

Jericho

Archeology Harmonizes With The Bible Account
Some scientific evidence worth considering
June 27-29, 2014 Salem Bible Students Convention Handout

In 2009, mechanical engineer and archeologist Dr. Bryant G. Wood delivered a one hour lecture on the archeological evidence collected from the tell or mound of Jericho by four teams of archeologists over the past century. In contrast to the usual skeptical academic community, Mr. Wood uses his reverence for the Bible to interpret the archeological evidence. Except for Mr. Wood's erroneous statement about the date of the conquest, his lecture seems credible and is well worth the hour it takes to view it. Although there is more evidence yet to be uncovered at Jericho, the evidence already in hand in 2014 is quite helpful to understand what happened in Jericho and how to properly envision the events of Joshua chapter 6. Many artists' conceptions of Joshua chapter 6 are quite misleading and Mr. Wood's lecture and website which are replete with drawings and photos help to separate truth from myth.

Mr. Wood's videotaped lecture can be viewed at:

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2008/06/The-Walls-of-Jericho.aspx#Article>

Some highlights from Mr. Wood's lecture:

1. Four teams of archeologists have excavated Jericho since 1902:
 - a. Ernst Sellin and Carl Watzinger – 1902-1909, 1911
 - b. John Garstang (British) - 1930-1936
 - c. Kathleen Kenyon (British – Bible skeptic) – 1952-1958
 - d. Lorenzo Nigro (Italian) - 1997-2000
2. Mr. Wood reviews and summarizes highlights from the excavations.
3. Mr. Wood is a Canaanite pottery expert. Pottery is used to date historical events such as when cities like Jericho were inhabited and destroyed. However, his 1406 BC date for the conquest is in error. cf. Vol. 2, pp. 42-51,194 (1575 BC)
4. At least one very strong earthquake strikes the Jericho area every century. The last significant earthquake happened in 1927. It caused a landslide that dammed up the Jordan River in Adam which is about 15 miles upstream from Jericho. The Jordan stopped flowing for about 20 hours.
5. Biblical Jericho is a mound, oblong or oval in shape, extending north and south. Today, the entire mound resembles an upside-down oblong bowl.
6. Biblical Jericho had two (actually 3) walls. A stone retaining wall extended all the way around the perimeter of the city. This wall was built on bedrock at ground level. It extended about 18-20' high.

7. The lower/outer mudbrick wall measuring about 6 feet thick and 18 feet high was built on top of the retaining wall, making both walls together about 35-40 feet high. This 35-40 foot high wall is the one that the Israelites marched around at bedrock or ground level.

8. The upper mudbrick wall was the inner wall of the city and was built all the way around the summit of the mound. It was about 6 feet thick and 18 feet high.

9. The city proper which was inside the upper/inner mudbrick wall was about 6 acres in size. The area between the upper/inner mudbrick wall and the lower or outer mudbrick wall was an additional 3 acres making Jericho about 9 acres in size.

10. The walls that collapsed were both the lower/outer and upper/inner mudbrick walls, but not the retaining wall. The walls fell outward and the mudbricks cascaded down over the retaining wall thereby building an instant mudbrick rubble ramp enabling the Israelites to go up over the 18 foot high retaining wall and on up to the city proper on the top of the mound. The 1997 dig uncovered a large portion of the stone retaining wall in tact on the south side of the mound which clearly shows the mudbrick rubble piled up against it.

11. The poorer classes of people (such as Rahab) built houses on the earthen rampart or embankment separating the lower and upper mudbrick walls. The rear wall of her house was the mudbrick wall in which she had a window which looked down over the mudbrick wall and continued down over the retaining wall to ground or bedrock level some 35-40 feet below.

12. All of the mudbrick walls around the mound are collapsed, except for one section on the north side of the mound which is where Rahab's house was probably constructed. The German (1902) excavation uncovered a short 9 foot high section of mudbrick wall that had not collapsed.

13. The mudbrick walls did not fall flat. They collapsed underneath themselves which is the proper interpretation or reading of the Hebrew word translated "flat" in Joshua 6:20. This suggests the cascading of the mudbrick wall rubble.

14. On the southeast part of the mound, a 3-foot thick layer of burned material was uncovered. Kenyon concluded that the wall collapse happened before the burn took place which is consistent with Joshua chapter 6.

NOTE: The tell or mound can be viewed on Google Earth. It is located more than 700 feet below sea level. It is 6 miles west of the Jordan and 1.5 miles northwest of the heart of downtown present day Jericho. The Google Earth coordinates are 31 degrees, 52 minutes, 15 seconds north latitude and 35 degrees, 26 minutes, 38 seconds east longitude.