

ILLUSTRATOR

WHEN KINGS MARCH OUT TO WAR

What Made a Queen, a Queen?

Crete in Titus's Day

WHAT MAKES BEHAVIOR, traditions, and standards seem normal? Culture does. We might do, see, or experience something that seems perfectly normal; persons living in another culture might view that same event or object as unbelievable or bizarre. The other day I watched cars traveling on the interstate. I thought, *People in Jesus' day never saw anybody moving that fast. They would be shocked if someone ever told them people would commonly travel at that speed and in that kind of comfort. In fact, everything out there would seem odd. What are those tall metal poles beside the road? Why are there so many? And what are those bowls on arms that extend over the road? At night, how do those bowls light up by themselves? How is that road so smooth? Where are outlines of the individual stones?* All of that seems so familiar and common. Why? This kind of travel is part of daily life, part of our culture.



Our lives are enriched by experiencing a different culture. It can happen when we visit a friend or relative in a different part of the country. For the first time, you may understand why your uncle and his family, all farmers, pray desperately for rain or why your friend is so frustrated after sitting two hours in “rush-hour traffic”—a term you’re now convinced is both bogus and misapplied. It can happen when we participate in a short-term international mission trip. Suddenly, we realize that not everybody has access to antibiotic ointment or aspirin, or we see that some people have to go to a cafe in town to use the Internet. We learn that some neighbors and relatives freely walk in, without knocking first. In specific cultures, each of these would be common.

In this issue of *Biblical Illustrator*, you will read of people experiencing life in their particular culture. Life during the time of the judges was different from that in David’s and Solomon’s day. Life for a royal was different from that of a soldier. First-century life for a Jew would have been different from that of a Gentile. Island life was different from city life.

We can never fully grasp life in a different culture or historical era. Yet the more we understand of a culture, the better we can appreciate someone’s actions. Each quarter, our writers explore, *What would they have done, thought, understood, or experienced in their day or culture?* In doing so, our writers help the biblical world come to life. As we better understand ancient, biblical cultures, may we use that knowledge to help our lives, help those we know and love, and ultimately, help transform our culture, for HIS glory.

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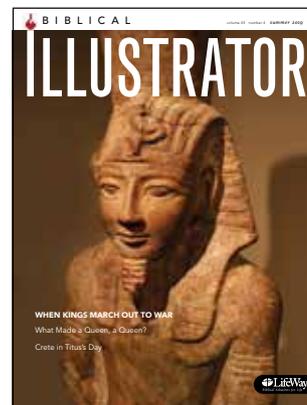
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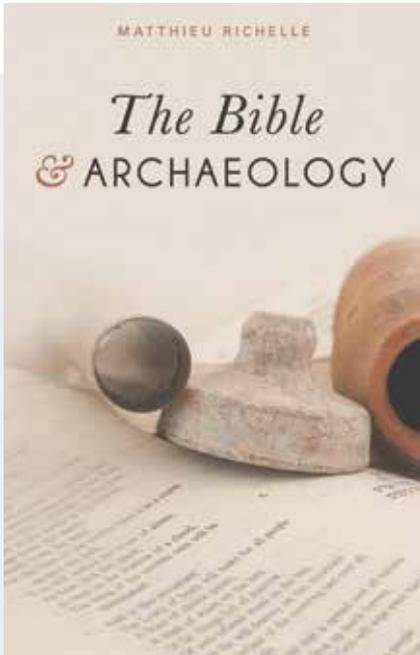
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About the cover:
Carved from Aswan granite, portrait of Ramesses II (ruled 1279-1213 BC), shown wearing the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. Records indicate Ramesses II had military campaigns that commenced in March/April.

ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ BRENT BRUCE/ WALTERS ART MUSEUM/ BALTIMORE (75/0421)



FRENCH BIBLICAL scholar Matthieu Richelle states that the purpose of his book *The Bible and Archaeology* is “to help the reader discover successively the riches of information that archaeology provides, the limits inherent to this knowledge, and the manner in which we should compare it to the Bible” (p. 107).

He begins by explaining the dating methods archaeologists use and how those relate to the strata of an archaeological site. Next, he discusses what archaeologists discover in their work. He then offers an overview of inscriptions, written texts, and epigraphic work. He explains challenges related to dating and authenticating writings. Next, Richelle discusses some of the inherent difficulties and limitations of archaeology, such as identifying a site and the difficulty in determining dates.

Richelle then tackles the topic of the relationship of the Bible and biblical archaeology. How do the two sources of information relate? What can each source of information offer the other?

Finally, Richelle examines two topics that he calls “Case Studies”—

first, the challenges related to identifying and understanding the kingdoms of David and Solomon, and second, the dating of writing related to these two kings.

The cry of Richelle’s book is intellectual honesty. He dives into the topics and interpretations across the spectrum of theological foundations and application. Richelle in essence says, “This is the topic. These are the ways that people have interpreted this information—people who agree with the Bible and those that do not.”

This is not a book for those wanting to read that all of archaeology easily syncs with the biblical record. Instead, it is a book for those wanting an introduction to: archaeology, its contribution to our biblical understanding, and some of the ways that scholars have struggled to reconcile the biblical record with archaeological finds and data. Some of the information may be a bit technical, yet readers will walk away with a fuller understanding of the current dialogue between the Bible and archaeology. 📖

G.B. Howell, Jr. is the content editor for *Biblical Illustrator* magazine.

On a scale of 1-10, this book receives a rating of 8 camels.



The Bible and Archaeology by Matthieu Richelle; Hendrickson; 2018; 168 pages; softback; ISBN: 978-1-61970-911-9

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TGP: 2 Samuel 11:1-17

When Kings March Out to War

WARFARE AND WEATHER

BY GARY P. ARBINO

IN THE SPRING WHEN kings march out to war...” (2 Sam. 11:1a, CSB). So begins the infamous story of David and Bathsheba. What does spring, though, have to do with war?

The Hebrew of 2 Samuel 11:1a reads literally, “And it happened, at the return of the year at the time of the going out of the messengers.” The parallel Hebrew passage in 1 Chronicles 20:1 reads, “And it happened, at the time of the return of the year, at the time of the going out of the kings.” The words “spring” and “to war” are actually not in the Hebrew texts.¹

“The return of the year” is a rare phrase; Scripture uses it only five times, yet none are explicitly defined as “spring.”² Possibly, this idiom describes an ancient “new year.” The Hebrews had two different months for the new year during their history, the months of *Abib/Nisan* in the spring and *‘Etanim/Tishrei* in the fall.

Four of the five occurrences involve warfare (2 Sam. 11:1; 1 Kings 20:22,26; 1 Chron. 20:1), while the fifth (2 Chron. 36:10) likely presupposes Babylonian military activity.³ First Chronicles 20:1 parallels “return of the year” with “the time when kings go out,” connecting it specifically with annual military activity.

Annals from Egyptian and Mesopotamian monarchs do occasionally give specific dates of departures for their yearly campaigns.⁴ Pharaohs Thutmose III (1479-1425 BC) and Ramesses II (1279-1213 BC), and Assyrian kings Shalmaneser III (858-824 BC), Sennacherib (704-681 BC), and Esarhaddon (681-669 BC) each recorded campaign commencement between early March and April 31. A March/April date, however, was not universal. Some of Esarhaddon’s campaigns record him already in the field both earlier and later: March in Egypt and Philistia, September in Sidon, and December (winter!) in the mountains



STOCK PHOTO



PUBLIC DOMAIN

Left: Victory stele depicts Assyria’s King Esarhaddon wearing his royal helmet and holding in his right hand what appears to be a cup and in his left hand, a mace and ropes secured to two captives. The kneeling captive, who has a ring through his lips,

may be Tirhakah (king of Egypt and Ethiopia); the standing captive may be the king of Tyre.

Above: Ninth-century monastery in the mountains of Tarteve, Armenia; Esarhaddon fought in this mountainous region in December.

of Armenia. Neo-Babylonia’s King Nabopolassar (626-605 BC) set out in any of the seven dryer months but favored May and September; his campaigns often extended into December or January. Babylon’s King Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BC) appears to have favored a December through March campaign season (see 2 Kings 25:1-3). The Chronicles, though, show start times throughout the year and campaigns lasting eight months or more. Although start dates varied, anecdotal evidence supports spring and summer as the usual time frame for military conflict.

Weather-dependent agriculture dictated the ancient economy. While larger states had standing armies from the Bronze Age on, these were often filled by conscripts from rural peasantry and by those who owed a “service obligation” to the crown for the right to farm royal fields. Pulling farmers

from their lands in peak agricultural seasons—especially plowing and sowing in spring—was not desirable. While harvesting continued through summer, this was somewhat less labor intensive⁵ and thus a more favorable time for military service. With barley ripening as early as April and fruits and grapes continuing until as late as October, the numerous annalistic boasts of armies “harvesting” the grains, fruit, and grapes of the enemy fields, point to summer warfare. Assyrian wall reliefs depict summer battles amidst laden fruit trees, date palms, and grape vines.

Many documents relate that military action was often undertaken to stop raiding parties. Aramean tribes and others on the agricultural margins, such as Arab tribes, had reputations for their raiding. Soldiers typically made forays during spring and summer harvest seasons to acquire—or destroy—crops and animals.

Assyria’s Sargon II (722-705 BC) boasted, “I had my troops cross the Tigris (and) Euphrates in full flood,

the high waters of spring, as if on dry land.”⁶ Although Sargon’s statement may be somewhat intended as propaganda, it nonetheless reflects the fact that the logistics of moving an army over long distances and fighting in open ground were weather related.

Ancient armies consisted of several specialized units beyond the infantry. These included chariot corps,⁷ cavalry, and wheeled siege machines—meaning large, shielded, mobile towers and fighting platforms that soldiers used to gain access to city walls. Dry, solid ground was essential for transport and effective battlefield deployment of personnel, weapons, and horses. Traveling into or through the mountains that stretch along the northern arc of the Fertile Crescent and into Anatolia required summer travel, when snows had receded. Armies undertook mountain expeditions to obtain valuable natural resources (e.g. cedars of Lebanon) or to engage resistant populations living in—or fleeing to—higher ground.

Provisioning for the army constituted another weather-related factor involved in military planning. Rations sent with the army or stored at depots in the homeland would consist primarily of previous seasons’ produce. Once the army left its territory (or those of obligated vassal states), supplies for both soldiers and animals needed to come from local sources;

this was best served during the harvest season. Of course, summer availability of water was also a major concern that created a logistical balancing act.

All in all, in the Israelite mind, the “return of the year” defined the flexible start of the annual “campaign season.” This lasted several months, spring through autumn.

Because rainfall throughout the region is generally non-existent from mid-May to early October, unusual weather-related events during campaign season were significant. Ancient documents indicate that such events played a rare role in warfare.

In Joshua 10:11, Yahweh hurled deadly hailstones (literally “large stones from the heavens”) to aid the Israelite soldiers. Assyria’s King Sargon II records that during a battle:

Adad, the violent, the son of Anu, the valiant, uttered his loud cry against them; and with the flood cloud and hailstones [lit: the stone of heaven], he totally annihilated the remainder.⁸

Sargon’s “flood cloud” is conceptually analogous to the torrent Kishon flash flood that swept away Sisera’s troops (Judg. 5:21). The “loud cry” parallels Yahweh’s voice of thunder, which struck panic among the Philistines (see 1 Sam. 7:10). Summer

thunderstorms were not part of the Near East’s normal experience.⁹

More frightening and damaging than thunder were lightning bolts from a summer sky. Assyria’s King Ashurbanipal (668-627 BC) declared that during one battle, “fire fell from the heavens and burned up the enemy.”¹⁰ Following a battle in North Syria, Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 BC) stated:

I fashioned a bronze lightning bolt, and (the tale) of the spoliation of the lands which I had conquered.... And (a decree), I inscribed thereon. I built a temple of burnt brick in that place and set up therein the bronze lightning bolt.¹¹

His claim elsewhere that the storm god Adad struck his enemy “with a thunderbolt”¹² illuminates such a response. Perhaps the most detailed account of such an event comes from the Hittite’s King Muršili II (1321-1295 BC):

FAST FACT

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Beginning the siege of a city when storage facilities were at their lowest and before the local fields were harvested allowed for both maximum pressure on the trapped inhabitants and foraging for the encircling army; but this was also the time when city water stores would be at peak. It was usually lack of water that caused capitulation, long before hunger.



Left: Battle scene from the North-West Palace in Nimrud shows Assyria’s King Ashurnasirpal II being supported by the god in the winged disc and leading a chariot charge beside a river up to the orchards surrounding an enemy town; dated about 865-860 BC. The trees in the orchard have leaves but are not yet bearing fruit.

ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ BRITISH MUSEUM/ LONDON (3/17/21)



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Left: Bust of Thutmose III; granodiorite stone; Egyptian annals tell of his going out to war in the spring.

warriors battling against Egypt. In their art, the Egyptians typically depicted Canaanites with this style of hair, beards, and clothing.

Above: Canaanite

the victorious stormgod, my lord, showed his divine power. He shot a lightning bolt. My troops saw the lightning bolt and the land of Arzawa [western Anatolia] saw it. The lightning bolt went and struck Arzawa. It struck Apasa (Ephesus?), the city of Uhhaziti. Uhhaziti fell on his knees and became ill...did not resist me and fled before me....All the land of Arzawa fled.¹³

Capitalizing on the power in nature, ancient kings frequently adopted meteorological metaphors in their boasts. They compared themselves to a “raging storm,” “gust of wind,” “tempest,” or “immeasurable downpour of heaven.” Victorious kings bragged that they “thundered against” their enemies, “rained down” fire and destruction, and “overcame them like a flood.”

While self-aggrandizing monarchs appropriated the force and majesty of violent weather, climatological factors did influence campaign seasons. Further, extraordinary weather events—whether properly attributed or not—impacted battles.

1. The Hebrew words for “the messengers” and “the kings” are similar, and most (but not all) editions and translators since before the time of Christ have decided that the earliest editions of 2 Sam. 11:1 read “kings”—as does the CSB. But the New American Commentary argues for keeping “messengers.” Bergen maintains that this verse concerns the first anniversary—“return of the year”—of the Ammonite humiliation of the Israelite messengers in 2 Sam. 10, and has little or nothing to do with the season or weather-related interests; Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, The New American Commentary, vol. 7 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 363. Although keeping “messengers” may provide a particular narrative context for David’s sending Joab, the parallel Chronicles passage (1 Chron. 20:1) helps to decipher the phrase “at the return of the year” and its implications for a broader understanding of the role of climate and weather related events in military activities in the ancient biblical world. While the translation of this verse is quite complex, this article will accept the basic CSB understanding of 2 Sam. 11:1a.

2. The Hebrew Bible does not have a word for “spring.” The CSB translates the Hebrew phrase “return of the year” as “spring,” while also, at times, using “spring” as a clarifying English modifier for “latter rains” (Deut. 11:14; Job 29:23) and “second crops” (Amos 7:1), which appeared in that season. Referring to this season, modern Israelis use the name of the month “Abib,” which is also spelled “Aviv” (March/April).

3. Hence the clarifying addition of “to war” by the CSB and most others in 2 Sam. 11:1 and 1 Chron. 20:1. Other than these five uses, this variant form of the com-

mon Hebrew term for “turn around” or “return” is used in the Hebrew Bible only three times—to “answer” (return a question) in Job 21:34 and 34:36; and in 1 Sam. 7:17: Samuel “returned to Ramah.”

4. See William K. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, eds., *The Context of Scripture* (CoS), 3 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2000); David Daniel Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (ARAB), 2 vols. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1926-27); Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 3 vols. (Berkeley: Univ. of California, 1973, 1976, 1980); and Harry A. Hoffner, *Letters from the Hittite Kingdom* (Atlanta: SBL, 2009).

5. Considering that military-age males were not as essential for harvesting work.

6. Charlie Trimm, *Fighting for the King and the Gods: A Survey of Warfare in the Ancient Near East* (Atlanta: SBL, 2017), 138. See Josh. 3:15 and 4:18—crossing the Jordan at flood stage.

7. Soldiers used chariots primarily as mobile archery platforms. Other chariot uses are debated, especially after re-engineering around 1000 BC made them more maneuverable. Some believe soldiers used chariots in charges at infantry lines and to harass the flanks of battle lines.

8. Lawson Younger, Jr., *Ancient Conquest Accounts* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 210.

9. An unseasonal thunderstorm the prophet called down during the harvest produced fear of both YHWH and Samuel, and likely destroyed that season’s crops (1 Sam. 12:18).

10. Cited in Moshe Weinfeld, “Divine Intervention in War in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East,” in *History, Historiography, and Interpretation*, eds. Hayim Tadmor and Moshe Weinfeld (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1983), 140.

11. Prism Inscription: ARAB 1 VII. I. 243; compare the “nahushtan” in Num. 21:6-9 and 2 Kings 18:4.

12. ARAB 1 VII. IX. 333; Assur-resh-isi (1132-1115 BC) makes a similar claim, ARAB 1 VI. II. 209. Other texts also speak of fire from the sky.

13. Translation by R.H. Beal in CoS (2.16). Translated here as “lightning bolt,” the Hittite word might also mean “meteorite.” See also K. Lawson Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 133, 208–209, and fn. 27. Younger, (209, fn. 26).

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BSFL: Joshua 2:1-14

Prostitution

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

ISTOCK PHOTO

BY TODD BORGER

THE OLD TESTAMENT OFTEN CONTAINS stories with unlikely characters. For instance, the Book of Judges is full of unsavory men whom God used to save Israel. Moses was a murderer. David was an adulterer and murderer. Some women of the Old Testament fare no better. Lot's daughters got their father drunk so he would sleep with and impregnate them. Tamar posed as a prostitute to trick her father-in-law into sleeping with her. Rahab, the heroine at Jericho, was a prostitute. The way we handle these persons is an important topic, but I bring them up here because we have a difficult topic that can be unseemly to modern ears—prostitution—but which was very much a part of the biblical culture. Tragically, it is still part of our modern culture and will likely never go away completely until Jesus returns.

As Sexual Immorality

The most common Old Testament Hebrew word translated prostitute is *zonah*. This word likely has a meaning closest to what we think of as a prostitute in today's world, but it has broader implications as well. *Zonah* typically refers to a woman who trades sex for money, but it could also refer to any sexual activity outside of marriage. Women identified or compared to a *zonah* include: Tamar (Gen. 38:15), Rahab (Josh. 2:1; 6:17,22,25), Jephthah's mother (Judg. 11:1), a Philistine prostitute Samson hired (16:1), the two women who argued over a baby before Solomon (1 Kings 3:16), and the women who washed in the bloody water in the pool of Samaria where someone had cleaned the blood from Ahab's chariot (22:38). Simeon and Levi accused

Right: Samson slept with a prostitute from Gaza, which is shown in the distance.

Upper right: Small amulet likely depicting Asherah, who was called the "sacred prostitute" or the "one

of the womb." At her breasts are the twin gods to whom she gave birth, Shahr and Shalem. A woman would have worn the amulet during her pregnancy, as Asherah was considered to be a fertility goddess.

Shechem of treating their sister, Dinah, like a *zonah* (Gen. 34:31). The above list reveals some surprising facts. First, none of these women were criticized for being prostitutes, although in several instances the cultural rejection is evident. Second, several of these women were important enough in the Davidic and Messianic line to be mentioned in later genealogies (see Matt. 1:3,5). Third, prostitutes were not banished—as evident from the two prostitutes who had access to King Solomon.

Aside from the women the Bible identifies as being prostitutes, biblical laws and wisdom literature offer nuances about the word. Hebrew priests were prohibited from marrying a *zonah* (Lev. 21:7,14).¹ The wages of the *zonah* were not to be brought into the Lord's house as a vow (Deut. 23:18). The *zonah's* fee was equivalent to a loaf of bread (Prov. 6:26). The *zonah* will lead an innocent man to his death (7:1-27). The *zonah* is compared to a deep pit (23:27). The *zonah's* companion destroys his wealth (29:3).

As Apostasy

Prophetic writings often compared Israel and other nations to a *zonah*. The city of Tyre became like the song of a *zonah* (Isa. 23:15-16). *Zonah* is one of several images Scripture used to describe Nineveh's atrocities (Nah. 3:4). Isaiah compared faithless Jerusalem to a *zonah* (Isa. 1:21). The Israelites had given gifts (the *zonah's* wages) to shrine prostitutes as part of pagan fertility practices. Micah declared that the conquering Assyrians would later use those same wages in their own pagan practices (Mic. 1:7). The *zonah* was the goal of trade when the nations invaded Israel and sold the boys and girls—for prostitutes and wine respectively (Joel 3:3). Prophets used the *zonah* image as a metaphor for apostasy. The metaphor worked two ways—either Israel was presented as the harlot



(Jer. 2:20; 3:3; Ezek. 16:30-41) or as the harlot's partner (Jer. 5:7; Hos. 4:14).

All of the above passages contain the noun translated as *prostitute*. Including the verb form of the word helps make the religious implications even clearer. While the noun often refers to an actual prostitute and is sometimes used metaphorically, the verb is usually used as a metaphor for Israel's apostasy. When Israel apostatized and worshiped foreign gods, they *prostituted* themselves.² Further, God made a connection between the people prostituting their daughters and the land being prostituted (Lev. 19:29). God also declared that the daughter of a priest who was promiscuous also defiled her father and was to be put to death (Lev. 21:9). If the Israelites forgot God and His laws, they prostituted themselves by going after their old way of life apart from the Law (Num. 15:39). God used Hosea's wife prostituting herself as a picture of how Israel was unfaithful to Him (Hos. 2:5). The love Hosea demonstrated in redeeming his wife was again a picture of God's love for Israel. Both were charged with no longer prostituting themselves (3:3).

The verb also reflected a societal meaning by saying Israelite men committed prostitution by going after Moabite women (Num. 25:1). In other uses of the verb form, an unwed woman was said to prostitute herself if she slept with a man when not married (Deut. 22:21). The city of Tyre prostituted itself by trading with all kingdoms (Isa. 23:17).

As Cultic Activity

Many scholars have long assumed that sexual activity and ritualistic prostitution were regular parts of the religions of the ancient Near East.³ Others have begun to question this idea.⁴ The Old Testament mentions this so-called cult prostitute, using two Hebrew terms *qadesh* and *qedeshah*, for a male and female prostitute,



ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/GB HOWELL/ ORIENTAL MUSEUM OF CHICAGO (70/G/6291)

Right: From ancient Sumer, a gypsum container from the Isin-Larsa period (2004–1763 BC). The

4-chamber vessel, which is supported by cattle, likely held eye makeup. Ezekiel 23 describes how

Jerusalem acted like a harlot, painted her eyes, and awaited the arrival of her lover, Assyria.



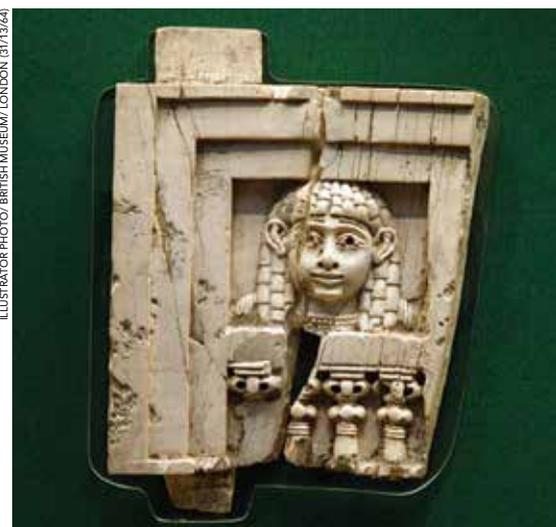
ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ LOUISE KOHL SMITH (82/17/5)

Left: A wall with a circumference of about sixty miles connected the ancient Assyrian cities of Nineveh, Nimrud, Karamless, and Khorsabad. Ruins from these four great cities are generally regarded as composing the whole ruins of Nineveh. The city itself lay in ruins for over 2,000 years. The image shows visitors atop part of the sixty-mile wall. Prostitution was one of the moral atrocities the prophet Nahum leveled against the city of Nineveh (Nah. 3:4).



Left: Roman ruins at Tyre. Although its sister city, Sidon, was older and originally stronger, Tyre quickly gained prominence as the primary Phoenician port city. The prophet Isaiah condemned Tyre for “prostituting herself with all of the kingdoms of the world” (Isa. 23:17, CSB).

ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ BRITISH MUSEUM/ LONDON (81/13/64)



Upper right: From the Fosse Temple at Lachish, ivory carving depicting a woman looking out of a balustraded window. This was a popular Phoenician theme,

possibly connected with the goddess Astarte and ritual prostitution.



ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ BOB SCHATZ (26/33A/19)

Left: From Beth-shan, a miniature bed, made of chalk and dated to

the Early Bronze Age III (2650–2350 BC); some contend that the bed was connected to the cult of the temple prostitutes.

Lessons for Us

Prostitution in the Old Testament takes on a broader meaning than our modern view of a sex-trade profession. It includes other forms of sexual immorality and also has religious connotations. Both aspects—the sexual and the religious—strongly impact Christ followers. When Paul listed the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19–21, he began with sexual immorality. Although certain Old Testament stories may be neutral about prostitutes, or even at times depict a prostitute behaving heroically, the New Testament clearly states that believers have an important moral mandate not to follow that ethic.

On the other hand, the New Testament does show Jesus spending a great deal of time among people such as prostitutes, tax collectors, and other “sinners.” If we are to follow Jesus’ model, we should likewise not shun people who come from certain backgrounds or who have tainted reputations. We should recognize them as our neighbors and thus individuals who can be recipients of God’s life-changing grace. 🕯

1. Contrast this with Hosea who twice married Gomer, described in Scripture as being a *zonah*.
2. Other texts speaking of Israel prostituting itself include: Ex. 34:15–16; Lev. 17:7; 20:5–6; Deut. 31:16; Judg. 2:17; 8:27,33; 1 Chron. 5:25; 2 Chron. 21:11,13; Pss. 73:27; 106:39; Jer. 3:1,6,8; Ezek. 6:9; 16:15–34; 20:30; 23:3–43; Hos. 4:10–18; 5:3; 9:1.
3. John Newell Oswalt, “Prostitution,” in *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, gen. ed. Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 4:910–12.
4. Elaine Adler Goodfriend, “Prostitution—Old Testament,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* ed. in chief David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:505–510; Karel van der Toorn, “Prostitution (Cultic Prostitution)” in *ibid.*, 510–13.

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respectively. The root behind these words covers the concept of holiness, sacredness, and consecration. Thus, the *qedesh* is one set apart for religious purposes, which may indicate a connection between this worker and sexuality. When Tamar dressed like a prostitute in order to deceive and seduce Judah, he referred to her as a *qedeshah* when searching for her (Gen. 38:21). A religious aspect of the sexuality does not enter that story otherwise. A more compelling case for this religious practice might be in Deuteronomy 23:17–18, which commands Israel not to let their daughters be a *qedeshah* or their sons be a *qedesh*.

The use of the Hebrew word *zonah* as a metaphor for apostasy was likely tied to the cultural norm of sexuality as a rite among other religions. God called His people Israel to be distinct. He called them to be holy.

ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ BRENT BRUCE/ ROCKEFELLER MUSEUM/ JERUSALEM (19/06/1033)



Smith

in

TIMOTHY'S HOME

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A mezuzah attached to a doorframe. *Mezuzah* is the Hebrew word for "doorpost." Inside the small rectangular box is a text, written by a Jewish scribe, containing select verses from the Torah, Deut. 6:4-9 and 11:13-21. The emblem at the top is the first Hebrew letter in the text from Deut. 6:4. Jews often attach a *mezuzah* to the doorframe of their houses or places of business.

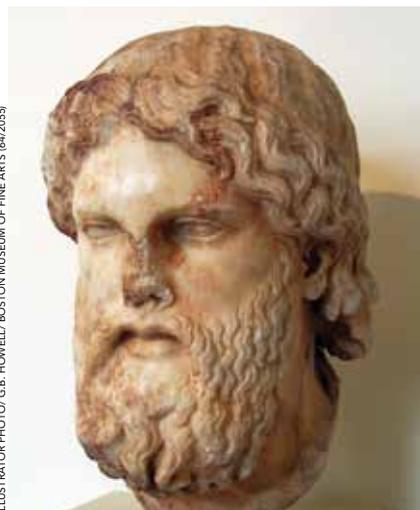
ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/BRENT BRUCE/ROCKEFELLER MUSEUM, JERUSALEM (190/871525)

BY CHRISTOPHER J. BASS

TIMOTHY HAD EARNED an excellent reputation among fellow believers for his faithfulness. We see this when Paul, on his second missionary journey, enlisted Timothy to replace John Mark and join him and Silas. The three traveled together, sharing the good news and strengthening the churches (Acts 15:36–16:5).

Timothy was the son of mixed-faith parents—a Greek and a Jew. A native of Lystra, he may have been converted on Paul’s first missionary journey—or shortly after (Scripture does not say explicitly; see Acts 14:6–23). Paul called Timothy his “child in the faith” (1 Tim. 1:2). This phrase could mean Paul was involved in Timothy’s conversion, or it might describe the closeness of their relationship in ministry.¹ Paul described Timothy by saying no one else was like him in his care and concern for other believers (Phil. 2:20–22).

Not only were they traveling companions, Paul sent Timothy



ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ G.B. HOWELL/ BOSTON MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS (64/2055)



ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ G.B. HOWELL/ BOSTON MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS (64/2545)

on several important missions (Acts 17:14–15; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4; and others). Additionally, “so close were Paul and Timothy that both names are listed as the authors of six of Paul’s letters (2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; Philem. 1).”² Two letters of the New Testament are addressed to him, from Paul, encouraging him to remain faithful to his calling. At some point Timothy was imprisoned and released—likely for his faithfulness to the gospel (Heb. 13:23).

Above left: Marble bust of Zeus, the father and most powerful of the Olympian gods; dated about 350–340 BC.

Above: The Greek Hermes; marble; about AD 30–40; probably from the Greek island

of Paros. The sculpture once featured wings in its hair. Ancient Greeks considered Hermes as the god over travelers, shepherds, and thieves. The people at Lystra thought Paul was Hermes (Acts 14:12).

Timothy’s Father

Luke wrote that Timothy’s father was a “Greek” (Acts 16:1,3). Although his mother’s faith had a strong influence on him—following his father’s Greek practice, Timothy was left uncircumcised. A wife of mixed-faith marriage was expected to submit to her husband’s religion.³

Lystra’s claim to fame was that, according to ancient legend, two Greek gods (Zeus and Hermes) had once visited them in disguise.⁴ Paul and Barnabas healed a crippled man, whipping the city of Lystra into an

Left: Marble statue of Hestia, the Greek goddess of hearth, architecture, family, and home. A city would establish a central hearth in her honor and would maintain a public fire. In time, Hestia became an important figure

for social, religious, and political life in ancient Greece.

Below: The site of ancient Lystra near the village of Khatyn Serai in modern Turkey; many believe Lystra to have been Timothy’s hometown.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ BOB SCHATZ (12/10/4)

uproar as they thought the gods had come to visit again (14:8-21). Before Paul and Barnabas were able to calm the crowd, the priest of Zeus was called to arrange a sacrifice to them.

Even with a local temple, the locus of Zeus worship would have taken place at home. Greek homes would have an altar to Zeus erected centrally. Zeus, along with Hestia (the goddess of the hearth), were the main focus of Greek worship. Nearly all Greek religious acts took place around the hearth. Family dinners would begin and end with religious practices that offered food and libations on the hearth.

Greek families would train their children, from birth, in the practices associated with the religious worship of their “gods.” Some of

Timothy’s earliest memories were likely of his father “sacrificing on the family altar and all the household assembled for sacred meals. Birth, puberty, marriage, and funerals were accompanied by ceremonial acts.”⁵ Thus, Timothy would have been exposed to this type of religious worship from a young age.

Timothy’s Mother

Paul’s custom was to begin sharing the gospel in the synagogue first, then to preach to the Gentiles. In Lystra, however, he did not do this. Lystra evidently did not have a synagogue (vv. 8-20). In order to have a synagogue, the city would need a *minyán* (a quorum of ten men). Even though Lystra thus likely did not have a large population of Jews, at least one Jewish family lived there—Timothy’s mother and grandmother.⁶

Timothy’s mother, Eunice, was a believing Jew (16:1; 2 Tim. 1:5). While she would have had to defer to the worship led by her husband, she still spent time teaching Timothy about faith in God. While some Jewish religious activities took place in the Jerusalem Temple or local synagogues, the majority of religious education occurred in the home.

The curriculum Timothy’s mother and grandmother (Lois) used would have included reciting and memorizing the Scripture (3:14-15). The ladies were following God’s command, to teach children the Scriptures by repetition (see Deut. 4:9; 6:7). Through this repetition, Jewish parents helped etch the Law onto their children’s hearts. Teaching would have taken

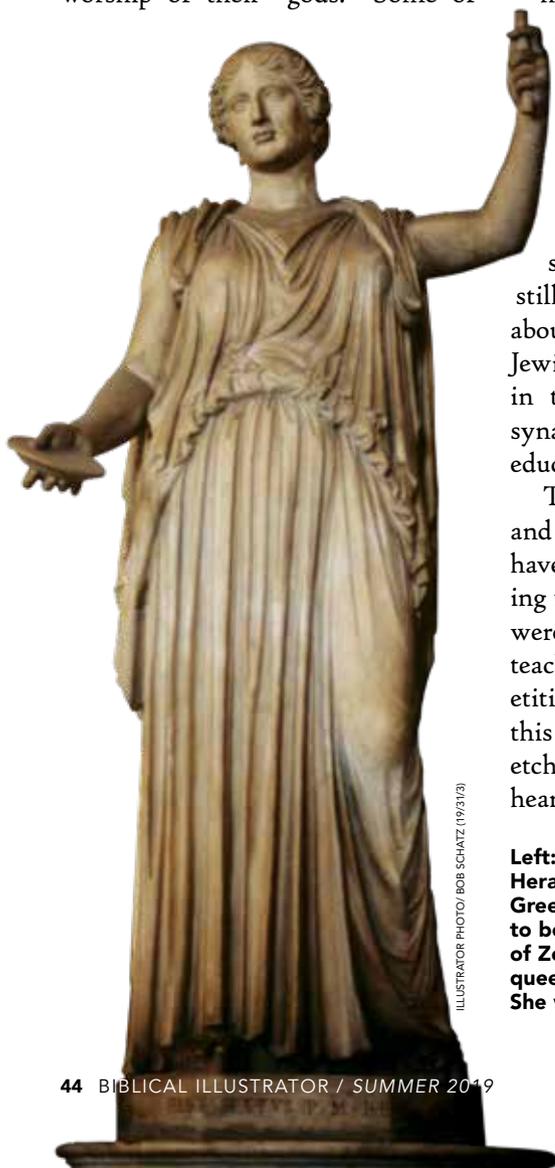
place during the day-to-day activities of the family life of the faithful. As many parents know, the next generation does not automatically believe in God and His ways. Thus, “great intentionality” is necessary for faith to grow.⁷ Timothy’s mother was intentional about training her son in the ways of the Lord, even while he was being exposed to Greek religion and its traditions.

Worship for Jewish families focused on the Torah (Law) and prayer. Households would gather to recite the *Shema* and other prescribed prayers at the beginning of the day. Children were taught from birth about the importance of the Sabbath, ceremonial purity, and other special observances that Jewish people held sacred.⁸

Mixed-Faith Parents

According to Jewish laws and customs, to marry a non-Hebrew was considered sinful.⁹ Since, however, Lystra had such a small Jewish population, the practice was likely tolerated.¹⁰ Even so, according to rabbinic law, a person who was born to one Jewish parent was considered Jewish.¹¹ Thus, while both parents would have had spiritual influence on his upbringing, Timothy was still considered a Jew according to their law—even though he was uncircumcised. Paul fulfilled what was legally required, so that Timothy would be able to minister with him in the synagogues (as those who knew him might have considered him a Greek because of his father, see Acts 16:3).

This background of mix-faith parents points to a home life that would have been different from that of children whose parents practiced the same religion. If both parents were Greek, they would have never revered the true God as revealed in Scripture. Instead, the family would



ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/BOB SCHATZ (19/21/23)

Left: Statue of Hera, whom the Greeks considered to be the wife of Zeus and thus queen of the gods. She was consid-

ered to be the patron goddess of marriage and childbirth. In her raised left hand she would have held a scepter.



ISTOCK PHOTO

have worshiped the false god Zeus and other gods of the Hellenistic pantheon. If, on the other hand, both parents were Jewish, Timothy would have been brought up exclusively following the teachings of the Old Testament. In such a home, generally the father would have led his family's religious ceremonies—with some help from the mother. A home that focused on one faith was not what Timothy experienced. With his father being Greek, Timothy's Jewish mother stepped into the role of religious educator to instruct their son in Hebrew tradition and Scripture.¹² Although Lois would have assumed that role, she still would have submitted to her husband—meaning most of the religious practices in the home would have likely been Greek.

Timothy was presented with two vastly different religious paths. Eventually, he would have to decide for himself which to follow. Despite his father's teachings and the influence of the pagan Greek culture in

Lystra, Timothy saw the truth of the Scripture that his mother had taught him and he trusted in Jesus as the fulfillment of what the Old Testament had proclaimed.

Timothy's Faith

While there was nothing extraordinary about the religious training Timothy received, or from whom he received it, the impact of the training was remarkable. Having backgrounds in both Jewish and Greek practices made Timothy an invaluable partner to Paul as they went on their journey to reach other Hellenistic cities. Eventually, Timothy would lead the church in Ephesus (a pagan Hellenistic city). His diverse background would have allowed him to deal uniquely with issues that might arise as the church fulfilled its mission of reaching Jewish and Greek people with the gospel. ❖

1. Robert J. Dean, "Timothy," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, gen. ed. Chad Brand, Charles Draper, and Archie England (Nashville: Holman, 2003), 1597–98.

Above: Boy and his family celebrate his Bar Mitzvah at Jerusalem's Western Wall. The lad is wearing the talith (prayer shawl) and the frontlet of the phylac-

tery containing Scripture from Deuteronomy, which is attached to the leather strap that encircles the head and drawn tight down the left arm. He is shown carrying a Torah scroll.

2. *Ibid.*, 1598.

3. Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 366.

4. John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 314.

5. Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 178–79.

6. Polhill, *Acts*, 313.

7. Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 93.

8. J. Julius Scott, Jr., *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1995), 248–50.

9. This information is in the non-canonical writings, Tobit 4:12; 1 Esdras 8:68–96; 9:7–9.

10. Keener, *IVP Background Commentary*, 366.

11. Polhill, *Acts*, 342–44.

12. This practice is described in the Apocrypha in Tobit 1:8. Tobit stated that he was instructed in the Law by his mother because he was "left an orphan" by his father.

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