

**The Gospel for a Pagan World – Part 3**  
**Genesis 1-11**

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There is an “educational” video on the hostage situation in Colleville, TX that I want to play for two reasons.

1. It is more confirmation of the increasing anti-Semitism in America.
2. It is something we may want to take under advisement. Churches are not immune to terrorist activity.

<https://www.cnn.com/videos/us/2022/01/19/rabbi-held-hostage-at-texas-synagogue-speaks-intv-tsr-vpx.cnn>

**Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.**

**Matthew 4:2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.**

**Matthew 4:3 And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”**

**Matthew 4:4 But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’”**

**The Gospel for a Pagan World – Part 3**  
**Genesis 1-11**

**Matthew 4:5** Then the devil \*took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple,

**Matthew 4:6** and \*said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will command His angels concerning You’; and ‘On their hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.’”

**Matthew 4:7** Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

**Matthew 4:8** Again, the devil \*took Him to a very high mountain and \*showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory;

**Matthew 4:9** and he said to Him, “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.”

**Matthew 4:10** Then Jesus \*said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’”

**Matthew 4:11** Then the devil \*left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

## **The Gospel for a Pagan World – Part 3**

### **Genesis 1-11**

The point of quoting this, is that knowing doctrine prepares you for the fight. Understanding the issues in the attacks on the Bible and Christian faith should help us prepare for individual battles in the Angelic Conflict.

This series of lessons on the “Gospel for a Pagan World” is based upon Eric Metaxas’ book, “Is Atheism Dead?” It is a “reversal” of the 1966 Time Magazine cover story “Is God Dead?” Metaxas makes five points in his book. These points were key issues atheists used to attack the Bible and Christian faith. In the past century, the development of our knowledge has started to reverse these points as issues against atheism.

1. The Big Bang Theory [The case for creation]
2. Fine Tuning [The case for purpose and design of creation]
3. Abiogenesis [The case for the creation of life]
4. Archaeology [The inerrancy of the Bible]
5. Atheism [The case for examining the truth]

This week, the lesson focuses on archaeology. Eric Metaxas quotes a famed rabi and archaeologist, Rabbi Dr. Nelson Glueck who said, “It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference.”

There is such a rich array of archaeological findings made in the past 150 years that it is difficult to limit the scope. I will narrate two remarkable discoveries: Jericho and the Hittite empire. I will mention two other significant finds.

## **The Gospel for a Pagan World – Part 3**

### **Genesis 1-11**

#### I. Jericho Destruction

There has been a fight over the Jericho archaeological site. Some have tried and continue to try to interpret the facts to say that the Bible is incorrect. Primarily, that has to do with the dating.

Read Joshua chapter 6, the entire chapter.

Here are some key verses

**Joshua 6:20** So the people shouted, and priests blew the trumpets; and when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with a great shout and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city.

**Joshua 6:21** They utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

**Joshua 6:24** They burned the city with fire, and all that was in it. Only the silver and gold, and articles of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord.

There have been several digs at Jericho.

John Garstang (5 May 1876 – 12 September 1956) was a British archaeologist of the Ancient Near East, especially Anatolia and the southern Levant.

## **The Gospel for a Pagan World – Part 3**

### **Genesis 1-11**

He conducted a dig at the Jericho site 1930-1936. He was convinced that what he had discovered supported the Bible.

Dame Kathleen Mary Kenyon, DBE, FBA, FSA (5 January 1906 – 24 August 1978) was a British archaeologist of Neolithic culture in the Fertile Crescent. She led excavations of Tell es-Sultan, the site of ancient Jericho, from 1952 to 1958, and has been called one of the most influential archaeologists of the 20th century. [From Wikipedia]

Here is an introduction in the controversy from an article in the book “New Perspectives on the Old Testament.” The article is by Leon Wood:

“One of the more controversial areas of evidence concerns the ancient city of Jericho, modern Tell es-Sultan. Following excavations there by John Garstang during the years 1930-36, a majority of scholars accepted the evidence he presented as favoring the early date. Garstang himself declared that the city fell in conquest to Joshua “between 1400 and 1385 B.C.” During the years 1952-58, however, Miss Kathleen Kenyon worked further at Jericho and concluded that the city fell in “the third quarter of the fourteenth century.” This variant viewpoint contributed to a change by many scholars away from the early date view; and, though her conclusion did not fit the late date either, most believed that other areas of evidence were sufficiently clear in favor of the position to take these as determinative rather than Jericho. They sought warrant for this thinking in Miss Kenyon’s repeated observation that Jericho was severely denuded of evidence, which made conclusions regarding it appear minimal in value. As a result, little notice is taken today of the evidence and position presented by Garstang.”

Kathleen Kenyon conducted a dig at the Jericho site 1951-58.

Bryant G. Wood has commented on this at <https://biblearchaeology.org/research/conquest-of-canaan/3625-the-walls-of-jericho>

## **The Gospel for a Pagan World – Part 3**

### **Genesis 1-11**

“When one hears the name 'Jericho' one naturally thinks of Israelites marching, trumpets sounding and walls falling. It is a wonderful story of faith and victory that we enjoy reading and telling in Sunday School class, but did it really happen? The skeptic would say no, it is merely a folk tale to explain the ruins at Jericho. The reason for this negative outlook is the excavation carried out at the site in the 1950s under the direction of British archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon. She concluded,

It is a sad fact that of the town walls of the Late Bronze Age, within which period the attack by the Israelites must fall by any dating, not a trace remains....The excavation of Jericho, therefore, has thrown no light on the walls of Jericho of which the destruction is so vividly described in the Book of Joshua (Kenyon 1957: 261-62).”

“Thomas A. Holland, who was editor and co-author of Kenyon's excavation reports, summarized the apparent results as follows:

Kenyon concluded, with reference to the military conquest theory and the L[ate] B[ronze Age] walls, that there was no archaeological data to support the thesis that the town had been surrounded by a wall at the end of LB I (ca. 1400 BCE...) (Holland 1997: 223).”

“H.J. Franken, a member of the Jericho excavation staff, stated,

Miss Kenyon's work has presented scholars with the hard fact that if Joshua was active with the incoming Israelites either c. 1400 or c. 1200 B.C. he would not have been able to capture a great walled city of Jericho, because there was no city of Jericho

## **The Gospel for a Pagan World – Part 3**

### **Genesis 1-11**

in these periods...the huge ruins of the Hyksos city gave rise to the folktale attached to the hero Joshua (1965: 190, 200).”

“According to Kenyon's dating, there was no city for the Israelites to conquer at the end of the 15th century BC, the Biblical date for the event. The Jericho of Joshua's time could not be found-it was lost! Through our research, however, we have found the lost city of Jericho, the Jericho attacked by the Israelites.”

Toward the end of his article Bryant Wood said:

“Jericho was once thought to be a 'Bible problem' because of the seeming disagreement between archaeology and the Bible. When the archaeology is correctly interpreted, however, the opposite is the case. The archaeological evidence supports the historical accuracy of the Biblical account in every detail. Every aspect of the story that could possibly be verified by the findings of archaeology is, in fact, verified.”

Some hardcore liberals refuse to agree to the evidence. Although they agree that Kathleen Kenyon’s dating was wrong, now they say that the Exodus could not have happened according to the

I include this comment from commentary.org to illustrate what some would say to not agree with the Bible. Pay particular attention to the last sentence.

From: <https://www.commentary.org/articles/theodor-gaster/the-story-of-gericho-by-john-garstang-and-j-b-e-garstang/>

“For Jews, the problem raised by the excavation of Jericho reaches far beyond the limits of mere archaeological controversy. The Jewish

## **The Gospel for a Pagan World – Part 3**

### **Genesis 1-11**

religion rests very largely upon acceptance of a certain historical tradition. Its festivals are commemorations of events recorded in that tradition, and the character of the Jew qua Jew depends upon identification of the individual with what is assumed to be a continuous and unbroken collective experience. This being so, an assault upon the authenticity of that tradition might easily come to be regarded as a challenge to the title-deeds of Judaism. It is, indeed, an apprehension of this fact that has led so many spokesmen of Orthodox Jewry to the view that the higher criticism of the Bible is incompatible with the doctrines of the faith; and it is this too which inspired Solomon Schechter's intemperate designation of that science as "the higher anti-Semitism."

"The fact is, however, that the dilemma is illusory. What has to be recognized is that the tradition upon which a people or group founds its identity and cohesion does not need factual authentication in history; myth and legend, saga and fable are an equally valid basis. What matters is the intensity and tenacity of acceptance, not the veracity of the thing accepted. No Christian has to prove that Christ was born on December 25 (actually, a late tradition) in order to observe Christmas; and by the same token no Jew need have to prove that the events of his past actually took place in the manner described in his traditional literature before he can observe the festivals or the home ceremonies of Judaism."

"We must recognize that tradition is compounded of fancy as well as fact, and that it is the fusion of both in the popular mentality that creates a culture and a civilization. The authentication of the Biblical narrative is important only for historical inquiry; but the faith and self-expression of a people requires no historical validation. Human truth must not be confused with documentary fact."

Who are these people?



## **The Gospel for a Pagan World – Part 3**

### **Genesis 1-11**

“COMMENTARY is America’s premier monthly magazine of opinion and a pivotal voice in American intellectual life. Since its inception in 1945, and increasingly after it emerged as the flagship of neoconservatism in the 1970s, the magazine has been consistently engaged with several large, interrelated questions: the fate of democracy and of democratic ideas in a world threatened by totalitarian ideologies; the state of American and Western security; the future of the Jews, Judaism, and Jewish culture in Israel, the United States, and around the world; and the preservation of high culture in an age of political correctness and the collapse of critical standards.”

Here are some specific correlations listed by [answersingenesis.org](http://answersingenesis.org).

“The correlations between the biblical account and the archaeological record are impressive:

- The city was strongly fortified (*Joshua 2:5, 2:7, 2:15, 6:5, 6:20*).
- The attack occurred just after harvest time in the spring (*Joshua 2:6, 3:15, 5:10*).
- The inhabitants had no opportunity to flee with their foodstuffs (*Joshua 6:1*).
- The siege was short (*Joshua 6:15*).
- The walls were leveled, possibly by an earthquake (*Joshua 6:20*).
- The city was not plundered (*Joshua 6:17–18*).
- The city was burned (*Joshua 6:24*).

Instead of being an indictment on the Bible, the archaeology from Jericho is a powerful extrabiblical witness to the accuracy of the Conquest narratives.”

**The Gospel for a Pagan World – Part 3**  
**Genesis 1-11**

<https://answersingenesis.org/archaeology/archaeologys-lost-conquest/>

“**Answers in Genesis** is an apologetics ministry, dedicated to helping Christians defend their faith and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ effectively. We focus on providing answers to questions about the Bible—particularly the book of Genesis—regarding key issues such as creation, evolution, science, and the age of the earth.”

## II. The Hittite Empire

The issue with the Hittites is that until the late 1800’s and early 1900’s the scholarly thought was that if the Hittites even existed, they were some backwater tribe, nothing like what the Bible described. Here is excerpts from a biblical account that equates the Hittites to the Egyptian empire. Certainly larger than a backwater tribe.

**2 Kings 6:24 Now it came about after this, that Ben-hadad king of Aram gathered all his army and went up and besieged Samaria.**

**2 Kings 7:3 Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, “Why do we sit here until we die?**

**2 Kings 7:4 If we say, ‘We will enter the city,’ then the famine is in the city and we will die there; and if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us go over to the camp of the Arameans. If they spare us, we will live; and if they kill us, we will but die.”**

## **The Gospel for a Pagan World – Part 3**

### **Genesis 1-11**

**2 Kings 7:5 They arose at twilight to go to the camp of the Arameans; when they came to the outskirts of the camp of the Arameans, behold, there was no one there.**

**2 Kings 7:6 For the Lord had caused the army of the Arameans to hear a sound of chariots and a sound of horses, even the sound of a great army, so that they said to one another, “Behold, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us.”**

**2 Kings 7:7 Therefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents and their horses and their donkeys, even the camp just as it was, and fled for their life.**

Here is Merrill Unger’s statement in his *Archaeology of the Old Testament* published in 1954: “Until the amazing recovery of Hittite civilization by modern archaeology, the Biblical references to this otherwise unknown people were commonly viewed with critical suspicion.”

Trevor Bryce, in “The Kingdom of the Hittites,” writes, “Hittitology is a relative newcomer to the field of Near Eastern studies. Little more than a century ago, when important advances were being made in the study of the Bronze Age civilizations of Mesopotamia, the Hittites were regarded as no more than a small Canaanite tribe living somewhere in Palestine—an assumption based on a few scattered biblical references. We now know that Hatti, the kingdom of the Hittites, was one of the great powers

## **The Gospel for a Pagan World – Part 3**

### **Genesis 1-11**

of the Late Bronze Age, rivalling and eventually surpassing in the fourteenth century its two most powerful contemporaries, the kingdom of Mitanni and Egypt. From their capital Hattusa in central Anatolia, the kings of the Land of Hatti controlled a vast network of vassal states, which at the height of Hittite political and military development in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries extended from the Aegean coast of Anatolia in the west to the Euphrates river in the east.

From allaboutarchaeology (<https://www.allaboutarchaeology.org/hittite-faq.htm>)

“How did the discovery of the lost Hittite civilization provide evidence in support of the biblical record? The Old Testament mentions the ancient Hittite civilization more than 50 times, either by their Hebrew name "Chitti" or by their designation as the sons and daughters Heth. However, prior to their rediscovery in the 19th century, there appeared to be no evidence for their existence outside of the Bible. Skeptics cited the missing evidence as evidence that the Bible actually fabricated their existence. This called the reliability of the biblical account into question. Basically the skeptics said, "We can't find any evidence for the Hittite civilization outside of the Bible. This demonstrates that the Bible cannot be trusted as an historical source.”

“Then, in the 19th and 20th centuries archaeologists hit the jackpot, not only identifying extrabiblical references to the Hittite civilization, but by actually finding and excavating the ancient Hittite capital city of Hattusa (modern day Boğazköy in northern Turkey). The rediscovery of this ancient civilization vindicated the Biblical record.”

“Evidence for the Hittites was bolstered in Egypt with the discovery of a treaty between Pharaoh Ramses II and the Hittite Empire. Originally written on silver tablets in Heliopolis and Hattusis, a huge copy was

## **The Gospel for a Pagan World – Part 3**

### **Genesis 1-11**

found on a wall of the great Karnak Temple. After years of fighting between the Hittites and the Egyptians, Ramses II and the Hittite king settled on a treaty whereby the territory of Syria and Canaan would be divided between them.”

#### III. Moabite Stone/Mesha Stele

From Wikipedia:

“The Mesha Stele, the first major epigraphic Canaanite inscription found in the region of Palestine, the longest Iron Age inscription ever found in the region, constitutes the major evidence for the Moabite language, and is a "corner-stone of Semitic epigraphy", and history. The stele, whose story parallels, with some differences, an episode in the Bible's Books of Kings (2 Kings 3:4–28), provides invaluable information on the Moabite language and the political relationship between Moab and Israel at one moment in the 9th century BCE. It is the most extensive inscription ever recovered that refers to the kingdom of Israel (the "House of Omri"); it bears the earliest certain extrabiblical reference to the Israelite god Yahweh.”

#### IV. The Merneptah Stele

From Wikipedia:

“The Merneptah Stele – also known as the Israel Stele or the Victory Stele of Merneptah – is an inscription by the ancient Egyptian Pharaoh Merneptah, who reigned 1213–1203 BCE. Discovered by Flinders Petrie in 1896 at Thebes, it is now housed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.”

“The stele represents the earliest textual reference to Israel and the only reference from ancient Egypt. It is one of four known inscriptions, from the Iron Age, that date to the time of and mention ancient Israel, under this name, the others being the Mesha Stele, the Tel Dan Stele, and the

## **The Gospel for a Pagan World – Part 3**

### **Genesis 1-11**

Kurkh Monolith. As a result, some consider the stele to be Petrie's most famous discovery, an opinion with which Petrie himself concurred.”

The point of this jaunt into archaeology is that the more we know about archaeology, the more we see that it supports the historical narratives of the Bible. We saw that some atheist scientists, when faced with increasing information from science that seemed to support God as creator, became believers. So too with archaeology. From Metaxas’ book:

“We should be clear that biblical archaeology is a relatively new field that only began in the last half of the nineteenth century. Yet within a few decades the number of finds confirming the biblical accounts was overwhelming and flew in the face of the biblical skepticism popular at that time. By the early twentieth century so many finds continued to bear out the biblical account that “The Bible is confirmed by every turn of the spade” became a popular catchphrase. And this trend continued as illustrated by Glueck’s statement from the middle of the century. The track record of biblical archaeology baffled—and continues to baffle—those convinced that archaeology must eventually contradict the biblical accounts.

“One of these is James Agresti, an aerospace engineer who in his book *Rational Conclusions* describes being a twenty-five-year-old atheist determined to study the Bible to document its errors. But what he encountered surprised him, and by the time he was finished, he was instead persuaded of its truth. But one of the main reasons for his about-face was what he learned about the archaeological record. Echoing Rabbi Glueck, Agresti concluded: “I have yet to encounter archaeological evidence that shows any part of the Bible to be inaccurate.”

Part IV next week will complete the series.