

# **Dr. David Schreiner, Pondering the Spade, Session 1, Setting the Stage**

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This is Dr. David B. Schreiner in his teaching on Pondering the Spade. This is session 1, setting the stage. Welcome to this course on Pondering the Spade.

I've entitled this Pondering the Spade after a work that I've done. My name is Professor Schreiner. I'm an associate professor at Wesley Biblical Seminary in the Jackson metro area of Jackson, Mississippi.

I was invited to give a talk about the intersection of Old Testament and archaeology, which is a topic that I'm very, very interested in. I think it's very, very fascinating. As we'll get into here in this first lecture, the first of four lectures, it's a relationship that I think has been plagued by some misunderstandings.

Thankfully, over the past couple of decades, we're beginning to refine this relationship. We're beginning to understand this relationship a little bit more. I think it's for the benefit of biblical studies because we really do have to understand the relationship between biblical studies, in this case Old Testament studies.

We're going to be focusing on Old Testament studies more than anything else, but we really do need to understand the relationship between archaeology, biblical studies/Old Testament studies. If we take seriously the notion that God used ancient Israel as the channel, as the mechanism, as the vehicle for so much of his revelation to humanity, then we need to look at the disciplines that are designed to unpack those cultures. This is why I think the intersection of archaeology and Old Testament studies slash biblical studies is absolutely imperative.

Like I said, we're going to go through four lectures here. We're going to move pretty fast. I'm not going to be able to talk about everything that I want to talk about.

We'd get bogged down in the details, but I'm going to hit the high points on this. Some more of the details that I'm going to unfortunately have to leave out, you can read about in my book, Pondering the Spade, which was published in 2019 by Wipf & Stock. You can find it on Amazon or the Wipf & Stock website.

That's my shameless book plug. I'm going to move on from there, and we're good. There are a lot more details, but I'm going to move quickly through these four lectures.

The first one is going to be setting the stage. I'm going to provide some introductory commentary about the nature of archaeology and give us some guidelines on what's

going to drive us through the final three lectures. The second lecture, we're going to dive deep.

I shouldn't say deep. We're going to dive into Mari, an ancient site, and then we're going to dive into the Gilgamesh epic. Then in the third lecture, we're going to talk about Tel Dan and a few other things and look at Israelite historiography and the interesting implications that archaeology has given us with respect to that.

Then, finally, in the fourth lecture, we're going to go really fast, and I'm going to hit some highlights and talk about some really, really important findings that I think really wrap this up and give us a good understanding of what it is. This is a discussion that's going to pit certain ideas against other ideas, and hopefully, by the end of it, my goal is by the end of these four lectures, you'll have a pretty good working understanding of how archaeology and Old Testament studies interact with each other and how it can inform our interpretation, how we can look to the discipline of archaeology in order to give scripture a little bit more oomph, a little bit more pizzazz if you will. But I want to start this morning, and I want to start here now in this first lecture with a telling vignette.

And this story, this experience of mine, I think, really begins to bring some things into focus. One of the things that my wife and I do is teach my oldest daughter. Actually, I'm a father of three, and now our second daughter is up in the same location, but we teach our oldest two daughters Sunday school classes. And I'm a bit paranoid, I'll admit it; I really am conscious about what my daughter's Sunday school teachers are teaching them because this is my career.

But anyway, so I take a hands-on active role in this. And one week, I was sitting in my room, and the way that we do things at our church is there's this kind of this central lesson where everybody congregates, everybody congregates in a middle room, and we this big lecture, not really a lecture, but a big talk, a big lesson. And then everybody breaks up according to their grades, and that's where my wife and I serve.

We serve in the breakup period. So, as I'm preparing for this breakup period, I hear the individual in the central room giving the big lesson start talking about archaeology. Naturally, my ears perk up, and then I hear him talk about names like Kathleen Kenyon, Ami Mazar, and Israel Finkelstein.

By this moment, I'm really intrigued because honestly, unless you're neck deep into this stuff, these are names that you probably might not recognize. So, I stop what I'm doing and begin to listen. I go out in the room, stand in the back, and begin to, you know, kind of take inventory of what's being said, and it gets even more sophisticated.

Now remember, these are first, second, third, and fourth-grade students. I mean, bless his soul, this is way above their heads, but you know, he's getting after it so I'm good with it. But I'm listening and he's talking about the urbanization and the cultural transitions between early bronze period and middle bronze period.

Then he's talking about middle bronze age culture in relationship to the patriarchs. Then, he's talking about the collapse of the late bronze age into the Iron Age and how does that collapse inform our understanding of the Iron Age. And I'm just thinking at this point, wow, this is amazing.

I can't believe this guy's actually trying to do this. But then it gets really interesting because he begins to arbitrarily, and that's the best word that I can really kind of use to describe what he does, but he messes everything up because he's applying Kathleen Kenyon's study on the early bronze age, middle bronze age transitions to the period of the Israelite settlement. So, he's mixing up all the dates, and he takes the collapse of the Late Bronze Age era into the Iron Age era and applies it to the exilic period about 700 years off.

And then he talks about Ami Mazar's discussion of the middle bronze age period, which Ami Mazar associates with the patriarchs. He applies it to the eras of David and Solomon. So, all that to say, I think there are some lessons.

I mean, we joke about it in this context, and rightfully so, but I got to give the guy an A for effort, all right? I got to give props to the guy. He's very passionate about what he does, but he messes everything up. And I'm thankful that this was so far over the kids' heads that they're not confused.

They don't know what they missed, but I was kind of shocked by what I heard. But anyway, I do think there are some lessons to learn from this. One, there is a popular interest in archaeology when it comes to Old Testament studies.

I mean, you actually don't have to look very far. You don't have to experience what I experienced to understand this. All you have to do is turn on your History Channel, Discovery Channel, and Learning Channel.

You can turn your TV on and you can find shows on how archaeology relates to biblical studies in a variety of forms. They could be good shows that are academically honest and intellectually sophisticated. And then you could go all the way to the other end of the spectrum and talk about ancient aliens and pyramids and Giorgio Tsoukalos and everything like that.

So, there's a whole spectrum of that, but there is a popular concern for archaeology and how that helps us understand scripture, okay? This experience proved that.

However, it also showed the unfortunate side of that reality. This is a relationship, the popular notion of how these two disciplines fuse is often misunderstood.

And it's at that moment when we misunderstand how these relationships interact with each other that we begin to get into problems. This latter methodological problem has been demonstrated throughout the course of academic history. And we'll talk about that here in a few minutes, but I mean, we cannot put our heads in the sand and pretend like these difficulties and these misunderstandings don't exist and didn't exist because there's a lot of literature written on the issue and on the topic of the misunderstanding between archaeology and Old Testament and we have to engage.

And it requires a proper discussion of this interaction. And this is what I'm here for. This is what I want to kind of leave you with at the end of these four lectures.

How do we understand the relationship between these two disciplines? How can these two disciplines, and I'll talk about this, how do they converge on each other? What is the nature of their convergence? I'm talking about the interaction. And when we understand the interaction, we'll begin to understand how archaeology can help us understand scripture better, help us give us another level to our interpretation. And that's what these four lectures are going to be about.

That's where I'm going. I want to take this vignette and turn it into something that's educational and valuable and that will hopefully help us out in a lot of ways in the long run. So, I want to transition now into discussing the nature of archaeology.

I'm going to take a little bit of a long route here through this first lecture. I want to get at the nature of archaeology as a discipline. I want to begin to get at the nature of how it intersects with biblical studies.

But I want to do it in kind of a roundabout route, and hopefully, this will make sense by the end of the lecture. But where I want to begin, I want to begin with something called ostraca. Now, ostraca is a big fancy word that just merely means potsherds with writing on it, okay? These are broken pieces of pottery that have been used for writing, okay? That's where I want to begin.

Now when you go on a tell and you're digging in ancient Israel, there's broken pieces of pottery everywhere. I mean, actually, you don't even have to dig. You can just walk on top of a tell and you can pull pieces of pottery that have kind of come to the surface.

You can just, you know, pick them up. It's like stones. But potsherds with writing on it is something a little bit more rare, and those are the things that become very, very important and critical.

So, for example, we're going to look at an ostrakon called the Meshad Hashevyahu Ostraca, all right? And this is a piece of pottery. This is a piece of pottery that has a fairly lengthy legal discourse on it, and it recounts somebody bringing an issue, if you will, a problem to a local judicial official. And he's basically saying, this guy that I worked for didn't give me my cloak back at the end of the day.

And what's interesting about this is it's dated to about the 7th century, I think. I think it's about the 7th century. So, it's right smack dab in the middle of Iron II, right around Josiah's time, that sort of thing.

That's the time we're talking about. What's fascinating about this is it seems to have an allusion to some specific legal commentary in the Book of Exodus, particularly about how if you take a cloak from somebody as collateral, if they're going to work for you, you have to give them the cloak back at the end of the day. This may be their only cloak.

You can't just take the things that they need to prove a point. So, is it possible that this ostrakon, this potsherd with writing on it, and I'll show you a picture here in a second, is showing us that biblical legislation is ordering Judean society? It's quite possible. These are the types of things that can potentially become very important and informative.

We have the Lachish letters. Lachish is the main administrative center in Judea during Iron II. It was sacked during Sennacherib's siege in 701 BC.

It was sacked by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon as he made his way to Jerusalem. So, it was sacked pretty significantly twice in the span of about 150 years, 130 years or so. And so, it's a very important administrative site.

However, right before the sacking of Jerusalem, so it was during Nebuchadnezzar's siege, not Sennacherib's, but dating to Nebuchadnezzar's sacking of Lachish and the siege of Jerusalem, there was a cache of letters. And these are military correspondence, okay? These are interactions and conversations that the people at Lachish are having with the people at Jerusalem in response to Nebuchadnezzar's imminent siege. And they're talking about how the signal fires of Azekah can't be seen anymore, which means the Babylonians are coming.

They're at our doorstep. We've got to be ready. So, it's an interesting example.

So, these are ostraca that give us an interesting example of how they ordered their day-to-day life, how they conducted military operations, and how they interacted with each other on a daily basis. Again, stuff that's really, really interesting, stuff that's really, really interesting that may not necessarily directly intersect but helps us

understand the way the culture operated on a day-to-day basis. Now, this picture that I have here on this is a drawing of the Mishad Hashav Yahu inscription, okay? And you can see the writing there.

You can see how this is what ancient Hebrew writing looked like. This is the legal dispute that I mentioned just a few moments ago about how the individual was bringing a complaint to the local judicial official about an individual not giving them their coat back. The Samaria ostraca is another cachet of ancient writings of ancient ostraca that are very, very important.

These date to a little earlier, 8th century, and these were found in Samaria. So, this is up north. This is a part of Israelite culture.

These are a lot of administrative receipts, the transaction of goods, who's buying what, how much are they buying, wine, grain, et cetera. These were found during the excavations of Samaria in the early 20s. And so, they've been around for a while.

But again, they give us insight into how Israelite and Judean cultures operate on a day-to-day basis. We also have the Arad ostraca as well. Arad is a site in the middle of a god-forsaken desert.

Honestly, it's probably a Judean fortress that kind of guarded the southeastern edge of Judean territory. And it is in the middle of nowhere, folks. There's no perennial water source near.

I honestly do not know how people lived here. And there are some nasty stories about how the Early Bronze City pooled the water runoff in the middle of the city. I mean, we talk about, you know, in this COVID-19 era, we talk about disease and germs and everything like that.

I don't know how people at Arad lived for more than three weeks down there. I really don't know. But apparently, they did.

And there was a very important Iron Age fortress at Arad. And we found a lot of Arad ostraca. Again, correspondence and day-to-day interactions with people there.

And what's interesting about all of these things is the way that they are analyzed. We look at them for content, but the way is, this is actually being developed as we speak, and within the past couple of years, they're now subjecting these writing systems to some pretty sophisticated computer algorithms, intelligent design, self-learning software programs in order to determine what we can, you know, figure out what we can determine about the people, the people writing. So, for instance, the Arad ostraca recently was subjected to a very interesting study, and they wanted to know

how many different styles of handwriting and how many different people were writing these Arad ostraca.

They actually used a similar study on the Samaria ostraca just more recently. So, this is very, very fascinating stuff. The ostraca and potsherds with writing on them are very, very important.

Not only do they give us content for what they were doing, but it also helps us to fill in the blanks about the development of their societies. So, again, this is what I'm talking about. These examples, the Arad ostraca and the Samaria ostraca in particular, they show us the range of conclusions and the complexity of archeology as a discipline.

As I just mentioned, archeology is more than just digging in the dirt, all right? It is to the point where we have, we are using ground-penetrating radar, we are using sophisticated computer algorithms. Recently, there's been a cemetery right outside of Ashkelon that was unearthed, about 200 bodies. This was actually found and unearthed in the last two years of excavations there.

But they subjected the skeletons to DNA profiling in order to try to bring some clarity to the age-old question of where did the Philistines come from? Really, really fascinating stuff here. So, archeology is becoming and will continue to be very, very technologically advanced. Again, this is a part of the nature of the discipline.

What is the discipline? What's it trying to do? How's it trying to do those things? And that will help us understand this intersection. So, with that, I'm going to launch into a very quick description of the contours of the discipline. How has the discipline developed across history? And there are many ways to skin this cat, all right? You can pick up Eric Klein's book on the short introduction of biblical archeology.

He does it one way. Everybody does it a way that they see fit. I'm going to try to keep it to you very, very simple, and I'm going to give you three phases, okay? Phase one is really called the inception of Palestinian exploration, all right? This is when this stuff first starts, and as you'll see, it's very, very methodologically crude.

It's glorified treasure hunting. This is Indiana Jones looking for the lost Ark, okay? This is essentially what this is. Obviously, based on what I just said, it's not that anymore, but this is how things start, and who do we start with? Honestly, you have to at least look to a guy named Napoleon Bonaparte, and if you know your world history, and Western civilization, you probably recognize this name, not because of his impact upon the development of archeology, but because of his desires for global conquest, all right? But in his efforts to secure the entire Mediterranean basin, in his efforts to spread French culture and the French kingdom, Napoleon Bonaparte brought with

him a team of scholars, and he basically said, look, as we go through Egypt, as we go through the Mediterranean basin, I want you taking pictures.

I want you not to take pictures, obviously. They didn't have that. I want you to draw pictures.

I want you taking notes, and I want you documenting all of this stuff, and hey, what do you know? We're actually going to bring some stuff home, all right? So, this is kind of the byproduct of what Napoleon Bonaparte was doing. This is how we got the Rosetta Stone, all right? And the Rosetta Stone was absolutely critical in deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics, all right? Because there were three languages on that stone, all right? We could read one of them pretty well. We could read a second one, but the third one was Egyptian hieroglyphics.

At that point, no one knew how to read it, but a guy by the name of Champillon or something like that, I don't speak French very well, C-H-A-M-P-O-L-L-O-N, I believe is how you spell it, he's the guy that's credited basically for translating and deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics. And he seized upon a name, a proper name, in order to kick-start his decipherment, and Napoleon Bonaparte and the Rosetta Stone was the key to all of that, to deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics. And that's important because once we could read Egyptian hieroglyphics, we could go to all these temples outside of Luxor, outside of Tanis, and we could begin to read everything that was written on those walls.

And voila, the door was kicked open to one of the greatest cultures the world has ever seen, perhaps the greatest culture the world has ever seen. The next guy I want to talk about briefly is a guy by the name of Sir Edward Robinson. This guy is known as the father of biblical, not biblical archaeology or biblical geography.

And he had a buddy named Eli Smith, and what these two guys did is they got on camels, they got on horseback, and they just started riding around the Syria-Palestine. And they talked to local Bedouin, hey, that hill over there, what's the name of that hill? And they would get the names from the local Bedouin, local Arabic names, and they would begin to look back in their Old Testament and begin to try to figure out, okay, what does this kind of sound like? And here's the brilliance of this man. He did it in the middle of the 19th century, and honestly, he was a lot, he was right on a lot of counts.

He was sharp, and he was pretty much successful in a lot of the identifications that he proposed. And actually, you talk about people; if you talk to people who are really, that has a specialty in biblical geography, they still, they will tell you that they still use this man's work that was published in the 19th century, all right? That's how brilliant this guy was. His work, hundreds of years, over 100 years later, 150 years now or so, still stands the test of time.



So that's Edward Robinson. He was a very, very, he was a very, very important person in this initial phase. And once Edward Robinson began to identify these tells, once he began to say, this is probably this, this is probably Lachish, this is probably Samaria, then all of a sudden you have the development of all these Palestinian exploration societies that are like, oh, we know where Lachish is.

We know how important Lachish is. Let's go there and dig. Maybe we can find some buried treasure.

This blew the door open for people to start funding expeditions. Now, all these expeditions were basically given the same kind of, they were given the same kind of objectives. Go find as much stuff as you can, bring it back, we'll load up our museums, and we'll all get rich and famous.

That essentially was, again, very, very crude. They were looking for what was the big find, like I mentioned, Indiana Jones, Redder's The Lost Ark, where's the Ark of the Covenant? Let's go look for it. And so that's kind of what they were doing.

But we have to thank Edward Robinson for this because he's the guy who gave us direction for all of these societies, okay? Now, phase two begins the rise of systematic archaeology. We're not going to quite get there, but it's during this phase, the early 1900s, that we begin to kind of talk about things with a little bit more methodological precision. We're not just out there digging holes and mounds, digging trenches, not really caring about little clay tablets that may or may not have writing on them.

Back in the early phase one, they didn't care. It's like, okay, show me a cherubim, where's a big bull? Let's dig up a big statue. Those types of things.

That's what they were looking for. With phase two, things begin to change, all right? And we have to thank a guy by the name of Sir Flinders Petrie. Odd duck this guy was.

He was a bit bizarre. I think stories of this guy, he used to wear dresses on the tells just to scare the locals away because he didn't want to be harassed. But this guy cut his teeth in Egyptology, excavating massive tells and massive sites like Tanis in Egypt.

But what he did was he began to refine seriation or pottery chronology. And when he came to a place called Tell el-Hessi, that's where he really began to put it into play. And we can thank Sir Flinders Petrie for two things.

One recognizes that they tell, they look like garbage mounds, but when you start digging into them, it's layer upon layer upon layer upon layer of ancient cities.

Recognizing that the tell was a very important point element in trying to decipher ancient settlement patterns, all right? People lived in cities. Yes, there were a lot of rural people, but the most footprint, the most material culture was left at tells because these were the sites of the cities and tells.

Once you established a city, it took a lot for you to abandon that site. So, when your city was destroyed, you just built another one right on top of it. And when that one was destroyed or destroyed by an earthquake or a military conquest, you just leveled things and you build another one.

So, these tells were quite literally like the layers of a cake or seven-layer jello, whichever one you like better, the occupational history of an urban site. Flinders Petrie understood this. And then with his pottery chronology, he began to develop ways on how we can date them and talk about the chronological sequences of each one of those settlement phases, each one of those layers within a tell.

That's what Sir Flinders Petrie is known for, all right? This guy, at the time of his death, decided that you know what, I'm going to go out with a bang, and I'm going to dedicate my body to science, but only my head. So, upon his death, this guy actually had his head decapitated. It was shipped off to England because he wanted his brain to be studied by science.

Unfortunately, the label got lost, and his head sat in a jar for years in some sort of basement. Well, long story short, they identified his head. His body is actually still. His body is actually buried on the outside of the old city in Jerusalem on the campus of JUC, I do believe.

I think, I'm pretty sure, that's where his body, minus the head, his head is in the basement of some museum in Britain. So, they know where his head is now, they've identified it, but yes, odd dude, odd dude, apparently thought really highly about himself, but he was very, very important. Again, understanding the tell, pottery chronology.

William F. Albright is another guy, and there are many guys that I could stop, many people, men, women that I could stop and I could talk about, but we just don't have time. But William F. Albright, William Foxwell Albright, is another massive figure in the development of a systematic, methodologically sound discipline of archaeology. This guy was brilliant.

He was a theologian, he was a Christian, he loved the Bible, and he thought his goal was to prove the Bible. And everything that he did as an archaeologist always went back to the Bible. How does this further explain the Bible? And that is an admirable pursuit.

Unfortunately, it also became the cause of so much of his criticism. But William F. Albright is mainly known for, he was the guy that developed the conquest model. How did Israel settle in the land? Conquest model.

Blitzkrieg-type military movement. Joshua, the Book of Joshua. William F. Albright is the guy who articulated that model for settlement in earnest the first time.

And he had a very, very, very, very, I mean, Frank Moore Cross, John Bright, I mean, basically, you name it, the who's who of famous biblical scholars in the 1970s and 80s, honestly, at some point, they all go back to him, whether they were indirectly or directly, many, many of his students. So, this guy was a giant, particularly in American archaeology. And if you open up a historical work on the history of American archaeology, biblical archaeology, you're going to find loads of information devoted to this guy.

Very, very important. But again, his conquest model also attracted a lot of criticism, particularly toward the end of his career. And, which is somewhat interesting, some of his biggest students, John Bright, even him, they kind of began to step back from the initial articulation of the conquest model once some more archaeological evidence came to light in the years subsequent to him presenting that theory initially.

And so, again, he was criticized, he's still criticized. And on the one hand, we lift William F. Albright up as this great archaeologist, biblical scholar, you know, this is a guy you want to be like. But on the other hand, we also kind of villainize him as being this methodologically naive individual.

And I think that's a little unfair. William Dever has really taken Albright to task. I like William Dever a lot; we'll talk about it here in a second.

But I think he really goes after Albright a little too much. But he's an interesting guy, very, very important. Yigal Yadin was an Israeli archaeologist who turned military; he was a military man.

And when he retired from the military, he figured, yeah, let's go dig up stuff. But Yigal Yadin is famous for his excavations at Megiddo, his excavations at Masada, and the articulation of what's called the Solomonic footprint. So places like Megiddo, Hazor, and specific urban centers Gezer, the specific urban centers that are talked about in 1 Kings chapter 9, are associated with Solomon's building campaigns.

What Yigal Yadin found at these sites was, oh my goodness, there's an overwhelming similarity in the city's archaeological footprint, the way they built their gate systems, the way they built their walls. And based on what 1 Kings 9 said, Yigal Yadin said, this is a Solomonic footprint, this is how Solomon reinforced his major urban centers, and

this is what Yigal Yadin is famous for. Again, way ahead of his time, with a huge following like William Albright, Yigal Yadin influenced a whole generation of Israeli archaeologists, and he's very, very important.

Then we have Dame Kathleen Kenyon. Kathleen Kenyon was brilliant, she was troubled, and she seems to this day continue to attract criticism. I mean, Bryant Woods still beats Kathleen Kenyon over the head with his data even though she's long gone, so Kathleen Kenyon is still a magnet of criticism.

But she was very instrumental in developing a particular system of excavation. She was very important in talking about Jericho, even excavating Jerusalem. She was kind of the contrarian viewpoint in some ways.

Everybody was talking about the conquest model with William Albright, Kathleen Kenyon says, I actually don't think Jericho was even inhabited during that time period, so how in the world can you have a conquest model? That's what Kathleen Kenyon was doing. But she's very, very important, and again, probably the most important element to her legacy was her taking part in the Methodological Revolution. So that's phase two.

Again, you have these giants in the field, and they're beginning to fine-tune archaeology as a systematic discipline. This brings us to the third and final phase, today's archaeology. Today's archaeology is going to take the methodological revisions, the methodological progression that was established in phase two, and we're just going to expand the trajectory.

And where we begin the discussion of phase three's archaeology, today's archaeology, is with digging methods. Archaeologists today are very focused on how you dig, not necessarily where you dig. That's important, too, but they are very, very conscious of how you dig.

What's your method? How are you documenting that find? Was that found in situ? What's its archaeological context? How do you dig? And fundamentally associated with these how you dig are basically, you know, this is an oversimplification, admittedly, but we have to talk about the Kenyon-Wheeler method and the Reisner-Fisher method, okay? And I'll talk about that for just a second here. Kenyon-Wheeler, Kenyon, Kathleen Kenyon, which I just mentioned, who I just mentioned, she developed her method of digging in Britain, all right? Kathleen Kenyon was British. She started her career as an archaeologist in Britain and with a person named Wheeler, her professor; I think it was her professor, but anyway, it was a guy named Wheeler.

They developed what was called the Kenyon-Wheeler method, and instead of exposing as much as possible, we're going to dig in five-foot by five-foot squares and

go down as far as we possibly can. Why? Because we can control the stratigraphy. We can control the data if we're digging in smaller sections, all right? The farther out we expand, the less control we have over the data, the less control we have about exposure, et cetera, all right? We want to know as much as possible about the occupational history of these places, who was living, when, for how long, et cetera, when did certain phases of occupation.

The best way to do that, according to Kenyon-Wheeler, was to dig in five-foot by five-foot squares, and then at the end of the day, you stare up, and you look at the bulk wall with all of its layers right there like a layer cake, and then you begin to interpret what you see, okay? That's how Kenyon dug at Jericho. That's how she dug at Jerusalem and other places. This is somewhat in contrast to the Reisner-Fisher method.

The Reisner-Fisher method, which ironically was used at Samaria and Kenyon worked at Samaria, was used at Samaria, and this is concerned with large-scale exposure. So instead of very controlled small sections, you can see the downfall there. If we're only digging in five-foot by five-foot squares, what happens if we miss something just a foot over from that? So Reisner and Fisher were like, let's just expose everything that we possibly can.

So, you can see the pros and cons here. In large-scale exposure, however, we lose control of the data. Great control of the data in the five-foot by five-foot squares, but what happens if something's just over there? Interestingly, today, a lot of archaeologists will use some sort of hybrid.

They still want to control the data. They still want to control the stratigraphy, but they do not want to lose sight of that large-scale exposure. Here's an example.

So, when I was digging at Tel Rehov in 2008, the year before, right, the year before, they had found an apiary, a beehive, an industrial beehive installation. They were digging in five-foot by five-foot squares, essentially, and one of those squares went right down and hit an ancient beehive, all right? And they looked at the beehive, they found out what it was, and they thought, you know what, there's probably more. So, at that point, the dig director made an executive decision.

He says, you know what, we are going to abandon this five-foot by five-foot method here, and we are going to go into large-scale exposure. We want to see how big this installation really was. By the time I got there in 2008, I saw five-foot by five-foot squares, but if I turned my body 45 degrees and looked over here, I saw the complete exposure of an industrial beehive installation.

There were 10 beehives. So, this is an example of using a hybrid model, and the decision to kind of abandon one for the other, obviously, is the dig director's

responsibility. But archaeology today is very specialized, and it's very multidisciplinary.

So, if you go to a dig today, you're going to find geologists, you're going to find paleographers, people who study, I'm sorry, epigraphists, you're going to find people who study bones, people who study writing, people who study rocks, in addition to classically trained archaeologists. You're going to, you're going to, you even may find genetic experts, depending on whether or what kind of DNA stuff they're doing. So you're going to find a lot of different voices, and again, it's up to the dig director to kind of be a leader and bring everybody's attention, make sure everybody's ideas are getting properly channeled and discussed, etc.

In many ways, it's exciting, but in many ways, it's, it can be kind of a dumpster fire if you don't have a good dig director there. Also, a part of today's archaeology is the impact of what's called new archaeology, and new archaeology was kind of a methodological revolution that took place in the 70s and 80s. Now, this has been criticized, but what cannot be criticized is the implications of what happened with new archaeology because archaeology essentially has become an anthropological discipline.

A lot of, universities, a lot of institutions will have an archaeology department in their School of Anthropology, all right. That is very significant. It is no longer in the School of Theology, which initially, these, these explorations, these initial forays in, in the late 1800s and the early and the mid-1900s, were all funded by theological institutions.

That's not the case anymore. Archaeology is seen and understood more, more as an anthropological discipline than anything else. So, those are the three phases, all right.

Again, initial explorations, initial explorations, a rising methodological precision, and today's archaeology is very sophisticated, very multidisciplinary, very conscientious, and very methodologically conscientious. So, what does all of this mean? Let's go back to the question. I told you I was going to take a roundabout route, but I think it's important for us to understand the contours of the discipline and certain elements of the discipline in order to understand this question.

Does archaeology serve biblical studies, all right? No, it does not. So, if it is no longer understood to serve biblical studies, it is no longer understood to be a subset of biblical studies. How do we define archaeology, and what does this mean for how the two disciplines relate to each other? Well, archaeology quite simply can be defined as the study of stuff in order to understand a particular culture or a particular place.

Very simple because archaeology is about finding things. It's about finding things that people use on a daily basis. It's finding material culture, finding houses, finding pots, finding loom weights, finding animal bones, finding places of worship, etc.

It's finding stuff. So, archaeology is the study of stuff in order to understand a particular culture or to understand a particular site. That's how I generalize, and I know it's crude, and if there are any trained archaeologists out there, they'll probably kind of be like, yes, you can be more sophisticated with that, and there are countless definitions where it's more sophisticated, but for our purposes and the purposes of this lecture, we can define archaeology as the study of stuff in order to understand a particular culture or a particular place.

But if archaeology is the study of stuff, what is the term biblical archaeology? What does that mean? Biblical archaeology is a term that has been dragged through the mud for a variety of reasons. Going back to William F. Albright, William F. Albright called himself a biblical archaeologist, but he was criticized for making his archaeological research too apologetic and too theological. Oh, Albright, he's just over there doing stuff again to prove the Bible.

And so, biblical archaeologist, the term biblical archaeology, or if you called yourself a biblical archaeologist, let's put it this way. Nowadays, if I'm in a conference and somebody wants to insult somebody else, we do this in very sophisticated ways, somebody will call somebody a biblical archaeologist. Oh, no, I'm not.

Don't call me that. So, it's a name that carries with it a certain amount of baggage. However, I think that we can still use it so long as we're willing to at least give an understanding of it, okay? Because archaeological research does inform biblical studies.

It does inform our understanding of ancient Israelite culture, and the more we understand ancient Israelite culture, the more we are going to be able to understand why did the biblical writer say that? Why did the biblical writer do it that way? So, archaeology that bears upon the Bible can be called biblical archaeology, and I think that's a definition that we can still hang on to. It is not about proving the Bible or disproving the Bible, alright? It is about archaeology that informs our understanding of the Bible, directly or indirectly, and this is where some of our later lectures are really going to get at. What does a direct influence look like? What does an indirect influence look like? And that's where I'm going to bring in this idea of broad convergence and narrow convergence.

So, for the next lectures, we're going to be talking about certain broad convergences, certain narrow convergences, alright? Broad convergences are more indirect applications of archaeological research to the Bible. Narrow convergences are going to be a discussion of those direct points of contact, okay? That's going to be the

difference, and archaeology does this. So, I think the term biblical archaeology can still be salvaged as long as we are prepared to use it correctly.

So, the rest of these studies, as I've already alluded to, the rest of these lectures, we are going to celebrate the perpetual and undeniable relationship between archaeology and biblical studies, specifically Old Testament studies. This is what these lectures are going to be about. I'm going to walk you through this interaction and kind of show you what this looks like, alright? So, I'm going to talk about different artifacts, alright? I'm going to talk about the story behind that artifact.

How were they found? Who found it? What was the discussion about it? And some discussions are going to be really, really robust, but I'm also going to make an intentional effort to talk about the implications of these finds. What do they mean for our understanding of Scripture, our understanding of the Bible? That is going to be the critical point. In that discussion, discussing the implications, that's where we're going to bring into focus this idea.

Well, is it a broad convergence, or is it a narrow convergence? And if it's a broad convergence, what does it mean if it's a narrow convergence, what does it mean? So, the finds that I'm going to talk about, there's only going to be a certain number of them, but I chose these finds by a few criteria. One is going to be the ripple effect. Did this find, did it produce a fairly large ripple effect? Did it move the needle, as they say? I'm going to choose some finds that I think produced a fairly significant ripple effect.

And so, that's going to be one criterion. Did it foster widespread interest? That is to say, did people who weren't necessarily archaeologists may not have even been interested in biblical studies before this point but did they find themselves reading about it? Did they find themselves interested in this conversation for X number of reasons? That was another criterion. And then, what was its impact? Did it show a significant impact on how we understood something? All right, we're going to talk about Ugaritic, and that blew the doors off of what we understood about the Canaanite pantheon, late Bronze Age culture, the late Bronze Age global international network, etc.

It blew the doors off of it and completely redefined the way we understood it because up until that point, all we had was what the Bible said about Baal, about Asherah. But now, all of a sudden, with Ugaritic, we realize, oh, what did the Canaanites say about Baal? What did the Canaanites say about Asherah? And in some ways, things were clarified, and in some ways, things were muddied. So, very, very interesting discussions, but they had an important impact on Old Testament studies.



And all of this, as I've already alluded to, is going to be discussed through William Deaver's idea of convergence. William Deaver is a famous American archaeologist who's now retired, and he dug at Gezer and at a lot of places in Syria-Palestine. But he has made great strides in understanding the relationship between biblical studies and archaeology, and this dates back, I think, to the 80s, when he first had some conversations with Shanks in biblical archaeology review.

This is where he really started kind of teasing out this idea of what's the relationship between these two disciplines, because that's what William Deaver understood. Archaeology is a separate discipline from biblical studies, but yet, they are going to gravitate to each other at certain times, and when those gravitations happen, how do we define it? How do we understand it? He has come up with this idea in the past few years of convergence, the idea that biblical studies and archaeology will converge. My spin on it is I'm going to take that idea of convergence, and I'm going to talk about broad convergences and narrow convergences.

Narrow convergences are the specific times when archaeological research specifically and directly impacts, bumps up against, or intersects with a passage, with a place, or something specific in our Old Testament. Conversely, broad convergences are going to be the places where archaeological research is going to impact and fine-tune our understanding in more broad and general terms. We're going to talk about worldview clarification.

We're going to talk about societal structure and those types of things. There isn't really a specific point, per se, but it's still very, very important for understanding everything that kind of bubbles below the surface or is behind the scenes. So, and I hope, I hope that when I juxtapose narrow convergences from broad convergences, you'll begin to really understand the difference there.

So that's where we're going to go. That's where we're going to go. And I look forward to the next few lectures. I hope you do, too as well. And I'll see you then.

This is Dr. David B. Schreiner in his teaching on Pondering the Spade. This is session 1, setting the stage. Welcome to this course on Pondering the Spade.