

5 AMAZING Archaeological Finds from the Old Testament | with Joel P. Kramer

(November 3, 2023)

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, if there's one place you could go on YouTube to get extremely clear teaching on the top archaeological discoveries related to the Bible, where would you go? Well, I can tell you where I go, I go there frequently. It's the Expedition Bible YouTube channel. And it's led by archaeologist Joel Kramer. This is a wonderful site. And Joel is also the author of a book called 'Where God Came Down: The Archaeological Evidence.'

It's been for quite a while, the number one biblical archaeology book on Amazon. And Joel has been living in the Middle East for decades. He's there right now. And he has access to so many of these sites, that you're going to want to avail yourself of his YouTube channel. Again, it's called Expedition Bible. And he's our guest for the entire show today. Joel, how are you?

JOEL:

I am great. Thanks for having me.

FRANK:

Hey, Joel, you really do great work over there. I love your YouTube videos. In fact, what we're doing right now, here, on our TV program, the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist TV program is we're going through the top archaeological discoveries in the Bible. Last night, we just did Lesson 11. It's probably going to be about 25 lessons, because there's so much out there.

And I often take clips of your YouTube videos, of course, giving you full credit for that and sending people to your YouTube channel because you explain things so well. And you show these sites. You go to so many of these sites. First of all, how did you get into archaeology and why have you been living in the Middle East for so many decades?

JOEL:

Well, I was raised in the Middle East. My dad was an engineer and worked for an oil company in Saudi Arabia. So, I grew up exploring the desert. And one of my childhood heroes was a geologist that worked for Aramco. And so, we used to go on camping trips with him, sometimes nine days long. And he kind of mentored me and my interest into archaeology, and just evidence-based understandings. And so, I kind of went in that direction.

And then I ended up moving to Israel in 2007 and enrolling in archaeology school over there. That's where I did my studying and my archaeological work with my professor. And so, I love



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archaeology. But I just love the Bible and anything that has to do with the Bible I'm intrigued in. And so, I wouldn't want to be doing anything else, honestly.

FRANK:

Now, you studied under Dr. Shimon Gibson. What is he famous for?

JOEL:

Oh, gosh, what is Shimon famous for? Looking back, if I would have had to do it again, I definitely would have chosen him again. Because what was so great about Shimon, many things. But one of the most impactful for me was that he was just so involved. He's just always got so many projects. He's one of these guys that's got his fingers in so many different pieces of pie. But as far as an archaeology student, that's what you want. Because, of course, you want to be learning in the classroom.

But the most important classroom to learn archaeology is in the field and in a square or a trench digging. And that's what he gave me the opportunity to do. And so, I've just got a lot of dig experience, and pottery reading, and all the different things that come along with archaeology studying under him. And I learned a lot. I'm very grateful for my time with him. Yeah.

FRANK:

What are some of the sites that he took you to that you were able to actually participate in a dig?

JOEL:

I would say the most impactful digs that I did with Shimon were, first and foremost, Jerusalem. And so, it was really a great opportunity because it's pretty rare these days to be able to dig in Jerusalem. And he had a dig going there the entire time that I was a student there. So, we were able to excavate just right outside of Zion Gate on the Western Hill. And wow, I mean, once you've dug in Jerusalem, nothing else really compares. You're talking about a city that's been destroyed so many times. And destruction layers are where you make the most finds.

And so, a city that has been destroyed as many times as Jerusalem, bad for the people in the city when it got destroyed, but very good for archaeologists that are digging through those layers. There, and then also, we did an excavation for several years in Bethlehem, digging right off the corner of the Church of Nativity, and then also in a field nearby, and then several other places as well. But those two were definitely the best as far as learning and just getting a feel for biblical sites that are that important, and what they're like archaeologically.

FRANK:

Now, can you relate any of the finds in any of those three locations? Like, what did you discover?

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JOEL:

Well, the greatest find that I ever found was in the Jerusalem dig. And it was a stone cup from the time of Jesus with an 11-line inscription on it that mentions the temple, a priest going up to the temple of the Lord. And so yeah, that was like hitting that perfect golf shot, you know, that that keeps you coming back for more. Definitely.

FRANK:

And so, where's that artifact now? Is that in a museum somewhere?

JOEL:

It was scheduled to be on display in the Israel Museum, but they're having a hard time with that inscription to understand all of it because of the way that it's written and everything. So, it's been studied for many, many years. And I'm not sure where exactly it is in the line of study at this point.

FRANK:

Now, I heard you give a great analogy regarding archaeology. You talked about a jigsaw puzzle. Can you give that analogy to our listeners and viewers right now?

JOEL:

Yeah, sure. I think it's important to put in perspective what archaeology, you know, its strengths and its weaknesses. And so, the reason why is because we have, of course, the Bible. And the temptation for people often is to put something above the Bible, and that's when we get in trouble is when we put something above the Bible. And so, archaeology is one of those things that some people when we give it too much credit, you know, then it becomes something that is so powerful that it's used to test the Bible. Is the Bible reliable using archaeology? And really, the reverse of that is the best way to understand archaeology.

In archaeology and the jigsaw puzzle, the analogy is, say that you have a 500-piece jigsaw puzzle, and you only have five pieces of that jigsaw puzzle. The rest have been lost. Well, those five pieces are important evidence that there once was a jigsaw puzzle. However, just using those five pieces, you really can't tell what the jigsaw puzzle is about. You need the cover of that jigsaw puzzle and the picture on that to give you the context of where your five pieces that you still have fit into the overall picture on the cover. And so, in this analogy, the Bible is the cover. It's what gives us the information. It's what paints for us this big picture of what's happened in the past and the events that have happened, the people that have lived, and so forth.

And really, archaeology is represented by these five pieces, because you only find pieces of what's been left behind from what's happened in the past. But they're important. They're evidence that those things are real, that those are real people, real events, real cities. And so, that is the perspective that the Bible is what we need in order to interpret what's being found in the ground.

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FRANK:

And there's so many pieces we're going to talk about on this program. My guest is Joel Kramer, archeologists living in the Middle East right now. Expedition Bible is his YouTube channel. So much more. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. Back in two minutes.

If you're low on the FM dial looking for National Public Radio, go no further. We're actually going to tell you the truth here. That's our intent, anyway. You're never going to hear this on NPR. We're talking about archaeological discoveries related to the Bible. My guest is Joel Kramer, author of 'Where God Came Down.' And if you don't have this book, you ought to get it. It's a wonderful overview of some of the top archaeological discoveries regarding the Bible. Very well-illustrated, very easy to read. It's probably right now, one of the top books on Amazon related to archaeology in the Bible. And Joel has a wonderful YouTube channel called Expedition Bible where he goes on site and explains some of the most famous archaeological discoveries.

In fact, some of them are not so famous because you never heard of them. But once you see them, you go, wow. I didn't know that. In fact, Joel, let's talk about one. In fact, we just talked about this last night on our TV show. And I heard you say this is one of the most important of all time. It's the Moabite Stone. Can you tell us a little bit about that? And friends, Joel is not going to be able to explain everything on the program today. So, you need to go to Expedition Bible and watch the video. It's an 18-minute video on the Moabite Stone, very interesting. But Joel, give us some overview of what the Moabite Stone or the Mesha Stele is.

JOEL:

Yeah, the Moabite Stone, one thing about its discovery is it happened right there, right at the beginning of archaeology in this part of the world. It was discovered the year after the first archaeology in Jerusalem was taken place by Charles Warren in 1867. And then this discovery was made in 1868 at a site. I'm here in Jordan, at a site just south of me here, Dibon, which is the capital of Moab. And so, it was discovered as so many important archaeological discoveries are, not by an archaeologist, but actually by a missionary who was traveling through the area at the time. To me, it's kind of a humorous story because it's such a Middle Eastern story.

He's in the tent with the sheikh of the tribe, and the sheikh is telling him about this inscription that he knows about in the pile of rubble that's near where his tent is. Kline is the missionary's name. And so, he's trying to act interested enough that he wants to go see it, but not too interested. So, he's taken out and he's shown this inscription. And nothing like this had been found in this area up until that point. It's still to this day one of the greatest archaeological finds of all time. But at that time, what's he going to do? He's going to act like this is no big deal and walk off or he's going to freak out? And he pretty much freaked out.

And I've looked back at what I would do, how I would handle that situation. And I don't think I would be able to handle myself any different. Anyways, it let the Bedouin know how valuable this inscription was. And then it started this whole bartering, fighting, a guy got stabbed, you

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know. It's a whole account of this whole story. And then the Bedouin ended up blowing this thing up over a fire and shattering it into pieces, and then the collecting of those pieces, and putting it together again like Humpty Dumpty or something like that.

It's just a classic story from the Middle East. And when they got it all together, they could read it because it was in Moabite, which was so closely related to Canaanite and Hebrew of the same time period, that they could read it. And it gave all kinds of things like the name of Israel, the name of Israel's God, Yahweh in the same inscription. It had the name of Gad, the tribe of Israel. It had the names of kings like Omri and others. And so, it was just a fantastic find. And it was right at the time where it was really being questioned whether the Bible was historical or not. And so, this find was a spectacular rebuttal to those claims. And so, it's still to this day one of the greatest archaeological finds of all time.

FRANK:

And the 18-minute video on Joel's YouTube channel explains it and you can see it. Also, another fun aspect of this was something called a squeeze. Can you describe what that is?

JOEL:

Yeah. So, in those early days, the way that they would copy an inscription is they would basically put paper mache over the top of an inscription. And then they'd let it dry. And then they would pull that off and it would leave the indentation of the inscription on the paper mache. That's what the guy who was sent over from Jerusalem was doing. He was getting a squeeze of the inscription and waiting for it to dry when he was attacked by the Bedouin, and he was stabbed in the leg by a lance.

But another guy that was with him grabbed that freeze off of the stone, and they jumped on their horses, and they took off to Jerusalem. And so, thanks to having them making that freeze and getting it back to Jerusalem, even though we don't have all of the inscription from the pieces and whatnot, we have most of it. But we have all of it because of that freeze. And so, it was very important that they did that.

FRANK:

Is it called a freeze or a squeeze? What is it?

JOEL:

I'm sorry, a squeeze. Yeah, squeeze.

FRANK:

It's a squeeze, okay. Yeah, well, they broke the thing up because they thought it would be more valuable to spread around the tribe, so then the archeologist would have to buy it from each. Was that kind of the reasoning behind it?

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JOEL:

Yeah. I mean, if you have a pot of gold with a bunch of gold coins in it, then you know how to divide that up amongst the Bedouin. But if you've got this inscription, and you realize it's very valuable, then how do you divide that up, as well as how do you protect it? They buried it for a long time because everybody was after it, including the Ottomans at the time. And so, yeah, they shattered it into pieces and passed it around. And then they had to try to reassemble it by going to each one that had a significant piece, and purchasing it, and doing the bartering that is necessary in this part of the world to get possession of it.

FRANK:

And so, that comes from about what like, 800 B.C.?

JOEL:

Yeah, that's from the ninth century B.C., 800's. Yeah.

FRANK:

800's B.C., and now it's in the Louvre in France. And if you watch Joel's video, you'll see him go there. There's thousands of people trying to look at the Mona Lisa, but nobody's trying to look at the Moabite Stone sitting right there. Joel, there's been a lot of discussion lately about Sodom and Gomorrah. Has this been discovered? I know you have a video on that. What's your view on that?

JOEL:

Oh, yeah, Sodom. You know, for one thing, I would like to say that none of these are my ideas. These are discoveries that were made long ago, and those kinds of things. So, in that way, I don't have the skin in the game that somebody does that's excavated a site and whatnot. But the story of how Sodom was discovered, and that story continues to this day. Because just recently, Zoar, which is one of the cities of the plain, was definitely discovered and identified. We had that city on the oldest map, on the floor of a church in Madiba. And now it's been discovered and excavated. And so, there's a whole story for how the cities of the plain were discovered.

And basically, the way that you find a biblical city is first and foremost, you've got to use the Bible. And so, the Bible really identifies where the cities of the plain are. The most important verses are Ezekiel 16:46, that says that Sodom is south of Jerusalem. That's great. You can cut the country in half. You only have to look in half the country. The other one is Genesis 10:19, which is giving the boundaries of Canaan, and it says to come down for the western boundary, to come down from Sidon to Gaza. And then you turn. You can only turn one way from Gaza. You can't turn the other way, or you'll go out into the Mediterranean. Then you turn towards the cities of Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Zeboiim, and all the cities of the plain.

And so, that identifies where they are biblically. Now, they could be on the west or the east side of the Dead Sea. We know they're close to the Dead Sea because of other verses. And so, they

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went looking for the remains of Sodom and Gomorrah in the right place back in 1928. Albright did, probably the most famous biblical archaeologist. They took a long time to find it because you're not looking at these...you know, you have these archaeological sites hear that form these magnificent tels. Well, a tel, these ancient mounds, are formed over time because you have these cities that are built on top of each other, and they form these magnificent mounds. If you have a big tel, then basically it means that that site was occupied for a very long time. Well, that's not what Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Zeboim, and Admah look like because they were destroyed by fire way back in the time of Abraham and Lot.

And so, what they basically are is they're tels that were destroyed, and therefore their growth was stunted. And so, they're not big, magnificent looking tels. They're these cities that existed for a much shorter period of time than other cities in this part of the world. And then they were burned by fire and never inhabited again, except for one. One out of the five continued, and that was Zoar, because that's the one that the Lord spared when Lot ran to Zoar. Zoar means little, the little town. And so, that is the one that survived. That's why there and there only you have this stack of archaeology. That's why it's on this oldest map that we have from the floor of this church, because it survived. And that's why we have reference to it. And so, we know now for certain where Zoar is. And so, the site that was identified as Sodom, the site Bab edh-Dhra, that was excavated back in the 60's, 50's. And so, it's the City of the Plain.

The Bible talks about five sites, and the cities of the plain have five early Bronze sites. Four of them are burned, and one of them survives historically onto the Madaba map called Zora on the Madaba map, which preserves the biblical name Zoar. So, it's quite evident. And again, there's the other theory that's pushed a lot that that they're up on the north side of the Dead Sea. But the problem with that is number one, it's one of the biggest tels in the country. It was a huge Roman site. It was a huge Iron Age site. They've excavated a palace up on top of that site. You can't have that.

FRANK:

What tel is that?

JOEL:

That is Tell el-Hammam.

FRANK:

That's the one I keep hearing about, yeah.

JOEL:

Yeah, but the problem with that is you have Jesus in Capernaum saying that Capernaum is going to become like Sodom. You can't have Jesus and the prophets in the Old Testament using Sodom as an example of destruction, and desolation, and abandonment, and then have it be a city in all those periods. Not to mention, the Bible says that's not where it is.

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FRANK:

A lot more with Joel Kramer. The book, 'Where God Came Down.' And He came down there in the desert. A lot more right after the break. We're back in two minutes. Don't go anywhere.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, with me, Frank Turek, on the American Family Radio network. Website, CrossExamined.org. Today, we're talking archeology with one of the clearest archaeologists you'll ever come across. His name is Joel Kramer. His book is called 'Where God Came Down', and you can access his videos at Expedition Bible. That's on YouTube. I go there quite a bit. Joel's got about 40 or so videos there. They're very well done. They explain the archaeological discovery.

He normally is on site where the discovery has been made. He's in Amman, Jordan right now. And he can drive to so many of these sites. But Joel, recently, you were actually given the opportunity to go to Iraq, ancient Babylon. And you have a great video there on your YouTube channel. And it shows that the prophecies that the Old Testament talks about regarding Babylon actually have come true. Can you unpack that for us a little bit?

JOEL:

Yeah, I've been to Babylon multiple times, probably six or seven times. And so, it's such a huge site. It's mind-boggling when you're there. I'm used to these sites in Israel and Jordan where you're standing on a mound and that's the whole city. But in Babylon, you're standing on a mound and that's just a building. And then the city itself is basically like two miles by two miles. And it's just hard to wrap my mind around. And I had to go back, and back, and back, and go through the excavation reports, and line up the top plan on the excavation report to the ground and look at it over and over to really grasp it. But basically, you have this wall, the wall line, that you can still see around the city. And it takes in this area that's about two miles by two miles.

And then you have these mounds inside of them that were the Temple of Marduk. The ziggurat there that is most certainly, it becomes the ziggurat of the later Babylonian city. But it's probably built on the same spot as the Tower of Babel was. And so anyways, you have this wall line there. And then just as the Bible says, it's just a desolation inside. And you know, I mean, I didn't expect it to match in detail as dramatically as it did while being there. I mean, when you're there in the early morning and evening, that place comes alive with wild animals. And they're howling, and running around, and owls and everything, just like described in the Bible. And so, it has become a habitation for animals rather than people.

And it's just so incredible to think of, for example, that ziggurat, which was the biggest one in all of Mesopotamia. And just the history of it in regard to the Babylonians destroying the Temple in Jerusalem, and then bringing the treasures back to that temple in Babylon, and just the exiles being there, and just on, and on, and on. In fact, Babylon is the second most mentioned city in the Bible. And so, there is a lot to learn and understand about that place. But the Bible says that it will become like Sodom and Gomorrah. We're just talking about the cities of the plains, that this great capital of Babylonia will become like Sodom and Gomorrah. And that's exactly what it

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has become like. And so, it's a deserted place and given over to wild animals just as the Bible describes. And that's what really struck me the most in being there, is just how dramatically God has fulfilled His word.

FRANK:

Although in 586 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar came down and took the Israelites or the Judahites out of Judah, how big was that city? How big were the walls? What kind of presence did it have?

JOEL:

Well, most of what's been uncovered at Babylon that you can see there today is from the time of Nebuchadnezzar. And it's quite hilarious. I mean, as an archaeologist working in this part of the world like Israel and Jordan, you're always trying to figure everything out. You're looking at pottery and all this kind of stuff. But in a place like Babylon, you don't have to do that because the bricks, many of them are stamped with the name of the king who did that building project. And so, you have layers of stamped bricks with Sennacherib on it, for example.

And then Nabopolassar, his stamps will be above that. And then Nebuchadnezzar's stamped bricks above that. And so, you can really tell who built what. Not to mention that we have the records as well from the Babylonians themselves that describe the building projects. And so, yeah. That is the main archaeology that you see there that is from the time of Nebuchadnezzar.

FRANK:

Now, how did you get the footage you got? Did you have a drone?

JOEL:

I probably shouldn't talk about that. [Laughter]

FRANK:

Oh okay. Friends, so forget about what I just asked him. [Laughter]

JOEL:

It's important to be able to get up and look down on places in order to understand them.

FRANK:

Because a lot of the videos that you'll see on Joel's YouTube channel Expedition Bible, you will see he gives aerial views of what he's describing. And in this video on Babylon, it's critical because the aerial views will show you the difference between the desolate area that the Bible predicts and the current modern area which has homes and other buildings on it. And so, you have pointed out that what the Bible is saying is true to within yards basically, that any area on this side of the wall is desolate. The other side is civilization.

JOEL:

That's correct.

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FRANK:

What are the general Scriptures that talk about this, Babylon being desolate? Is it Jeremiah? Is it Isaiah? Who's saying this?

JOEL:

I think Isaiah goes into it, Jeremiah, maybe even Ezekiel, being that he was out there. But yeah, they're very descriptive. And the irony of it all. I mean, the ziggurat of Babylon was just, it was literally a man-made mountain with a temple on top of it. And it was one of the wonders of the ancient world, you know? And now a bunch of foxes live in it, and a bunch of jackals roam around and howl at night. And it has become, it's been dethroned. You know that false god has been dethroned. And the great palace of Nebuchadnezzar, they've done restoration work on it.

Saddam Hussein did restoration work on it. If they hadn't done that restoration work, then it would look even more miserable than it does. But you don't go to Babylon and look at the archaeological remains like you do some of Herod the Great archaeological remains. You don't go there and ooh and ahh. Because you're just stunned by what once was so magnificent, has now become so insignificant. And that is the point that Scripture is making about what's going to happen to this great city in the future. And that is what happened.

FRANK:

You can trust what the Bible says. You also have used an analogy of a treasure map when it comes to the Bible. Can you unpack that for us as well, Joel?

JOEL:

Yeah, sure. When you're wanting to dig, you want to know where to dig. And so, there's the whole concept of a treasure map is it's going to show you where to dig. It's going to tell you where the treasure is, even though it's not above ground. You're going to have to go where the X marks the spot, and you're going to have to dig. And so, the Bible does that over and over again. Back in the early days of archaeology, archaeologists knew that, and explorers knew that. They used the Bible as a tool, like a treasure map, to know where to look for something.

For example, where are the Tombs of David? Well, Raymond Weill, the first Jewish archaeologists to dig in the City of David, used the Bible because it explains where the tombs of the House of David were located. And then he went right there. And then he uncovered tombs in that area and identified them as the tombs of the House of David. And so, the reason that doesn't happen much anymore is because the field of biblical archaeology has become so secular that nobody believes, very few working in the field today believe that it's a reliable history. And so, therefore, they've got the treasure map. But they just discard it. They don't use it. And so, it tells us where the Cities of the Plain are. It tells us where we should go looking for all kinds of things.

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And so, to not believe in the Bible and not to consider it reliable, then you don't use it. And I don't know how else to put it, but over time, biblical archaeology has gotten dumber, and dumber, and dumber. And the reason why is because it tries to figure things out through technology, and through other means rather than using the Bible, that is not only inspired by the one who has been the eyewitness over all of human history, but also has been written down by people that come from those places in those time periods. And so, you would think today that everything would have been found by now, everything would have been dug up by now. But that's not the case. And the reason it's not is because while they used to do that in the old days, they've done that less and less over time because of the secularization of the field.

FRANK:

What percentage of the Holy Land has been excavated?

JOEL:

Well, people argue over that. Anywhere from less than 1% to 3% is kind of the range of the argument. I think it's around 1%. And that why that analogy with five pieces of a 500-piece jigsaw puzzle is about accurate. So, we're talking about just a small sample of all that could be dug that actually has been dug. So, if the argument is ever usable that hasn't been found, well, that's because only about 1% of what could be dug has been dug. And yet, in that 1% sample, it is mind-boggling how much evidence has come to light just in that small sample.

FRANK:

And we're going to cover more that evidence right after the break. In fact, Jericho has been discovered. It lines up with what the Bible says. Hazor, there's so many discoveries. Gezer, I love your video on Gezer, Joel. We can even talk about that. We could talk about some New Testament discoveries as well. We could spend hours doing this. We're talking to Joel Kramer. His book is 'Where God Came Down: The Archaeological Evidence.' The YouTube channel you need to go to right after you listen to this program is Expedition Bible. Great videos up there that explain all this visually. We're back in two minutes with Joel Kramer. I'm Frank Turek. Don't go anywhere.

Ladies and gentlemen, the best place to get an education in apologetics, philosophy, and theology is Southern Evangelical Seminary. That's where I went. That's where Alisa Childers is going. That's where Melissa Dougherty's going, and several others. If you go to SES.edu/Frank, you can even get scholarship money for apologetic courses there. Go to SES.edu/Frank. We're talking to Joel Kramer, archaeologist. He has his Archaeology degree from the University of the Holy Land, spent 10 years living in Israel. He now lives in Amman, Jordan. He puts out the greatest videos on YouTube called Expedition Bible.

Joel, you also have one on Jericho. And if there's ever a controversy when it comes to a site and when it was destroyed, it's Jericho. There's been a dispute between Garstang, and Kathleen Kenyon, and then of course Bryant Wood, and now others. Our mutual friend Titus Kennedy has an interest in Jericho. What's the truth about Jericho?

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JOEL:

Yeah, Jericho is used as the number one example to claim that the Bible is unreliable. But it should be the opposite. It should be the number one example that shows the reliability of the Bible. Look, it's simple. I've been studying Jericho for 17 years. I'm good friends with Bryant Wood. I know Peter Parr, brought him over there. He's the one that dug with Kathleen Kenyon. It's simple. Here's how simple it is. Nobody argues that the mound that's known as the city of Jericho is Jericho. Everybody agrees. If you look at Kenyon's reports, what is she reporting on? It's the excavations of Jericho. Okay? So, this is where the Bible is talking about. Nobody argues.

Too often, we concentrate on all the disagreements of Jericho. But look at how many agreements there are. Everybody agrees that there is a fallen wall, a collapsed city wall that has collapsed around Jericho. Why do they believe that? Because that's what they found in the excavations. They found a stone retaining wall. And then what was left, one row of mud brick up on the top. And all the rest of that mud brick wall was collapsed off the side of the city wall. What is Jericho famous for in the Bible? It's famous for where the walls came tumbling down. And what was found there when archaeologists got around to digging the site? A collapsed city wall. Just to the south of Jericho is Qumran.

In the Qumran Caves were amongst the other books of the Bible, we have the Book of Joshua laying in that cave for all those thousands of years, which said to any future archaeologists, if you ever get around to digging the mound of Jericho, you're going to find a collapsed city wall under it. And then when they finally got around to digging the city of Jericho, all the excavations, they found a collapsed city wall around it. It's game over right there. You know, anybody can understand that if the Bible is telling you what you're going to find under the ground before you dig under the ground, and then find exactly what it says you're going to find, that's a reliable source. Whether a piece of pottery is bent like this or bent like this is not as powerful as a collapsed city wall.

FRANK:

Joel, how does this show that the Book of Joshua, at least when it comes to Jericho, must be an eyewitness account?

JOEL:

Because how else would they know that? They had to come up with a secular reason why everything matches so well in all these sites, including Jericho. So, their reason was at the time of Josiah, when most secular scholars believe that the Bible was written, that he sent out these writers to places like Jericho, and they sat down, and they made up the story. Well, all you have to do is look at the plan of the archaeology of Jericho. And you can see at the time of Josiah what was underground and what was above ground.

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And so, everything that we're talking about, this collapsed city wall, the burn destruction, and all this other evidence that comes out of Jericho was all underground at the time of Josiah. So, there's no way that a writer at that time would have been able to make up that story by what they were looking at. And so, the best explanation for how the writer got it right, was that they were there. And they saw what happened. And they wrote down an account of it. And then that was preserved for thousands of years. And now thousands of years later, that that mound of dirt was dug up, and that was what was found.

And so, everybody argues about the pottery. Some say that it matches with the Bible, Garstang and Wood. And then others say no, no. It doesn't match with the Bible, like Kenyon. But you can't escape the reality that the Bible told us what was going to be found under the ground before it was dug up and found. And to me, that is the end of the story. And what should be pottery chronology is one of those things that's raised above biblical chronology. It shouldn't be. Pottery chronology is not that reliable.

If pottery was so reliable, the dating using it to date with, then why do all of the excavations that have taken place at Jericho, none of them agree with each other? The Germans dug there. Two British excavations dug there. And most recently, an Italian excavation. None of them agree to when the pottery dates to. They're off by over 300 years in their disagreement. So, instead of asking the question that we hear all the time, what does archaeology say about the reliability of the Bible? We should flip that around and say, what does the Bible say about the reliability of things like pottery, and dating with pottery? If we have a destruction that we can nail down when that happened because the Bible tells us with biblical chronology when that happened, then let's try to understand more about the pottery that comes from that destruction knowing the data that comes from, the ancient, eyewitness account.

And so, it's blown out of proportion. It's made to sound confusing and complicated. It's not at all complicated. It's very simple. The Bible shows its reliability by telling us before that mound of dirt was dug up what was going to be found and then that was found. And it's not found in other cities. You don't dig other cities and find a collapsed city wall around them. The only city that has a collapsed city wall around it that has been excavated in the land of the Bible, is Jericho.

FRANK:

Now, the two places you can go friends to learn more about this, one is Joel's YouTube channel Expedition Bible. He has an entire video on this where he talks to the archaeologists, including Peter Parr, who was one of the archaeologists who was with Kathleen Kenyon in the 1950's when she excavated it, and also Bryant Wood who has analyzed all the pottery there. He's a pottery expert, actually. He's an archaeologist as well. And you'll see how all this fits. You can also listen to the podcast I did with Titus Kennedy a few months ago. Go back to the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist podcast.

He's a colleague of Joel. As you know, he's an archaeologist on the situation in Jericho, and he says exactly what Joel is saying here. So, you can listen to that as well. Joel, we want to get to

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the New Testament. We're not going to get to it in this program. But in the midweek podcast coming up on Tuesday, we will. And friends, if you're listening on the American Family Radio network and you want to hear archaeological evidence from the New Testament, you're going to have to listen on Tuesday, wherever you get podcasts. It won't be broadcast on the American Family Radio network. It will be just wherever you get podcasts. Look for I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. But Joel, with just a few minutes left, tell us a little bit about Gezer. An amazing discovery has been made there. A discovery that actually has to do with child sacrifice. Tell us a little bit about that.

JOEL:

Yeah. So, Macalister dug there in the late 1800's. He found a Canaanite high place, and excavated it, and found the remains of many children that were sacrifices was a Canaanite city. And so, he wasn't the only one that had those interpretations. The same type of evidence was found in several of the Canaanite cities that were under excavation. And that was the interpretation by archaeologists up until about the 1960's. And then, it became politically incorrect to believe that this was evidence connected to what is described quite often in the Bible, of this practice of child sacrifice.

But the most dramatic evidence that we have is this excavation by Macalister in Gezer, where you have all these standing stones in a row. You have an altar there. And then buried all around at the foot of these standing stones, you have these jars with burned infants inside of them. You also have the skeleton of a human baby that is found in the cave underneath, and a little stone altar is in the middle of that cave, and a sacrificed baby on top of that altar. Which means at the time of the city's destruction, they were doing these sacrifices.

FRANK:

Don't you have a seven year old who has been decapitated?

JOEL:

Yeah, you have two decapitated young girls. And then you have another young girl that's been sawn in half. And you have just human bones scattered all over this area. And so, this is a good example of what I was talking about earlier. Back in the early days when the archaeologists believed in the Bible, they used the Bible to interpret what they found in the ground. Whereas then as it became more and more secular, then that became politically incorrect. And now, you sit in archaeology school like I did for 10 years, and you're told the opposite.

You're told there is no archaeological evidence at all for child sacrifice, even though we have the graveyard, the cemetery at Carthage, for example, where you have over 10,000 sacrificed children. Carthage being where they immigrated to, the Canaanites, the Phoenicians, from Sidon, and the coast there. And so, you know, you have plaques there showing the priests sacrificing the children. It's so obvious. That lasted into the Roman period where you have historians that are eyewitnesses of this practice that are describing it. But now, all that is considered politically correct.

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FRANK:

Joel Kramer, it's great having you on. Joel, we're going to have you on the Tuesday midweek podcast. Friends, you need to check that out. Also, go to Expedition Bible. You can see the Gezer video as well as about 40 others. You're going to want to see it there, Expedition Bible. And check out the book, 'Where God Came Down.' See you here on Tuesday. God bless.

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