
Implications” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1999), 135-
55. See also M. Heltzer, “Akkadian kitnunu and Hebrew
kidon,” “sword” Journal of Cuneiform Studies vol. 41,
no. 1 (Spring 1989): 65-68.
7. Dan Levene and Beno Rothenberg, “Early Evidence
for Steelmaking in the Judaic Sources,” The Jewish
8. Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, “Israelite Ethnicity in
Iron I: Archaeology Preserves What Is Remembered and
What Is Forgotten in Israel’s History,” Journal of Biblical
Literature vol. 122, no. 3 (Autumn, 2003): 419. Bloch-
Smith restricted the “Israel” sites to the central highlands
(Dothan, Bethel, Ai, Khirbet Raddana, Tell en-Nasbeh,
Gilo, el-Khad, Beth Zur, and Tel Beersheva).
9. For example, sites such as Ashdod, Tel Migne-
Ekron, Beth Dagon, Tell el ‘Ajjul/Gaza, and Tell Qasile
were surveyed. Such sites are commonly within the realm
of what is normally associated with the “Philistines.”
10. See Joost H. Crouwel, “Chariots in Iron Age
Cyprus,” Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus
(1987), 101-118.
11. See Joost Crouwel and Mary Aiken Littauer,
“Chariots” in OEANE, 485.
12. See Sa-Moon Kang, Divine War in the Old
Testament and in the Ancient Near East (Berlin: Walter
de Gruyter, 1989), 50.

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