

ARCHAEOLOGY VERSUS THE BIBLE CLAIM TO BE THE TRUTH

"Biblical archaeology has helped to bury the Bible, and archaeologists know it" Hector Avalos in *The End of Biblical Studies*

"Many Christians believe science does support Christianity's most important claims. I encourage those who think this to research specific topics from credible scientific sources. For example, many believers mistakenly think that archaeological discoveries have confirmed key stories and events in the Bible. To date, however, archaeologists have only found evidence of some physical places and human beings named in the Bible. No artifact or site has ever confirmed the occurrence of any supernatural event, such as the Great Flood or the resurrection of Jesus, or the existence of any supernatural beings, like angels, demons, or God himself. To date, there has been no known verifiable scientific evidence that confirms any Christian supernatural claims" John Loftus, *Christianity in the Light of Science*.

Christianity and Judaism claim to be historical faiths. Christianity cannot have any credibility if events mentioned in the Bible such as the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt to Israel or the resurrection of Jesus Christ never happened. Jews accept the former as true but reject the latter so Judaism dismisses Christianity as fantasy and rejects its claim to be historical. Archaeology has always suspected that the Bible contains many lies and with today's advanced technology it has got no discouragement in its scepticism.

BUT IT AIN'T NECESSARILY SO

It Ain't Necessarily So, Investigating the Truth of the Biblical Past, Matthew Sturgis, *Headline Books*, London, 2001

This book cannot be recommended enough. It explores the most up to date archaeological evidence that the Bible contains much that is untrue.

The Bible claim that the Israelites were not Canaanites has been disproven (page 8, 111-113).

The conquest of Canaan as spelled out in the Bible where Joshua led the people of Israel to successful war against Canaan is likewise false (page 8).

The shared DNA between Israelites and Palestinians today may point to a common origin in Canaan (page 11). Israel means fighter for El and is a Canaanite word (page 117). El was top Canaanite god and Israel had been worshipping Yahweh and his wife Asherah in the 8th century BC (page 13, 117).

The list of Edomite kings in Genesis 36 makes the error of naming kings who lived long after Moses which conflicts with tradition that Moses wrote Genesis (page 22).

Jericho was destroyed 150 years before the coming of Joshua. The story from the Bible that he destroyed it is false (page 62). There is no evidence that the city was even occupied at the time of Joshua (page 64). "Almost everyone" agrees that the Jericho story from the Bible is false (page 64). Worse, Canaan at the time was very likely to be a province of Egypt at the time (page 69). It even had unwallled cities, so sure were the people that Egypt always be able to protect them.

Cuneiform tablets from those times discovered in 1889 give proof that Egypt stepped in to look after Canaan and restore stability (page 69). This refutes the Bible claim that Israel escaped slavery from Egypt by going to Canaan and that it fought the Canaanites in Canaan not the Egyptians. The Israelites after they left Egypt are supposed to have settled for a while at Kadesh but not a shred of evidence for this has been uncovered (page 72). The story of the Exodus from Egypt and the conquest of Canaan by Joshua is pure myth for most scholars (page 74). Even the Holy City, Jerusalem, its name comes from the Canaanite god, Shalem (page 137).

King David was one of the central characters in the Bible and Jesus, according to the New Testament, claimed he was a David and his successor as King and his descendant. Hardly anything indicating that David ever lived has ever been found and items thought to back up the Bible account have been re-ascribed by scholars (page 145). He had a rags to riches existence in the Bible. His grand capital city Jerusalem was merely a small village (page 146). The Bible lies that it was his splendid royal headquarters. The presence of the Philistines and the poor evidence for David in comparison has led many scholars to doubt the existence of David (page 159).

An inscription speaking of the house of David about 100 years after David's time is used by some as evidence for the existence of David (page 164). Many scholars think that the inscription is speaking of a placename not the house of David. Another inscription is disputed as well. Scholars by guessing the missing letters have worked out that they think it refers to

the house of David as well (page 169).

The Bible boasts and brags about the great buildings and super-wealth and great alliances of King Solomon and yet the evidence for all this so bad that at the present time unless new evidence comes up Solomon must be taken for a myth (page 207).

That God failed to preserve archaeological evidence very well for his Bible surely says that it is the word of man not God?

HISTORICAL PROBLEMS

Bible critics have mostly believed that certain events recorded in the Bible never happened and that some of the characters in it never existed.

The existence of Adam and Eve was denied because it was thought that having two first parents would have forced the human race to propagate itself by dangerous incest. Evolution disposed of Adam and Eve forever. The Bible says that each species God made in the Garden of Eden reproduced after its own kind which contradicts evolution which requires creatures to evolve from simple life forms.

The existence of Abraham was denied for it was thought that his story did not fit the period in which he would have lived and because some of that story seemed to have been embellished.

It was thought that there were no Philistines or Hittites around in patriarchal times.

The existence of the naughty cities of Sodom and Gomorrah was denied.

The conquest of Canaan under Joshua was denied.

The existence of Darius in the Book of Daniel was denied.

The census by Quirinius recorded in Luke is still unproven. It was not likely that a census that would require a pregnant woman like Mary or indeed anybody at all to go to the city of her roots ever happened.

The existence of Pontius Pilate was denied or doubted until his name was found carved in stone.

The court where Jesus was tried before Pilate, the Pavement was allegedly recently discovered.

Would these and the other things that were denied until they were found to be true have been allowed to fall into oblivion by a good and trustworthy God? Would a God who requires faith permit the evidence for the trustworthiness of his revelation to be lost even for a day? Without it we have reason to mistrust his book. There is no other way we can prove the Bible except by combing it with an archaeologist's and historian's comb for we can't just assume that the supernatural stuff which is unverifiable by nature is true. (Yes, I know once they have done that that it is up to philosophers to run the next battery of tests.) The fundamentalists howl in triumph when history is apparently found to deny what the sceptics say and supports them but they should hang their heads in shame for that. It is downright crazy to say, "The Bible must be a true revelation from God when it is historically accurate", for it is the spiritual and moral teachings that are important and you cannot prove they are accurate.

NUMBERS 14 AND ITS GRAVE PROBLEM

The Bible says that almost the entire generation of Israel that left Egypt died during the forty years trek through the wilderness in Numbers 14. Israel did not cremate but buried the people.

The problem is that there are no remains of these people in the region. The Encyclopaedia of Bible Difficulties contends that because Israel was nomadic it would have buried the dead in shallow graves in sand and gravel. And wild animals would have scraped the bodies up. Skeletons would soon be worn down and finally scraped away by sand and gravel if they became exposed to the abrasive action of the sand and gravel carried in the wind.

But Israel was a large nation and could easily have taken the time to bury the dead properly and good and deep. Indeed, it would have done that for the Hebrews stressed family life and decent burials. The cleanness laws would have made them reluctant to just throw some sand on a corpse and move on. They had to be put down deep. Not being buried was a taboo so they would have taken great care to make sure that the corpses could not be distributed. They would have buried them far down under a layer of rocks covered up with sand and gravel so that no wild beast could dig them up and have a feast and to protect them from the wind.

JOSEPH AND JERICHO

This is a study of David M. Rohl's volume, *A Test of Time, The Bible from Myth to History*.

He claims that the tomb of Joseph – the Joseph of Genesis – was found in Tell ed-Daba, Egypt in 1987.

There was no body in it. The Bible says that Joseph was taken away by Moses.

A statue was found and it was decided that this was a religious statue of Joseph to which sacrifices and prayers were made. The head was badly disfigured due to desecration.

The statue is of a vizier – which was Joseph's role. He holds a throw-stick which shows he was a foreigner. Joseph was not a native of Egypt but Israel.

And the man wears a coat of many colours like Joseph's famous coat.

Now there is no evidence that this man was Joseph. The image of the statue in the book shows a coat of four colours not many. And Joseph would not be wearing that coat of many colours for he got it when he was a boy and was kidnapped in it and it was wrenched off dipped in animal blood and taken back to his father to make him think Joseph was dead.

There is just a part of the alleged throw-stick in the right shoulder of the statue meaning that it could be anything else. The coffin of Ramesses II shows a strange prominent strip sticking out of his headdress which makes interpretation difficult for the alleged stick on the statue. And the statue is unusual with a mushroom style of red hair.

If the Egyptians really honoured and preserved Joseph's statue would they have let Moses take the body? The grave was certainly robbed making it clear that the only way the body got out was by being stolen but not by Israel who would have been the first suspects which would have meant that the body would have been recovered by the Egyptians.

The Bible says that Joshua and his men circled the walled city of Jericho with the Ark and they miraculously fell. The book of Joshua, however, does not say that it was the kind of miracle that makes blood come out of a communion wafer. But the result of the miracle was the merciless slaughter of the citizens including children.

A curse from the Lord was evilly put on the person who would rebuild the city by God through Joshua. It was promised that the person's firstborn son would die where the foundations would be and his youngest son would be buried where the gates are.

On page 301, we read that it was found that the wall had collapsed in places in 1907 by Professor Garstang. It was a mud brick wall. But in 1952 it was found by Dame Kenyon that this wall belong to the Early Bronze age. Because of this it was thought that the falling walls story was untrue for it was believed that the walls fell before Israel would have appeared there in the Late Bronze age. The scholars put the Israelite Conquest in the Late Bronze Age but Kenyon proved that there was no big city of Jericho in that time. Rohl solves these problems with a new chronology that he proposes. He says that the Conquest took place in the Middle Bronze Age and says that Kenyon's research for that period supports the historicity of the falling walls story of Joshua.

But later we read that weathering has left only a little of the Middle Bronze Age wall to go on (page 303). There was a slope built along the wall so if the wall fell it would have tumbled down the slope into the trench. Kenyon found reddish earth that she assumed must have been what was left of the wall. And there was evidence that the city had been burned.

Joshua 3:15 says that the attack took place during harvest time and Garstang found jars of grain in the ruins. There was no evidence of wounding from the skeletons which Rohl thinks may have been due to a plague spread by the Israelites (Numbers 25).

Why were no Israelite artefacts found? They must have put some of the people to the sword so there would have been something left.

The walls could have fell on their own when they disintegrated into earth for they were weak by nature.

Where are the blackened bones?

Where are the skeletons that would have been the signs of people slain in battle?

Israel would not have removed the corpses for the Law forbade that – corpses, pagan ones especially - were thought to be dirty.

And people keep grain all year around.

The people of Jericho could have been struck by plague and thoroughly incinerated the dead – the skeletons were just buried by the people were not infected - and then they burned the city. The fire caused the wall to collapse. This is the most reasonable hypothesis and explains why there are not many bones. Bodies are hard to burn so if they do not exist then it shows that special attention was taken to disposing of them. The odds are stacked against the Bible's story of what happened.

The best book to read on the subject of Bible archaeology proving that the Bible is false is *The Bible Unearthed* by Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman.

Conclusion

The Bible just demands too much faith. There is no evidence that many of its historical claims are true at all and it expects to be revered as truth itself! The number of those scholars who believe morally dubious pagan deity Baal was once the same God as equally morally dubious Yahweh is not insignificant. No matter how nice Yahweh and the Christian God is, it does not change who he is. He is a demon!

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