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EXCAVATION UNCOVERS NAZARETH HOME FROM JESUS' TIME

Provides Unprecedented Window into Ancient Lifestyles

NAZARETH, DEC. 21, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Excavations in Nazareth have uncovered an unprecedented discovery: the remains of a family home from Jesus' time.

A press release from the Israel Antiquities Authority announced today that this finding "is of the utmost importance since it reveals for the very first time a house from the Jewish village of Nazareth and thereby sheds light on the way of life at the time of Jesus."

This discovery is giving archaeologists new information about the way of life in Nazareth during Jesus' time.

Yardenna Alexandre, the authority's excavation director, explained: "The building that we found is small and modest and it is most likely typical of the dwellings in Nazareth in that period.

"From the few written sources that there are, we know that in the first century Nazareth was a small Jewish village, located inside a valley. Until now a number of tombs from the time of Jesus were found in Nazareth; however, no settlement remains have been discovered that are attributed to this period."

The discovery was made during excavations linked to the construction of the International Marian Center of Nazareth, which is being carried out by the Association Mary of Nazareth.

The center is being built next to the Church of the Annunciation, which tradition holds as the site where Mary, the mother of Jesus, lived.

The press release reported that the ancient building that was uncovered had two rooms and

a courtyard with a rock-hewn cistern for collecting rainwater.

A few artifacts were found, including pottery fragments from the first and second centuries. As well, some pieces of chalk vessels were discovered, which were used by Jews because the "vessels were not susceptible to becoming ritually unclean," the authority explained.

Another pit with a hidden entrance was found, which was "probably hewn as part of the preparations by the Jews to protect themselves during the Great Revolt against the Romans in 67," Alexandre noted.

The Association Mary of Nazareth announced its plans to conserve the archeological remains inside its new center.

The center, which is scheduled to be completed next year, will be run by the Chemin Neuf Community, a Catholic organization with an ecumenical mission that is active in 25 countries. It aims to offer multimedia educational tools to teach about Nazareth and its role in the Christian faith.