Dear Friends,

After our wonderful two weeks in New England (mainly Maine), it is back to work with three upcoming lectures:

**1st Lecture – August 18th:**
“The Early Synagogue”
Wednesday, August 18, 2021
11:00 a.m. (EDT)
Presented by Jewish Historical Seminars (Jerusalem) – via Zoom
https://www.jewishhistoricalseminars.com/lectures
Ein Gedi Synagogue, 5th–7th centuries C.E.
[image © Gary A. Rendsburg]

2nd Lecture – August 25th:
"In Search of Ancient Israel: The Historical Roots of the Biblical Narrative"
Wednesday, August 25, 2021
7:00 p.m. (EDT)
Presented by Siegal Lifelong Learning / Case Western Reserve University (Cleveland, Ohio) – via Zoom
**On the right:** the Merneptah Stele, dated to the reign of Pharaoh Merneptah, c. 1220 B.C.E., containing the earliest reference to Israel in the historical record.

**On the left:** simple, understated gravestone of Sir W. M. Flinders Petrie (who discovered the Merneptah Stele in 1896) in the Protestant Cemetery on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem (and note the ankh sign instead of the Christian cross).

Note: my teacher Cyrus Gordon excavated with Petrie at Tell el-‘Ajjul (near Gaza) during the 1930s, and thus I consider myself a grand-disciple of the great Sir Flinders.

[both images via the internet / CC BY 3.0]

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**3rd Lecture – August 26th:**
Thursday, August 26, 8:00 p.m. (EDT)
Biblical Archaeology Society (Washington, D.C.) – via Zoom

Note: I am honored to be the inaugural presenter for this new Biblical Archaeology Scholar Series program, per the wording at the BAS website:
The new BAS Scholars Series program offers a quarterly stand-alone presentation by noted scholars of the Bible and archaeology. Each insightful hour-long presentation focuses on one select subject of the speaker’s expertise. Professor Gary A. Rendsburg is our first presenter. Access the exciting BAS Scholars Series through Zoom.

Artistic rendering of Jerusalem during the reign of King David (c. 1000–965 B.C.E.), created by Leen Ritmeyer, architect extraordinaire.
Authors Ridge, Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, Concord, Mass., burial spot of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Louisa May Alcott, and their family members. [image © Melissa A. Rendsburg]

For the relevance of this image and of this unique gathering of 19th-century American writers to our topic, well, you will need to attend the lecture!

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**Bonus item**

Many thanks to my colleague Pete Enns (Eastern University), who devoted an entire episode of his podcast “The Bible for Normal People,” to my work on the book of Genesis:

https://peteenns.com/episode-172-pete-enns-a-whole-different-way-of-reading-genesis/
Much of what Enns presents overlaps with what I will present at my Biblical Archaeology Society lecture on August 26 (item no. 3 above), but it is good to hear the material expounded by someone else, with his own additional observations.
If you followed us on Facebook, you will know that we had a marvelous two-week trip in New England: mainly Maine, though with stops at the two historical cities of Salem, Mass., and Newport, R.I.

The highlight at the former was our visit to the House of Seven Gables, built in 1668, the setting for Nathaniel Hawthorne’s eponymous novel (1851) – once again, per the caption to the image of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery above, Hawthorne plays a crucial role in my talk on the book of Genesis.

The highlight at the latter was our visit to the Touro Synagogue, built in 1763, the oldest synagogue building still in use in the U.S., and the only synagogue building remaining from the colonial period.

The House of Seven Gables, Salem, Mass.
[image © Gary A. Rendsburg]
The Touro Synagogue (exterior), built in 1763, Newport, R.I.
[image © Gary A. Rendsburg]

The Touro Synagogue (interior), built in 1763, Newport, R.I.
[image © Melissa A. Rendsburg]