

Dr. Jeffrey Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 13, Archaeology of Deuteronomy and Joshua Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 13, Archaeology of Deuteronomy and Joshua, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Jeffrey Hudon's lecture on Biblical Archaeology, Session 13, examines the archaeological evidence related to the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua. The lecture **focuses on three key cities**: Jericho, Ai, and Hazor, analyzing the archaeological findings at each site and comparing them to the biblical accounts of their conquest. Different scholarly interpretations of the conquest are presented, including **the unified military conquest, peaceful immigration, and social revolution theories**. The lecture also **discusses the challenges of interpreting archaeological evidence**, highlighting the limitations of archaeology in definitively confirming or refuting biblical narratives. Finally, the lecture touches upon the debate surrounding the identification of Mount Nebo and an altar on Mount Ebal.

2. 19 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 13 – 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
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3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, "Hudon_BibArch_EN_Ses13.pdf," focusing on the archaeology of Deuteronomy and Joshua:

Briefing Document: Archaeology of Deuteronomy and Joshua

Introduction: This document summarizes Dr. Jeffrey Hudon's lecture on the archaeology of the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua. The lecture explores the archaeological evidence related to the Israelite entry into Canaan, the various interpretations of the conquest narrative, and the challenges in correlating archaeological findings with biblical accounts.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Deuteronomy and Mount Nebo:

- Deuteronomy is presented as a series of three speeches by Moses, given on the brink of the Israelites entering Canaan.
- Mount Nebo, in Jordan, is identified as the site of Moses' death and burial. It is described as a ridge overlooking the Jordan Valley with two peaks, the northern peak traditionally believed to be the place where God showed Moses the Promised Land.
- The site has a long history of religious significance and was a Christian shrine and monastery in the 4th century. Today, it is a place of pilgrimage for Christians and is also held holy by Muslims and Jewish people.
- Archaeological excavations were conducted by Sylvester Saller and later an Italian architect rebuilt the memorial.
- Hudon points out that the view from Mount Nebo does not encompass the entirety of the land shown to Moses, suggesting a "supernatural element" to God's revelation.

1. The Book of Joshua and Archaeological Significance:

- The book of Joshua is considered an important source for archaeologists due to the narrative of a new people moving into a land, destroying and then inhabiting cities, and introducing a distinct material culture. However, archaeological results are described as "mixed" with "highs and lows."

- The Canaanites inhabited the valleys, while other distinct ethnic groups, such as the Perizzites, Jebusites, Amorites, Gergesites, and Hivites, inhabited the hills.
- One of the main difficulties lies in distinguishing these groups in the archaeological record. Pottery from the late Bronze Age, the supposed time of the conquest, lacks clear differentiation between various ethnic groups.
- There are clear distinctions in pottery and material culture in the later Iron Age (Iron II) when groups like the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Judah and Israel emerged.

1. **Three Main Historical Views of the Conquest:**

- **Unified Military Conquest:** This view, supported by scholars like John Bright, considers the book of Joshua to be a generally accurate historical record of a swift and decisive military campaign where the Israelites took the land within a generation or sooner. These scholars believe the Biblical narrative to be a "faithful record of events."
- **Peaceful Immigration Theory:** Initially proposed by German scholars like Albrecht Alt and Martin Noth, this view suggests that the events described in Joshua were a condensed version of a much longer process of peaceful immigration and interaction between nomadic Israelites and Canaanite farmers. "The Israelites came in as nomadic people, and they would interact with the farmers, and that's how they got along." Yohanan Aharoni and initially Israel Finkelstein also agreed with this theory.
- **Social Revolution View:** This view, popularized by George Mendenhall and Norman Gottwald, proposes that the Israelites were indigenous to Canaan, not newcomers, and their "conquest" was actually a peasant revolt against Canaanite overlords. This view, particularly among liberal and secular scholars, sees the Biblical narrative as a revolt and not an actual conquest or immigration of a people. "The Hebrews were not people coming into the land; rather, they were indigenous...They actually revolted, creating a peasant revolt against their Canaanite overlords, and took over parts of the land." This theory, especially in the extreme form of the indigenous theory is refuted by Hudon.

1. **Problems with the Social Revolution View:**

- Hudon argues that this view imposes modern geopolitical realities onto the biblical text and ignores evidence suggesting different material culture and practices adopted by the Israelites.

- He also highlights the importance of the biblical traditions of the Israelites' origin in slavery and their exodus from Egypt.
- He quotes his advisor, Anson Rainey, who said that the "idea of a revolting peasant theory...is revolting, not the peasants"
- Hudon emphasizes "linguistic evidence as well as pottery evidence showing that the origin of the Israelites was to the east of Jordan, that they came across"

1. **Archaeological Evidence and Specific Sites:**

- **Jericho (Tell el-Sultan):** Early excavations by Charles Warren and John Garstang. Garstang believed he found collapsed walls from Joshua's time.
- Kathleen Kenyon's later excavations, using more modern methods, suggested there was "virtually nothing there" in the Late Bronze Age (the supposed time of the conquest) to conquer. Kenyon found a major Middle Bronze city at the site but did not find anything significant at the Late Bronze level.
- Kenyon's work is questioned due to the fact that some say she was agnostic and anti-semitic, and that she may have been biased against evidence that would confirm the Biblical account.
- Hudon suggests that the top stratum of the city at Jericho was probably eroded away.
- He points out that there must have been an occupation at Jericho because of Elisha's spring. The site continues to be excavated by an Italian expedition led by Lorenzo Nigro.
- Hudon says that "the middle Bronze Age walls...were reused and remained in use during the time of Joshua" and that the destruction of these walls is the destruction of the city.
- Burnt grain found in storage jars seems to suggest that the city was destroyed by the Israelites, since they would not take plunder from Jericho since it was devoted to God.
- **Rahab's House:** It is suggested that Rahab could have lived in a casemate wall (a structure that has two rows of walls close together with rooms within them).
- **Ai (Et-Tel):** Initial excavations by a Jewish lady in the 1930s. Later, John Garstang dug trenches at Ai and found no Late Bronze pottery.

- Joseph Calloway's extensive excavations in the 1960s and 70's did not find any Late Bronze occupation.
- Calloway eventually concluded that the biblical account of the conquest of Ai was a myth, "the Bible got this wrong."
- Hudon proposes a theory by Alan Millard that the site of Ai, which means "ruin," was a makeshift redoubt for Canaanites, not a large city during the Late Bronze Age. The Israelites did not take an inhabited city, but a military encampment that served as a last stand for the Canaanites. "The site of I was actually a makeshift redoubt, a makeshift citadel or stockade for the surrounding Canaanite populations to retreat to, to defend themselves against this Israelite incursion."
- **Hazor:** Excavated by Yigal Yadin. Clear evidence of destruction during the Late Bronze Age, aligning with the biblical narrative, a "rousing positive example of archaeology, again, collaborating and confirming the biblical account."
- The city had an upper and lower city. The lower city is 180 acres in size.
- Hazor is described as "the head chief Canaanite city"
- Evidence of a palace, ash layers, and knocked-over Canaanite artifacts were found.

1. **Other Archaeological Evidence:**

- Adam Zertal's survey of the hill country of Ephraim. He discovered what he thought was an altar on Mount Ebal, but it was disputed by other archaeologists including Anson Rainey, who said that it was a watchtower. Ralph Hawkins argues with Zertal that this was an altar from the time of Joshua.
- Hudon discusses the boundary descriptions of the various tribal lands as described in Joshua 15. He suggests that the list was updated over time, probably in the period of the monarchy.
- The topography of the Mounts Ebal and Gerizim are discussed, as is the city of Shechem. Hudon ends by quoting Joshua's appeal to the people before his death.

1. Limitations of Archaeology:

- Hudon emphasizes that archaeology is a limited science that cannot prove or disprove all aspects of the biblical narrative. "Archaeology has limitations, and it can't prove everything you want to define. It can't show you everything you want to find or prove certain biblical accounts."
- It can only provide evidence that is subject to interpretation.

Conclusion: Dr. Hudon's lecture highlights the complexities and challenges involved in using archaeology to understand the biblical accounts of Deuteronomy and Joshua. While some sites like Hazor seem to support the biblical narrative, others like Jericho and Ai are more enigmatic. The various interpretations of the conquest and immigration demonstrate the dynamic relationship between historical, archaeological, and theological perspectives.

4. Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 13, Archaeology of Deuteronomy and Joshua

Biblical Archaeology: Deuteronomy and Joshua Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is the significance of Mount Nebo in the context of the book of Deuteronomy?
2. According to the lecture, why should the book of Joshua be a valuable resource for archaeologists?
3. What are the three main views discussed regarding the historicity of the conquest of Canaan as described in the book of Joshua?
4. What are the core arguments of the social revolution theory concerning the origins of the Israelites?
5. What were the conflicting findings of John Garstang and Kathleen Kenyon at Jericho, and how did these contribute to the debate surrounding the city's archaeology?
6. How does the discovery of burned grain at Jericho support the biblical account of Joshua's conquest?
7. What is the main problem with the archaeological evidence at the site of Ai, and how does Alan Millard address this problem?
8. Why is Hazor considered a significant site that supports the biblical narrative of the conquest?
9. What is the debate surrounding the structure discovered on Mount Ebal?
10. How do boundary descriptions in Joshua contribute to the archaeological study of ancient Israel?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Mount Nebo is the site where Moses viewed the promised land before his death. It is also believed to be his burial site. It holds religious significance for Christians,

Muslims, and Jewish people and was the location of a shrine and later a monastery.

2. The book of Joshua describes a new group of people entering Canaan with a different material culture, destroying and inhabiting cities, and establishing new villages. This process of conquest and settlement should leave observable archaeological evidence.
3. The three main views are the unified military conquest, the peaceful immigration theory, and the social revolution view. Each of these has a different interpretation of the book of Joshua as a historical source and how the Israelites populated Canaan.
4. The social revolution theory posits that the Israelites were indigenous Canaanites who revolted against their overlords. They were not newcomers to the land. This theory argues against the traditional narrative of the Exodus and the subsequent conquest.
5. Garstang claimed to find collapsed walls at Jericho that he attributed to Joshua's conquest, while Kenyon later determined that there was no significant Late Bronze Age occupation at the site. Kenyon's findings refuted the earlier claim and led to debates over interpretations of the archaeological record.
6. The burned grain at Jericho suggests that the city was destroyed and the spoils were not taken, which aligns with the biblical account that Jericho was dedicated to the Lord and its contents destroyed. This distinguishes it from typical practices of warfare and plunder.
7. The primary problem with Ai is the lack of evidence of Late Bronze Age occupation or destruction. Millard suggests that the site of Ai was a makeshift redoubt or a place of refuge for the surrounding Canaanites. It was not an inhabited city at the time of the Israelite conquest.
8. Hazor has yielded clear evidence of destruction during the Late Bronze Age. This supports the biblical account of its conquest by Joshua. The scale and complexity of the site match the description of it being the head of the Canaanite kingdoms.
9. There is a debate about whether the structure found on Mount Ebal is an altar or a watchtower. Some scholars, such as Adam Zertal and Ralph Hawkins, believe it is an altar used in connection to the book of Joshua, while others remain critical.

10. Boundary descriptions in Joshua provide geographical and historical contexts for understanding the ancient tribal territories of Israel. These descriptions can be compared with archaeological findings to help date the various cities and regions and assess patterns of settlement and trade.

Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the unified military conquest, peaceful immigration, and social revolution theories regarding the Israelite settlement of Canaan, considering their interpretations of the book of Joshua and relevant archaeological evidence.
2. Discuss the contributions and challenges presented by the archaeological excavations at Jericho. How did the interpretations of Garstang and Kenyon differ, and how has this site influenced the broader understanding of the biblical narrative?
3. Analyze the archaeological issues presented by the site of Ai, examining the different interpretations offered by various scholars. How does Alan Millard's suggestion help to address these issues, and what does this reveal about the limitations of archaeological evidence?
4. Evaluate the archaeological evidence discovered at Hazor. How does this site both support the biblical account of Joshua's conquest and provide insight into the limitations of archaeology as a tool for understanding biblical history?
5. Discuss the challenges and complexities of using archaeology to interpret biblical texts. What are the limitations of the archaeological record, and how do different interpretations, such as those discussed in this lecture, demonstrate the ongoing scholarly debate between archaeological data and biblical accounts?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Mount Nebo:** A mountain in Jordan believed to be the site where Moses viewed the promised land and died.
- **Canaanites:** The people inhabiting the land of Canaan before the arrival of the Israelites, often depicted as enemies in the Bible.
- **Unified Military Conquest:** A view that interprets the Book of Joshua as a generally accurate account of the Israelites' rapid military conquest of Canaan.

- **Peaceful Immigration Theory:** The view that the Israelite settlement in Canaan was a gradual process of immigration and integration, not primarily a military conquest.
- **Social Revolution Theory:** The theory that the Israelites were actually indigenous Canaanites who revolted against their own elites and created a new identity as Israelites.
- **Tell el-Sultan:** The archaeological site of ancient Jericho, located in the Jordan Valley.
- **Stratigraphy:** The study of rock layers (strata) and layering used in archaeology to understand the historical sequence of a site.
- **Late Bronze Age:** A period in the ancient Near East roughly from 1550-1200 BCE, the time frame when the Israelite conquest of Canaan is traditionally placed.
- **Revetment Wall:** A supporting wall, often sloped, built to reinforce a main wall, commonly used in ancient fortifications.
- **Casemate Wall:** A city wall that is two parallel walls separated by a space that can be used for rooms or filled with rubble for added strength.
- **Khirbet Qeiyafa:** An early Iron Age archaeological site in Israel where casemate walls were discovered.
- **Et-Tel:** The site identified as biblical Ai, which translates to "the ruined mound."
- **Redoubt:** A temporary or makeshift fortification or defensive position used for protection during attack.
- **Hazor:** A significant archaeological site in northern Israel, a large Canaanite city, and mentioned in the Book of Joshua as the head of all the kingdoms.
- **Orthostat:** A stone slab, often decorated or carved, used in the construction of walls or buildings.
- **Mount Ebal:** A mountain in the West Bank, where an ancient structure was discovered that is debated to be either an altar or watchtower.
- **Mount Gerizim:** A mountain in the West Bank, adjacent to Mount Ebal.
- **Trans-Jordanian:** Pertaining to the region east of the Jordan River.

5. FAQs on Hudon, Biblical Archaeology, Session 13, Archaeology of Deuteronomy and Joshua, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on the Archaeology of Deuteronomy and Joshua

- **What is the significance of Mount Nebo in the context of the book of Deuteronomy?**
- Mount Nebo is where Moses, according to the biblical account, viewed the Promised Land before his death. It's located in Jordan and is a site of pilgrimage for Christians, Muslims, and Jews, due to its association with Moses. While visitors today can see much of the landscape, it is believed that God granted Moses a supernatural vision, allowing him to see the entirety of the land that his people would inhabit which goes beyond the physical limitations of the site. The site was excavated in the 1930s, revealing early Christian shrines and mosaics.
- **How does the book of Joshua present opportunities for archaeological study?**
- The book of Joshua describes the entry of a new people (the Israelites) into Canaan, involving city destructions and new settlements, which would suggest material culture shifts visible in the archaeological record. The book's descriptions of conquest and settlement provide a framework for comparing with archaeological findings to confirm or challenge biblical narrative. However, the archaeological record, particularly from the late Bronze Age, has proven difficult in many areas.
- **What are the main views on the historical accuracy of the conquest of Canaan as described in the book of Joshua?**
- There are three primary viewpoints. The *unified military conquest* view, supported by some older scholars, treats Joshua as a generally accurate historical record of a rapid, widespread military campaign. The *peaceful immigration* theory suggests the Israelites entered Canaan over a longer period as nomadic groups, gradually interacting with the local farming populations. The *social revolution* view, popular among contemporary scholars, posits that the Israelites were indigenous Canaanites who revolted against their social and political elites, and was NOT an invasion from without.

- **What are the challenges in using archaeology to verify the biblical accounts of the conquest?**
- One challenge is the lack of distinct pottery or material culture to differentiate between various groups (like Jebusites, Amorites) in the Late Bronze period. Additionally, archaeological findings, such as at Jericho and Ai, have sometimes conflicted with the biblical narrative, leading to different interpretations of the texts. Archaeology can be limited and can't necessarily prove all the details in the Bible.
- **What does archaeology reveal about Jericho, a key city in Joshua's conquest?**
- Archaeological evidence at Jericho is mixed. John Garstang claimed to have found evidence of collapsed walls from the time of Joshua. However, Kathleen Kenyon concluded that there was no significant city during the late Bronze Age at the time of Joshua. She did find Late Bronze Age houses and tombs, but these were not within a city context. The possibility that middle Bronze Age walls were reused and that any Late Bronze structures were lost to erosion. This indicates the limitations of archaeology in confirming the biblical details. There are also some issues with pottery dating, where it's been shown that Kenyon misidentified Late Bronze Age pottery as Middle Bronze Age.
- **What is the "problem of Ai," and how is it being approached by archaeologists?**
- The "problem of Ai" refers to the lack of archaeological evidence of Late Bronze Age occupation or destruction. While other sites have been suggested, the most widely excavated site, Et-Tel, has no Late Bronze Age evidence. Possible solutions include: that this is not the biblical Ai (although this is unlikely), the Bible has it wrong, or more plausibly that Ai was not occupied during the Late Bronze Age as a city, but a makeshift fortress used by Canaanites from surrounding villages (as suggested by Alan Millard). The fact that the name 'Ai' in Hebrew means 'ruin', is key to understanding its role in this part of the Biblical account.

- **What makes Hazor an important site in the context of the book of Joshua?**
- Hazor is significant because archaeological evidence, excavated extensively by Yigal Yadin, confirms the city's status as a large Canaanite city. There is evidence of clear destruction layers, correlating with the biblical account of its conquest and destruction by Joshua. The existence of both an upper and a lower city with substantial evidence of Canaanite infrastructure, and its destruction makes Hazor a prime example of archaeology aligning with the biblical narrative. Evidence suggests there were actually two destructions at Hazor, further solidifying its alignment with the biblical text, irrespective of early or late dating of the Exodus.
- **What was found at Mount Ebal and what are the conflicting views about the structure?**
- Adam Zertal's survey of Mount Ebal uncovered what he believed to be an early Iron Age altar with sacrificial remains and a ramp. However, other archaeologists, including Anson Rainey, have argued that the structure was more likely a watchtower. While Ralph Hawkins has produced a more recent work arguing that this was in fact an altar, the discussion is far from conclusive.