



**AREOPAGUS
PROCLAMATION**

Volume 17 • No. 1 • October, 2006

A monthly thoughtletter
published by the
AIIA Institute
PO Box 262
Monson, Maine 04464

SIX LEADING ARCHAEOLOGICAL MYTHS

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The public is constantly bombarded, in both the secular and Christian media, with bogus archaeological finds that claim to either prove or disprove the Bible. I and my staff have dealt with many of them in our quarterly magazine, *Bible and Spade*, and in our electronic newsletter, available free of charge — visit www.biblearchaeology.org.

Here are a six examples:

MYTH #1 • Noah's Ark Has Been Found

A number of individuals have stated they have found Noah's Ark at various locations in the vicinity of Mt. Ararat in eastern Turkey and, most recently, in Iran. To date, no scientific evidence has been produced to back up these assertions.

MYTH #2 • Ramesses the Great is the Pharaoh of the Exodus

Rameses II ("the Great") ruled Egypt ca 1279–1212 B.C. If there was an Exodus, liberal scholars say, the Pharaoh of the Exodus must have been Rameses. Hollywood and the media have picked up on this so that, in the minds of many, Rameses is the same Pharaoh that Moses confronted. There is a major problem with this identification, however, in that Biblical chronology places the Exodus 200 years earlier! While we cannot yet say for sure who the Pharaoh of the Exodus was, it certainly was not Rameses.

MYTH #3 • Pharaoh's Chariot Wheels Have Been Found

There has been a lot of publicity in recent years arguing that Mt. Sinai has been found in Saudi Arabia and that the Red Sea (Hebrew = Reed Sea) crossing was at the Gulf of Aqaba between the Sinai Peninsula and Saudi Arabia. Divers have photographed round objects in the Gulf which, it is held, are from Egyptian chariots. Since the objects are encrusted with coral, they cannot be retrieved for further study, as coral is protected. The Gulf of Aqaba is much too far from Egypt to be the correct location. Moreover, the Gulf of Aqaba is a busy modern shipping lane and any number of round wheel-like objects could have been deposited there over the centuries.

MYTH #4 • Mt. Sinai Has Been Located at Jebel al-Lawz in Saudi Arabia

Jebel al-Lawz is not in the right location to be Mt. Sinai. In Deuteronomy 1:2 we read that it took the Israelites 11 days to travel from Horeb (i.e. Mt. Sinai) to Kadesh in the northern Sinai. Pastoralists traveling with their flocks and herds can only cover 5–6 miles per day. This means the distance from Kadesh to Mt. Sinai is 60 miles or so. The straight-line distance from Ka-

desh to Jebel al-Lawz is approximately 150 miles, with the actual walking distance being much greater.

MYTH #5 • The Ark of the Covenant Has Been Found

The Ark of the Covenant is in Ethiopia, under the Temple Mount, or in a cave beneath Gordon's Calvary in Jerusalem, depending on who is trying to sell you his book or video. There is no evidence to back up any of these contentions. The late Ron Wyatt declared that he found not only the Ark with Christ's blood on it, but the Table of Showbread, Altar of Incense, original Book of the Law written by Moses, and various Temple implements, in a cave beneath Gordon's Calvary in 1982. The cave was professionally excavated in 2005 and no trace of these objects was found.

MYTH #6 • Archaeology Proves That There Was No Conquest of Canaan

Secular scholars maintain that archaeological findings demonstrate the Conquest described in Joshua never happened. Two places are singled out as providing proof positive: Jericho and Ai. At Jericho, they allege, there was no occupation at the time of the Conquest. Our research has shown that a massive destruction of the city (see Joshua 6:24), which the archaeologists dated to 1550 B.C., really occurred in 1400 B.C., the very date of the Conquest according to Biblical chronology. The site of Ai was misidentified. At the correct site, Khirbet el-Maqatir, where I directed excavations from 1995 to 2000, evidence was found which matches the Biblical account exactly, including evidence of burning (Joshua 8:28).

CONCLUDING OBSERVATION

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is! Do not believe sensational claims unless there is well-documented evidence to back them up.

More Convincing Evidence in Defense and Confirmation of the Christian Faith