

TESTING BIBLE "HISTORY", JOSEPH AND JERICHO

"Biblical archaeology has helped to bury the Bible, and archaeologists know it" Hector Avalos in *The End of Biblical Studies*. Let us look at those who say there is no evidence that the Bible reported anything incorrectly.

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 Egypt 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.

