

OIL IN ISRAEL

Does the Bible Foretell its Discovery?

By Chris Mitchell

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Note from Pastor Kevin Lea: We recently covered the scriptures that are mentioned in this article during our study through the book of Genesis. Many wells have been drilled based on the assumption that the Bible verses mentioned below predict an oil find in the area of the Jewish tribes of Asher and Ephraim, but to date none have hit a productive oil field. I am skeptical that these verses mean crude oil will be found, but if this well does hit significant oil, then many will consider it to be a fulfillment of Gen 49 and Deuteronomy 33. Time will tell.

CBN.com –NORTHERN ISRAEL - The tiny nation of Israel lies in the heart of the oil-rich Middle East. But Israel so far has not discovered any substantial oil reserves of its own.

Yet one company believes there is lots of oil in the Holy Land, and they intend to find it.

It stands nearly 15 stories tall - the biggest oil rig in Israel. Located in northern Israel and near the biblical valley of Armageddon, this complex of technology and machinery could change the future of the Middle East.

The reason is simple. Israel is oil-dependent. While it produces a meager 50,000 barrels of oil a day, it consumes more than five times that amount. And many of the surrounding Arab nations - some sworn enemies of the state of Israel - possess most of the known oil reserves in the world. If Israel became energy-independent, it could change the geo-dynamics of the region.

John Brown is the founder of Zion Oil and Gas, a company dedicated to discovering oil in Israel. He founded the company on what he says is a God-given mission - now almost 25 years old - to discover a major oil deposit in Israel.

"To Israel, obviously, a huge oil discovery would change the economics, both politically and the structure of the company, or the country, and we see that also as a huge positive thing for the restoration of Israel," Brown said.

"And what is the potential here? It's huge..." Brown declared. "We have a good handle on it because of the geology that we have here in Israel. There are certain structures that we see - our geologists, geophysicists and the Petroleum Institute of Israel say that we have a combination of reefs, and [they] are very important in huge oil fields. So we have a lot of significant points that tell us that we're onto something that could be wonderful blessings."

Zion Oil and Gas bases the drilling in Israel on promises from the Bible. One of the main promises is found in Genesis, chapter 49, verse 25. It is where Jacob tells his son Joseph that God will give him the "blessings of the deep that lie beneath."

Although the drilling goes down more than 4000 meters, it is rooted in promises made more than 4,000 years ago. Brown believes that the "blessings of the deep" is oil, and his company, in a unique blend of scripture and science, has invested millions of dollars on that promise.

But where would those blessings be? Brown began his quest with a book written nearly 25 years ago called "The Treasures of the Deep," by Jim Spillman.

The book examines the map of the tribes of Israel, to discover the location of the oil. While Genesis talks about the "blessings of the deep" for the sons of Joseph or the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim, another scripture in Deuteronomy [33:24] says the tribe of Asher will "... dip his foot in oil."

Brown believes that the two scriptures create a biblical "X" marks the spot for oil in Israel. The company now has a nearly 100,000-acre lease where the ancient tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim used to dwell.

"We're still drilling ahead - we're about 4,200 meters going on down, and we're expecting to find something in the next two or three weeks, hopefully," said Zion Oil and Gas Drilling Manager Stacey Cude.

But alongside the ancient signposts is state-of-the-art science. Cude is a veteran drilling manager, formerly with Exxon Oil.

Cude explained, "But our project here, what sets it apart from so many other projects drilling for oil, is that it is not only Biblically based, but it's scientifically backed by technology - by science - the latest and greatest. And we have experts here that know exactly what we're looking for from a technical point, but what they found thus far backs up what the Bible says, and that's why we are drilling in this location."

"Actually, I think the better word[s] to use is we're seeing Scripture confirm

science, or science confirm Scripture,” Brown added. “That's what we're physically seeing right now as we speak, because we expect at any time to have a very successful oil well.”

Based on the science and geology, Zion Oil and Gas is optimistic about its prospects. Steve Pierce is the geologist on the project.

Pierce declared, "This could be very significant. We will probably be the first well in all of northern Israel to drill this deep strata-graphically... We may be onto something very significant."

He continued, "When we map the area using seismic, we see a lot of what we call seismic anomalies, and these seismic anomalies could be significant as well."

The company expects to drill down to 5,000 meters. With less than 1,000 meters to go, they say they might hit a major deposit in a little as a few weeks. They keep updates on their Web site at <http://www.zionoil.com>. If they do strike a major oil discovery, Brown believes it would be a sign of the times, and this could have a huge impact on the state of Israel.

"As Bible-believing Christians, we believe that God has set the restoration of the land as a very key to the fulfillment of prophecy. So it would be huge, not just for Bible prophecy coming to pass, but it would be huge too, for the economic development of Israel," Brown said.