

Joshua 07-05-11a

This is Friday, the 11th of May, 2007. We continue our study tonight in the book of Joshua at chapter 8. We generally pause at the beginning of our study to give each of us a chance to exercise our individual priesthood, to set aside the concerns and the distractions of the week, and to focus our attention on the study of God's Word. Shall we pray? Father, it is always a refreshment and a privilege to spend time in fellowship and in the study of your Word.

We're grateful for the believers who share an enthusiasm for your Word, with whom we assemble, with whom we live and have friendship and fellowship. We thank you for the gifts that you have distributed to each one of us, and the blessing and the edification that we receive from contact with each other. We thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ and his work on our behalf, his ongoing intercession and his soon return to take us to be with himself and with you.

We know that the time that remains to us is precious, and we ask your blessing on us as we spend some of it this evening in the study of your Word. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

We have seen over the last week or two the battle at Jericho, the consequences of Achan's sin, and the interpretation and application of that, not only individually in terms of not tolerating sin in our camp, the camp of our soul, but also there are some dispensational applications that we looked at last time. This brought us to the close of chapter 7, and a final reminder is found in that last verse, verse 26, where in accordance with the word of God, the sin in the camp has been identified, it has been isolated, and it has been dealt with, and it is also memorialized. Achan, unlike other miscreants who malfunctioned in the history of Israel during their time in the wilderness, the ground does not open and swallow them up.

They are not swept away in battle. They do not disappear. Instead, there is a great heap of stones raised over Achan.

And like the first heap of stones that came out of the bed of the Jordan, this is a memorial. And the name of that place, the Valley of Achor or the Valley of Achan, they both kind of mean the same thing, is there to this day. And whenever you see that, I think it occurs about a dozen times in the book of Joshua, this is sort of like Selah in the Psalms.

When the psalmist writes a certain thing and then he says Selah, that's sort of like the bridge in a song where you're supposed to kind of think about the words and think about what has just been said. And this heap of stones is a reminder, generation to generation in Israel, that things that belong to God need to be respected. But at the same time, there is a balancing truth here as well.

They raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. The name of the place has been called the Valley of Achor. To this day, strong reminder.

But what's right in the middle? It's like another little mini chiasm. To this day and to this day. The heap of stones is there.

The name of the valley is there to this day. But right in the middle, what does it say? The Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger. And there's a great principle there.

We can fail pretty significantly as believers. And remember, national Israel in the Old Testament speaks for individual believers in this age. And it is the nation that found, identified, isolated, and dealt with sin in accordance with God's command.

God said, find the sin, isolate it, and deal with it. That's what the nation did. And the nation is now no longer under discipline from God.

God turns from the fierceness of his wrath. He doesn't say, well, you had that sin, so I'm never going to bless you. I'm never going to give you victory.

I'm going to break my covenant with you. I'm going to leave and go off and find another people. When there is obedience, when there is recovery, when there is return, God turns from the fierceness of his wrath.

And the same thing is true for us as individuals. We are going to sin. We are going to fail.

It isn't a matter of if, it's a matter of when. And when it happens, we have to not waste time. There has been a big debate about should you feel sorry for your sins or not.

And the answer to that question is, sometimes we will and sometimes we won't. You certainly should not sit around trying to force yourself to feel bad. There is no point in trying to find a hair shirt to put on.

We can sin and we may not feel particularly sorry. I yell at people in traffic and I know it's wrong and I acknowledge that it's wrong, but I don't feel particularly sorry about it. There are other times when I hurt people that I love and I feel deeply, deeply sorrowful.

But my sorrow accomplishes nothing. It's just a human emotion. The most you can hope is that if you do something that creates sorrow for yourself and others, that it will provide additional motivation to not repeat that mistake.

But in terms of the forensics, in terms of the judicial aspect, the legal aspect, God isn't interested in whether we feel sorry or not. And He doesn't forgive any more completely or less completely based on how sorry we feel. And we don't earn God's forgiveness by generating sorrow or feeling sorry.

It's kind of like getting a traffic ticket. That ticket is over with when you go down and pay

the fine. And it doesn't matter how sorry you feel.

There is a consequence, and that consequence is fulfilled, and then it's over with. Now, you may have points on your license or something, and you may feel sorry about that. But God looks at the work of Jesus Christ.

God looks at the righteousness of Jesus Christ and imputes it to us. God isn't interested in how sorry we feel. God is interested in us learning from our mistakes, growing in grace and knowledge of the Savior, and in recovering.

It is silly. There are people who actually mess up, perhaps seriously mess up in terms of their spiritual life or in terms of sin, and they say, I think I will sort of penalize myself by not returning to God. God's probably not interested in me showing up right now, so I'm not going to approach Him.

I'm not going to acknowledge that sin, and confess it. I'm not going to do Psalm 51 or 1 John 1.9 right now. I'm going to stay out here in the dark.

That will sort of be my penance. This is a stupid idea. Don't do that.

Don't let your human nature, don't let Satan whisper in your ear, and say, well, you've messed up, so God doesn't want to see you. You should stay out here in the dark and wallow in self-pity. You're tainted and defiled, so just stay away from God.

Let some time pass, and then you can recover later. This is the philosophy of the devil. Don't do that.

Think of being in a state of disrepair as arterial bleeding. The longer you stay disconnected from your spiritual resources, the longer you stay disconnected from communion with God, thinking in terms of His Word, receiving the guidance of His Holy Spirit, coming to Him in prayer and in communication, the longer you let that rift persist, it's like necrosis. It's like cutting off circulation to your flesh.

And the longer you persist in that, the more of your spiritual life is going to die, and the longer it's going to take to recover. Don't get some goofy notion that God doesn't really want you to come back right now because your sin was so severe. But our mind will say this.

Look at this example. Ache and sin. That day when they discovered that there was sin in the camp, God says, look, wake up bright and early, get everybody sanctified, get this thing identified, deal with it, and move on.

Go right back to A1, and let's try this thing again and do it right. So that's where we are at chapter 8. Find the sin. Isolate the sin.

Deal with the sin. In obedience to God. Joshua follows to the letter God's instructions in

dealing with this sin.

And it is buried under a pile of stones. And remember, hopefully next time such a situation arises, people will remember and say, I'm not going to make that mistake again. If I'm going to fail, at least let me fail in some new creative way and learn something from that.

Why go over the same lesson again and again and again make the same mistake over and over again. So this is where we are at the cusp of chapter 8. But when you see that phrase, to this day, that means there is a corporate memory in Israel of that event. God's grace to Rahab is remembered to this day.

The discipline on Achan is remembered to this day. And to this day we remember that the church is a lot like Rahab, rescued from destruction because of response to God. And God does not hold Rahab's nationality or her background or her profession or anything else against her.

But Achan, who is of the tribe of Judah and has everything going for him, disobeys God and it costs him. God is interested in attitude. God does not care about background.

It is what we decide. It is what we choose that determines where we stand before God. And if we find that we have failed, we choose to recover.

We choose to receive God's grace and we choose to remember that as grace. Chapter 8. Now the Lord said to Joshua, Do not be afraid nor be dismayed. Remember this is what God said to Joshua back in the beginning.

Be strong and have a good courage. Be not afraid. The Lord is with you to give you this land and he reiterates that.

Don't be afraid. Do not be dismayed. Take all the people of war with you and arise, go up to Ai.

Look, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land. And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves.

Lay an ambush for the city behind it. Lay an ambush for the city behind it. Joshua rose, all the people of war to go up against Ai, etc.

But this interests me. Think about it now. Israel, what has been their occupation for the last many, many, many, many decades? Where have they been? They were in Egypt as slaves and then they were in the wilderness as wanderers.

How much military experience do they have? What military academy has Joshua attended? He didn't go to USMA. He didn't go to the Citadel. He didn't go to the Marine

Military Academy.

He didn't take any courses in strategy and tactics. God doesn't say, come up here and let me scratch out on a tablet a map for you and show you how to divide your forces. God just says, lay an ambush for the city behind it.

And God's finished. And you think about Joshua and you think, what's an ambush? I don't know if this word has even occurred in the Bible up to this point. So, I ask myself, how did Joshua know what an ambush is and how to lay one? And then I think back to the previous 40 years.

Who is Joshua's mentor? Moses. Has Moses been to military academy? Has Moses been a general of armies? Has Moses led campaigns? Who took Joshua to school on military strategy and tactics? He had probably the greatest instructor of the age. One-on-one for 40 years.

How would you like to get your training in your area of enthusiasm or your area of expertise from the greatest mind with the most experience and learn it for 40 years before you have to really put it into practice? There is nobody on the planet better prepared to lay an ambush than Joshua, the son of Nun. He has the benefit of all of the wisdom of the Egyptians taught to him by an Egyptian prince and general who has years of battle experience. Moses led many campaigns in Egypt.

One of these days we'll do a study on Moses' background as a prince in Egypt and some of the things that archaeology has uncovered. Sometimes the archaeologists don't even know what it is they've uncovered. They don't realize that given the time and given the correction in the chronology the general who led these campaigns and left these inscriptions and performed these accomplishments was very likely Moses.

At any rate, Joshua doesn't have any trouble understanding when God says lay an ambush Joshua is prepared. There is another great principle here. When God puts a task in front of us and says do this He doesn't do it unless He has given us the means.

God does not ask the impossible of us. He does not test us above what we are able to bear, what we are able to accomplish. Now, the practical application of this is when we are navigating through our day and we come into a set of circumstances that are a big challenge sometimes we say, whoa! Didn't see this coming.

How am I going to negotiate this? How am I going to do this? First step in developing a plan of attack is to take a step of faith and say God would not give me this to face if I were not prepared. Now, there is a condition on making that application. You have to be a believer doing what they are supposed to do.

If you do not walk in the light, if you do not keep yourself in God's word, if you do not exercise the functions of a normal healthy believer you will be like a student who goofs

off in class staring out the window and thinking poetic thoughts while the teacher is giving lectures and then here comes the pop quiz, here comes the test, and yes, you will be caught unprepared. There are many illustrative terms of phrase for being caught unprepared. Various garments around various parts of your anatomy.

My favorite is caught with your pants around your ankles. And this happens when you are not following your daily responsibilities as a believer. So, one of two things is going to take place when a challenge comes.

We are either going to realize that we have been goofing off spiritually and God has given us this challenge to show us that we have been goofing off and we really are not prepared, or, and this is where we have to judge ourselves, examine yourself and see if you are in the faith, and if you have been doing what you are supposed to do, and I would guess that anybody listening to me is probably at this stage doing what they are supposed to do, or you would not be here. You are listening to the teaching of the word of God. You have made a priority out of it.

It is not easy to set aside time. It is not easy to travel. It is not easy to clear the decks and spend a couple of hours, two or three times a week, making a priority out of the word of God.

And if you are doing that, I suspect you are someone who has their ducks more or less lined up in the spiritual realm. Now, Bible class is not everything, but it is a great first step. So, let's assume that we have all done that.

We are hitting our marks. We are going to the Lord in prayer. We are trying to meditate on His word.

We are trying to take in that spiritual food and make sure that we have got some kind of spiritual life and breath going on. That is a given. Here comes a challenge.

Here is a test. Here is a circumstance. And it is a Star Trek moment.

Captain, it is like nothing we have seen before. I mean, how many times do they say that? There is a blob on the screen. There is nothing in the computer on this.

Well, the assumption, the step of faith that we take is this is not something God would throw at me without preparation. I have the tools to negotiate this. I may have to do some thinking.

I may have to work through a process here. But God would not give me this if I couldn't do it. That is the bottom line.

If you are a growing healthy believer, God does not give you things you can't do. It may seem that way, but the first application of faith is, no, I can do this. So God tells Joshua,

lay an ambush.

And Joshua says, Ambush, ambush. What is this? Of course, he is doing it in Hebrew. And the first thing he does is go look at his skill set.

What have I learned? What do I know? Oh yes, I remember Moses told me, there is going to come a day when you are going to be in the land and you are going to come against these walled and fortified cities. Well, let me tell you, I have been to school on this. And this is how you do it.

Sometimes you are going to lay a siege and you are going to go against it and perhaps build a ramp or you are going to batter down the gates. And there are other times that you are going to have to do an orev, O-R-E-V, ambush. And if you remember the sort of smattering of Hebrew that I have given you, when you see that O-E vowel pattern, orev, that is an I-N-G word.

That is I-N-G in Hebrew. When you take the trilateral and you put O-E in it instead of A-A, this is from the verb Ara, Ara means to lie in wait. So you are going to do a lying in waiting.

Turn the verb into a noun. You are going to set a trap or a snare for them. This is something you find in Proverbs chapter 1 where it says the wicked lie in wait for their own blood and they lurk secretly for their own lives.

In the book of Judges and other places you will find this same word used. But this is what it means. It is not a mystery.

It means to set a trap, to set an ambush, to lie in wait. It is not going to be a frontal assault. There is some strategy to it.

There is some deception. There is some sleight of hand that they are going to use. Now, this is cursing turned to blessing.

These people at Ai are smart. They are good warriors. They know what happened at Jericho and they have made great preparations.

Akin sinned. 36 men died in the first assault. So the people in Ai now have some experience of the Israelites.

They say, hey, these guys are beatable. That God and the parting of the river and the ten plagues, they put their sandals on one toe at a time just like everybody else. We can beat these guys.

Look, we have three dozen dead ones laying out here in the sand. We can beat these guys. So it was, if you want to say it this way, very unfortunate that the discipline on Israel was the loss of these lives.

But God is going to turn that curse into a blessing because now this is a setup. The next time Israel attacks Ai, God is going to use their previous experience against them. They are going to be overconfident.

They are going to say, hey, this battle is going just like the first one did and they are going to chase the Israelites and it is going to be their undoing. God can turn cursing into blessing. The reason the attack on Ai is going to work, the reason this ambush is going to work is because of those 36 men who lost their lives.

Their sacrifice essentially is not in vain. We tend to think, wow, that Achan, these guys, these innocent bystanders just lost their lives. God is going to use their sacrifice to win a great, great victory and hearten and revivify the spirit of the entire nation.

It isn't a waste. It isn't a total loss. It's going to turn around.

So this is all incipient. This is all potential when God tells Joshua, lay an ambush for the city behind it. Now, once again, there is archaeology here.

And I've given you a handout. It's time for us to take a look at this. There is a map of Ai.

As with Jericho, there has been archaeology. There's been a lot of debate about where was Jericho, where was Ai. And let me give you a little excursus here on the whole scholarly approach to the biblical account of Israel.

The exodus, the conquest of the land. If you read modern scholarship, go out on the web, everybody, I saw a guy, Matthew has seen this, a guy was citing an article in one of the more recent biblical archaeology reviews where four scholars and experts on the Holy Land, on Israel, they said, well, you know, what does scholarship do to your faith? And, of course, the title of the article was Lost Faith, or whatever. And they said, well, what will be balanced here? And so, old Herschel Shanks there got four scholars.

Two of them say, well, I totally lost my faith. And the other two say, well, I still have my faith. But when you talk to the other two, they don't believe the Bible is true.

They just say, I believe it in sort of an esoteric, philosophical, spiritual, emotional sense, but I would never take the Bible literally. So the upshot is, out of the four guys, all four of them say, as a result of my detailed, vast knowledge of archaeology and scholarship and all the latest, greatest stuff in Israel, there's no way the Bible can be true. And I would never try to take it literally.

Well, far be it from me, a small timer here in Plano, Texas, to disagree with these vast intellectual giants, but they're all wet. And I'm going to explain why. Let me give you just a little bit of background on how these conclusions have been derived.

The first thing that happened in archaeology and I'll give you a good source that

summarizes a lot of this a little bit later. There's a nice summary. I looked all over.

I've been reading and excavating and so on, and I found a real nice summary that you can access on the web. By the way, those who are watching with us, if you want the handout, they're in, aren't you glad? I actually remembered ahead of time. There are two handouts in the handout folder under the Joshua folder up on the FTP, on the website.

But there's a fellow named Dr. David Livingston. He's got a website called ancientdays.net. He's done a really nice job of bringing together a lot of these things that I've got in much greater detail. But here's basically what happened.

The first thing is, back in the early part of the last century, in the 1920s and 1930s, archaeologists went and they said, we're going to go over and we're going to find and verify the things that happened in Joshua. We'll go excavate Bethel and Hatzor and Jericho and Ai and we'll find these things. We'll find the destruction layer and it will confirm the biblical account.

So they went over there and they started to do an archaeology. And one of the first things they discovered is, when they did find a destruction layer, based on the dating scheme that had been established at other sites, Egypt and so on and elsewhere in the ancient world, they said the destruction layer is too late for Joshua. And so they said, well, and there's some other things that don't fit and I won't go into great gory detail, but it all has to do with pottery.

Everything is dated by pottery. What is the pottery style? What about bichromeware? What about the shape of the lip and the lid and the lamps and all of this stuff? And they've done a vast study of pottery. So now when they go into a particular layer of a tell, they find a certain kind of pottery and they say, aha, we have bichromeware here.

We've got Mycenaean pottery. We've got exports or imports. We've got different things that we find.

We've got Egyptian scarabs. And so this dates these layers of a city. They also discovered that in Israel proper, there had been great walled cities and then those had been destroyed and they were replaced by little sort of open villages.

They weren't restored to their former glory. And so they tied this to the Hyksos and to the expulsion of the Hyksos in Egypt. Everything hinges on Egypt.

I'm giving you the short course in the history of the ancient Near East and how archeology dates it. Number one, everything hinges on Egypt. Egypt has got the most extensive chronology.

Everything else is like ribs sticking out of the backbone of Egypt. As goes Egyptian chronology, so goes the dating of everything else in the Middle East. Now, long ago, in

the 1800s, they pieced together what they felt was a pretty complete and connected history of the dynasties in Egypt.

They are sequential. They are numbered. They go all the way back to the early, early dynasties that built the Great Pyramid and the other Pyramid of Cheops and the Sphinx and all the rest of that stuff that's out there in the Valley of the Kings.

It comes all the way down. You've got three big chunks of connected dynasties. You've got the First Intermediate Period, the Second Intermediate Period, the Third Intermediate Period, and so on.

It's all mapped out. And they like it. It has served them well.

The problem is, when they started checking Bible events, the archaeology didn't match the chronology. So, one of two things is messed up. Either the Egyptian chronology is messed up, or the Bible is not true, one or the other.

Well, guess what? Scholars, given a choice, are quick to say, that Bible, Hebrew myths and legends made up during the captivity, feeling bad as slaves and captives and ne'er-do-wells wanting to fantasize about a former glory. They made up, you know, David is like King Arthur, etc. etc.

Of course, the fact that this sort of thing is unprecedented in world history, look at the British. They were a bunch of savages running around and you've got the myth of King... Do the British run around saying, we have a great and storied history because of King Arthur? No. Nobody has ever done this.

Nobody has built a fantasy history and then been walking around strutting, saying, look where people are because of this history. But, scholars say, well, but the ancient Hebrews, that's just the kind of people they were. So, a thousand years after the fact, they made up this history.

Well, that's what they choose. They do not want to deconstruct 150 years of scholarship where men have built their reputations and earned their doctorates and written their papers and established their journals and have got this vast sea of literature that all fleshes out that backbone that was created back in the 1800s out of Egyptian chronology. Unfortunately for them, and this has been pointed out by many scholars over the years, there are problems, there are anachronisms, there are impossibilities that are created by this, what turns out to be, problematic reconstruction of Egyptian history.

What they thought was sequential, in terms of dynasties, has turned out to be parallel. Have you ever heard of Upper and Lower Egypt? Sometimes in the movies, they'll have a pharaoh walking around and somebody will say, hail the prince of Isis and Osiris and the other king of Upper and Lower Egypt. The reason they say Upper and Lower, that's kind

of like the North and the South in the United States.

It's kind of like Israel and Judah in the divided kingdom. Egypt was not always one big happy bunch of pyramid builders. There were times when it was two kingdoms, Upper Egypt, and Upper means South.

When I think in a map, I think Upper ought to be North. But Upper Egypt is the heights, the Nile flows North. And Upper Egypt is the South, Lower Egypt is the plains of the Nile and the Nile Delta and that.

Well, some of these dynasties that they have uncovered and found their inscriptions, these pharaohs were ruling simultaneously, not sequentially, so that they have artificially extended the Egyptian chronology in places where it ought to be parallel. And this has thrown some of the chronology, especially during the time of the Exodus, down to the time of David, off by as much as 300 years. Not only that, but the pottery record, which is the most reliable means of dating everything you dig up, graves, burials, tombs, tells, anything that's got pottery.

Pottery evolved in a very gradual and predictable fashion all the way through this time. Unfortunately, the dates that they have assigned for various kinds of, for example, there are three bronze ages. There's early bronze, middle bronze, and late bronze.

And within each of those, there's late early bronze, there's early middle bronze, there's late middle bronze. Each of those early, middle, and late bronze ages are further subdivided roughly into thirds. Well, there are date ranges that have been assigned to the early, middle, and late bronze ages.

Middle and late bronze are the ages we're talking about with the Exodus, with Moses, Joshua, all the way down to the time of David. We're in the bronze age. Into the early iron age.

Remember the problem with the iron swords? Saul and Jonathan, the Philistines had a monopoly on the iron smelting and sharpening and so on. Well, you're getting into early iron as you transition into the monarchy period, according to the standard chronology. The problem is that pottery where that bronze versus iron division is all based on the work that was done 200 years ago on Egyptian chronology.

Which is off. So that, the upshot is, one of the first conclusions in the early part of the last century, stay with me now, because this won't last too much longer. In the early 1900s, 1920s, 1930s, when a lot of the great, you know, Flinders, Petrie, and the rest of these guys are all going around digging stuff up over in Egypt and in ancient Israel.

What they discovered is all of these big walled cities were destroyed too early for Moses and the children of Israel. Must have been the Egyptians. The Hyksos period is too early in the standard chronology.

And the driving out of the Hyksos and they say, well, you know, the Egyptians were running around chasing the Hyksos out of Egypt and while they were at it, they destroyed everything that they walked over. And that's what did in these big walled cities. They've got the wrong pharaohs.

They've got the wrong tomb paintings showing conquests and destructions. They have misidentified the people who are being conquered, etc. It's all off by centuries.

So, to cut a long story short, and it's fascinating if you're interested, I'll give you some places where you can read some good summaries. But here's the upshot. The guys in the 1920s and 1930s said, you know, we really have to revise our understanding of when the Exodus took place.

Ramses is mentioned, you know, the cities of Ramses, stomping mud into bricks, no more straw, killing the babies, the midwives, etc. All of this, that had to be taking place in the 1200s B.C. The Exodus must have been circa 1250. The conquest, the intrusion of the Israelites into the land must have been circa 1200.

Because that's what fits with our chronology. That's what fits with the destruction and the excavation of these cities. It must have been in the 1200s.

So, they said, we've got to move the Exodus late, down into the time of when we think Ramses II was the pharaoh. Okay? Mistake number one. Well, mistake number two, when they reconciled when they thought the Exodus took place in Egyptian chronology proper, they said, okay, let's look in the destruction layers of the cities circa 1200 B.C. and see where the Israelites destroyed these cities.

Well, guess what? In the 1200 destruction layers, there is no great walled cities. The great walled cities have been gone for a couple of hundred years and there's no big destruction layer. So, point number two, all of the archaeologists and ancient Near Eastern scholars said, aha, the conquest of the land under Joshua is a myth.

Because, having figured out that the Exodus and the conquest quote-unquote, took place in the 1200s, we go to the archaeology layers in the cities and the tells, and guess what? There's no destruction. There's no burn. There's no intrusion.

There's no incursion. So, this must have been a gradual infiltration of people and there was no big Exodus. So, it's a circular argument.

We'll move the Exodus out of the proper time, and then when we look in the dirt during that time, we don't find the Exodus. We'll move the conquest 250, 300 years out of its proper sequence, and then we'll look in the destruction layers and there is no destruction. It's circular.

But, it makes great sense to people who believe that the Egyptian chronology is golden

and inviolable and cannot be questioned. Anybody who does question it in the scholarly world becomes a pariah. Look at some of the stuff that's been written about guys like Velikovsky or David Roll or some of the others who have in a very logical and scholarly fashion said, don't you think if we slip this, look at how it suddenly resolves all of these problems.

Duplicate accounts that seem to be 200 and 300 years apart suddenly synchronize between the Hittites or the Amalekites and the Egyptians. We've got a copy of a treaty up here. We've got a copy of a treaty up here.

They're suspiciously similar in two different languages, but they're 200 years apart. When you fix the chronology, it's the same treaty between the same two parties. It's amazing.

You've got coffins. Matt can give you the details of some of the Egyptian coffins and the date stamps that are on them and how based on the way they were stored, you cannot make the standard chronology work. I say all of that to say this.

Now that we're looking at Jericho and now that we're looking at AI, if you go and read virtually any website that pooh-poohs any scholarly article any biblical archaeology review, they will say, ah, you know, we just can't really have faith in the literal biblical account because when you put the spade in the dirt, it doesn't pan out. There is no walled city. It's been destroyed for a couple of hundred years.

There are reasons why this is true, and it boils down to do you believe that when there's a conflict between quote-unquote science and the Bible, the Bible is your starting place and science better figure out how it can fit, or do you assume that science has got it all figured out and the Bible must be screwed up? When you find people who prioritize the scholarship and the findings of men who have piled one upon another for the last 250 years, yes, you'll have to lose your faith. And that's what these four scholars in the biblical archaeology, Bart Ehrman, everybody, the atheists love to run him up the flagpole and fly him because he used to be a conservative evangelical. He grew up in a fundamentalist tradition.

And when he got educated, he threw that all over. He says, now I'm an atheist. I don't believe the Bible is true.

I don't believe in any of this stuff. Oh, they love to trot him out as their poster child for get smart and you won't believe the Bible anymore. Well, in truth, you can reassess all of the archaeological and ancient Near Eastern evidence from inscriptions and treaties and so on.

And by going back and redoing some of the rather ignorantly done work from 200 and 250 years ago, it all jives. It all makes sense and makes better sense. But there's such a

resistance in the scholarly community to undoing decades and decades of work.

Rethinking. Retooling. It's just too much momentum.

They don't want to redo it. It's easier and it's more fun to say your Bible is all wet. But you don't have to check your brain in at the door to believe the Bible.

You can engage your brain. You can engage the science. You can accept all of the archaeological findings and discover that the Bible has been verified.

It has been proven true. Case after case after case after case after case. There is no and here's the conclusion for our first lesson.

There is no archaeological evidence that the Bible is not true. There are theories based on that evidence just like the science of biology. People can look at the science of biology and say, I think evolution took place and there is no God.

But that is an assessment of evidence. It is not evidence itself. I can look at the very same evidence and see the hand of God and the design that God built into things.

Where they wax and wane within a certain set of limits. God said reproduce after your kind. Dogs can go from Chihuahuas to Great Danes but they don't become zebras.

They don't become something other than a dog. They are always canis canis. In the same way, any other area of science whether it is astronomy whether it is archaeology there is no reason to refuse to look at the evidence for fear of losing our faith.

I say embrace the evidence. Bring it in and let's figure out how to reconcile it because it is all true. The archaeological record is true and the Bible is true.

All you have to do is figure out how they fit together. And it has been done. But it is hard to find because the vast weight of scholarship is on the sheet of music that says, well, my starting point is the Bible can't be true.

They are done before they start. Well, this all bears on Jericho and AI and we will see why when we come back from the break. But let's pause here and we will come back in a minute.