# Radiocarbon dating rewrites timeline of biblical city Gezer’s violent past



Archaeologists have made a remarkable breakthrough in understanding the ancient biblical city of Gezer, located in Israel. Through advanced radiocarbon dating techniques, researchers have shed light on a turbulent chapter of Gezer's history, revealing layers of brutal conflict and upheaval that coincide with significant events chronicled in biblical texts. The findings have captivated scholars and offer a renewed view of this historically rich city, which has been extensively referenced in Egyptian texts and Assyrian annals.

Groundbreaking research published in the journal PLOS ONE has enabled experts to unravel a timeline of destruction and reconstruction within Gezer spanning from the 13th to the 9th centuries BCE. The study involved analysing 35 organic specimens, primarily seeds, excavated from stratified debris in the city. These organic materials expose a period marked by violence and political shifts, as deduced from various phases of destruction and rebuilding efforts illustrated in the archaeological layers. The results suggest multiple catastrophic events, with clear evidence of a significant destruction episode around 1200 BCE likely linked to the Egyptian king Merneptah. This correlation adds credence to the historical records, thereby affirming Merneptah as a ruler acknowledged in both archaeology and scripture.

The research team made crucial observations about the physical state of Gezer's remnants, including administrative buildings that appeared to have been hastily vacated at the time of their downfall. Notably, the remnants of a six-chambered gate and a connected palatial structure were found entombed under layers of mudbrick debris, suggesting a sudden and unanticipated collapse. Furthermore, the study supports the biblical description of Shishak, an Egyptian monarch credited with departing Gezer, as depicted in ancient texts, thus reinforcing his historical presence.

However, not all connections between the archaeological data and ancient writings have held up to scrutiny. The study raises questions regarding the historically proposed correlations with Hazael, an ancient ruler mentioned in 1 Kings. Discrepancies in the dating evidence indicate that while some destructive episodes align with historical accounts related to Merneptah's reign, others do not support the narrative of Hazael’s campaign against Gezer, prompting scholars to reconsider previously accepted timelines of these events.

This research aligns with recent archaeological discoveries in the region, further illuminating the historical significance of Gezer. For instance, findings suggest a stone carving estimated to be 1,700 years old was found in the vicinity of the area where Jesus is believed to have performed his miracle of walking on water, underscoring Gezer's long-standing cultural and historical importance.

These revelations not only contribute to a deeper understanding of the tumultuous history of Gezer but also demonstrate the ongoing interplay between archaeology and biblical history, challenging narratives while affirming foundational stories woven into the fabric of ancient texts.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/science/2066159/horrifying-truth-biblical-city-uncovered-after-incredible-archaeology-discovery), [[4]](https://www.jpost.com/archaeology/article-773513)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/science/2066159/horrifying-truth-biblical-city-uncovered-after-incredible-archaeology-discovery), [[2]](https://www.oeaw.ac.at/en/news/iron-age-reliable-chronology-for-important-site-in-israel-for-the-first-time-1), [[3]](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2023/11/231116140849.htm), [[6]](https://www.sci.news/archaeology/gezer-chronology-12458.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/science/2066159/horrifying-truth-biblical-city-uncovered-after-incredible-archaeology-discovery), [[6]](https://www.sci.news/archaeology/gezer-chronology-12458.html), [[7]](https://phys.org/news/2023-11-radiocarbon-dating-egyptology-biblical-accounts.html)

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## Bibliography

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