

Joshua 07-02-09a

This is February the 9th, 2007. We continue our study this evening in the book of Joshua. Resuming at the end of chapter 1. Let's take a moment as we prepare to study this great section of God's word and go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, what a privilege it is for us to set aside the normal tasks of life and to refresh ourselves, nourish our souls and renew our motivation and our hope by spending time together in the study of your word. We thank you for this book and the great truths that it contains and we ask your blessing on us as we fellowship in them together. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. We saw the introduction to this book last time and began a study of the first chapter. We saw what Joshua's name means, we saw a little bit of his history and you'll recall, and just by way of summary, if you're taking notes and want to write these things down for reference, we know quite a bit about Joshua from the Pentateuch by the time we arrive at this 6th book.

As I mentioned last time, this is the opening book, the first book in the division of the Hebrew Bible known as the Prophets. The prophetic section, the Nevi'im, open with Joshua and Judges and the books of Samuel. And one might ask oneself, why is it that Joshua is the opening book of the Prophets? But if you think about it, this is the first stage in history where you have a written canon for guidance.

And in concordance with that, we find that supernatural revelation from God goes down sort of proportionally. Because you have the books of Moses, because you have the canon of the law available, there is a difference in the way God works. Did you ever wonder, when Israel is leaving Egypt, there are the ten plagues, these vast, sweeping, destructive judgments on the land of Canaan don't take place the way they did in Egypt.

Egypt is judged with nine plagues, three by three, and then the final judgment on the first born. When Joshua and the Israelites crossed the Jordan into Canaan, why didn't God put ten plagues on them? They are exceedingly sinful, the iniquity of the Amorites is full. Why doesn't God just decimate them with lice and flies and hail and darkness and all of the other maladies that beset Egypt? Well, it's helpful to ask these sorts of questions.

One of the things is, at the beginning of their deliverance, Israel doesn't even know God's name. God reveals it to them through Moses and through the signs and the authenticating wonders that pretty much give Moses his bona fides so that he can go and say, I am from the I am and I am here to deliver you. You move through the forty years in the wilderness and now they have a Bible.

Now they have got the books of the law. And they have communication of God's truth through the ritual Levitical system. And it's kind of easy to forget that in the days of

Joshua, the tabernacle is still up and running and functional.

The Levites are still maintaining the sacrificial system. There are still those white curtain walls and the tent of skins and the laver and the altars and all of the accouterments that we studied in Leviticus. It's all still there and in Exodus.

It's all still there. It's up and running. There is a great teaching tool.

There is a great set of truths that are being communicated to the Israelites through that. So, we moved into the early part of this first chapter and saw the issue of those who are going to stay on the far side of the Jordan. They are going to stay and settle on the eastern side of the Jordan.

And you have the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh. And there is a commitment made that even though they are going to dwell on what you might call the wrong side of the Jordan, they are going to fight with their brethren to take the land. And that's kind of where we left off last time.

And we asked ourselves the question, understanding that the conquest of Canaan is a metaphor, it is a set of episodes that teach spiritual truths about our spiritual conflict and our spiritual warfare. What would that necessarily represent? Because we look at the forward progress of Israel into the land and pushing across and driving out all of these ites. And yet these individuals don't really want to drive anyone out.

They want to settle in these fertile grazing lands. Well, there are two things to remember. First of all, the land on the eastern side of the Jordan is included in the promised land.

It is a part of that overall territory where God promised to give it to them. So, it's not like it's some unclaimed territory. Secondly, they don't sit there and settle and say, we will not fight, quite the opposite.

They say, we will do everything you say, we will go wherever you send us, just as we obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. May the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses. And there's a little clue there in verse 17.

Do you see it? This happens a few other places in scripture. Just as we obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. But may the Lord your God, why don't they say, may the Lord our God be with you as he was with Moses.

This to me is a telling detail and tells us of a little bit of a separation. There's a little bit of a distance. If we interpret and apply, what conclusion might be drawn from this? There are a couple of suggestions.

One is that not everyone is a frontline combatant. These tribes are going to send their

military age men along with the rest of Israel. The military age men are going to go across the Jordan.

They're going to take up their swords and their spears and their shields and they're going to fight. But they're going to leave their wives, their little ones and their livestock in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan, i.e. on the eastern side. So there is a difference, isn't there? Between the Reubenites and the Gadites and the Hat Tribe of Manasseh In that they are on an unaccompanied tour where the other tribes are going across with their families.

So there is a separation. The purpose of God is going to require them to hold the land in one place and to fight a battle in another place. They're going to be separated from their families where the rest of Israel is going to be returning to the camp and have their families present.

So this is one of the first instances you can see where there is a real issue made out of family separation for the purpose of spiritual responsibility. And it does happen. There are people who have to separate in order to fulfill the call of God in fighting a battle.

You can't always be a missionary and take your family with you into some of these hostile places. That's sort of an obvious kind of concrete example. But think of it in spiritual terms.

Sometimes you may be the warrior in your family. You are the one fighting the spiritual battles. You are the one trying to take the land in your soul and trying to establish a place where God can put His presence.

And you're fighting spiritual battles and your family is not with you in the spiritual sense. They're sort of on the other side of the Jordan where the grass is green and there is no real conflict. And you are on your own.

You are with others who are trying to fight that battle and take that land and receive the fulfillment of those promises. But your kith and kin aren't with you. Seems like a legitimate observation to draw from this, isn't it? And this is a valid circumstance.

It happens to some of us. And it should not tear us asunder. It shouldn't cause us to question all of our values or to revisit and wonder if maybe it would have been better to have a unified family that's all on the far side.

If spiritual responsibility calls and if it requires us to leave our family behind, then that's what we have to do. You just have to be sure that if you're doing that, God is in it. Notice what they say.

We will come with you. We will fight. All that you command us, we will do.

Wherever you send us, we will go. Just as we heeded Moses, we will heed you. But just be sure that the stuff we're leaving our families to do is actually God's will.

Make sure the Lord your God is with you. And so, the decisions that are made, where to fight, how to fight, what to take, and so on, those decisions that take you and keep you separated from family, those need to really be sound. Need to be biblical.

Need to be in God's will. Make sure God is in it and God is with you. There are people who separate from their families not only spiritually but physically and say, well, I've got a ministry and I've got to spend all my time down at the mission or I've got to spend all my time at the church or I've got to spend all my time at this, that, and the other because this is the Lord's work and it's a high calling and I've got to be there.

And there is an abdication of responsibility. There is a failure to actually heed the word of the Lord. And God is not really calling people to abdicate being a husband, abdicate being a father, abdicate being in the home, but it is justified and it is rationalized on the basis of this is the Lord's work.

If such a separation is in the offing, if it's potential or possible or if it starts to take place, we just have to be sure and be constantly checking that God is with us. Well, be strong and of good courage. Chapter 2 is going to take us into the episode of Rahab and the Spies.

It's a very well-known episode. And what I find interesting is Joshua the son of Nun in chapter 2 sent out two men from Acacia Grove or from Shittim to spy secretly saying, go view the land, especially Jericho. Now, do you notice a contrast with Numbers chapter 14 verses 6 and following? Actually, beginning back in chapter 13 when Moses sent men to spy out the land.

This was a big public to-do, wasn't it? They kind of canvassed the tribes and got one man from each tribe. Twelve spies are going to come forth. Their names are given.

And everybody knew. It was a big public deal. So Moses sent them and gave them specific instructions which God himself had given to Moses at the beginning of chapter 13 of Numbers.

Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I'm giving the children of Israel. From each tribe of their fathers send a man, every one a leader among them. So in verse 21, they went up and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin as far as Rehov near the entrance of Hamath.

They went up through the south and they came to Hebron, Ahimom, Sheshai, and Talmai. The descendants of Anak were there. Hebron was built seven years before Zion and Egypt.

They came to the valley of Eshkol. They got the cluster of grapes there. They carried it between two of them on a pole that was so lush and heavy.

They brought pomegranates and figs. They departed and then they came back to Moses and Aaron and gave the report. That's what happened back in Numbers 13.

Here in Joshua chapter 2, when you read it in the New King James, it says, Joshua sent two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly. Well, there's really no other way to spy. If it's not secret, it's not spying in my view.

But if you look at this in some other translations, you find that it's a little bit more clear. For example, the New American Standard, Joshua the son of Nun sent two men as spies secretly. Sent secretly.

Secretly is an adverb modifying how they were sent. This wasn't noised abroad in Israel. Joshua picked two trusted men whose names are not given, by the way.

Go view... It's like the confidential stamp or the top secret stamp wasn't lifted on this mission even after it was over. And he said, Go view the land, especially Jericho. Go look at the land, but we're primarily interested in just the first target.

I don't need you to go bring me grapes. I don't need you to go to Eshcol. I don't need you to run up and down and tell me about the sons of Anak.

Let's just look at the first objective. And there's another good principle here of observation. One of the problems that occurred with the mission at the Twelve, and you can imagine Joshua is intimately familiar with that from 40 years earlier, 39 years earlier, was what? We went all up and down the land and we saw all of the obstacles at once.

Their cities are formidable. Their people are huge. Their this, that and the other.

Remember that report? They give all of the problems at once. Joshua says, A, this isn't going to be a big public townhouse meeting and we're not going to take a vote on whether to go into the land. B, I just want you to look at one thing.

Let's just look and see how we're going to take Jericho. Come back and give me intelligence on just the first step. And like a lot of large tasks, the best way to accomplish a large task is break it into smaller tasks and just take them one at a time.

So let's just go into the land and focus on Jericho. We, spiritually, when we fight our battles, we can look and say, Boy, I've got a big problem with X, whatever it may be. There's sins of the tongue.

There's mental attitude sins. There's overt sins. You can have problems with worry, gossip, patience, lack of any one of the fruit of the Spirit.

You know, there's all kinds of things. And we can look at ourselves and say, I can't believe that I've still got all of these problems. When is my Christianity ever going to have an effect? When am I ever going to start becoming more Christ-like? And it can be discouraging to look and see all of the work that remains to be done in our own personal sanctification, our own personal growth.

Well, the same principle applies. One thing at a time. Instead of trying to wake up tomorrow being the image of Christ, let's take the current most pressing problem.

What is the immediate problem? Before I become totally apostolic, why don't I just see if I can work on patience? Why don't I just see if I can work on confidence? Why don't I just see if I can work on overcoming a tendency to worry? Why don't I overcome being judgmental? Why don't I overcome being narrow-minded and dogmatic when I talk with people? Or whatever it may be. One thing at a time. Find the most pressing problem.

What is the immediate issue? What do I need to try to get under control today? Where is the point of attack? I don't have to win the war today, in other words. What is my battle today? Let me concentrate on this battle. So, Joshua focuses the point of the spear here at one town.

Canaan is full of towns. Let's just look at the first one. See how we do on that.

Well, the reason Joshua is wise enough to do this is his experience. His experience goes all the way back. He is mentioned way back in Exodus chapter 17.

Israel is just coming out of Egypt. And here comes Amalek the other way. Joshua is put in charge of the army.

Moses told him in verse 9 of Exodus 17, Choose some men and go out. Fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.

But Moses told Joshua, Choose some men and fight this battle. That's pretty much what Joshua is doing here. He is choosing some men, getting ready to fight another battle.

In Exodus 17, Joshua did as Moses said to him and fought with Amalek. This is the consistent pattern of Joshua all the way through his life. You find him as a young man.

You find him as an older man. When he gets instructions, he carries them out. I can't think of a time, I can't think of an episode where Joshua was ever disobedient.

Can you? Is there any case where Joshua didn't completely fulfill the commands that were given to him by Moses or by God? Even Moses, as great as he was, messed up a couple of times. You don't find that recorded of Joshua. He's not as splashy.

He's not as famous. He's not as revered as Moses. But he certainly got a great track record of obedience.

And it tells us in Exodus 17 that Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the Lord said to Moses, write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. Specifically, God said, write this down and read it to Joshua that I'm going to blot out Amalek.

And seven chapters later, Exodus 24, when Moses goes to Mount Sinai, Joshua goes with him. In Numbers chapter 11, we find Joshua listed as Moses' assistant, Moses' servant. In Numbers 13, we've already seen his name being changed from Hosea to Joshua.

And the episode of spying out the land is explained in the following chapter. In Numbers 27, God specifically tells Moses to commission Joshua as his successor. The Lord said to Moses, take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, capital S, and lay your hand on him.

Set him before Eliezer the priest and before all the congregation and inaugurate him, anoint him in their sight. You shall give some of your authority to him that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. Notice, Moses is commanded by God to delegate authority to Joshua well before Moses dies.

Let the people get used to Joshua exercising some of your functions, some of your authority, before you're gone. Make a smooth transition. Train up your successor while you are still here.

These are great principles for any similar circumstance, business, family. There ought to be transition. There ought to be overlap.

For example, I think that pastors for the future generation ought to be nurtured and raised up and given increasing opportunities and responsibility by their pastor in their church. You shouldn't just be sitting out there in the pew like any old member knowing you have the calling and the gifting of God to go into pastoral ministry and then get mailed off to seminary and then come back and try to start functioning within a church. That is not the biblical model.

What does the Apostle Paul do with Timothy and Titus? Takes them around with him. Shows them how it's done. Introduces them to the congregations.

Writes letters about them and says, I am sending you Timothy. I am sending you Titus. I am sending you Epaphras.

These are men who have traveled with me, whom I have personally trained, whom you have seen in my company. Smooth transition within a family. As generations age and get ready to check out and go to glory, there needs to be a handoff.

There needs to be a transition so that things don't fall into disarray and that there hasn't

been any planning and there hasn't been any guidance given in terms of material things or whatever else. So, we have a great model here in the example of God telling Moses, be sure you transition Joshua into this leadership role. Bring him in gradually.

Delegate some things to him. Get him experience before I take you up to Nebo and take you home. And that's what took place.

Moses did this. And it says in Numbers 32, God speaks, and the Lord's anger was aroused when the people were discouraged of heart at the report of the spies. And in 32:10 of Numbers, the Lord's anger was aroused on that day and He swore an oath saying, Surely, none of the men who came up from Egypt from twenty years old and above shall see the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob because they have not wholly followed me except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun for they have wholly followed the Lord.

The two men from the first generation who went into the land and lived quite a long time in the land are the two men who wholly followed the Lord. Well, this is the background. And after Joshua is initially inaugurated and becomes Moses' servant officially and starts taking over some of those duties, then there is another anointing that takes place at the end of Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 31-33. Moses gives his song and in verse 19 it says, Write down this song for yourselves and teach it to the children of Israel. Put it in their mouths that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel.

God says, When I have brought them to the land flowing with milk and honey which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and filled themselves and grown fat, then they will turn to other gods and serve them and they will provoke me and break my covenant. Then it shall be when many evils and troubles have come upon them that this song will testify against them as a witness. For it will not be forgotten in the mouths of their descendants.

For I know the inclination of their behavior today even before I have brought them to the land of which I swore. So Moses wrote down the song that same day and taught it to the children of Israel. Then he inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun and said, Be strong and of good courage, for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you.

And, of course, this is Moses speaking for God. You have this happening a number of times in Scripture. It's an interesting thing to note that when Moses speaks to Joshua, he says, The land which I swore, I will be with you.

This is Moses talking, but he is the mouthpiece of God. And this is God in the first person speaking through Moses to Joshua. And this is not the only place in Scripture where this

occurs.

Then when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, Moses commanded the Levites, Take this book of the law, put it beside the Ark of the Covenant. This is the book of the law that we saw last time in Joshua chapter 1, that Joshua is to steep himself in. They have a Bible now.

They've got a written canon of Scripture. So, when Joshua gets ready to send these individuals into the land, he's got experience. He has got the written word of God.

He has the commission from God. He's on solid ground, and he has the promise of God that God will be with him if he will be strong and have a good courage and if he will continue to wholly follow the Lord. We have all of the same things as believers.

Our warfare is spiritual. The land of conquest for us is spiritual. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against these principalities and powers.

The battleground is in our own soul. But we also have God's word. We also have God's anointing and God's commissioning and God's promise of provision.

It is up to us as to whether we are going to wholly follow the Lord or if we are going to more often reflect those who died in the wilderness and never went into the land of promise. I would like to take just a couple of minutes and give you a little bit of material from a book called The View from Nebo by Amy Doxer Marcus. Do not buy this book.

I execrate this book, but I'm going to read you something from it because this is the kind of thinking that pervades the modern culture. I paid good money for this book, so you won't have to. Chapter 3 in here.

Let me just read you something off the fly leaf. The Bible has long been our guide to the history of the Middle East, a history that resonates with extraordinary force to this day. Now a new battle has erupted in the region over the reality of the biblical past with serious consequences for our times.

While many events in the early books of the Bible are regarded as more symbolic than historically accurate, the remainder of the Old Testament has long been considered a reliable record of thousands of years of Middle East history. But, recent dramatic and controversial discoveries at archaeological sites in the region have raised questions about many of the most widely accepted biblical narratives. What are they saying? We've known for a long time that God didn't knock down the walls of Jericho, but generally speaking the migration out of Egypt into Canaan and the destruction of these cities and the battles under Joshua, etc., the kingdoms of David and Solomon, those have generally been accepted.

We take out the supernatural, but the flow of events and the progress of the nation of

Israel have not been argued with. But now, in the light of spectacular new archaeology, we're going to throw that out also. That's what they're saying.

Chapter 3 in this book is called The New Canaanites. And I want to read you a little of this because it is pertinent to what's going on in the Middle East as we speak. How can you tell an Israelite from a Canaanite? This is the question many historians and researchers have been asking as they seek to unravel the origins of Israel.

Why? Because when they go in and dig up ancient tells in Israel, and they go back to the time when they believe, the Bible says that the Israelites were coming into the land under Joshua. What they find is they don't find a destruction layer. They find Canaanite pottery, Canaanite objects, Canaanite little gods and goddesses and godlets and yes, I made up that word.

In these destruction layers, these little idols and bones, animal sacrifices and what not. And they're saying, wait a minute, if Joshua and the Israelites came in, how come we have these undisturbed Canaanite towns that have all of this Canaanite stuff? In the book of Joshua, entire Canaanite villages, men, women and children are eradicated by a victorious Israelite army of tribes that have been freed from slavery in Egypt to march in and conquer the land. The Canaanites are the idol worshippers.

They hold religious ceremonies involving sex and drink, part of their broader campaign to entice the Israelites away from the true path of monotheism. They are morally inferior to the Israelites and culturally undistinguished. So these are sort of the primitive head-thumping, child-sacrificing ne'er-do-wells and they're not too smart.

And the Israelites are the sophisticated, artistic, wonderful people who come in and blow away these primitives and take over the land. Except, now I'm back to the book, that's not how it happened. All the latest evidence indicates that there was no swift invasion at the time that is generally attributed to the beginning of the Israelites' settlement in Canaan.

Many of the sites mentioned in the biblical account of the conquest, including the most famous of all, the city of Jericho, were not even occupied during that period, let alone destroyed. I skipped one little phrase here. All the latest evidence indicates that there was no swift invasion around 1250 to 1225 B.C. I actually say B.C.E. here because that's the politically correct way.

Before the Common Era, instead of before Christ. When did the invasion of the land take place? Right around 1405-1400 B.C. Not 1250 to 1225. So, if you're looking in the layers of archaeological detritus in the 1200s B.C., you're going to be finding remains from what culture? From a biblical point of view.

The Israelites have been there for how many years? 200 years. 150 years. 200 years.

Now, if in those archaeological digs you find idols, Canaanite objects, sort of unsophisticated and primitive dwellings, what does that tell you? It tells these people, see there were no Israelites, this is still the Canaanites. What does it tell someone who actually has read the Old Testament? The Book of Judges is true. Every man did what was right in his own eyes.

They melded in with a lot of the Canaanites instead of destroying them. Or after the initial conquest of the city, they began to syncretize. And even though the city was destroyed, they took up a lot of Canaanite ways.

They did not distinguish themselves as Israelites. What's interesting to me, they go on to talk about this reassessment and archaeological things. What they talk about is that there were in the Book of Joshua, it says that the Israelites went in and took these fortified cities.

These two spies are going to come back and talk about the fortifications. And the book says, you know, there are no big fortifications in these Canaanite cities. When you go to these cities, the walls had been knocked down a couple of hundred years earlier, and these cities typically don't even have street plans.

The cities at the time of 1250 to 1200 BCE were mainly there was one big structure right in the middle of town, and then everybody just kind of dwelt around it. And it's in earlier times that there were walls and fortifications, but that stuff is all long gone by the time the wink-wink Israelites come in 1250 or 1200. Well, if you allow the Bible to tell you the truth, and the Israelites had come 150 or 200 years earlier, that underlying layer is the Canaanite fortification that was knocked down.

Those are the gates and the gate posts. And what happened? When the Israelites moved in and they destroyed those cities under Joshua at God's command, and took over dwelling there, if you destroy the city, now what are you going to do? Well, if you're a bunch of city builders and urban architects and civil engineers, while you'll lay out buildings and streets and plumbing and all kinds of fancy finished stonework and all that, who are the Israelites? How have they been living for the last 40 years? Do you think they're going to come in and say, well, sure don't need those tents anymore. They came in and settled and lived in much the same way that they had lived on the other side of the Jordan.

So, surprise, surprise, there's very little archaeological evidence of building and streets and it's going to take them decades to become urbanized. They are agricultural. They are nomadic.

They have been living for a generation and a half in the wilderness, in a mobile... How much archaeological evidence do they find of the Israelites out in the wilderness? And the liberals say, see, there really was no big wandering horde of Israelites because we

find no archaeological... What do you expect to find out of people who dwell in tents and travel from place to place and put down no roots? You know, maybe you'll find circles of rocks where they built campfires and that's about it because what do you leave behind when you take everything with you? How much archaeology is there for the Bedouin? Bedouin are still out there today. Camels and horses, they've been living in tents for thousands of years. Find me some archaeological evidence of the long-standing, historically well-known dwelling of the Bedouin in the Saudi Arabian peninsula there and you won't find any because surprise! They're nomads.

They don't leave any archaeological evidence. Neither did the Israelites not only during the wilderness wanderings but in the first several generations in the land. They followed God's command and they knocked down these cities and archaeology is unanimous in finding that... In fact, I was trying to find the... I should have used a highlighter because I certainly don't mind marking up this book but the idea is that archaeologists have said far from the biblical view where you have these primitive Canaanites and then Israel comes in and lifts the culture up out of the gutter and makes it into a wonderful, intelligent place it seems to have gone the other way.

It seems to have reached its heyday in earlier centuries and to have gone downhill as you approach 1000 BC. Well, guess what? The Canaanites were great builders and great artisans and so on. They got destroyed and replaced by the nomadic people of Israel and yes there was a decline.

The Israelites didn't fashion graven images. They didn't paint. They didn't decorate pottery with images of birds and beasts and four-footed creatures and so on because it was prohibited by the law of Moses.

So that's exactly what you should expect to find in the archaeological record and to the extent that you do continue to find Canaanite gods and things buried in the rubble, that matches the biblical record that says that Israel in the period of the judges was constantly falling into idolatry constantly being enticed into the ways of the Canaanites that they had not fully destroyed. So I say all of that to say this if you read archaeology magazines or you run across popular presentations of the latest archaeological finds and they say there's no destruction later at Jericho and there's no evidence of any kind that there was conquest under Joshua, just be aware that the view has been carefully constructed to avoid the actual evidence. There were fortified Canaanite cities that all seem to have gone into decline or disappear or have a destruction layer right around 1500-1400 depending on how you date via paleographic evidence and pottery evidence and so on.

And then after that for the next couple of hundred years you have very low level archaeological evidence and what there is seems to indicate a decline. Ta-da! That's exactly what the bible says. That's exactly what happened.

So, as with so many attacks on biblical veracity this one is a false construct that starts with a date that's a couple of hundred years out of whack and then proceeds to shoot down a straw man the straw man being, well Israel says that they came into the land and made it a lot better but when we look at it in archaeological terms they came into a good land and it went from bad to worse. Well, that's a straw man. The bible doesn't say that the Israelites came in and turned it into a wonderful center of art and culture and pottery and civic achievement.

The bible never claims that. So they create this false thing and say, see the bible is wrong when it never said that to begin with. Read the book of Judges.

Read Judges chapter 18 and tell me how sophisticated and wonderful the Israelites were when they went into the land. So, I just give you this as an example. I have one more thing I'm going to point out from this chapter that has to do with current events as soon as we come back from the break.

But, there are so many attacks on our Christian faith there are so many attacks on the bible from every quarter, from science in all of its different manifestations, whether it's archaeology or biology or physics and it reaches the point where an honest, reasonable Christian has to ask the question, do I have an unreasonable faith? Am I just really a relic from days gone by when people were sort of unsophisticated and lived out kind of a simple faith and didn't really know the way things actually are? I am here to tell you that you can take any one of these areas, and I've taken several. I have educated myself and stayed current on biology. I've educated myself and stayed current on physics and astronomy and particularly on archaeology of the Holy Land.

And if you go into any one of these you will find this same kind of shell game going on. The same kind of picking and choosing of evidence and manipulation of evidence to construct a case that sounds really airtight until you go in and start looking at it in a knowledgeable fashion and you find why are you ever after talking about the 1200 and 1100 B.C. layers in these cities when you defined out the conquest which was 200, 300 years earlier? Of course, you're not going to find destruction layers 300 years after the cities were destroyed. But it doesn't read that way when you pick up a book like this or an article that you'll see.

So just be aware there is spin, there is redistribution of data in such a way that people make what sounds like a really strong case. But just do your homework, go back and say, now wait a minute, what data are we talking about here? What city are we talking about here? I'll give you a little bit more on this after the break.