

This great outdoor altar was first built and used at Megiddo during the Early Bronze Age II, or 2850-2650 B.C.E. The city then was surrounded by a mudbrick wall some 25 feet thick. This altar was the main structure in a great open-air shrine. It still stands 5 feet high. Steps lead up to the top on the east, which helps us understand a biblical injunction against the Israelites walking upon their altar (Exodus 20:26). The excavators found pottery and bones surrounding the altar, confirming its use in the local Canaanite cult. In later periods the altar was still in use and was provided with huge temples (walls of which are visible around the altar) that were used until the transition to the Middle Bronze II A period, about 2000 B.C.E.