

**MaozNews No. 140**  
**Published every 4 weeks or so**  
**October 2019**

© Baruch Maoz

**More Top Archaeological Discoveries in Israel, pg. 1**  
**Israel – a New Government? pg.3**  
**Ministry News, pg. 6**  
**Family News, pg. 6**

**Some Top Archaeological Discoveries in Israel**

Based on an article by Nir Hasson Haaretz May 08, 2019

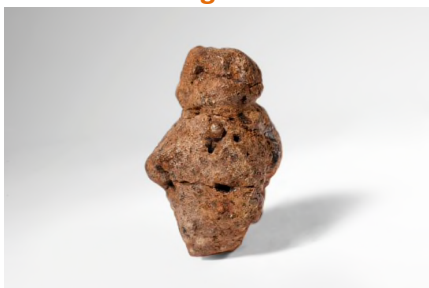
**Hadrian's Statue**



In 1975 a kibbutzник from Tirat Zvi was scanning Tel Shalem in the Beit She'an Valley with a metal detector, when he found the bronze head of Emperor Hadrian. The rest of the statue was discovered shortly afterwards, later reconstructed at the Israel Museum. This

is one of only three extant bronzes of Hadrian found and definitely the best of the lot, says David Mevurach, museum curator, who suspects it was molded in Rome. The find's importance isn't based merely on its rarity or beauty, but on Hadrian's significance in Jewish history. Hadrian crushed the Bar Kochba Revolt — an outburst of independence, followed by the biggest mass slaughter in Jewish history up to that point, greater than the Second Temple disaster, says Mevurach. Hadrian decided to put an end to Judah's rebellious spirit, once and for all. He wiped out a thousand settlements, killed half a million people and changed the name of the province from Judah to Syria-Palestine, which is why Zionism views Bar Kochba as anti-hero.

**The "Venus" Figurine**



It doesn't look like much, admits Prof. Naama Goren-Inbar of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who led the excavation at Birkat Ram. But if this is a figurine it is by far the oldest in the world, an artifact of the Acheulian culture, which spans from about 1.7 million to 250,000 years ago. It would have been made not

by a modern human being, but by a more primitive hominin, *Homo erectus* or other. Experts remain divided but many are

confident that the Venus isn't a natural pebble but shows marks of modification.

### The Priestly Blessing Amulet



In 1979 the archaeologist Gabriel Barkai was excavating a hill in Jerusalem, above the valley known in Hebrew as “Ben Hinom” and, in English, as “Gehenna”. He found a burial cave dating to the First Temple era, with hundreds of pottery vessels and 120 silver items. Among these were two small amulets, about the size of a cigarette butt. They turned out to be teeny rolled-up silver scrolls. Archaeologists spent three years trying to figure out how to unroll the silver without destroying the artifacts.

When they finally succeeded, they were able to decipher ancient Hebrew writing – a text from the Book of Numbers, slightly altered. One contained the Priestly Blessing, the oldest biblical verse ever found, predating the Dead Sea scrolls by centuries, Barkai says: “The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; The LORD make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; The LORD lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace”. The tiny silver scrolls would quite have been worn as amulets some 2,700 years ago.

### Neolithic Masks



The Neolithic period changed humankind. This is the time when a hunting-gathering nomadic or semi-nomadic style of life was supplanted by settlement and farming. Symbolism had been known for tens of thousands of years, as attested to by figurines found in Europe. But the power of the 15 stone masks found in the Judean desert and similar masks discovered elsewhere in the Levant is staggering, but these are the earliest masks known, made to resemble human faces.

## Seals and Bullae from the First Temple Period



In the 1970s the archaeologist Yigal Shilom sifting through debris removed from the Temple Mound in Jerusalem, found dozens of seals and seal impressions (bullae) from the First Temple era. Dozens more were found later.



The importance of these seals lies in the names they bear, some of which are mentioned in the Bible, all from the same period. Among these are the seals of Gemaryahu ben Shafan (Jeremiah 10:11), the minister Jehucal ben Shlomyahu (Jeremiah 37:3), Gedaliah ben Pashhur (Jeremiah 38:1).

In 2015 archaeologist Eilat Mazar announced finding a seal of "Hezekiah King of Judah."

## Israel – A New Government?

Israel is a parliamentary democracy. A government that fails in a No Confidence vote inevitably falls. Elections in Israel are for political parties, not for a President with executive powers. Israel's President -- a non-executive position -- is authorized by custom to accord the Knesset (our parliament) Member most likely able to form a parliamentary majority (61/120) a mandate to do so.

Should the person mandated fail to form a Government within 28 days and an 21 additional days extension (if the President chooses to grant them), he must either return the mandate to the President, or garner enough votes in Parliament to call new elections.

If the mandate is returned, his next most likely opponent is asked to try his hand. That person is accorded 21 days, with no extension possible. If he fails, the President must inform the Knesset, following which the Knesset may mandate one of its members to form a Government. Should that person fail as well, the remaining option is elections.

Israel's political scene is composed of three camps: the right wing, comprised of Prime Minister's Likud, following recent elections with 32 seats in the Knesset; Yamina, an extreme right-wing party largely supported by settlers in the West Bank (7 seats), and two Orthodox religious parties (9 and 7 seats respectively); the left, comprised of Labor (6 seats), the Democratic Union (led by former Chief of Staff and Prime Minister Ehud Barak, 5 seats) and the United Front (representing the Arab parties, 13 seats). A centrist party recently emerged, consisting of Blue and White (led by former Chief of Staff Benny Gantz, and a "cockpit" of disaffected former Netanyahu supporters, 33 seats). One party, sitting on the fence, is Yisrael Beiteynu (led by Avigdor Liberman, 8 seats).

In election held in March of this year, no party achieved a likely majority. For the first time in Israel's history, declining to consider the option of a Government he did not lead, PM

Netanyahu refused to return the mandate to the President. Instead, he called for renewed elections, held this September. Once again, no party achieved a likely majority. Mr. Netanyahu formed a bloc with the right wing parties, consisting of 55 seats, undertaking to negotiate together the formation of a government. Such a bloc clearly predetermines any policies the Government-to-be will pursue. The centrists and left wing parties, comprising 57 seats, support Mr. Gantz. The only way to avoid another round of elections is a Broad Unity Government consisting of the two major parties, with or without the satellite parties, or the defection of one or more of the smaller allied parties on the left or the right.

In terms of policies, there is little difference between the two major parties, excepting Mr. Gantz' willingness to negotiate with the Palestinians. The Likud tends to be more nationalistic, more lenient toward the demands of the religious orthodox parties and more supportive of continued Jewish settlement of the West Bank. Blue and White insists on civil liberties, freedom from Orthodox religious coercion and believes that the conflict with the Palestinians must be resolved -- for Israel's good -- by way of a territorial compromise. However, the right wing bloc Mr. Netanyahu has created, implies social policies diametrically contrary to those of any of the parties not do not belong to that bloc. So long as the Israel-Palestinian conflict is unresolved, no Israeli government can allow itself to be dependent on support from the United Front, although both major parties sought Arab voters' support.

Differences between two the major parties are also stark in terms of personalities. Mr. Gantz is soft-spoken, gentlemanly, clean-as-a-whistle, surrounded by strong personalities who accept his leadership. Mr. Netanyahu is a Machiavellian politician surrounded by corrupt individuals and fawning weaklings. PM Netanyahu has promoted second-tier Likud Knesset members beholden to him by virtue of the Ministerial positions they were granted over the heads of senior members suspected of more independent minds or viewed as potential rivals, thereby creating cackle of frustrated (although frightened) prominent Likudniks. For the time being, none of them dare move without Netanyahu's approval but, if the signs of political death throes appear, they are likely to turn on him like a pack of hungry dogs before turning on each other.

Mr. Netanyahu has three grievous charges hanging over his head, for which he may well be indicted following hearings before the State Attorney General on October 2-4. Sometime toward the end of the year, most probably next month, the AG will announce his decision whether to indict Mr. Netanyahu, and on what charges.

Mr. Netanyahu, the consummate politician, is calling for a unity Government with Blue and White on condition that he is the Prime Minister and that his platform forms the basis of the Government-to-be's policies. Blue and White declines the leadership of one likely to be indicted, insisting that no Prime Minister can competently lead the country while defending his innocence in the Court, and has undertaken to loosening the grip the Orthodox parties have on society and on government.

Because Mr. Netanyahu commands a larger bloc, President Rivlin mandated him to form a Government. Mr. Netanyahu promised that, should he see no likelihood of success, he will return the mandate well before the stipulated 28 days accorded him by law are over. He is now renegeing on that promise. He is biding his time, hoping that the AG's decision, due in November, will be in his favor, thereby removing Blue and White's major objection to his leadership.

The more insecure Mr. Netanyahu is of his position, the more determined he becomes to hold on to power as his Get Out of Jail ticket. His present hope is to paint Blue and White into a corner by creating a situation in which they are blamed for refusing to form a unity Government with the bloc he formed, paving the way for him to force them into

Government after the AG's favorable decision, or for presumed gains, should elections be held again.

Avigdor Liberman's Yisrael Beiteynu (8 seats) holds the key to this impasse. Should he join with either Mr. Netanyahu or Mr. Gantz, he and the smaller parties on either side of the political divide will have enough parliamentary support to form a Government. So far, Mr. Liberman's position has been that his party will only join a unity Government, led by either of the two contestants.

The leaders of both the largest parties are ostensibly calling for a unity government and, should they join together, could easily form such. However, Mr. Netanyahu declines to negotiate in good faith: he will only negotiate as a representative of his right-wing bloc, created on the grounds of a political platform unacceptable to the centrist and left wing parties. In addition, he refuses to vacate the Prime Minister's office. His ploy with the right wing bloc is meant to protect his legal flank over against probable indictments, to which end he is willing to force the country onto a third round of elections. There is an important reason for this. By law, while serving as Prime Minister he need not resign until found guilty by all courts of appeal in a judicial process that could take years. If he is not Prime Minister, he would need to resign whatever Ministerial post he held, even if merely indicted

A unity Government is likely not to serve Israel well, particularly with regard to the conflict with the Palestinians or to the role the Orthodox insist on playing in Israeli politics and society. Such a Government is likely to be hamstrung, unable to make necessary decisions.

It remains to be seen if Mr. Liberman will bolt his election commitment and join one side or the other; if the Likud will forgo Netanyahu's leadership for the good of the country, or if Mr. Gantz will manage to break the right wing bloc and form a government. There are hints of an unravelling of Mr. Netanyahu's political support within both the bloc and the Likud. Faint whispers of displeasure were being heard, which Mr. Netanyahu sought to quell by hinting at the possibility of primaries, only to transform those whispers into a roar: Gideon Sa'ar, Netanyahu's chief rival in the Likud, responded with a public "I'm ready". Apparently terrified, Mr. Netanyahu described Mr. Sa'ar's response as a putsch – as if challenging leadership in a party that boasts of its democratic process is illegitimate – and withdrew his threat to hold primaries. Instead, he had his party's Central Committee affirm their unwavering support for his leadership.

He then sought to have the parties in his 55 seat bloc affirm their support for his candidacy should all efforts to form a Government fail and the matter is referred to the Knesset. They balked.

A whopping 37% blame Mr. Netanyahu for the possibility we might be forced into a third round of elections (another 35% blame Liberman, 6% blame Gantz, leading to the conclusion that the Likud will lose even more seats in the next round).

Gantz seems unruffled. He too is biding his time, awaiting the President according him a mandate to attempt the formation of a government. An early decision of the AG is likely to strengthen his hand. Meanwhile, Netanyahu's criminal hearings have ended, and the press is busy discussing the Prime Minister's shifty dealings while Mr. Netanyahu engages in one obvious spin after another. He seems to have lost his touch. Gantz repeatedly expresses his willingness to form a unity Government with Netanyahu on condition that the latter is not the first to serve as Prime Minister in a rotation agreement. But that would render Mr. Netanyahu vulnerable.

So far, Mr. Liberman is staying his course by consistently refusing to join any Government but one comprised of the Likud and Blue and White.

I have again delayed this letter in the hope that the picture would become clearer, but eight days remain during which the PM can hold on to his mandate, and nothing is happening. Mr. Netanyahu has not met with Blue and White for 20 days and with Mr. Liberman for 13. Contrary to his public promise, it looks like he is going to hold onto the mandate for as long as he can in the hope that something will change. Anything *could* change, but who knows when? We have been without a functioning government for over a year now, while threatening clouds are gathering on the economic, social and security horizons, all in an effort to shield Mr. Netanyahu from the courts.

### Ministry News

I have completed writing and translating **Bible study notes on the book of Jeremiah** and am preparing to commence work on **Ezekiel**. The Introduction to **Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi** (in Hebrew) is completed, but for a few fine tunings to be done on the way. I've related the three prophets to the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel and Esther because they all lived and acted in approximately the same period. Consequently, I re-wrote and greatly extended my commentary on **Haggai**. I now need to fine-tune **Malachi** in light of my findings while working on the Introduction (which runs to 30 pages, not including the specific Introductions to each of the prophets). The commentary on **Zachariah** is next on the line. This will bring my series of commentaries on the Minor Prophets to an end. My commentary on **Romans** is soon to be on hand. My **commentary on Galatians** (in English) is now edited and was submitted to the publisher.

The **bi-weekly course on How to Preach and to Listen to Sermons** continues, with a growing number of attendees and some discernable impact on preaching in our church. However, it will be necessary to bring this series to a close soon for reasons indicated below, in our Family News section.

### Family News

**Keith is still unemployed.** He is presently working as a part-time janitor in a church, cleaning toilets and keeping the grounds, while he seeks more gainful income. Shlomit is working part-time as a teacher.

**Five year-old Eliya** (Tamar and Marcus's youngest) **was taken by ambulance and hospitalized**, desperately fighting for breath. The cause has not yet been identified – either a severe asthma attack, or a severe allergic reaction. She is home now. We are grateful to God for her recovery, but it was quite a scare. I was especially unsettled because our eldest, Avital, was rushed to the hospital with similar symptoms on her fourth birthday, and we almost lost her. My mind kept going back to that event.

Thank you for your prayers: **our home in Israel has sold**. Just as we were negotiating and immediately after, various problems with the structure arose (the contractor who built the house did a very poor job). As a result, we were without water for a few days while new plumbing was installed throughout the house. We also had to deal with a number of other matters, all of which have now been resolved. We will be able to hand over the home with a clear conscience. There are two **tentative dates for relocation**, both dependent on when our buyer is able to complete payment. The earliest is likely to be at the end of the coming February, the latest in March-April. In two days I am about to travel to the US, to make the

necessary arrangements for our relocation. In the meanwhile, I shall have the pleasure of visiting the family.

We have received quotes from a number of shipping companies and, for insurance purposes, a quote on the value of our possessions during transport. Once we have a firm date for relocation, we shall contract one of the companies. We will also need to do some work on the house in Chattanooga so it can fit for our needs, which is one of the reasons I **am in the US (October 18 – December 4)** and **open to invitations to preach** anywhere within a reasonable drive from Seattle WA or Chattanooga TN.

In Christ by grace,

Baruch and Bracha Maoz

**You can help** by purchasing copies of Baruch's books from Barnes & Noble or from Amazon, by asking for them at your local bookstore **and by posting reviews of these books** on Barnes & Noble or Amazon websites. Positive reviews help us sell.

**Come Let Us Reason Together** (On the Unity of Jews and Gentiles in the church). Christ as the fullness of divine revelation and his work as sufficient for our whole salvation, Presbyterian and Reformed.

**Jonah: A Prophet on the Run** a devotional commentary on the book of Jonah, Shepherd Press.

**Malachi: A Prophet in Times of Distress** a devotional commentary on the book of Malachi. Founders Press.

**Colossians: The All-Sufficient Savior** a devotional commentary on the book of Colossians. Founders Press.

Soon to be available: Galatian: **He Did it All** a devotional commentary on the book of Colossians.

**The commentaries are suited for personal devotions and group studies**

Baruch's sermons may be heard on **Sermon Audio**

To remain abreast of developing circumstances in Israel, visit the **MaozWeb** or "follow" Baruch on **Facebook**, **LinkedIn** and **Twitter** (@BaruchMaoz).

Intermittent bulletins are produced as necessary



LinkedIn



**Checks in support of our ministry** should be written to the order of **Berean Baptist Church special missions account, POBox 1233, Grand Blanc MI, 48480-3233**. Please designate: "For Soli Deo Gloria", or, "For the ministry of Baruch Maoz". Bank transfers may be made to **Chemical Bank, 2301 W, Big Beaver Rd. Suite 525, Troy MI 48084 ABA Routing 072410013 , Berean Baptist Account 5389484382 Swiftcode: CHEMUS33**

All contributions are tax deductible. Receipts are sent at the end of each calendar year or at donor's request. Please do not send contributions directly to us.

Funds sent for the ministry will be used exclusively for that purpose.

We reserve the right to use personal funds for the purposes of the ministry.