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## *Discovering the World of the Bible* LaMar C. Berrett

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## Book Reviews

Berrett, LaMar C. *Discovering the World of the Bible*. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1973. 699 pp. \$14.95 hardbound; \$10.95 paper.

(Reviewed by Gilbert W. Scharffs, Associate Director of the Institute of Religion adjacent to the University of Utah. Dr. Scharffs is author of *Mormonism in Germany* and several articles in LDS periodicals and has conducted numerous BYU travel Study tours to Israel and to U.S. Church History sites.)

Dr. Berrett's book is an invaluable tool to any traveler in the Middle East. It includes most of the identifiable biblical sites and many non-biblical points of interest, plus dozens of maps, charts, diagrams, and color and black-and-white photographs. Latter-day Saints will find references to LDS scriptures which pertain to the various locations.

Dr. Berrett in his preface correctly states: ". . . local guides do not always know what the individual visitor wishes to see." Often LDS tourists are disappointed because they are unable to receive the Mormon point of view of the places they visit. A good example of where Dr. Berrett has included interesting LDS insights to a particular location is his material on the Qumran Community and the Dead Sea Scrolls (pp. 312-314). Non-Mormons, however, should find this travel guide equally helpful because only a small fraction of the total content makes reference to LDS scriptures and writings, and these are usually at the end of the biblical material.

The book gives a comprehensive coverage of ten countries—Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and with the emphasis of course on Israel. The latter comprises almost one third of the book.

Although arranged by country, further subdivision by area, town, and specific sites are made. There is a brief thumbnail history given of each location, both ancient and modern and all the scriptures which pertain to that particular spot. All sites

are listed in a logical sequence of travel to avoid backtracking. However, if the traveler's itinerary does not coincide with Dr. Berrett's, the comprehensive index enables one to readily find whatever river, monument, tomb, mountain, city, lake, ruin, or museum one happens to be interested in.

The maps and charts are very complete and well done including maps of what is in some of the tombs and a floor plan of certain museums. Also helpful are numbers in the text that correspond to the same sites on the maps.

Guiding a group of students to the temple wall in the old city of Jerusalem, I lost my way last summer in the maze of narrow, winding streets. However, with Dr. Berrett's book in hand, I soon had our group headed in the right direction without anyone suspecting that I didn't know where I was.

The uniformity of style throughout the book makes it easy to use, instead of having to get used to the peculiarities of different maps, brochures, guide books for every area visited. For example, biblical names always appear first in one type face; modern names next in another style of type; variants, definitions of names, translation, and other explanatory matters are next in italics.

It is difficult to criticize this work, it is so well done. A few words about the time it takes to go from one location to another would be helpful, since those used to thinking in terms of mileage on U.S. roads or freeways will find themselves running late as they navigate the ancient roads throughout the Near East. Modern road numbers might also be included, plus some general information on accommodations. However, Dr. Berrett probably intentionally avoided getting into this area because economic growth, especially in Israel, would make any treatment of this nature out of date within a short time.

The book still includes the sites of occupied areas of Israel under their original country. For example, information on the Sinai Peninsula is still listed under Egypt. Should that nation regain the territory lost in the six-day war of 1967 the book will again be correct. However, with the Israel development in this area, they apparently don't intend this to happen.

One of the finest features is the excellent overview of history of each country from Ancient times to the present, both in outline and summary. This makes *Discovering the World of the Bible* a valuable book; not only a travel guide, but an

excellent reference book for any serious students of the Bible and history.