

1 & 2 Samuel Series

Lesson #052

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Dean Bible Ministries

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THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S
HOLY WAR: JERICHO AND Ai
1 SAMUEL 15; JOSHUA

Is There Such a Thing as Biblical Holy War?

1. The term *Holy War* is not used in the Bible.

2. The biblical term is

**1-חרם-1 *cherem*-1 hof imperf 3 masc sing
to ban, devote, destroy**

The basic meaning is the exclusion of an object from the use or abuse of man and its irrevocable surrender to God. The word is related to an Arabic root meaning “to prohibit, especially to ordinary use.” The word “harem,” meaning the special quarters for Muslim wives, comes from it. It is related also to an Ethiopic root, meaning “to forbid, prohibit, lay under a curse.” Surrendering something to God meant devoting it to the service of God or putting it under a ban for utter destruction.

~TWOT

Consecration for service to God is dealt with in Lev. 27:28 (persons or things); Josh. 6:18; Mic. 4:13 (objects). Whatever is devoted to the Lord, be it human being, animal, or property, is considered most holy by God and is therefore not to be sold or redeemed by substituting something else. According to Num. 18:14 and Ezek. 44:29, all such objects are to be given to the priests for the support of the religious ceremonies. The gold, silver, bronze, and iron from Jericho, for instance, were so designated (Josh. 6:19).

~NIDOTTE

3. As such, the core idea of consecrating something to God informs us that the doctrinal application is going to relate to sanctification.

Unlike Islamic *jihad* or the heresy of the Christian Crusades, fighting in a *cherem* did nothing toward salvation or spiritual growth.

4. In the Bible there is a period of intense warfare between Israel and her neighbors, where God is authorizing Israel to destroy specific peoples because of their horrible sins and years of hostility toward God. These were the Canaanite groups who were guilty of the grossest religious sins of all time—infant sacrifice, sexual orgies, and temple prostitution. These religions embody the worst that human history had to offer.

5. God's promise to Abraham in Gen. 15 foreshadows what will come.

Gen. 15:13, “Then He said to Abram: ‘Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.’ ”

Gen. 15:16, “ ‘But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.’ ”

6. This is further developed after the Exodus.

Exodus 23:20ff

Num. 33:40–53

Lev. 18:24–27

7. The cause of God's intervention was not because of Israel's holiness or righteousness, but because of the evil among the Canaanites. God gave them extended grace to turn to Him from approximately 2000 BC until 1406 BC, over 600 years.

Deut. 9:5, “It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

8. From a spiritual standpoint, God is looking at this as a battle between the kingdom of Satan/man vs. the establishment of His theocratic kingdom. As such, biblical *cherem* is a type or picture of spiritual warfare in the Church Age.

9. During this limited period of history, from the Conquest in 1406 BC through the last period of Saul's kingship, the rules of engagement in Deut. 20:16–18, which applied to the Canaanites, were distinguished from the rules of engagement in Deut. 20:10–15, which applied to non-Canaanite populations.

****No one since ca. 1050 BC has been authorized to engage in *cherem*.**

10. Instructions for Israel's warfare are described in Deut. 20.

11. The character of God problem.

+Righteousness

Justice

Love

12. In order for God to fulfill His plan, evil must be eliminated. This goes back to understanding the problem of evil.

13. The battles of Jericho and Ai.

Recognition of the seriousness of obedience ...

**Josh. 1:16, “So they answered Joshua,
saying, ‘All that you command us we will
do, and wherever you send us we will go.’ ”**

**Josh. 1:18, “Whoever rebels against your
command and does not heed your words,
in all that you command him, shall be put
to death. Only be strong and of good
courage.”**

Josh. 3:5, “And Joshua said to the people,
‘Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the
LORD will do wonders among you.’ ”

Josh. 5:2, “At that time the LORD said to Joshua, ‘Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time.’

Josh. 5:3, “So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins.”

Josh. 6:6, “Then Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, ‘Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark of the LORD.’ ”

Josh. 6:17, “Now the city shall be doomed [cherem] by the LORD to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

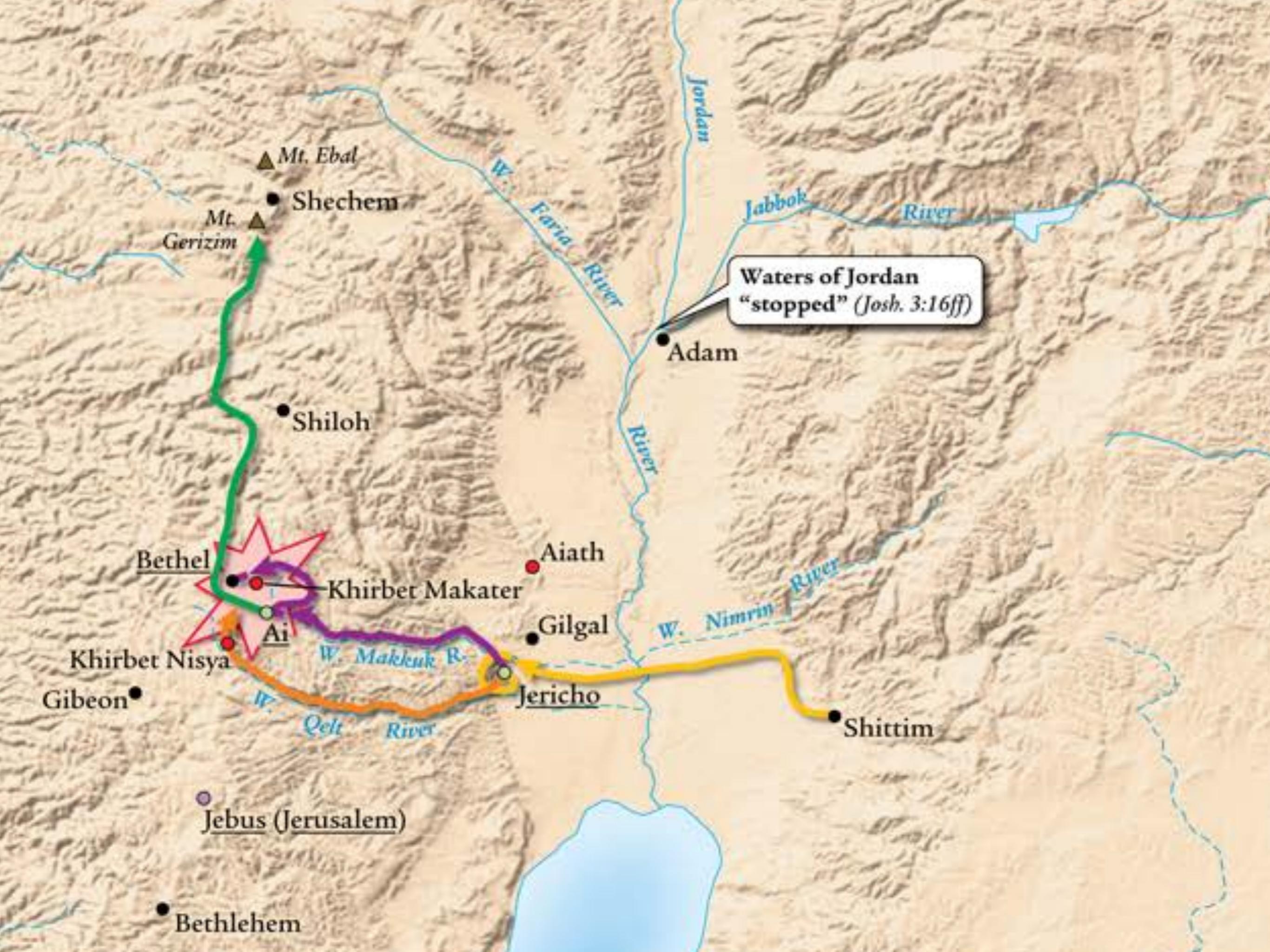
Josh. 6:18, “And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

Josh. 6:19, “But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.”

Josh. 6:24, “But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.

Josh. 6:25, “And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father’s household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

Josh. 6:26, “Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, ‘Cursed be the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates.’ ”



BRONZE AGE

3300–1200 BC

**EB—EARLY
BRONZE**

**MB—MIDDLE
BRONZE**

1800–1600 BC

**LB—LATE
BRONZE**

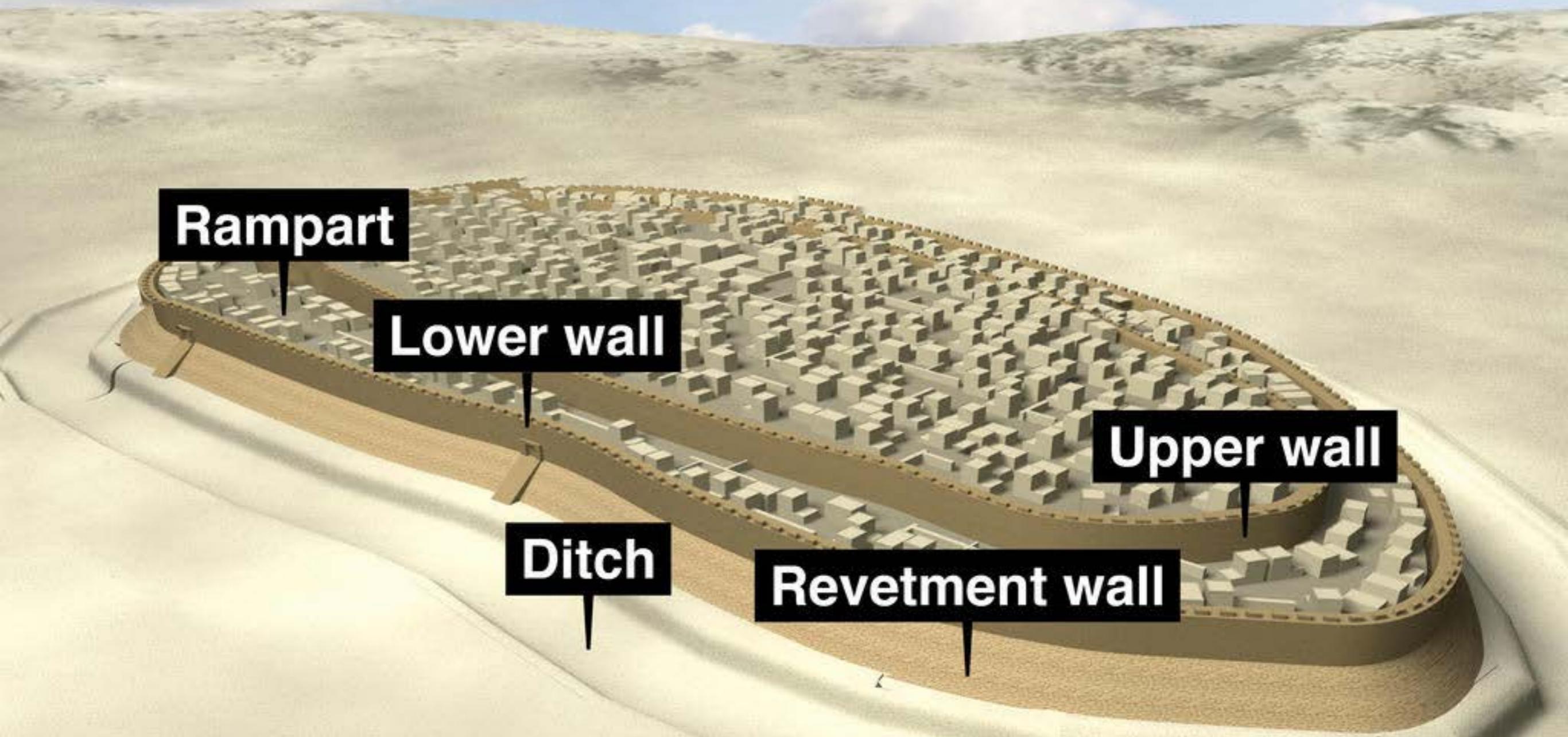
1600–1200 BC

Exodus Conquest
1447 BC 1407 BC



Ancient Jericho

Toward the end of the Bronze Age





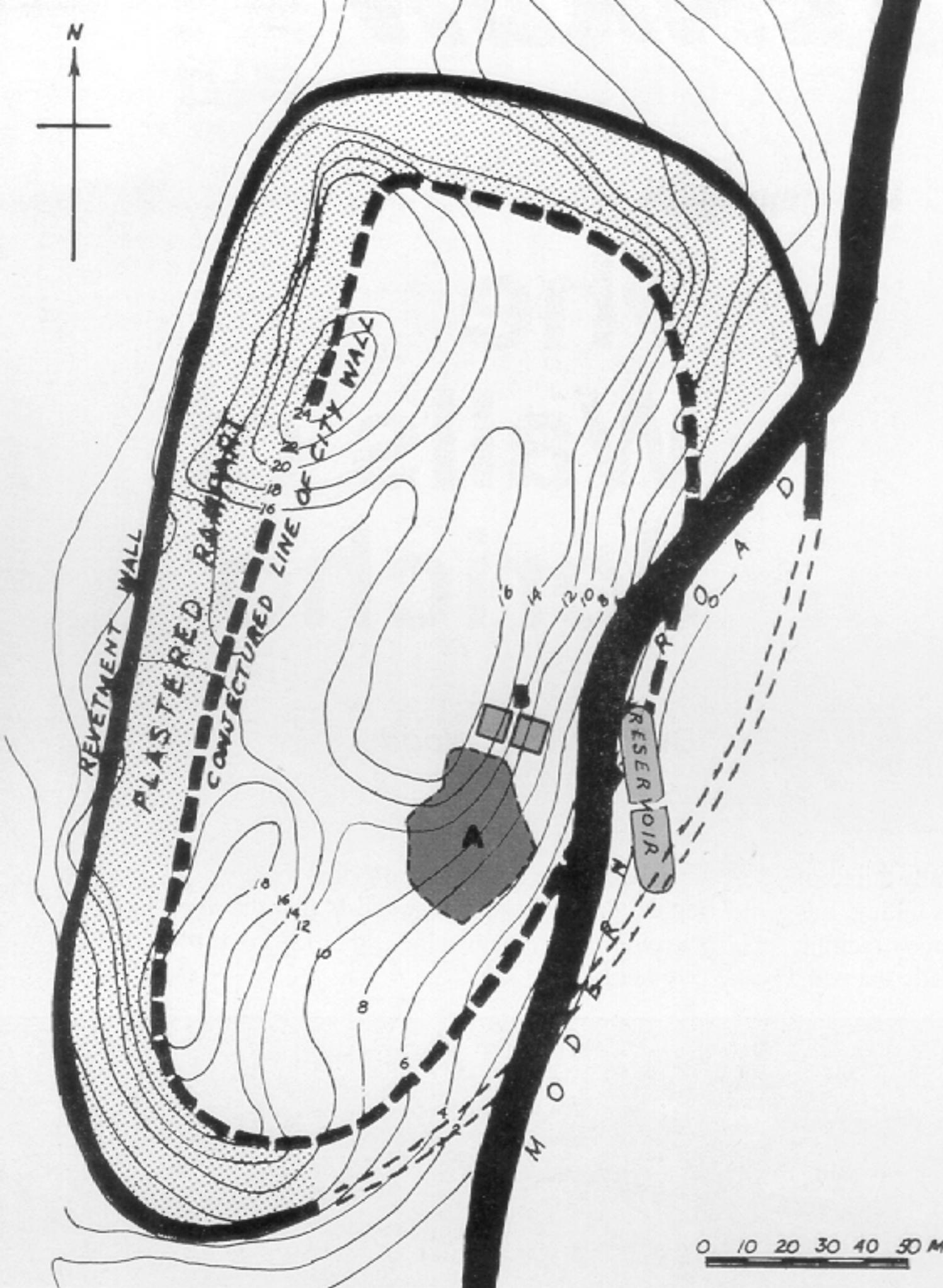


Exposed revetment wall

Neolithic tower

Elisha's spring

Jericho, Tell es-Sultan aerial from east



Plan of the ruins of Jericho.

A—area excavated by John Garstang where he found evidence for the destruction of Jericho by the Israelites which he dated to ca. 1400 BC.

B—Two 8×8-m squares excavated by Kathleen Kenyon where she found similar evidence for destruction, but misdated it to 1550 BC and attributed it to the Egyptians.

Excavated in 1928, 1930.

**Wrote the definitive work on
Bronze Age pottery.**

**Jericho existed from a
remote age.**



J Garstang (1876 – 1956)



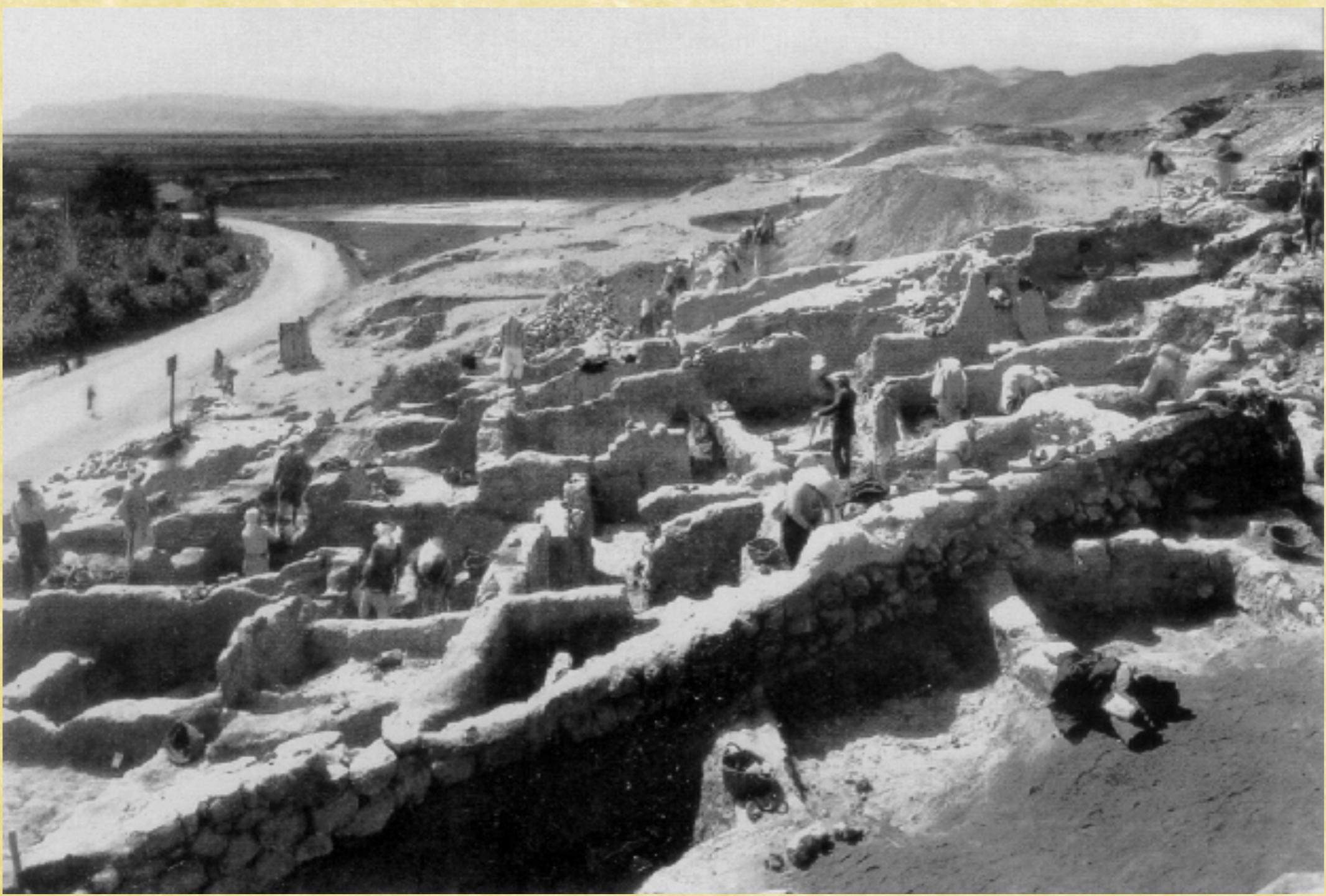
“... occupied long before the Bronze Age by a people using floors and receptacles of beaten and stuccoed earth, and whose weapons were of flint, ...”



J Garstang (1876 – 1956)

“The date of destruction [of the later city] is estimated from the complete absence of Mykenaiean deposits in the occupation layers and other details at about 1400 BC.”





“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



Dame Kathleen Kenyon
1906–1978



Jericho, Tell es-Sultan balk with burn layer

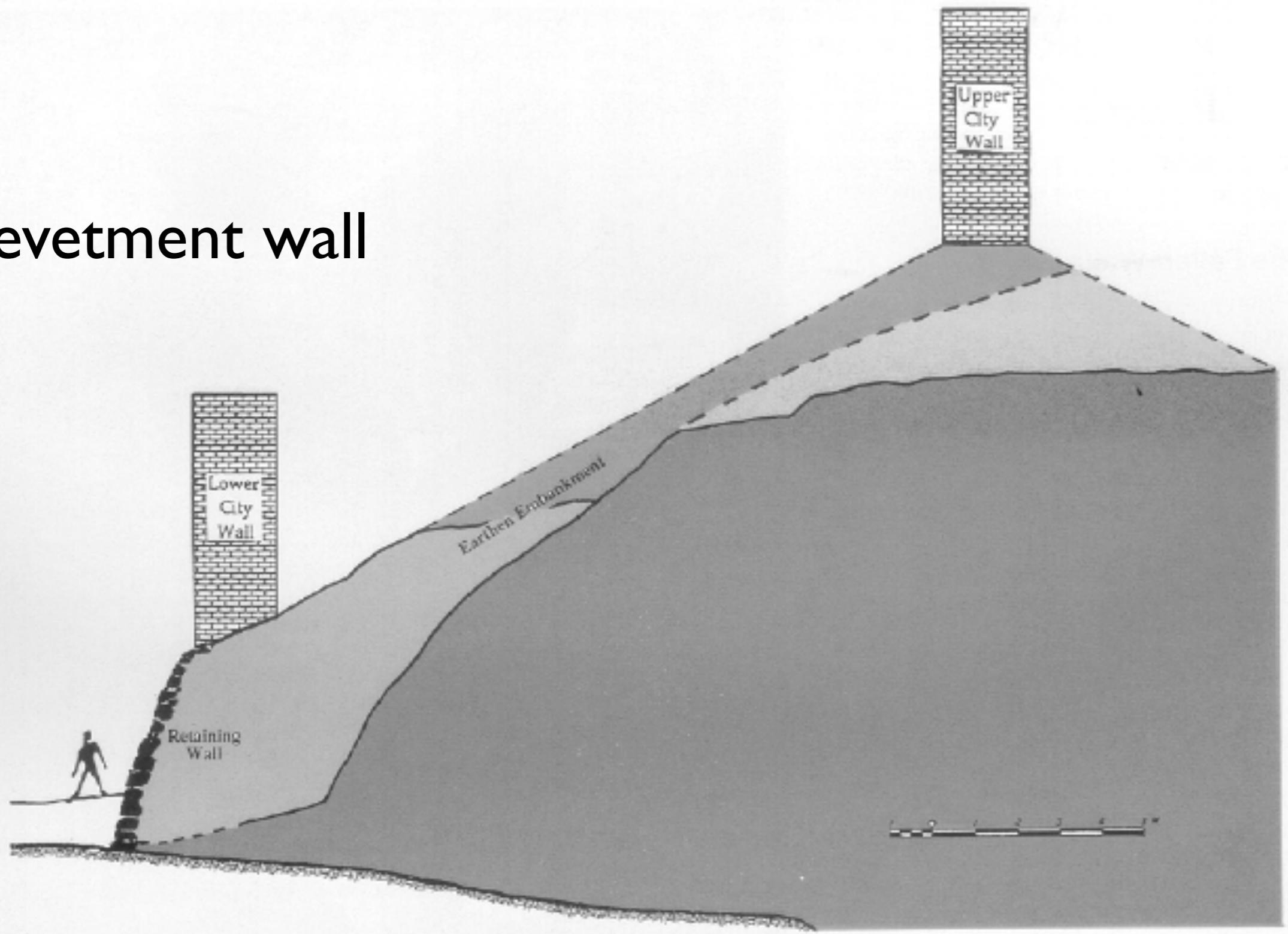


Jericho, Tell es-Sultan balk with burn layer



Jericho, Tell es-Sultan grain store jars in balk

Revetment wall





Jericho, Tell es-Sultan mud brick collapse in front of revetment wall

“The defenses at this time consisted of two parallel walls built of brick: The outer one was about six feet thick, the space between the two being from four to five yards across. Though so massive, these walls were faulty in construction. The bricks were sun-dried, contained no binding straw, and varied greatly in size, though their thickness was fairly uniform and averaged about four inches. The foundations consisted generally of two or three layers of field stones, which lacked uniformity of size and were unevenly laid.”



J Garstang (1876 – 1956)

“The outer wall was built wholly upon debris, and, as is now found, on the very brink of the mound, which must have been leveled out for the purpose.”

....

“A number of houses leaned against the inner face of the main city wall, ...”



J Garstang (1876 – 1956)



**Jericho,
Tell es-Sultan
mud brick
collapse in
front of
revetment wall**



Jericho, Tell es-Sultan collapsed mud brick wall with Bryant Wood



“The meticulous work of Kenyon showed that Jericho was indeed heavily fortified and that it had been burned by fire. Unfortunately, she misdated her finds, resulting in what seemed to be a discrepancy between the discoveries of archaeology and the Bible. She concluded that the Bronze Age city of Jericho was destroyed about 1550 BC by the Egyptians. An in-depth analysis of the evidence, however, reveals that the destruction took place at the end of the 15th century BC (end of the Late Bronze I period), exactly when the Bible says the Conquest occurred.”

~Wood 1990.