

## **Dr. Jeffrey Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 3, Archaeological Methodology Resources from NotebookLM**

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

### **1. Abstract of Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 3, Archaeological Methodology, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

This lecture by Dr. Jeffrey Hudon on Biblical Archaeology focuses on archaeological methodology, contrasting Old and New Testament contexts. He explains the challenges of finding direct New Testament connections due to its nature as a religious movement, while highlighting the Old Testament's richer archaeological record. The lecture then explores common archaeological finds (pottery, inscriptions, metalwork), dating techniques, and potential biases in interpretation, emphasizing the importance of objectivity and multidisciplinary approaches. Finally, Dr. Hudon illustrates these concepts using case studies and examples from his own work, including the significance of tells and khorbets.

**2. 27 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 3 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Introduction & Languages → Archaeology).**



**Hudon\_BibArch\_Ses  
sion03.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, "Hudon\_BibArch\_EN\_Ses03.pdf," which is a lecture on Archaeological Methodology by Dr. Jeffrey Hudon:

#### **Briefing Document: Archaeological Methodology in Biblical Studies**

##### **Introduction:**

This document summarizes a lecture on archaeological methodology by Dr. Jeffrey Hudon, focusing on the application of archaeology to biblical studies. The lecture highlights the differences in approach between Old and New Testament archaeology, the importance of various artifacts, the dating methods used, potential abuses of archaeology, proper archaeological practices, and the methods of excavation. It also emphasizes the limitations of archaeology as a tool for biblical studies.

##### **Key Themes and Concepts:**

#### **1. Old Testament vs. New Testament Archaeology:**

- Old Testament archaeology often deals with empires, kings, major battles, and large-scale movements, resulting in abundant material data (e.g., destructions, building programs).
- New Testament archaeology is more challenging as Christianity was initially a spiritual movement within Judaism, making direct connections to archaeological finds more difficult.
- While relevant to both, archaeology is considered *more* relevant to Old Testament studies.
- Quote: "In the New Testament, archaeology is much more difficult to connect with the text because Christianity was a movement, a spiritual-religious movement within Judaism initially, and that is, makes it difficult to identify archaeological finds that are directly related to the text."

#### **1. Archaeology as a "Fifth Gospel":**

- Archaeology provides an external check and supplement to scripture.
- It offers additional information, insights, and material evidence that can substantiate biblical accounts.

- It helps fill in gaps where historical sources outside the Bible are limited, especially for the Old Testament.
- Quote: "In biblical studies, I like to consider, and others do as well, archaeology is kind of a fifth gospel. It gives us an external check or an external supplement to Scripture and other ancient contemporary records."

#### 1. What Remains to be Discovered?

- **Pottery:** Extremely important for dating, ethnicity studies, and understanding daily life. Used for storage, cooking, and eating. "Pottery is extremely important for archaeology... It was used for almost everything."
- **Metal:** Nails, weapons, and tools are found, but metal is less prevalent than pottery due to its value.
- **Coins:** Become significant for dating after the 7th century BC, particularly during the Persian period.
- **Stone:** Used for grinding, rolling, and sling stones.
- **Perishable materials:** Wood, parchment, leather, and cloth are rare, usually found in very dry environments.
- **Inscriptions:** The most crucial because they connect ancient writers directly to readers, often found on pottery (ostraca). "By far, the most important aspect in archaeology...are inscriptions."

#### 1. Inscriptions and Ostraca Examples:

- **Mesad Hashavyahu ostraca:** Late 7th century, from a small fortress on the Mediterranean.
- **Arad ostraca:** Dispatches from commander Eliashib detailing troop and supply movements and fears of Edomite attacks, providing a snapshot of a critical period before Jerusalem's fall to Babylon.
- **Lachish ostraca:** Dispatches during Judah's fall to the Babylonians, some mirroring Jeremiah 34:7 in mentioning that only Lachish and Ezekiah remained aside from Jerusalem.
- Importance: These provide critical "snapshots" of history.

#### 1. Dating Methods:

- **Coins:** Particularly useful after the Persian period.
- **Pottery:** Styles change through time, providing a relative chronological framework.
- **Architectural and Artistic Styles:** Change over time, aiding dating.
- **Carbon-14 (C14) Dating:** Used for organic materials.
- **Historical Sources:** Contemporary records outside of the Bible.

#### 1. **Archaeology as a Destructive Science:**

- Excavation cannot be repeated. Therefore, proper recording and publication of data are crucial.
- Digging is done methodically, often in five-by-five-meter squares or trenches. "You cannot excavate a site twice."

#### 1. **Abuses of Archaeology:**

- **Treasure Hunting:** Early expeditions were often focused on looting artifacts for museums, rather than understanding history. "the early archaeological expeditions to the Holy Land were very little more than treasure hunters looting and plundering."
- **Extremist Destruction:** ISIS has destroyed many ancient sites (e.g., Palmyra, parts of Nineveh).
- **Nationalistic Purposes:** Using archaeology for military intelligence, national prestige, or making biased historical claims (especially seen with some Israeli and Palestinian Authority archaeologists).
- **Religious Purposes (Archaeological Eisegesis):** Using archaeological findings to confirm pre-conceived theological views, ignoring conflicting evidence. This can be done by maximalists and minimalists.
- **Ideological Purposes:** Using archaeology to counter biblical accounts for personal/ideological purposes.
- Quote: "Worse than that are contemporary nationalistic claims or historical claims from data that you excavate. This is very subjective..."

### 1. **Proper Use of Archaeology:**

- To answer questions about the ancient past, to contribute to knowledge.
- Commitment to objectivity in digging, processing, and publishing data.
- Thorough data collection, assessment, and study before making biblical connections.
- Obtain professional expertise for interpretation when necessary.
- Be exceptionally organized in recording, collecting, and storing data.
- Recognize the limitations of archaeology as a tool for biblical studies.
- It primarily helps understand the biblical world and its people, rather than "proving" the Bible. "It first and foremost helps us understand the biblical world and its people. Sometimes it helps to substantiate, validate the Bible, and sometimes it actually proves the Bible."

### 1. **Excavation Process:**

- Choosing a specific site to excavate.
- Raising funds and obtaining permits from the Department of Antiquities of the relevant governing body.
- Studying the site, looking for surface clues to guide excavation.
- Developing a detailed research design.
- Working with budget specialists and obtaining permits.
- Gaining affiliation with organizations like ASOR (American Schools of Overseas Research) and AIA (American Institute of Archaeology).
- Recruiting staff, volunteers, and specialists.
- Ensuring proper equipment and finances.
- Conducting local and regional surveys to understand the site in context.

### 1. **What do we Search For?**

- **Answers:** Ancient name of the site.
- Periods of settlement and abandonment.
- Reasons for abandonment (destruction, famine, earthquake).

- Ethnicity of the inhabitants.
- Identity of the destroyers (if applicable).
- **Inscriptions:** Epigraphic material on various mediums.
- **Material Cultural Objects:** Anything made, altered, or deposited by humans.

#### 1. **The Lack of Monumental Inscriptions in the Levant:**

- The people of the Levant may have commonly written inscriptions in ink on plaster over stone or mud-brick walls, which deteriorated over time. "One possibility is that the peoples of those in that area of the Levant may have written inscriptions, perhaps on plaster, on top of stone or mud brick walls, and wrote it in ink. And that simply did not survive."
- The discovery of Balaam son of Beor at Tel Dir Allah in Jordan, preserved due to a plastered wall, supports this theory.

#### 1. **Importance of Pottery:**

- **Dating:** Pottery styles change over time, allowing for relative dating.
- **Ethnicity:** Certain pottery forms and styles are unique to particular people groups. Example: The comparison of Philistine and Israelite pottery from the time of the judges.
- **Level of Prosperity:** Simple pottery suggests a less developed economy, while more ornate pieces suggest a more advanced economy and artisan class.
- **Function:** Location of pottery helps discern the function of a specific area.
- **Trade:** Foreign pottery suggests trade networks.
- Quote: "Pottery forms and pottery styles have change throughout history. And so that gives us, as archaeologists, a clue about what we're looking at and when it was made."

#### 1. **Tools of the Trade:**

- **Theodolite (less common now):** To measure levels.
- **GPS:** To get exact elevations and locations using satellites.
- **Sifting Screens:** For finding small artifacts.
- **Gufa:** Reused automobile tire with handles for hauling dirt.

- **Trowel:** For careful work around artifacts.
- **Hand Pick and Brush:** For delicate work.
- **Toothpicks/Dental Picks:** For cleaning delicate objects.

#### 1. **Methods of Excavation:**

- **Square Method:** Using five-by-five-meter squares to maintain vertical control using the bulks between the squares.
- **Trenching:** Cutting long trenches to reveal stratigraphy, used for examining defensive walls. "We leave these standing borders or bulks...to give a vertical dimension to our excavation. In other words, if we dig down, we can see, kind of like a layer cake..."

#### 1. **Destruction Layers:**

- Violent destruction seals areas, creating a "time capsule" that helps archaeologists analyze artifacts and contexts.
- Quote: "When a site is destroyed violently, roofs cave in, or fire, everything is like a time capsule..."

#### 1. **Tells vs. Kerbes:**

- **Tells:** Artificial mounds formed by successive layers of destroyed and rebuilt cities (e.g., Beit Shan, Beersheba), can have complicated stratigraphy.
- **Kerbes:** Shallow sites with limited stratigraphy, often representing a city or farmstead that was only occupied for a short period and not built upon later.
- Importance: These sites have a great difference in the number of layers, and in the complexity of those layers.

#### 1. **Biblical Chronology**

- Edwin R. Thiele's work is highlighted as crucial for understanding biblical chronology.
- Thiele's insight that the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah used different calendars and accession systems clarified the dating of the biblical kings.
- Quote: "And many people thought, well, there was maybe corruption in the text...But Thiele went back and figured out that they used two different

calendars, the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah, and a different accession year system. When he finished his work, they harmonized beautifully."

#### 1. **Chronological Table (Common Archaeological Periods):**

- Chalcolithic (Copper Stone Age)
- Early Bronze Age
- Middle Bronze Age (Patriarchs)
- Late Bronze Age (Exodus)
- Iron Age I (Settlement)
- Iron Age II (Monarchy)
- Babylonian Period
- Persian Period
- Hellenistic Period
- Roman Period
- Byzantine Period.

#### 1. **Genesis and Time:**

- Genesis's use of "toledot" (histories/genealogies) condenses eras, and thus biblical timelines might cover a longer period of time than traditional interpretations suggest.
- Quote: "Genesis uses the Hebrew term Toledot, or histories or genealogies...to condense or highlight areas or eras rather than lengthy periods of time..."

#### 1. **Archaeology in Practice: Example of Taylor Memorial Chapel:**

- A log chapel was moved, modernized, and reconstructed, creating complexities for future archaeologists lacking historical records.
- Example shows the challenges archaeologists have deciphering building styles, materials, and contexts without historical knowledge.
- Quote: "And today it's kind of a historical site. Now, as an exercise, think of this going forward in time, maybe 500 years, and Taylor Memorial Chapel's in ruins. And maybe it's still standing, maybe it's collapsed, but there's something there, enough there for archaeologists to come."





**Conclusion:**

Dr. Hudon's lecture provides a comprehensive overview of archaeological methodology, emphasizing the careful approach required for biblical studies. It highlights the potential and limitations of archaeology, stressing the importance of proper techniques, objectivity, and the recognition that archaeology primarily supports and affirms, rather than proves, the biblical text. By understanding how archaeologists work, we can better appreciate the information they provide and how it enhances our understanding of the past. The lecture stresses that careful method, attention to detail, and an understanding of the tools available are necessary for successful archaeological work.

## **4. Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 3, Archaeological Methodology**

### **Biblical Archaeology Study Guide: Archaeological Methodology**

#### **Quiz**

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each:

1. How does the relevance of archaeology differ between the Old and New Testaments, and why?
2. According to the lecture, what is the most important material remains that archaeologists rely on to make conclusions about a site?
3. What are ostraca, and what is their significance in understanding ancient cultures?
4. Besides coins and pottery, what other methods are used to date archaeological remains?
5. Why is archaeology considered a "destructive science," and what are the implications of this?
6. What are some of the potential abuses of archaeology, and why do these occur?
7. What is the proper approach to making correlations between archaeology and the biblical text?
8. What are the initial steps one must take to excavate a site in the Holy Land, assuming one has the requisite training?
9. What are some of the common types of questions archaeologists attempt to answer by excavation?
10. How do changes in pottery styles and forms help archaeologists draw conclusions?

#### **Answer Key**

1. Archaeology is more relevant to the Old Testament because it involves empires, kings, and major events, which provide more archaeological data. The New Testament deals with a spiritual movement, making it more difficult to connect archaeological finds directly to the text.

2. According to the lecture, inscriptions are the most important remains because they provide a direct connection to the ancient writer, allowing historians to get their thoughts and observations. These writings can be discovered on pottery and other objects.
3. Ostraca are pieces of pottery with writing on them, often containing messages or records. They provide valuable insights into daily life, historical events, and social conditions of ancient societies due to their direct, personal nature.
4. Besides coins and pottery, carbon 14 dating for organic materials, architectural and artistic styles, and historical sources that are contemporary with the biblical text are all ways to date archaeological remains.
5. Archaeology is a destructive science because excavating a site cannot be repeated, meaning that if proper record-keeping and publication are not completed, valuable data is lost. Proper procedures for recording and storing data must be carefully followed, and these are also non-repeatable.
6. Abuses include using archaeology for nationalistic, religious, or ideological purposes, where evidence is selectively interpreted to support a pre-determined narrative. Egos and self-interests often cause archaeologists to draw biased conclusions.
7. The proper approach is to collect, assess, and study data thoroughly before making biblical connections, avoiding hasty correlations. One must be objective and avoid imposing theological views onto the evidence.
8. One must first choose a specific site, raise money, carefully study the site and surface remains, and create a detailed research plan that includes budget, permits, and affiliations. One must also get a permit from the Department of Antiquities.
9. Archaeologists try to identify the ancient name of the site, its periods of settlement and occupation, reasons for abandonment, the ethnicity of inhabitants, and causes of destruction. Additionally, they seek to find and decipher inscriptions and material cultural objects to understand what happened at the site.
10. Pottery styles and forms change over time and within cultures, providing valuable data about dating, ethnicity, level of prosperity, and trade networks. Changes in style allow archaeologists to distinguish periods, cultures, and the levels of craftsmanship within a specific period.

## Essay Questions

1. Discuss the importance of pottery in archaeological research, including its role in dating, identifying ethnicity, and understanding trade.
2. Analyze the various abuses of archaeology described in the lecture. How can these abuses be avoided to maintain objectivity and integrity in research?
3. Contrast and compare the square method of excavation with trenching, discussing when each method might be most suitable and their respective advantages and disadvantages.
4. Explore the complex issue of the scarcity of monumental inscriptions in the Levant, offering a potential explanation based on the lecture's discussion of the Tel Dir Allah find.
5. Reflect on the lecture's example of the Taylor Memorial Chapel. How does it illustrate the challenges archaeologists face in interpreting historical sites and artifacts without the presence of textual records?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Archaeology:** A blend of physical science and history that attempts to find evidence of humanity's past through the study of material remains.
- **Biblical Archaeology:** A sub-discipline of archaeology that focuses on the material remains of cultures and societies mentioned in the Bible.
- **Ostraca:** Pieces of pottery with inscriptions on them, often used for everyday writing.
- **Inscriptions:** Epigraphic material written on stone, ivory, ceramic, plaster, parchment, or leather fragments; these are considered very important by the lecturer.
- **Loci:** Specific areas within an archaeological site that are unique and peculiar due to the contents of a specific stratum or level of occupation.
- **Stratigraphy:** The study of layers or strata of soil and artifacts within an archaeological site to establish a chronological sequence of human occupation.
- **Tell:** An artificial mound formed from the accumulated remains of successive settlements.

- **Kerbe/Horvat:** A shallow site where stratigraphy is not complex due to short periods of occupation or limited re-settlement.
- **Potsherds:** Broken pieces of pottery, which are critical for dating and identifying cultures.
- **Assemblage:** A collection of artifacts that, when studied together, give information about the activities of a people at a site.
- **Eisegesis (Archaeological):** Imposing one's own interpretation or ideas onto archaeological findings, often to conform to a pre-existing theological or historical viewpoint.
- **C14 Dating:** Carbon-14 dating, a method used to date organic materials by measuring the amount of radioactive carbon-14 remaining in the sample.
- **Toponymic:** A name derived from a place.
- **Material Culture:** Anything made, altered, shaped, or deposited by humans.
- **Gufa:** A reused automobile tire with handles bolted on, used to haul dirt.
- **Theodolite:** An instrument that was used for taking elevation levels at a dig.
- **GPS (Global Positioning System):** Uses satellite technology to identify the specific location and elevation of a given point on earth.
- **Square Method:** Excavating sites in five-by-five-meter squares (six by six with borders)
- **Trenching:** Excavating a site in a long trench to expose a cross section of the history of the site
- **Neutron Activation Analysis:** A way of chemically analyzing artifacts to determine where they originated.

## **5. FAQs on Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 3, Archaeological Methodology, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**

### **Archaeological Methodology: A Biblical Archaeology FAQ**

1. **How does archaeology in the Old Testament differ from archaeology in the New Testament, and which is more relevant to its respective texts?**
2. Archaeology in the Old Testament primarily deals with material remains of empires, kings, battles, and large-scale movements, which often correspond directly to biblical narratives. In contrast, New Testament archaeology is more challenging due to Christianity's origins as a spiritual movement within Judaism, making direct connections between archaeological finds and the text harder to establish. Therefore, while relevant to both parts of the Bible, archaeology tends to be more directly relevant to the Old Testament.
3. **What are the primary types of artifacts that archaeologists typically uncover, and which is considered most crucial?**
4. Archaeologists frequently find pottery (used extensively for storage and cooking), metal objects (nails, weapons, and tools), coins (particularly useful for dating from the Persian period onward), and stone tools (grinding stones, sling stones, etc). Inscriptions, whether on pottery (ostraca) or other materials, are considered the most crucial artifacts because they directly link ancient writers to contemporary readers and modern researchers, providing invaluable historical context and insights.
5. **What are some examples of important inscriptions found in biblical archaeology, and why are they significant?**
6. Key examples include the Mesad Hashavyahu ostraca (late 7th century, military dispatches), the Arad ostraca (messages from a fortress commander detailing troop movements and defense against Edomites), and the Lachish ostraca (letters from the time of Judah's fall to the Babylonians), which include descriptions similar to those in Jeremiah 34:7. These inscriptions are significant because they offer firsthand accounts and context from critical periods in biblical history, supporting or adding to the written accounts. They also connect ancient writers directly to the present.

7. **What are some of the major abuses of archaeology, and how can they be avoided?**
8. Common abuses include treasure hunting, nationalistic manipulation, using archaeology to "prove" one's theological views (eisegesis), and ideological bias against the Bible. These abuses can be avoided by: committing to objectivity, fully assessing and studying all data before making biblical connections, obtaining expert assistance for interpretation, thorough organization in data management, recognizing the limitations of archaeology, and being wary of ideological self-interests.
9. **Why is pottery such a vital element in archaeological research?**
10. Pottery is indispensable in archaeology because it is virtually indestructible, abundant at most ancient sites, and undergoes stylistic changes over time. The forms and styles of pottery can help with: (1) dating sites, as pottery from different periods varies greatly; (2) identifying ethnicity, as some pottery styles are unique to certain people; (3) inferring the level of prosperity or trade; and (4) understanding site function based on where and what type of pottery is found. Pottery can also indicate trade through neutron activation analysis to locate where pottery clay came from.
11. **What are the fundamental methods and considerations involved in excavating a site, including research design and logistics?**
12. Excavating a site involves: choosing a site, securing permits from local departments of antiquities, raising funds, recruiting staff and volunteers, and creating a detailed research design with specific questions. Most sites use a combination of excavation and survey. Logistical considerations include obtaining proper equipment, including new equipment yearly, and affiliation with research institutions, and oversight by local antiquities authorities. Excavations often use five-by-five-meter squares, maintaining vertical 'bulks' to observe stratigraphy. Trenching is another method, which often involves creating a long trench along a slope, such as around defensive walls, that may include many layers.



**13. What are tells and kerbes and how do they differ?**

14. Tells are artificial mounds that accumulate over time as cities are built, destroyed, and rebuilt on the same site, creating layers of stratigraphy. They usually involve deep excavation. In contrast, kerbes (or horvat) are shallow sites, usually single-occupation sites, with minimal layering, indicating they were occupied only for a short period and not significantly rebuilt later. They are usually less deep than a tell. Tells contain multiple layers of occupation, while kerbes do not.

**15. What is the overarching goal of biblical archaeology, and what are its capabilities and limitations in relation to the Bible?**

16. The primary goal of biblical archaeology is to understand the biblical world and its people. It seeks to answer historical questions about the past, to contextualize the biblical narrative, and to add to the understanding of ancient life. It can help to validate, support, and sometimes prove the Bible by providing external evidence of its historicity. However, archaeology cannot "prove" faith or definitively establish all biblical claims; it can primarily support or affirm what the Bible states, or provide historical context, rather than fully prove the Biblical narrative in every aspect. Archaeology has limits on its capability, but remains a powerful tool for understanding the past and the Bible.