



The Caller

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Confidence Corner John F. Board

Did the Israelites conquer Jericho? This is the question Dr. Bryant G. Wood addressed in the March/April 1990 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review* (originally *Biblical*

Archaeology Reader). This is also the subject of this week's *Confidence Corner*.

Dr. Wood who has served as supervisor on several archaeological digs in Palestine took another look at the evidence uncovered by Kathleen Kenyon (daughter of Sir Frederic Kenyon) from 1952-1958. Consider *the* information from *BAR*.

First consider the fact that Jericho was described in Scripture as a well fortified city (think the walls of Jericho and see Joshua 2:5,7,15; and 6:5). Archaeologists found an outer wall of stone that protected the city that they had found in their excavations. One area excavated showed the wall to be up to six feet wide and twelve feet high.

According to Joshua 5:10, the children of Israel would conquer the city in the harvest time (see Rahab's actions in 2:6). What was found in the houses of the city was quite interesting—large quantities of grain. This would be expected at harvest time. What would be unexpected though was that the Israelites did not take the grain with them when they invaded Jericho. How can this be explained?

Remember in OT times grain could be used as monetary exchange (I Kings 5:11). Any normal invaders would have taken the grain. Yet Israel did not. You see Jericho was to be devoted to God according to the "cherem ban;" though the Israelites would have taken the valuable metals for the treasury of the LORD, they were instructed to take nothing for themselves (6:17-19). The fact that something as personally valuable as grain was left behind, fits well with the Biblical account.

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The Bible and Archaeology

The Nuzi tablets are another significant find of archaeology. Nuzi is located just above Assyria. Nuzi, though not a biblical site, was discovered in 1925; over 1,000 different cuneiform tablets have been found. The tablets mostly deal with business and family situations. The tablets are mostly written in Akkadian with some Hurrian words as well.

One thing of significance is that the Nuzi tablets help to support the biblical material regarding the Patriarchal customs in the book of Genesis. For example, in Genesis 15:1-4 we read how Abraham was concerned that his servant Eliezer, not a son, was his heir. The Nuzi tablets show it was normal for childless parents to adopt a servant as a son; this adopted would serve then until they died and became their heir.

The Nuzi tablets also show it was a normal practice (I am not saying a practice accepted by God) in the case of a childless couple, the wife could locate another woman for the husband. One of the tablets state, "If Gilimninu (the wife) will not bear children, Gilimninu shall take a woman of Lulluland as a wife for Shennma (the husband)." In Genesis we see that Sarah provided Hagar to Abraham (Genesis 16:3) for the purpose of bearing children. Should the first wife later bear a son, he would rank over the son born to the second wife. Such was the case when Isaac was born in Genesis 21:1-10.

What is the point of all of this information? Simply put, many think that the book of Genesis was just fanciful made up story material. Such is simply not the case. Genesis is the inspired word of God, and customs of other nations show that the accounts in Genesis were often common practices, especially of a people who did not have a faith in God. Both of the examples from the Abraham account show that Abraham and Sarah, because of a lack of faith in God, acted as the nations who did not serve God round about them.

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Sunday's Sermons:

**A.M. — Love Not the World
1 John 2:15-17**

**P.M. — Old Testament Encouragement
Romans 15:4**

James and Your Life

James chapter four addresses the subject of worldliness. Verses 1-3 address the cause of conflict—selfishness. Verses 4-6 address the result of conflict—friend of the world/enemy of God. Verses 7-10 provide the remedy for conflict that leads to enmity with God—humble yourself and submit to God. In verses 13-17, James continues his warning to those who possess a worldly mind in another area—an arrogant self sufficient attitude of planning daily life without regard for God.

Before we dismiss this article as not applicable to ourselves and move on to something else in the bulletin, let us seriously consider some thoughts regarding James' message. Have we ever been guilty of expressing our need for God in public worship settings and then disregard God in the restless pursuits of daily life? Though James employs the illustration of tradesmen to illustrate his point, his rebuke is intended for all Christians who are guilty of self willed independence of God as they go about their everyday lives.

Consider the serious nature of what James has to say. The original language in verse 13 has James saying, "Now listen." I could probably better convey the original with an exclamation point! "Listen" (*age*) is an imperative (command form) and is enhanced by the addition of the adverb "now" (*nun*). Though the expression is common in secular Greek writings, it is only used in Scripture in this place and in James 5:1. James the Lord's brother has something important to say—one commentator says James uses "the signal for an attack."

In verse 14 James conveys the absurdity of the position these people hold; though they are among a class of beings who do not know the future, they act as if they do. They held Proverbs 27:1 in total contempt. Their planning with total disregard for life was the root of worldliness.

But more importantly to our study, they also were living not recognizing the uncertainty of human life. What is your life? James warns that they do not even know what will occur on the morrow, and as some have noted is probably indicated even more strongly, "they do not even know if there will be a tomorrow" for them, or anyone else. The word "what" (*poia*) is used to call attention to the precarious nature of our lives. James enhances the application to the reader by saying "you are" (this calls attention by the reader to themselves for application). He continues to show just how our lives are like vapors—just as vapor is expected to appear and understood to remain visible for only a short time (think breath on a cold winter day), then is something that is "sure" to follow—that breath will disappear (Heb. 9:27). One way or another, our life here upon the Earth will have a sure end; either death or the Lord's return is certain.

Truly as we might say in the English language, our **life appears** and then **disappears**. We are provided no guarantees. Death is no respecter of persons—it takes young and old alike. The question we need to ask ourselves is, "Are we living our lives with consideration of God and His will?" A sobering thought but one that could not be more important to consider in view of not this life, but eternity!

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