

Dr. Ted Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 19, Joshua: Jericho, Ai, Gibeon, War Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

Joshua: Jericho, Ai, Gibeon, War

1. Abstract of Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 19, Joshua: Jericho, Ai, Gibeon, War, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This is a transcript of a lecture by Dr. Ted Hildebrandt on the Book of Joshua. The lecture **covers several key events** in Joshua, including the fall of Jericho, the battle of Ai, and the treaty with the Gibeonites. Hildebrandt **discusses the concept of "herem"** (devoted to the Lord) and the archaeological evidence for and against biblical accounts. He also **explores different interpretations** of the sun standing still and examines the complexities of war and non-resistance within a biblical context. Finally, he uses personal anecdotes and the "Get Lost in Jerusalem" program to **illustrate various points**.

2. 23 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 19 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Introduction → Old Testament Literature).



**Hildebrandt_OTLit_
Session 19.mp3**

3. Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 19, Joshua: Jericho, Ai, Gibeon, War

Joshua: Walls, War, and Conquest

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What are the three sites in Jerusalem that Dr. Hildebrandt wants students to explore in the "Get Lost in Jerusalem" program?
2. According to Dr. Hildebrandt, what does the phrase "to this day" mean in the book of Joshua? Provide two examples.
3. What three significant things did the Israelites do at Gilgal before attacking Jericho?
4. What are the two contrasting archaeological views on the walls of Jericho, and who are the main figures associated with each view?
5. According to Dr. Hildebrandt, what is significant about the altar on Mt. Ebal that he photographed?
6. What was the Gibeonite deception, and how did Israel respond to it?
7. Summarize the key points of Dr. Hildebrandt's desert experience on the way from Jericho to Michmash.
8. What are the three interpretations of the "sun standing still" discussed by Dr. Hildebrandt?
9. Who was Jabin of Hazor, and what is the significance of the Valley of Har Megiddo (Armageddon)?
10. What two significant problems did the Israelites encounter after their victories in the south and north of Canaan?

Answer Key

1. The three sites are Area G, Hezekiah's Tunnel, and Warren's Shaft. These locations allow students to engage with the historical and geographical context of Jerusalem through virtual exploration.

2. The phrase “to this day” refers to the time the book of Joshua was written, not to the present day. The phrase is used when discussing the twelve stones set up in the Jordan River and when mentioning that Rahab was still living and could verify the events of the story.
3. At Gilgal the Israelites renewed their covenant with God by circumcising all the males, observing Passover, and stopping the supply of manna, which was a special product from heaven. These actions were significant because they marked a new phase in Israel's relationship with God and their entrance into the Promised Land.
4. John Garstang found evidence of walls falling outward at Jericho, supporting the biblical account. Dame Kenyon disputed this, stating there were no walls and dating the site to the wrong period but Bryant Wood has since examined her data to show that she ignored evidence that supported Garstang’s claim.
5. The altar on Mt. Ebal is significant because it is constructed with uncut stones and has a ramp, which matches the biblical description of altars built by the Jews as described in the book of Joshua. This discovery suggests that the altar could indeed be the one built by Joshua.
6. The Gibeonites tricked Israel into making a treaty by dressing in old clothes and bringing moldy food, pretending they came from a distant land, when they were from nearby. Israel made a treaty with them without consulting God.
7. Dr. Hildebrandt's desert experience involved running out of water and experiencing severe dehydration, leading to blurred vision and intense headaches. This illustrates how challenging the terrain is and why it was not normal for travelers to go through that part of the desert.
8. The traditional interpretation is that the sun literally stood still, creating an extended day for battle. A second interpretation is that Joshua asked for the sun to be silenced by the clouds and hailstones to give his troops relief from the intense heat and to help confuse their enemies. The final interpretation is that the sun and moon were positioned as a bad omen.
9. Jabin was the King of Hazor who led the northern Canaanite forces against Israel. The Valley of Har Megiddo is significant as the place where the battle took place, and is also known as Armageddon, the site of the final battle in biblical prophecy.
10. The two main problems were the sin of Achan, which led to a defeat at Ai, and the deception of the Gibeonites, which resulted in Israel making a treaty with a

nearby people when they should have destroyed them. These problems demonstrate the consequences of disobedience and neglecting to seek God's guidance.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Develop a well-organized essay for each of the following prompts.

1. Analyze the significance of the "herem" in the context of the book of Joshua. How does this concept relate to the ethical challenges of war in the Old Testament, and what are some differing viewpoints on its application?
2. Compare and contrast the approaches of John Garstang and Kathleen Kenyon regarding the archaeology of Jericho. What does the conflict between these two figures suggest about the relationship between archaeology and biblical interpretation?
3. Discuss the significance of Gilgal as a sacred site in the book of Joshua. How do the events that occur there prepare the Israelites for the conquest of Canaan, and what do these events reveal about their relationship with God?
4. Explore the different viewpoints on the sun standing still as discussed in the lecture. Evaluate the textual, scientific, and cultural considerations that shape these interpretations.
5. Examine the concept of corporate responsibility in the context of Achan's sin and its consequences. How does the narrative of Achan challenge the notion of individual responsibility, and what does it reveal about the relationship between individuals and communities in the book of Joshua?

Glossary of Key Terms

Area G: An archeological excavation site in Jerusalem.

Hezekiah's Tunnel: A water tunnel in Jerusalem built during the reign of King Hezekiah.

Warren's Shaft: A water system in ancient Jerusalem.

Western Wall/Wailing Wall: A sacred site for Jews in Jerusalem, part of the retaining wall of the Second Temple.

Wilson's Arch: An ancient stone archway in Jerusalem, located near the Western Wall.

Kippah: A skullcap worn by Jewish men, particularly during prayer.

Manna: A miraculous food provided by God to the Israelites during their wilderness wanderings.

Circumcision: The ritual removal of the foreskin of the penis. It is a significant religious practice for Jewish people.

Late Bronze Age: A period in the ancient Near East that is significant for its archaeological record.

Fudge Factors: A term used by Dr. Hildebrandt to describe manipulated data to fit desired outcomes.

Herem: A concept of total destruction or devotion of people and goods to God, often associated with warfare.

Gibeonites: A people living in Canaan who deceived Israel into making an alliance with them.

Michmash: A town in the central highlands of ancient Israel.

Book of Jashar: A non-biblical book cited in the book of Joshua. The content is not canonical and no copies survive.

Valley of Har Megiddo: A valley in northern Israel, also known as the Valley of Armageddon.

Ai: A small Canaanite city that the Israelites attacked after Jericho.

Achan: An Israelite who sinned by taking forbidden items from Jericho.

Philistines: A group of people living along the coast of Canaan, often in conflict with the Israelites.

Non-Resistance: A view that Christians should not engage in war, advocating pacifism.

4. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided lecture transcript by Dr. Ted Hildebrandt:

Briefing Document: Analysis of Dr. Ted Hildebrandt's Lecture on Joshua

Introduction:

This document summarizes the key themes, ideas, and facts presented in Dr. Ted Hildebrandt's lecture on the Book of Joshua. The lecture covers a wide range of topics, including archeological sites in Jerusalem, the crossing of the Jordan River, the fall of Jericho, the concept of *herem*, the battle at Gibeon, and the division of the land, with a concluding section on different views of war. The lecture interweaves biblical narrative, historical context, and archaeological evidence to explore the complexities of the text.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Get Lost in Jerusalem Program:

- Hildebrandt begins by introducing a virtual program, "Get Lost in Jerusalem," used for his class. He highlights sites such as Area G, Hezekiah's Tunnel, and Warren's Shaft.
- The program offers a 360-degree virtual tour of Jerusalem, allowing students to explore key locations. He notes that women are restricted in some areas of Jerusalem and that the virtual tour is a way to see places they might not see in real life, such as the inside of Wilson's Arch, where he was not sure if he should take photos. "This program will show you something that women will not be able to see in real life."
- He emphasizes the educational value of the program in learning the geography and layout of Jerusalem. "You can actually learn your way through Jerusalem based on this program."

1. Crossing the Jordan and the Twelve Stones:

- The significance of the twelve stones representing the twelve tribes of Israel is discussed, though Dr. Hildebrandt acknowledges that only 9.5 tribes entered the land, while 2.5 were already settled in Transjordan. "So Joshua says no, no you guys can't sit by because you got you're land already. You've got to come and help us fight the Canaanites."

- Hildebrandt points out the unification of all Israel as they entered the promised land as "all of Israel...together," a contrast to the later split into north and south, stressing the unique historical moment.

1. **"Until this day":**

- Hildebrandt addresses the phrase "until this day" in the Book of Joshua, distinguishing between the time of writing and the present day. He argues the statements about the stones and Rahab are meant to be understood as being within the generation in which the events occurred. "It means 'till this day' meaning when the book was written."
- He notes that the mention of Rahab still being alive ("She lives among the Israelites to this day.") suggests that the book was written closer to the events it describes rather than centuries later. "You want to know about these stories? If you want to know about these stories you can go ask Rahab, she's still alive till this day."

1. **Gilgal and Preparation for Battle:**

- The lecture explores the importance of Gilgal as a holy site where the Israelites performed three key actions: celebrating Passover, ceasing to receive manna, and circumcising all males before the battle of Jericho. He notes the apparent strategic challenge in doing so just before going to battle, and that it did not stop them from circumcising all the males due to it being a commandment from God. "God says, before you go into battle against Jericho you have to circumcise all the males. Question: Is that a problem?"

1. **Archaeology and Jericho:**

- Hildebrandt discusses the archaeological work at Jericho. He outlines the initial findings of John Garstang, who discovered walls that had fallen outward, seemingly in line with biblical accounts. "Garstang found the walls of Jericho fallen out just like the Bible said. Archeology proves the Bible."
- He then introduces the contrasting findings of Kathleen Kenyon, whose excavation and dating of the site contradicted Garstang, noting that she dated the wall to the wrong time period. "She said there were no walls there and the wall's date was from the wrong period, she was only citing data that was supporting her theory."

- He also presents more recent evidence from Bryant Wood, who re-examined Kenyon's data and argued for a more accurate dating that aligns more closely with the Biblical timeline. "Bryant Wood has shown that some of this is all wrong. He goes back and says this wall was dated correctly by Garstang, or thereabouts, and it should be a Late Bronze age."
- Dr. Hildebrandt emphasizes the importance of understanding that archeology can be interpreted differently and does not always offer conclusive proof of the Bible. "Does archeology prove the Bible, disprove the Bible, or are these things debated?"

1. **The Altar at Shechem:**

- He discusses a stone altar found at Mount Ebal, near Shechem, and how it matches descriptions in the Bible of Jewish altars that should be made of uncut stones, without steps, but with a ramp. He states, "Guess what, this had a ramp with uncut stones. Question: is this a Jewish altar?"
- He presents the evidence suggesting the altar is from the time of Joshua. "What they're suggesting is that this altar is from chapter 8 verse 30."
- He underscores that there remains debate over the age and significance of the altar.

1. **The Gibeonite Deception:**

- The lecture covers the ruse of the Gibeonites, who tricked the Israelites into making a treaty by pretending to be from a distant land, emphasizing they were actually from the center of Israel. "They are from dead center in the middle of Israel. Dead, smack dab, straight center of Israel is where they came from."
- He explains how the Israelites failed to consult God before making an agreement, creating a problem for them. "The Jews by the way never consulted with God and made an alliance with the Gibeonites."

1. **The Southern League and Sun Standing Still:**

- The story of the southern league attacking the Gibeonites and the subsequent battle in which the sun stood still is discussed.
- Hildebrandt shares a personal anecdote of a difficult desert journey, to illustrate the physical exhaustion that Joshua's troops would have experienced. "When

you're walking in the desert, and it's 110, 115, 120 degrees all of a sudden you're getting dehydrated. What happens when you get dehydrated?"

- He explores alternative explanations for the sun standing still, presenting various interpretations including the idea that Joshua was asking for relief from the heat rather than a literal lengthening of the day. "So what he's asking is the sun to be silenced. His troops are getting beat on by the sun, the sun is intense over there, and the sun is beating down and he says, 'Lord, silence the sun.'"
- He also introduces John Walton's interpretation that God putting the sun and moon in specific positions was to act as a bad omen for the Canaanites. "What he's suggesting is that what's going on with Joshua is that God put the sun over here on one horizon, the moon on the other so that the Canaanites would see that and realize this is a bad omen."
- Hildebrandt emphasizes the significance of prayer and how God listened to Joshua's prayer and set the heavens in response. "God listened to the voice of a man and set the heavens according to Joshua's request."
- He notes that Joshua cited the Book of Jashar when discussing the events, and that this was a non-inspired book that is now lost. "Joshua cites the book of Jashar apparently on the record of the sun standing still."

1. **Northern Campaign and Hazor:**

- The lecture discusses the defeat of Jabin, the King of Hazor, and the significance of Hazor as a massive archaeological site. "Hazor is the biggest archeological site in all of Israel. It's about 250 acres I think."
- Hildebrandt connects the location to the valley of Armageddon (Har Megiddo). "This is where Armageddon is right here. Now we'll look at this more closely later. This is the valley of Armageddon."

1. **Two Problems: Ai and Achan's Sin:**

- The defeat at Ai is presented as a significant problem for Joshua. It was a much smaller city than Jericho. "I'm talking less than the quad. It's a small, small, very small city, Ai although we're not sure exactly where it is."
- Achan's sin of stealing gold and a Babylonian garment is explained as the reason for the defeat. "Achan sinned and there was sin in the camp...Achan stole some of the goods and so there's sin in the camp. God knows there's sin there."

- The consequences of Achan's sin for the entire community are discussed, highlighting the concept of corporate responsibility. "The sin of one person affects others. So is this just the Achan sin?"
- He mentions the idea of corporate responsibility for sin based on some ways that other cultures might view sin and their response. "It helps seeing the family as a unit. Now that's not saying... it's not always one individual's fault, that there is a relationship between individuals and corporateness."
- He discusses how the Israelites had fallen into a pattern of presuming God's support, rather than seeking guidance. "They assumed that God was on their side and that God was predictable...Rather than realizing each situation is an individual choice and so committing each individual choice to God rather they said, "Oh, yeah, of course."
- He gives an example of churches that always assume that God is with them, which he claims is a dangerous assumption. "Have you ever been in churches that have this concept that God is with us in this church."

1. **Gibeonite Deception (Revisited):**

- The issue of the Gibeonite deception is revisited, emphasizing that the Israelites made a treaty without consulting God. "the men of Israel sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the Lord."
- The lecture stresses the importance of seeking God's guidance in all decisions. "Each decision needs to be put that way."

1. **Division of the Land:**

- Hildebrandt briefly covers the division of the land among the tribes, highlighting four tribes and six cities.
- He notes the significance of Benjamin (where Saul is from) and Judah (where David is from), and how Jerusalem lies on the border between the two. "So what's the relationship of Judah and Benjamin? Judah is in the south, Benjamin sits right on top of it. Jerusalem is on the border between the two, north and south."
- He notes how Beersheba is the southernmost boundary of Israel. "Beersheba is the southern boundary of Israel." He highlights also how the tribe of Dan moved to the northern most point of Israel due to their conflicts with the Philistines.

1. **War and *Herem*:**

- The lecture introduces the concept of *herem* (devoted to destruction) in the context of war, stating it was an act that put the people of a city under God's judgement, rather than a human act of violence. He gives the example of the taking of the city of Jericho. "It is very serious. It has to do with God's judgement and this judgement is taking them over so that God can destroy them. It's not that they destroyed them."
- He also notes that ultimately, God has the prerogative of life and death. "Who has the prerogative of life and death?...God has the right for life and death and you just have got to admit it at a certain point."
- Hildebrandt clarifies that the *herem* was not universally practiced, but was only applied in specific instances like Jericho, Ai, and Hazor.

1. **Three Views of War:**

- Three views on war are discussed: non-resistance (pacifism), the just war theory, and the realism view.
- Non-resistance is described as refusing to use weapons, though some might work as medics or chaplains. "The non-resistance position says basically this: you go into the army as a medic or chaplain. I won't pick up a gun to hurt somebody but I will go in as a medic or chaplain to heal."
- He gives a few challenges to this pacifist position. "What if you saw somebody being raped? Would you actually physically hurt the person that was raping the person?"

Conclusion:

Dr. Hildebrandt's lecture provides a multifaceted exploration of the Book of Joshua, blending historical, theological, and archaeological perspectives. He encourages a critical approach to the text and the evidence, presenting different interpretations and views and highlighting the complexities of these stories. He also emphasizes the role of faith and prayer, and notes the importance of seeking God's will, and not relying on assumptions about how God will act. He also challenges the idea of an over-individualized interpretation of the actions of the characters in the bible and their relationship to their communities, and the impact that individual actions can have on the community. The lecture serves as a foundation for understanding the book of Joshua as well as the bigger issues of faith, history, and war.

5. FAQs on Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 19, Joshua: Jericho, Ai, Gibeon, War, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Okay, here's the 8-question FAQ based on the provided source:

Frequently Asked Questions on the Book of Joshua and Related Themes

1. **What is the significance of the "Get Lost in Jerusalem" program mentioned, and what are some of the key sites it highlights?**
2. The "Get Lost in Jerusalem" program is a virtual exploration tool designed to help users familiarize themselves with the layout and important landmarks of Jerusalem. It uses panoramas and allows for virtual navigation, mimicking the experience of being there. Key sites include Area G, Hezekiah's Tunnel, Warren's Shaft, the Western Wall, and Wilson's Arch. The program also provides contextual information about each site. It aims to immerse users in the physical space of Jerusalem, enabling a deeper understanding of its history and significance, much like students can learn their way around a new school through its campus.
3. **What are the key events that occurred at Gilgal after the Israelites crossed the Jordan, and why is it considered a holy site?**
4. At Gilgal, the Israelites performed three significant actions before attacking Jericho: they celebrated Passover, ceased receiving manna, and circumcised all the males. This marked a new beginning for the Israelites in the promised land. It became a holy site due to these significant events and the establishment of a memorial of twelve stones from the Jordan river. It was later a place of sacrifices, including those made by Samuel and Saul.

5. **How do statements like "until this day" in Joshua impact our understanding of when the book was written, and what is an example of such a statement regarding Rahab?**
6. Statements like "until this day" within the book of Joshua do not necessarily mean the contemporary time of the reader; instead, they refer to the time when the book was written. For example, when the book mentions that the twelve stones are still there "until this day," it means they were present at the time the book was written, not necessarily in the 21st century. Similarly, the statement that Rahab "lives among the Israelites to this day," suggests the book was written within a generation or two of the events, not hundreds of years later when Rahab would no longer be alive. This implies a more immediate writing of historical record. This immediacy supports the idea that the book of Joshua may have been written closer to the events described.
7. **What are the varying archaeological perspectives on the fall of Jericho, and what does this teach us about using archaeology to interpret the Bible?**
8. Archaeologist John Garstang's excavations in the 1930s seemed to support the biblical account of Jericho's walls falling outward, dating them to the Late Bronze Age. However, Kathleen Kenyon, excavating later, suggested there were no walls and that the city's destruction happened at a different time period, disproving the biblical account. But Bryant Wood, after reviewing Kenyon's data, argued she only cited evidence supporting her view and ignored contradictory findings, thus supporting Garstang's initial assessment. This shows that archaeology can provide insights, but it's often subject to interpretation and new discoveries which can create debate. Archaeology should be used carefully, rather than to prove or disprove the Bible in its entirety. Data can be interpreted in different ways and at different times.
9. **What was the significance of the Gibeonite deception, and what lesson can be learned from Israel's mistake in making a treaty with them?**

The Gibeonites tricked the Israelites into making a treaty by pretending to be from a distant land when they were actually from the heart of Canaan. Israel failed to consult God before making the treaty, acting on what seemed to be obvious based on their observations of the Gibeonites' old clothes and moldy food. The lesson is to always seek God's guidance before making decisions, even when things seem obvious. Additionally, appearances can be deceiving, and human wisdom is flawed.

- 1. Why did the Israelites initially fail at Ai, and what does this teach us about individual sin and its impact on a community?**
2. The Israelites' initial defeat at Ai was a direct result of Achan's sin; he violated the herem by taking spoils from Jericho that were meant for God. This act of disobedience brought defeat upon the whole community. Achan's sin teaches us that individual actions can have significant consequences for the entire group and highlights the corporate dimension of Israel's identity and the interconnectedness of its members before God. It also underscores that God expects obedience, not just assumed favor.
- 3. What are some of the various interpretations regarding the "sun standing still" in Joshua, and what is the primary takeaway from this event?**
4. Traditional interpretations of the "sun standing still" in Joshua 10 describe a literal 24 hour extension of daylight caused by a stoppage in the earth's rotation to allow the Israelites to defeat their enemies. However, there are other views, such as God bending the light to appear as if the sun stood still and a more contextual interpretation: "stand still" as meaning "silenced" and the passage describing the hailstones and clouds cooling the heat. A third interpretation ties the sun and moon's position to a bad omen among the Canaanites that caused them to flee from battle. Regardless of the exact means by which God worked, the core message is the power of prayer and God's responsiveness to it. God answered Joshua's request to achieve victory for Israel.
- 5. What is "herem" in the book of Joshua, how was it applied, and what does it suggest about the nature of war?**
6. "Herem" refers to a practice of devoted destruction, where certain cities or their inhabitants were completely annihilated in war. This was commanded by God against the Canaanites. It was not a common practice, but used on specific cities: Jericho, Ai, and Hazor. It was a judgment against the wickedness of those specific Canaanite cities and not a general practice. Herem was a demonstration that God is the ultimate judge with the prerogative of life and death. It was not a general rule of engagement for every battle. The lecture also discussed views on war, including the non-resistance (pacifist) position, and the importance of considering what one would be willing to kill for, and if any war can be considered a "just war".