

THE DATING OF HAZOR'S DESTRUCTION IN JOSHUA 11 VIA BIBLICAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL, & EPIGRAPHICAL EVIDENCE

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I. INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, one of the hottest topics in the field of OT Biblical studies today is the dating of the exodus.¹ Essentially, there are two prevailing views: the early-exodus theory, which contends that the Israelite exodus transpired during the middle of the 15th century BC, and the late-exodus theory, which purports that the Israelites actually left Egypt during the 13th century BC. On the side latter view, Biblical archaeologists such as James Hoffmeier contend that a 13th-century-BC exodus better fits the material evidence, in large part due to alleged connections between sites mentioned in the Biblical text—such as the store-city of Raamses (Exod 1:11), which he asserts “is likely to be equated with the Delta capital built by and named for Ramesses II, that is, Pi-Ramesses”²—and excavated or identifiable sites in Egypt.

On the side of the former view, Biblical archaeologists such as Bryant Wood argue that the exodus must have occurred in the middle of the 15th century BC, since the ordinal number “480th” in 1 Kgs 6:1 can be understood only literally (contra allegorically, as late-exodus proponents suggest). Wood, who mainly presents archaeological evidence to support his case, even declares that “the 13th-century exodus-conquest model is no longer tenable.”³ Thus the battle over the proper dating of the exodus and conquest continues to wage.

While this debate cannot be settled in the present article, nor can space here be devoted to the issue of the alleged Ramesside connections with the store-city of Raamses or the problem of archaeology not being able to “provide any trace of Israelites [in Canaan] before the Iron Age (shortly before 1200 B.C.E.),”⁴ a reexamination of one aspect of this issue is in order: namely, the destruction of Hazor that is recorded in Joshua 11. The importance of Hazor’s contribution to the debate on the timing of the exodus cannot be underestimated, as “Hazor provides the only possible evidence for an Israelite conquest of Canaan in the late 13th century” BC.⁵

The initial Israelite conquest of Canaan under Joshua included three cities that were destroyed and put to the torch: Hazor (Josh 11:10–11), Jericho (Josh 6:21–24), and Ai (Josh 8:18–19). Hazor—strategically located on the Great Trunk Road, which is the main commercial highway that cut through Canaan and was part of the principal military route throughout the Late Bronze Age (1550–1200 BC)—thus is at the center of the debate over the timing of the exodus, since it was both destroyed by Joshua and destroyed in the 13th century BC. The Biblical text requires that the former is true, while archaeology requires that the latter is true. The matter that will be discussed here, however, is whether these destructions are distinct or one and the same. This study may go a long way toward determining whether or not the exodus and conquest transpired in the 13th century BC.

¹For example, see the debate between James Hoffmeier and Bryant Wood in *JETS* (James K. Hoffmeier, “What Is the Biblical Date for the Exodus? A Response to Bryant Wood,” *JETS* 50:2 [Jun 2007], 225–47; Bryant G. Wood, “The Biblical Date for the Exodus Is 1446 BC: A Response to James Hoffmeier,” *JETS* 50:2 [Jun 2007], 249–58), as well as an attempt by Ralph Hawkins to support the late-exodus theory by means of datable scarabs from Samaria (Ralph K. Hawkins, “Propositions for Evangelical Acceptance of a Late-Date Exodus-Conquest: Biblical Data and the Royal Scarabs from Mt. Ebal,” *JETS* 50:1 [Mar 2007], 31–46).

²James K. Hoffmeier, “Out of Egypt,” *BAR* 33:1 (Jan/Feb 2007), 36.

³Bryant G. Wood, “The Rise and Fall of the 13th-Century Exodus-Conquest Theory,” *JETS* 48:3 (Sep 2005), 489.

⁴Manfred Bietak, “The Volcano Explains Everything—Or Does It?,” *BAR* 32:6 (Nov/Dec 2006), 61. Late-exodus proponents should remember that there was also an “invisibility of the Israelites in the archaeology of Canaan between ca. 1200 and 1000” BC (Alan Millard, “Amorites and Israelites: Invisible Invaders—Modern Expectation and Ancient Reality,” in *The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions*, ed. James K. Hoffmeier and Alan Millard [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004], 152–53). In light of this later invisibility, an earlier invisibility for the two centuries before this period should not be precluded as a possibility, either. While Bietak is on track when noting the significance of the Merneptah Stele to the presence of the Israelites in Canaan, even this critical Egyptian landmark does not remove the Israelites’ occupational invisibility. In fact, the Merneptah Stele even *pronounces* the existence of the occupational invisibility of the Israelites, an indisputable point, because the stele dates to a time that is 25 years or more before the archaeologically demonstrable presence of settlements in the Judean hill country.

⁵Hoffmeier, “What Is the Biblical Date?,” 255.

II. THE DESTROYER OF THE FINAL BRONZE-AGE CITY

1. *The Destroyer's Nationality.* Ancient Hazor consisted of a large, rectangular lower city (170 acres) and a bottle-shaped upper city (30 acres), essentially an elongated mound called a tel, which rises about 40 m. above the surrounding plain.⁶ Yigael Yadin, the archaeologist who excavated at Hazor from 1955–1958 and 1968–1969, documented the great conflagration that accompanied the total destruction of the final Late-Bronze-Age city, which he believed to have occurred most likely by *ca.* 1233 BC.⁷ Evidence of this destruction consists of layers of ashes, burnt wooden beams, cracked basalt slabs, mutilated basalt statues, and fallen walls. Yadin's findings in the lower city confirm that public structures such as the Orthostats Temple and the Stelae Temple were violently destroyed, while the renewed excavations in the upper city—under current excavator Amnon Ben-Tor—corroborate the existence of a fierce conflagration that also is mostly limited to public buildings. This includes both the monumental cultic edifices and the administrative palatial buildings, all of which served as the foci of religious and civil power and wealth at the height of Canaanite Hazor in the 13th century BC.⁸

Seemingly, the smaller-scale domestic and cultic buildings in the lower city were not similarly burned or violently destroyed, though the campaign did include the decapitation of basalt statues of gods and kings, and probably also the smashing of ritual vessels found in the temples.⁹ The intentional nature of the desecration of these statues and vessels is clear: “This was a systematic annihilation campaign, against the very physical symbols of the royal ideology and its loci of ritual legitimation.”¹⁰ This desecratory destruction is normally attributed to the Israelites, as argued by both Yadin and Ben-Tor.¹¹ Kitchen agrees, declaring “that neither the Egyptians, Canaanites nor Sea Peoples destroyed LB Hazor—the early Hebrews remain a feasible option.”¹² Moreover, Yadin went as far as to make a connection between this particular destruction and the text of Joshua 11: “This destruction is doubtless to be ascribed to the Israelite tribes, as related in the Book of Joshua.”¹³

⁶Yigael Yadin and Amnon Ben-Tor, “Hazor,” in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, vol. 2, ed. Ephraim Stern (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society & Carta, 1993), 595. The upper city was established first, during the Early Bronze Age of the middle of the second millennium BC, while the lower city was founded in the middle of the 18th century BC (Middle Bronze IIB), but forever abandoned during the middle third of the 13th century BC (Late Bronze IIB), when the final Canaanite city was destroyed (Ibid. 595, 599, 603). The existence of the lower city during the Late Bronze Age, in addition to the expected city on the tel, was unusual for this period, as southern Levantine sites with more than 12 acres in area are the exception to the rule (Anson F. Rainey and R. Steven Notley, *The Sacred Bridge* [Jerusalem: Carta, 2006], 63).

⁷The final city of the Late Bronze (IIB/III) Age (*ca.* 1300–1200 BC) is designated Stratum 1A in the lower city, and Stratum XIII on the tel. Yadin progressed slightly in his thought as to the dating of this destruction, but he seems to have settled on the second third of the 13th century BC. For example, he stated in a 1972 publication that “it seems most probable that 1A was destroyed during the second third of the thirteenth century” BC (Yigael Yadin, *Hazor: The Head of all those Kingdoms*, The 1970 Schweich Lectures of the British Academy [London: Oxford University Press, 1972], 108). In a 1993 publication, this statement is virtually repeated, with the addition that this destruction and dating applies both to the upper and lower cities, and that conflagration was the cause (Yadin, “Hazor,” in *New Encyclopedia*, 603). Kitchen prefers lowering the date to at least 1220 BC, arguing that “[t]he Yadin date of 1230 BC (Mycenaean wares near [the] end of Hazor) was based on [the work of Arne] Furumark (in [the] 1940s!), who then used old, high Egyptian dates not usable today” (Kenneth A. Kitchen, “Hazor and Egypt: An Egyptological & Ancient Near-Eastern Perspective,” *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 16:2 [Nov 2002], 310). Later, Kitchen defined the known parameters more precisely, noting that the vizier Prahotept erected a monument in Hazor sometime during the decade following Years 40–45 of Ramses II (Kenneth A. Kitchen, “An Egyptian Inscribed Fragment from Late Bronze Hazor,” *IEJ* 53:1 [2003], 24, 25), translating to 1245–1235 BC, thus leaving 1234–1230 BC as a legitimate option for the destruction of the final Late-Bronze city (Wood, “Rise and Fall,” 476). The high chronology for the 18th Egyptian Dynasty, far from unusable or outdated, despite the claims of Kitchen and Hoffmeier, is quite defensible (Douglas Petrovich, “Amenhotep II and the Historicity of the Exodus Pharaoh,” *The Master's Seminary Journal* 17:1 [Spr 2006], 87). The low chronology's current popularity among many Egyptologists may prove to be nothing more than a mere trend.

⁸Sharon Zuckerman, “Anatomy of a Destruction: Crisis Architecture, Termination Rituals and the Fall of Canaanite Hazor” *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 20:1 (June 2007), 24.

⁹Amnon Ben-Tor, “The Fall of Canaanite Hazor—the ‘Who’ and ‘When’ Questions,” in *Mediterranean Peoples in Transition* (eds. Seymour Gitin, Amihai Mazar, and Ephraim Stern; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1998), 465.

¹⁰Zuckerman, “Anatomy of a Destruction,” 24.

¹¹Yadin, “Hazor,” in *New Encyclopedia*, 603; Amnon Ben-Tor and Maria Teresa Rubiato, “Excavating Hazor—Part Two: Did the Israelites Destroy the Canaanite City?” *BAR* 25:3 (May/June 1999), 22–39.

¹²Kitchen, “Hazor and Egypt,” 313.

¹³Yadin, “Hazor,” in *New Encyclopedia*, 603.

In Sharon Zuckerman's wonderful article that whets the appetite of all those awaiting the disclosure of Canaanite Hazor's cuneiform archive(s), she challenges the notion that the Israelites were the actual culprits behind the destruction of the final Canaanite city of the Late Bronze Age, arguing that an internal revolt instead led to the city's annihilation.¹⁴ This long-time senior staff member at the Hazor excavations suggests that Hazorite rulers and elites enforced a dominant ideology, which the populace contested, resisted, and ultimately revolted against due to the political and religious impositions. While she notes that the other of the two possible explanations for the destruction is military conquest, she completely rules out this option because "there is no archaeological evidence of warfare, such as human victims or weapons, anywhere in the site."¹⁵ Zuckerman's theory aside, most maximalistic archaeologists and conservative Biblical scholars attribute this destruction to the Israelites, mainly due to the "intentional desecration of shrines and cultic objects," including decapitation and the severing of the hands of the cultic figures and idols, which is considered "a practice unique to Israel."¹⁶

2. *The Destroyer's Identity.* Citing Judg 4:24, Wood argues that the Israelites destroyed the Hazor of this era under the leadership of Deborah and Barak.¹⁷ However, Hoffmeier refuses to assign this Israelite destruction to Deborah and Barak, objecting that Wood invented an attack on Hazor not claimed in the text (Judges 4). Hoffmeier states, "[T]he text is absolutely silent regarding any military action against Hazor itself," so "there is no basis to believe that the destruction of the final LB IIB (late 13th century) city was caused by Deborah[']s and Barak's triumph over Jabin and Sisera."¹⁸ Hoffmeier correctly observes that the text does not expressly state that these Israelites destroyed the city, but his argument from silence cannot prove that Hazor was not destroyed during the judgeships of Deborah and Barak. The Biblical author used the verb הִכְרִיתוּ (Judg 4:24), which features the *hiphil* stem, implying a complete cutting off. Thus the demise of Jabin was decisive and final.

The Israelites "went harder and harder against Jabin" until they killed him, meaning that they grew stronger and stronger in relation to Hazor, until they were able to defeat its king. Yet could the mere killing of the king who controlled this entire region be seen as a victory that would earn its way onto the pages of Judges? Certainly the Israelites' fight was not a personal vendetta against the king himself, as a man, but rather against the city of Hazor and its influence in northern Canaan. In truth, exterminating Hazor's king alone would be a hollow and meaningless victory for the agents of God's wrath (Deut 7:1–2). As mentioned already, archaeology reveals that the very peak of Hazor's might throughout the entire Canaanite era was achieved at this time, which is confirmed by the epigraphical evidence from the Amarna Letters, in which Hazor's king is the only Canaanite

¹⁴Sharon Zuckerman, "Where is the Hazor Archive Buried?," *BAR* 32:2 (Mar/Apr 2006), 37. Unlike the description in Joshua 11, the text of Judges 4 does not state that the Israelites burned—or even destroyed—Hazor, so neither Ben-Tor's theory (Israelite destruction) nor Zuckerman's theory (internal revolt) is at odds with the text, per se, if these two Israelite initiatives against Hazor were not one and the same event. However, certainly the burden of proof is upon Zuckerman to overturn the mound of evidence produced by Ben-Tor, which seems to make evident what the account in Judges 4 alludes to, though does not state explicitly. The fate of Hazor in the narrative of Judges 4 will be discussed in greater detail subsequently.

¹⁵Zuckerman, "Anatomy of a Destruction," 25. Obviously one great weakness in Zuckerman's dismissal of the conquest theory is that her argument is one derived completely from silence. It must be noted that only a minute fraction of Tel Hazor has been excavated, and thus the possibility of a mass-burial site cannot be overlooked, as well as that of skeletal remains existing only in areas as yet unexcavated. In a personal conversation between the present writer and Ben-Tor, the chief excavator ventured that 600 years would be needed to excavate the entire site. Moreover, clearly not all of Israel's victories over Canaanite cities, which battles actually were fought by the divine "captain of the army of Yahweh" (Josh 5:14–15) both in the days of Joshua and well beyond, were won by conventional weaponry or included a direct, human assault on the city's fortified defenses (e.g. Jericho [Josh 6], Ai [Josh 8], earlier Hazor [Josh 11], Bethel [Judg 1:23–25], and Jerusalem [2 Sam 5:6–9]). Thus Zuckerman's expectation to find remnants of weapons allegedly used if the Israelites truly were the destroyers of Hazor, and to find them in the site's scant few excavated areas, is presuppositionally flawed. Zuckerman also fails to explain why the lower class(es) would initiate an internal revolt that would lead to the irreparable devastation of their native city, which would have to be the case since Hazor was left uninhabited until the 11th century BC, forcing the revolvers to evacuate and resettle in other cities throughout the Hula Valley such as Tel-Dan, as Zuckerman suggests. What motive could be strong enough to incite such a peasants' revolt that would lead to complete, personal disenfranchisement?

¹⁶Hoffmeier, "What Is the Biblical Date?," 245.

¹⁷Wood, "Rise and Fall," 477.

¹⁸Hoffmeier, "What Is the Biblical Date?," 244.

ruler referred to as a king in letters to the Egyptian pharaoh.¹⁹ Considering Hazor's exalted status in Canaan from the middle of the 14th century BC through the second third of the 13th century BC, a period of over 100 years, Hazor represented the most imposing national threat to the Israelites in the Promised Land.

The strength of Jabin's army and that of the lesser vassal-cities of the surrounding area was what the Israelites finally overcame, resulting in the king's death. Hoffmeier fails to recognize the main issue in the conquest-narratives of Joshua and Judges: the defeat of *cities* (Josh 11:12; Judg 11:33), the extermination of *peoples* (Josh 11:20), and the acquisition of *land* (Josh 1:2, 6; 12:1).²⁰ The king's death indubitably is logically connected to the conquest—and to the subsequent destruction—of Hazor. In light of the emphasis on this fortified city and its unequivocal regional influence, the “cutting off” also must include Hazor, not purely the death of its king. The Israelites experienced a decisive and final victory over Hazor, which eradicated its powerful king and eliminated Hazor's influence over the territory of northern Canaan, where its sovereignty had posed a suppressive threat to the expanding Israelites.

Even if all of this evidence fails to be persuasive, the text of Joshua 12 should tip the scales for any objective reader. In this chapter, the author provides a “king list,” which is an account of all of the monarchs defeated by God under the service of Moses and Joshua. In the introduction to the king list, a common type of record kept by Ancient Near Eastern (hereinafter ANE) conquerors, the text notes that “these are the kings of the land, whom the sons of Israel killed, and whose land they possessed” (Josh 12:1). For the Biblical writer of Joshua, the smiting of a king is inextricably bound to the acquisition and possession of his land. Should the writer of Judges be expected to depart from this standard? Surely the territorial land controlled by Hazor was the prize that Israel won, and it could not have been acquired without “military action against Hazor itself.”

Therefore, Wood is exactly correct when he states, “The destruction of Jabin implies the destruction of his capital city Hazor.”²¹ Undoubtedly, Hoffmeier's aversion to this reality is due to his need to reconcile the archaeological remains at Hazor with the late-exodus theory, since a destruction under Deborah and Barak would require the archaeology of Hazor to reveal two later destructions—the one at the end of the Late Bronze Age, and a subsequent one before the first Israelite occupation—if this theory were to remain credible. As the spade has shown, however, after the destruction of the last Bronze-Age city in a massive conflagration, Hazor remained completely abandoned until the initial Israelite settlement of the 12th century BC.

As for the destruction under Joshua, Josh 11:11 clearly states that “he [Joshua] burned the city [of Hazor] with fire.” Most archaeologists who accept the historicity of the Biblical account thus link the massive conflagration of the final Late-Bronze-Age city of Hazor to the fiery destruction accomplished under Joshua. Moreover, they commonly connect the later story of the seemingly independent defeat of Hazor's King Jabin, which is recorded in Judges 4, to the destruction described in Joshua 11. Yadin betrays his commitment to this conclusion when he notes that “[t]he narrative in the Book of Joshua is therefore the true historical nucleus, while the mention of Jabin in Judges 4 must have been a later editorial interpolation.”²² Thus at present, one Israelite destruction by fire is commonly theorized.²³

¹⁹In Amarna Letter (EA) 227, the ruler of Hazor, while writing to the Egyptian pharaoh, refers to himself as the “king of the city of Hazor,” a case unparalleled in all of the correspondence of the Canaanite cities mentioned in the el-Amarna archive. Furthermore, in EA 148, he is referred to the same way by the ruler of Tyre. Unfortunately, EA 227 is rather fragmentary, but in it the king of Hazor reassures pharaoh that he is safeguarding the *cities* of pharaoh until the Egyptian king's arrival (*The Amarna Letters*, ed. William L. Moran [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992], 289, 235). As Yadin writes, “This indicates no doubt that the King of Hazor's rule embraced more than the city itself,” which “is further corroborated by the letters of the rulers of Tyre and Ashtaroth” (Yadin, *The Head*, 8). It should be no surprise that in Judges 4, Jabin is referred to four times as the “king of Canaan,” while only once is he called the “king of Hazor.” In fact, he is called the “king of Canaan, who ruled in Hazor” (Judg 4:2).

²⁰Keil and Delitzsch seem to agree, writing that the purpose of Joshua is to show how the faithful covenant-God of Israel fulfilled the promise that he made to the patriarchs, and how the Canaanites were destroyed and their land was given to the tribes of Israel for a hereditary possession through the medium of Joshua (C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, “Joshua,” in *Commentary of the Old Testament*, vol. 2 [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989], 15).

²¹Wood, “The Biblical Date: 1446,” 256.

²²Yigael Yadin, *Hazor: The Rediscovery of a Great Citadel of the Bible* (New York: Random House, 1975), 255. Elsewhere, the former chief excavator notes that the destruction of the final Canaanite city undoubtedly is the one “related in the Book of Joshua” (Yadin, “Hazor,” in *New Encyclopedia*, 603).

²³Zuckerman, “Anatomy of a Destruction,” 25.

However, the picture painted in the Biblical text does not allow for such a link between the great conflagration described in Joshua 11 and the destruction of the Late-Bronze-IIb (*ca.* 1300–1200 BC) city of Hazor. As Biblical chronologist Rodger Young firmly established, 1446 BC is the correct year of the exodus,²⁴ and as the present writer demonstrated elsewhere, the exodus can be dated even more precisely to 25 April, 1446 BC.²⁵ Thus the conquest of the Promised Land began in 1406 BC, 40 years after the exodus (Num 32:13).

III. TEXTUAL OBJECTIONS TO JOSHUA 11 AND JUDGES 4 DESCRIBING THE SAME ATTACK

1. *The Lengthy Gap between Narratives.* The first textual objection to the theory that Joshua 11 and Judges 4 describe the same attack is that a large and undeniable gap in time separates the two narratives. The destruction of Hazor under Joshua transpired in *ca.* 1400 BC, given that the conquest of Canaan—to the extent that it actually was carried out as divinely outlined—required six years to complete.²⁶ With this date secured, the account of Hazor’s demise in Judges 4 must be dated, even if only approximately, because unquestionably the dating of the period of the judges is one of the most intriguing challenges related to Biblical chronology.

To begin the determination of the dating, Joshua seemingly died in *ca.* 1384 BC, and the Israelites’ faithfulness to God extended only to the time of the deaths of the elders who survived him (Josh 24:29, 31).²⁷ Given that the exact survival-span of these faithful elders cannot be quantified precisely, this period will not be

²⁴Rodger C. Young, “When Did Solomon Die?,” *JETS* 46:4 (Dec 2003), 601, 602. For a development of the argument that the jubilee cycles support a date of 1446 BC for the exodus, see *idem*, “The Talmud’s Two Jubilees and their Relevance to the Date of the Exodus,” *WTJ* 68 (2006) 71–83; *idem*, “Ezekiel 40:1 As a Corrective for Seven Wrong Ideas in Biblical Interpretation,” *AUSS* 44 (2006) 271–276; *idem*, “Three Verifications of Thiele’s Date for the Beginning of the Divided Kingdom,” *AUSS* 45 (2007) 173–179.

²⁵Petrovich, “Amenhotep II” 84, n. 15. This article evaluates the candidacy of Amenhotep II as the exodus-pharaoh by examining this pharaoh’s biography against what must be true of the exodus-pharaoh historically. The conclusion drawn is that Amenhotep II is the *only* pharaoh of either the 18th or 19th Dynasty who sufficiently meets the necessary biographical requirements. To date, no late-exodus advocate has attempted to challenge the evidence that was presented, or the conclusion that was drawn.

²⁶The commencement of the conquest can be dated exactly. With the exodus datable to 1446 BC, the conquest automatically is dated to 1406 BC, because for “40 years the sons of Israel walked in the wilderness” before entering Canaan (Josh 5:6). Since the crossing of the Jordan River transpired on the tenth day of the first month, a date of 28 April 1406 BC is fixed as the day in which the Israelites crossed into Canaan (Josh 4:19). The new moon that began Nisan of 1406 BC occurred at 05:10 UT (universal time) on 17 April (as listed on the webpage <http://sunearth.gsfc.nasa.gov/eclipse/phase/phases-1499.html>). Since the time at Shittim in the Plains of Moab, where the Israelites seemingly stayed (Num 25:1; Josh 2:1; 3:1) when the new moon was observed, is 2.4 hours ahead of GMT (Greenwich Mean Time), the new moon was observable at 05:10 + 2.383 hours = 07.55 hours, or 7:33 am. When factoring-in the one full day of variance in the earth’s rotational velocity that takes into account the delay in the retrograde motion of the earth during Joshua’s long day (Josh 10:12–13) and Hezekiah’s ten steps on the sun dial (2 Kgs 20:8–11), the new moon actually occurred on 18 April, a date that does not need to be altered since the new moon occurred in the morning and not after dusk, unlike the new moon for the month of the exodus (Petrovich, “Amenhotep II,” 84, n. 15). Therefore, the new moon for the month of the conquest was observed by the Israelite priests on the evening of 18 April 1406 BC. Extrapolating forward, the tenth day of the month of Nisan/Abib would have been 28 April. As for the date of the completion of the conquest, Caleb notes that at the time of the division of the land, and thus immediately after the conquest formally concluded, he was 85 years old (Josh 14:10). He further provides a chronological harmonization for this event by noting that he was 40 years of age when Moses sent the 12 spies from Kadesh-barnea to spy out Canaan (Josh 14:7). Since this spying mission transpired in early summer of the second year after the exodus, and thus in 1445 BC, the 45 years of time (Josh 14:10) between these events effectively date the division of Canaan among the Israelite tribes to 1400 BC. Therefore, the conquest began in 1406 BC and concluded in 1400 BC, a span of six years. The northern campaign was far shorter in length because the operation hinged on one massive battle fought against the powerful king of Hazor and all his allies (Josh 11:1–8).

²⁷Although the exact date of Joshua’s death is impossible to determine, a close approximation can be made. While Israel was at Mt. Sinai in *ca.* 1446 BC, Joshua was said to be “a young man” (Exod 33:11), probably meaning that he was 30–50 years old, in contrast to the aged Moses. Moses was nearly 80 years old during his previous trip to Mt. Sinai (Exod 3:1), since he “was fulfilling 40 years of age” when he departed from Egypt (Acts 7:23), and the angel spoke to him at the burning bush “after 40 years had passed” (Acts 7:30). Leon Wood perceptively notes that “Joshua had been entrusted with more leadership than Caleb and also is said to have been ‘old and well advanced in years’ (Josh. 13:1) when Caleb speaks of himself as being yet strong and vigorous [Josh. 14:11]. Joshua was probably more than ninety at this time” (Leon J. Wood, *A Survey of Israel’s History* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986], 171). If Joshua may be adduced to have been *ca.* 95 years of age when he divided Canaan, then—since he lived to the ripe age of 110 years (Josh 24:29)—he would have lived another 15 years beyond this event, making 1384 BC the approximate year of his death. Thus Joshua would have been Caleb’s senior by *ca.* 10 years, and Moses’ junior by *ca.* 32 years, making Joshua “a young man” of *ca.* 49 years of age when he served Moses at the tent of meeting.

included in the measurement of time between Joshua's death and the victory over Hazor's king during the days of Deborah and Barak (Judg 4:24).²⁸ Assuming that the unfaithful, subsequent generation began immediately after the deaths of the elders of Joshua's generation who outlived him, the first chronological reference is to eight years of oppression (Judg 3:8), followed by 40 years of rest (Judg 3:11).

A second oppression, this one of 18 years (Judg 3:14), was followed by 80 years of rest (Judg 3:30). A third oppression and period of rest, related to Shamgar (Judg 3:31), is not documented as to its duration. This undefined number also may be ignored safely for the purpose of the present study. The final number necessary is 20 years (Judg 4:3) for the period of oppression under "Jabin, King of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor" (Judg 4:1). When all of these numbers are added, the total comes to 166 years. The imprecision of this length of time, already obvious from the above discussion, is further complicated by how the required length of the period of the judges—which totals 341 years, if using Joshua's death (*ca.* 1384 BC) for its inception, and the conservative date of *ca.* 1043 BC for the start of Saul's reign—does not match evenly with the 410 years derived when adding together all of the years of oppression and rest that transpired throughout the narrative of Judges.²⁹

This apparent contradiction is resolved simply by understanding that the oppressions and periods of rest, which transpired throughout Israel and at various times, did not run consecutively but concurrently (i.e. with unspecified overlaps).³⁰ However, another problem arises: the 166 years must be lengthened both by the undefined years of the faithful generation that survived Joshua and by Shamgar's judgeship, and shortened by the unspecified overlapping of the judgeships. Assuming that the adjustment for the overlapping of the judgeships is somewhat lengthier, 150 years may be used as a rough number for the time between Joshua's death and the events of Judges 4. This would mean that the latter event occurred in *ca.* 1234 BC, which matches well with Yadin's dating of the destruction of the final Bronze-Age city. Because the Hazor of Joshua 11 was destroyed in *ca.* 1400 BC, in this scenario the difference between the two destructions of Hazor would be *ca.* 166 years.³¹ Thus with such a lengthy interval between the events of these two narratives, the demises of Hazor in Joshua 11 and Judges 4 are chronologically far too distant from one another to be fused into a single event.

2. *The Identification of "Jabin" as a Dynastic Title.* The second textual objection to the theory that Joshua 11 and Judges 4 record the same attack on Hazor is that the name "Jabin, King of Hazor" in these independent narratives does not refer to the same king. Yadin asks, "If Joshua, who lived before Deborah, had already destroyed Hazor and killed Jabin, how is it possible that (at least) several decades later, Jabin was still alive and his commander in chief engaged in battle as far away from Hazor as the valley of Megiddo? This is indeed one of the most irksome questions of Biblical research."³² Yadin, therefore, pondered how one king could have ruled for so long, though the archaeologist's "several decades" should be corrected to "150 years."

The tension dissipates, however, once the reader understands that the term "jabin" is not the name of the king, but rather is a royal, dynastic title. Oddly enough, earlier in the same volume Yadin answers his own question, when he writes, "Scholars have suggested that the form of the name of the king of Hazor mentioned in the Bible—Yabin (Jabin being the Anglicized version)—is indeed short for the full theophoric formula. If this is

²⁸Since these elders "who had known all of the acts of Yahweh that he had performed for Israel" (Josh 24:31) apparently were old enough to have experienced the exodus, but undoubtedly were younger than 20 years old when the 12 spies were sent to Kadesh-barnea (Num 14:29), they would have been no older than 82 years of age at Joshua's death, if he actually died in *ca.* 1384 BC. Therefore, they may not have survived Joshua by any more than 5–10 years. This would be consistent with Steinmann's proposition that the initial oppression of the Israelites during the period of the judges, as instigated by Cushan-Rishathaim of Mesopotamia (Josh 3:8), transpired in 1378 BC (Andrew E. Steinmann, "The Mysterious Numbers of the Book of Judges," *JETS* 48:3 [Sep 2005], 499).

²⁹John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville: Word, 1997), 339. Here, a handy chart documents the periods of oppression and rest under each judge, complete with references.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 335. For example, Judg 3:30–4:1 implies that Shamgar judged during the 80 years of peace after Ehud's deliverance from the Moabites, while Judg 10:7 implies that Jephthah (occupied with the Ammonites in Transjordan) and Samson (busy with the Philistines in the Shephelah) were contemporary (L. Wood, *Survey*, 171).

³¹Waterhouse gives a loose figure of 150 years between the two victories over Hazor, noting that "Hazor remained a foreign enclave within Israel until her fall, some 150 years later, to the victorious army of Deborah and Barak (Judg 4:4–24)" (Douglas Waterhouse, "Who Are the Habiru of the Amarna Letters?," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 12:1 [Spr 2001], 40).

³²Yadin, *The Rediscovery*, 250.

true, then Yabin may have been a royal dynastic name of the kings of Hazor for quite a time.”³³ In fact, as Kitchen points out, the use of this ancient name dates back to the Mari archives of the 18th century BC, where Yabni-Adad is mentioned as the king of Hazor.³⁴ The view of a dynastic use of “jabin” thus has sufficient merit.

One example of this practice of using dynastic titles superfluously, which was common for both Biblical and non-Biblical authors of antiquity, is drawn from Egypt. The Egyptian dynastic title, “pharaoh,” derives from the word that literally means “great house.” During Egypt’s Old Kingdom (*ca.* 2715–2170 BC), the word was used of the royal palace. Not until the middle of the 18th Dynasty (*ca.* 1575–1307 BC), slightly before the reign of Thutmose III (*ca.* 1506–1452 BC), was it used as an epithet for the Egyptian monarch.³⁵ The Biblical text itself confirms the notion of the pharaonic title as having a dynastic use equivalent to “king.” Moses writes in Exod 5:4, “the king of Egypt said to them,” signifying that the Egyptian king spoke directly to Moses and Aaron. After recording the words of the king, Moses writes in Exod 5:5, “Then pharaoh said,” as the speech to the Israelite leaders continued. Pharaoh even used a verb in the second person plural (הִשָּׁבְתֶם), clarifying that he still was speaking to Moses and Aaron. Since the terms “king of Egypt” and “pharaoh” are used interchangeably by Moses in this narrative, the Biblical author of the 15th century BC views “king” and “pharaoh” as synonyms.

Concurrent with this innovation in Egyptian onomastics, the standard practice of Thutmose III’s time was to leave enemy kings unnamed on official records. This pharaoh’s campaign against a rebellious coalition at Megiddo, instigated by the empire of Mitanni, was fomented by the king of Kadesh (on the Orontes River), who—in *The Annals of Thutmose III*—was called “that wretched enemy of Kadesh.” Moreover, when Egyptian scribes listed the booty that was confiscated after the Battle of Megiddo, they did not name the opposing king whose possessions the Egyptians plundered, referring to him only as “the prince,” or “the prince of Megiddo.”³⁶ Why then did the writer of Judges not simply write, “the jabin of Hazor”? In answer, the standard practice of Biblical writers from the second millennium BC through the exile, beginning with Moses, was to include the foreign dynastic title superfluously (e.g. “pharaoh, king of Egypt,” which appears 21 times in the HB).

Another example of a superfluous dynastic title is the use of “abimelech,” who was the king of Gerar. Abraham (Genesis 20) and Isaac (Genesis 26) both stood before a king of this designation, though the events transpired over 65 years apart from one another. Certainly one cannot expect a single “Abimelech” to have reigned so long. Moreover, the anticipated formula, “abimelech, king of Gerar,” appears in Gen 20:2, meaning that the only logical conclusion is to consider “abimelech” as a dynastic title also.³⁷ These two examples support the conclusion that “jabin” is a dynastic title similar to “pharaoh” and “abimelech,” and the writer of Judges simply followed the standard practice of the day in how he recorded it. This custom of using the dynastic title superfluously shows respect on the part of the writer for the royalty of the monarch and for his native tongue. Therefore, the two jabins are two different kings of Hazor, separated in their reigns by over 150 years in time.

IV. THE FIERY DESTRUCTION OF THE LATE-BRONZE-I-AGE CITY

Since the Biblical record now is seen to display two separate invasions of Hazor against two distinct monarchs, the archaeological record must be consulted to determine whether a destruction by conflagration might be confirmed as having taken place at Hazor during the Late Bronze I Age (*ca.* 1550–1400 BC). This period by far preceded the destruction of the final Canaanite city of Late Bronze IIB/III, which falls within the period of the judges and is both well documented and well known.³⁸ In fact, Yadin writes in reference to the

³³Ibid., 16.

³⁴Kenneth A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 175.

³⁵James K. Hoffmeier, “The Memphis and Karnak Stelae of Amenhotep II,” in *The Context of Scripture III: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 21.

³⁶James K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 109; Wood, “Rise and Fall,” 478.

³⁷Mack concludes, “It is quite possible that Abimelech was the royal title rather than the personal name” (E. Mack, “Abimelech,” in *ISBE*, vol. 1 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979], 9).

³⁸Regarding the dating of the events in Judges 4, Wood notes that “Judges 4 gives an account of a confrontation between the Israelite tribes, led by Deborah and Barak, and Jabin king of Hazor in the late 13th century B.C.” (Bryant G. Wood, “Archaeological Views: Let the Evidence Speak,” *BAR* 33:2 [Mar/Apr 2007], 26).

lower city of this later era, “The end of Stratum 1A came about as the result of a violent fire, as indicated by ashes found in the less exposed areas excavated in Areas H and K.”³⁹ Of the upper city, he writes, “The total destruction of the LB III city (Stratum XIII) was evident in all excavated areas.”⁴⁰

But what is known about the Hazor of Joshua’s day, and its end? Yadin described Late-Bronze-I Hazor of the lower city (Stratum 2) as “one of great prosperity and cultural standards.”⁴¹ Relatively few Egyptian objects of any kind have been found in Late-Bronze-Age contexts in Palestine, but Hazor’s own sparse amount of Egyptian materials from Late Bronze I is contrasted by a rich supply of cultic objects that reflect mostly Syrian, Anatolian, and Mesopotamian iconography, revealing the city of Joshua’s day to have been glorious, influential, and *at least* somewhat autonomous.⁴² The picture of Hazor revealed by the spade matches perfectly with the description found in Josh 11:10, namely that “Hazor formerly was the head of all these kingdoms.” This description, probably written retrospectively before the middle of the 14th century BC to describe the city prior to this particular destruction, is a direct reference to Hazor at the time of the conquest under Joshua.⁴³

As for what is known of the demise of the Late-Bronze-I city, the opinion of most is that its destruction, visible both atop the tel and especially in the lower city, occurred sometime from *ca.* 1455–1400 BC. A temple district was unearthed by Yadin in Area H, at the northern tip of the lower city, during the excavations of 1955–1958. To the east of the main *bamah*, or high place, a heap of broken ritualistic vessels was discovered, along with fragments of clay models of animals’ livers for priestly divination.⁴⁴ This temple apparently had its own potter, who produced these votive vessels in order to sell them to those who worshipped at Hazor. His kiln was found, along with 22 miniature votive bowls that were still resting on the floor when discovered. Yadin notes accordingly “that the temple of stratum 2 was destroyed by an enemy and the people abandoned it abruptly.”⁴⁵ The destruction of Jericho’s City IV (Late Bronze I Age), which stratum is contemporaneous with Hazor’s Stratum 2 of the lower city, reveals a similar appearance of abrupt abandonment.⁴⁶

While much more evidence of the destruction of the Hazor of the Late Bronze I Age has been uncovered in the lower city, perhaps the most decisive evidence of the same destruction in the upper city is owed to the recent excavations on the slope of the tel, as reflected in the excavation reports published by Ben-Tor. The following quote, which comes from the excavation report of 2000, relates to the Late-Bronze-I stratum in Area M, which is located on the northern side of the upper city and originally was dug by Yadin to verify that the inhabitants of the Solomonic city occupied only the western side of the tel (i.e. Areas A, AB, B, L, etc.).⁴⁷

³⁹Yadin, *The Head*, 37.

⁴⁰Ibid., 126.

⁴¹Ibid., 32.

⁴²Piotr Bienkowski, “The Role of Hazor in the Late Bronze Age,” *PEQ* 119:1 (Jan-June 1987), 53.

⁴³Yadin and Ben-Tor, “Hazor,” in *New Encyclopedia* 594. For a strong defense of the view that the book of Joshua as a whole was not composed by Joshua himself, and that it was written roughly 25 years after his death, see Keil and Delitzsch, “Joshua,” in *Commentary of OT*, 15–19.

⁴⁴Yadin, “Hazor,” in *New Encyclopedia*, 597. One cow’s liver, which consists of two broken fragments, that was found in this heap bears a cuneiform inscription that on one fragment reads, “One king will bend down another. An enemy will attack my country. . . . Forgiveness [will be granted] by the god to the men. A servant will rebel against his lord.” The other fragment reads, “Ištar [?] will eat the land. Nergal will The gods of the city will come back” (Yadin, *The Rediscovery*, 114–115). Perhaps future excavations at Hazor will reveal whether or not the impending attack anticipated by the inscriber is related to the eventual attack made by Joshua.

⁴⁵Ibid., 115. In case future excavators of Late-Bronze-I Hazor follow Zuckerman’s colorful but flawed theory of internal revolt being the cause for the destruction of the final Late-Bronze city, they must find a way to rationalize the evidence related to this potter. If the Late-Bronze-I city was destroyed by an internal revolt led by disgruntled working-class residents who torched their town and fled the area in disgust, it must be explained why a common potter—who by definition must be counted among the rebels—would abandon his kiln and forsake 22 of his valuable wares that would provide his livelihood upon relocating to another city or region. Even more troublesome for such a theory, perhaps, is that the inscriber of the cow’s liver fully anticipated an attack from an outside enemy.

⁴⁶Two of Jericho’s excavators, John Garstang (1930–1936) and Kathleen Kenyon (1952–1958), found that City IV—the Jericho of Joshua’s day—was amply supplied with grain, indicating that the harvest was just completed. Large jars full of grain were discovered in many of the houses, testifying to a short siege that prevented Jericho’s citizens both from consuming their bountiful harvest and from escaping the city alive (Bryant G. Wood, “Did the Israelites Conquer Jericho? A New Look at the Archaeological Evidence,” *BAR* 16:2 [Mar/Apr 1990], 51; Bryant G. Wood, “Uncovering the Truth at Jericho,” *Bible and Spade* 0:1 [Aut 1987], 10).

⁴⁷Yadin, *The Head*, 141.

Two fragmentary walls built on top of the paved [Late-Bronze-IIb/III] street, which were found covered by the destruction layer marking the end of the entire architectural assemblage, indicate that the last phase of occupation here [during the Late Bronze IIb/III Age] was of a rather poor nature. This is also attested by a huge pit dug through the paved street, immediately in front of the entrance into the citadel, entirely blocking the access to it. The nature of this pit could not be ascertained. The pit cut into an earlier accumulation of fallen mud-bricks and ashes: this is the only clear indication found so far for an earlier destruction, still in the Late Bronze Age, predating the final destruction of the [last Canaanite] city. That earlier phase [i.e. of the Late Bronze I Age], extending beyond the excavated area, was apparently of a substantial nature, as indicated by an orthostat associated with it. The orthostats forming part of the paved open area in front of the podium adjacent to the citadel, some of them clearly in secondary use, may have originated in this earlier phase.⁴⁸

This “earlier accumulation of fallen mud-bricks and ashes” refers to the remains of the Late-Bronze-I city, which must have been burned to the ground after its destruction. A quote from the 2001 excavation report, an extremely relevant piece to the puzzle for understanding the demise of the Hazor of Joshua’s day, makes this abundantly clear. The results of these further excavations in Area M during the following summer represent a much more extensive portrayal of the end of Late-Bronze-I Hazor than was visible after the season of 2000.

In this area the upper [Late-Bronze-IIb/III] pavement covering the street and the entrance to the “citadel” was removed in order to investigate earlier phases of construction. An earlier pavement, differing in nature from the later one, was revealed. This earlier pavement predates the construction of the “citadel”, the western wall of which cuts through it. This earlier phase ended in a conflagration, similar to the one that brought an end to the later phase. The ceramic assemblage associated with this earlier phase, albeit meager, seems to place the date of this earlier destruction somewhere in the Late Bronze Age I (15th century B.C.).⁴⁹

Given Ben-Tor’s comparison of the fiery destruction of the Late-Bronze-I city to that of the Late-Bronze-IIb/III city, together with Yadin’s description of a violent fire and a total destruction characterizing the fate of the latter, the Hazor of Joshua’s day clearly was destroyed by a massive conflagration, as well. Evidence of this conflagration is visible in Area M on the northern slope of the tel, thanks to the excavations of 2000 and 2001. Various sections of the burnline and residual burned areas, which measure half of a meter in some places, have been preserved since the excavations in this part of Area M ceased in 2001. This burnline, visible throughout the excavated area, reveals the unmistakable signs of a great conflagration.⁵⁰

Admittedly, the scope of this conflagration has yet to be determined fully, due to the relatively few spots on the site that were excavated down to the level of Late Bronze I. Once excavations begin again in the lower city sometime in the future, a far clearer picture should become visible there than can be found in the upper city, since the outward expansion of a tel was virtually impossible, and since later rebuilding—especially on a tel—often included the removal of underlying dirt and debris in order to lay foundations and accommodate successful building operations.⁵¹ Unfortunately, an ancient site cannot always preserve a complete picture of how the earlier levels looked at the time of their destruction and/or abandonment. At the same time, however, sufficient and harmonious evidence already was found in both the upper and lower cities to confirm that the Hazor of the Late Bronze I Age indeed was destroyed by a great fire, and that the “cultic centers seemed to have been singled out for especially harsh treatment by the conquerors in the 15th century” BC.⁵²

⁴⁸See “2000 Excavation Report,” on the webpage <http://unixware.mscc.huji.ac.il/~hatsor/hazor.html>. Bracketed insertions were added in order to clarify various identifications that are not discernable without the entire context of the excavation report.

⁴⁹See “2001 Excavation Report,” on the webpage <http://unixware.mscc.huji.ac.il/~hatsor/hazor.html>.

⁵⁰See the webpage http://exegetisinternational.org/index.php?option=com_deepockets&task=contShow&id=2&Itemid=30 for several examples of this burnline and other burned remains.

⁵¹In his discussion of the upper city during the Late Bronze I Age, Yadin laments that many conclusions regarding the evaluation of structures, installations, and finds are difficult to make, owing to the enormous amount of leveling and looting that took place on the tel during the Solomonic period (Yadin, *The Head*, 125).

⁵²Wood, “Let the Evidence Speak,” 78.

V. THUTMOSE III AS THE DESTROYER OF THE LATE-BRONZE-I CITY

1. *Pro Thutmose III.* To whom does Hazor's chief archaeologist attribute the destruction of the city of Late Bronze I? According to Ben-Tor's published excavation report, "This destruction is most probably contemporary with the end of Stratum 2 in the lower city, which may have been the result of the military campaign led by Thutmosis III."⁵³ The association between Stratum 2 of the lower city and Stratum XV on the tel—the level of the Late-Bronze-I findings in Area M—remains undisputed, but does the extant evidence agree with Ben-Tor's proposal that Thutmose III just may be the right choice for the destroyer of the city of this age?

In the first half of the 15th century BC, during the nearly 54-year-long reign of Thutmose III, Egypt reached the zenith of its imperial expansion, receiving tribute from nations as far away as Assyria and Babylon.⁵⁴ Yadin connects this era in Egypt's history to the "LB I [Hazor] which still existed in the times of Thutmosis III."⁵⁵ This valiant pharaoh launched 17 known military campaigns into/through Syro-Palestine, during any of which he could have reduced Hazor to rubble and burned it to the ground. The record of his exploits in neighboring Palestine clearly makes him prime suspect number one, but does the record warrant that he can or should be dubbed as the figure most likely to have destroyed Late-Bronze-I Hazor?

Thutmose III is credited with initiating the ANE custom of listing the Asiatic and African peoples whom he conquered, or over whom he claimed dominion. In the Temple of Amun at Karnak, three of his lists bear inscriptions with the names of conquered peoples. Subsequent New-Kingdom (*ca.* 1560–1069 BC) pharaohs followed this example by compiling such lists also, among whom are Amenhotep II, Thutmose IV, Amenhotep III, Horemheb, Seti I, Ramses II, and Ramses III. One city on Thutmose III's conquest lists is Hazor, meaning that he either destroyed or subjugated it. Which of these two options is correct, though? The answer seems to lie with Amenhotep II (*ca.* 1455–1418 BC), his son and successor, who also lists Hazor among the cities that he conquered.⁵⁶ Yet, could Amenhotep II himself have conquered or subjugated Hazor if his father recently had razed the city and burned it to the ground? Archaeology and epigraphy answer all of these questions.

2. *Contra Thutmose III.* Evidence related to the reigns of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II strongly contradicts Ben-Tor's theory that Thutmose III may be responsible for the destruction of Late-Bronze-I Hazor.

a. *Evidence related to the reign of Thutmose III.* Thutmose III is far more likely to have subjugated Hazor than actually to have destroyed it. In support of this conclusion is the parallel that exists with several other cities that were destroyed or subjugated by Thutmose III and Amenhotep II. Relevant among these cities are Aleppo, Kadesh, and Tunip. Kadesh, which is considered to have been the most powerful city in Syria and was already mentioned as being the focal point of rebellious opposition to Egypt at the outset of the reign of Thutmose III, is the closest of these cities in proximity to Hazor.⁵⁷ Not to be deterred, Egypt's greatest imperialistic pharaoh eventually attacked Kadesh and "destroyed" the city. However, Pritchard notes this about the invasion of Kadesh: "The word 'destroy,' used with reference to this town, is not to be taken literally; Thutmose may have done no more than destroy its food supplies."⁵⁸ Redford concurs, as he writes, "The mountains were crossed and Kadesh attacked directly. Although the terse entry in the daybook reads 'destroying it,' it is clear that the city itself did not fall, and suffered only the laying waste of its orchards and crops."⁵⁹

Even Kadesh, the fierce enemy of Thutmose III that led a rebellion against Egypt at the outset of his reign as sole regent, was not razed or burned down by this pharaoh. If loathsome Kadesh was shown such mercy, as confirmed by Amenhotep II's later "destruction" of that city also, what reason would Thutmose III

⁵³Amnon Ben-Tor, "News and Notes," *IEJ* 51:2 (2001), 238.

⁵⁴Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 160.

⁵⁵Yadin, *The Head*, 200.

⁵⁶James B. Pritchard, *ANET* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 242. Hazor is mentioned in a topographical list of Amenhotep II at Karnak (Bienkowski, "Role of Hazor," 54).

⁵⁷Omar Zuhdi, "Combined Arms Egyptian Style: Thutmose III Crosses the Euphrates," *KMT* 18:3 (Fall 2007), 56.

⁵⁸Pritchard, *ANET*, 239.

⁵⁹Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, 158.

have to burn down nearby Hazor?⁶⁰ The primary goal of this imperialist was subjugation and tribute-collection, not destruction and annihilation.⁶¹ Only on rare occasions would he so devastate a city, as he had no intention of applying a scorched-earth policy.⁶² Actually, these cities were merely stepping stones toward his ultimate goals: the defeat of Mitanni, the conquest of Mesopotamia and its environs, and the status of dominant world-empire.⁶³ Since Hazor was located on this pharaoh's normal campaigning route, he and his enormous army would be far wiser to preserve and exploit Hazor, as their 17 campaigns through Palestine required innumerable supplies. A central part of the Egyptian campaigning policy in Palestine was to provide food for the troops and horses.⁶⁴

b. *Evidence related to the reign of Amenhotep II.* Even stronger evidence demonstrating that Thutmose III did not burn the city to the ground is that Hazor was a functioning city during Amenhotep II's reign, and that Amenhotep II himself could not have burned the city to the ground either, despite his own claim to have destroyed Hazor. This conclusion is based on both archaeological and epigraphical evidence. Archaeologically, Hazor's stratigraphy reveals a notably long period of non-habitation that occurred between the city's Late-Bronze-I and Late-Bronze-II occupations, thus demonstrating that Hazor sat deserted for a considerable time after its conflagration at the close of Late Bronze I. Yadin writes in reference to the findings in the lower city, "In view of a considerable accumulation between Stratum 2 and Stratum 1B above it, it may be assumed perhaps that there was a gap in the history of Hazor, some time in the middle of the fifteenth century" BC.⁶⁵

This "considerable accumulation" attests to a period of multiple decades in which the once-glorious Hazor sat abandoned, unused, and uninhabited. Since Amenhotep II mentions Hazor on the conquest list of his Year-3 campaign, the city cannot have been destroyed by his father and then abandoned throughout the entirety of his own reign. If Amenhotep II's claim to have destroyed Hazor is accepted as trustworthy,⁶⁶ this renders a

⁶⁰Hoffmeier emphasizes that the conquest list of Thutmose III for this campaign was *not* a record of destroyed cities (James K. Hoffmeier, "Reconsidering Egypt's Part in the Termination of the Middle Bronze Age in Palestine," *Levant* 21 [1989], 187).

⁶¹As Hoffmeier correctly explains during his discussion of the primary battle of this campaign, which was fought at Megiddo, "While it is true that Thutmose III was concerned to have order and loyalty in Canaan, he was not going to destroy cities that could be useful to him" (Ibid., 187). For this reason, Hoffmeier concludes that Megiddo was not razed either, despite this city's distinction of being the site from where the king of Kadesh launched his rebellion against the Egyptians at the outset of Thutmose III's sole rule.

⁶²Thutmose III undoubtedly would have followed the same foreign policy as that of the earlier pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty, including his grandfather, Thutmose I, who set the precedent for his progeny by venturing through Canaan and into Mesopotamia. "Because of Egyptian economic interest in the region, it would make little sense to adopt a scorched earth policy in Canaan. . . . [W]hen Thutmose I acceded the throne, he was able to march, apparently unmolested, all the way to the Euphrates river" (James K. Hoffmeier, "Aspects of Egyptian Foreign Policy in the 18th Dynasty in Western Asia and Nubia," in *Egypt, Israel, and the Ancient Mediterranean World: Studies in Honor of Donald B. Redford*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Antoine Hirsch [Leiden: Brill, 2004], 133).

⁶³One author calls the Egyptian advancement into upper Syria a direct attack on Mitanni, "which must long have been seen as one of Thutmose's manifest goals" (Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, 159). Another writer suggests, in reference to Thutmose III's renowned campaign into Mesopotamia, that "[t]his campaign was perhaps intended as a capstone ending a series of military operations begun twelve years earlier with the daring strike through the Aruna Pass at Megiddo" (Zuhdi, "Combined Arms," 55). The Gebel Barkal Stele of Thutmose III states that this conquering pharaoh "crossed the Euphrates after the one who had attacked him, at the head of his armies seeking that feeble enemy [from] the land of Mitanni." The subsequent victory caused Thutmose III to boast, "There is no opponent of mine in the southern lands, northerners come bowing because of my awe. It was Re who ordained it concerning me, I having bound together the Nine Bows, the islands in the midst of the sea, the Aegean and rebellious foreign lands" (Thutmose III, "The Gebel Barkal Stela of Thutmose III," in *Context of Scripture*, vol. 2 [trans. James K. Hoffmeier] 15). All of this causes Hoffmeier to look back on this pharaoh's first campaign and conclude that it already "suggests that Egypt was moving towards an imperial model of domination" (Hoffmeier, "Egyptian Foreign Policy," in *Egypt, Israel, and the Ancient Mediterranean*, 134).

⁶⁴Hoffmeier, "Egypt's Part," 187.

⁶⁵Yadin, *The Head*, 32. Yadin's reference to the middle of the 15th century BC for the timeframe of the occupational gap is purely speculative, as a connection to the Late Bronze I Age is the only certainty. The matter of import in his observation is that a large occupational gap did occur between Late Bronze I and Late Bronze II, before a later re-inhabitation finally took place.

⁶⁶One may be tempted to accuse Amenhotep II of merely inflating the record, claiming to have conquered a city that he never actually defeated. This argument, however, is a weak and desperate one. If one randomly asserts that Hazor was not "destroyed" by Amenhotep II, why should this pharaoh not be accused of falsifying the conquest of some or all of the other sites on his conquest list? For that matter, why should Thutmose III be trusted to have "destroyed" Hazor as he stated in his conquest list? Thus one could dismiss the claims of any or every ancient conqueror who boasted of cities that he captured during his exploits abroad. The burden of proof should remain squarely upon the shoulders of the modern student of history to produce sufficient evidence when claiming that

conflagration under Thutmose III and a subsequent invasion/conquest under Amenhotep II mutually exclusive, an impossible chain of events. There had to be an occupied city of Hazor for Amenhotep II to conquer!

Important archaeological evidence exists in the form of a royal scarab from the reign of Thutmose IV (ca. 1418–1408 BC).⁶⁷ This son and successor of Amenhotep II reigned for a modest “eight-plus years,” though most scholars assign ten years to his reign.⁶⁸ During Yadin’s second year of excavations, he began work in what became Area F, which is located in the lower city between Area C and Area D.⁶⁹ While digging in Stratum 1B (Late Bronze IIA, = 1400–1300 BC), his team found a burial cave, designated 8144, which yielded the critical scarab. The cave was buried under Stratum 1A (Late Bronze IIB, = 1300–1200 BC), so the stratified scarab was placed there at the end of the 15th century BC, indicating roughly when this cave was first used for burials.⁷⁰

The final period of the cave’s use, which further defines the chronology of the cave and the stratum, is indicated by an unusually great yield of imported Mycenaean pottery, along with datable imported Cypriot ware (Milk Bowls, a Base-ring, and Bucchero Ware) and local pottery, none of which dates beyond the 14th century BC.⁷¹ Yadin draws special attention to “a large group of imported Mycenaean vessels of the late stage of III A: 2,”⁷² noting also that this abundance of IIIA:2 pottery was complemented “with [a] few A: 1” vessels.⁷³ According to Yadin’s pottery specialist, Mycenaean IIIA:2 pottery dates to ca. 1400–1375 BC in its early forms and dates to ca. 1375–1300 BC in its late forms, while Mycenaean IIIA:1 ware dates to ca. 1425–1400 BC.⁷⁴ In Yadin’s discussion of Late-Bronze-I-Age pottery found in Hazor’s caves during his expeditions, he describes numerous types of late Mycenaean IIIA:2 wares, but he makes no mention of any early Mycenaean IIIA:2 pottery that would date to the short period from ca. 1400–1375 BC.⁷⁵ This dearth of early Mycenaean IIIA:2 pottery matches well with the period of non-inhabitation—as revealed by the noted occupational gap—that occurred after the city was destroyed on Joshua’s northern campaign in ca. 1400 BC. Thus the cave was in use during the years shortly before ca. 1400 BC, and throughout the years from ca. 1375–1300 BC.

The stratified, royal scarab of Thutmose IV cannot be considered a later reproduction or a mere family heirloom that was passed down from one generation to the next. As Yadin carefully explains, “All Thutmose IV scarabs are rare and a boon to archaeologists in this country because we know that they were made exclusively during his reign (the names of some Pharaohs continued to be inscribed on scarabs after their death, but the popularity of Thutmose IV was buried along with him). We can therefore conclude that the cave was first used sometime during his eight-year reign, from 1410 to 1402 BC, or immediately thereafter.”⁷⁶ The significance of this royal scarab to the present debate is that it confirms the existence of Hazor as an occupied and functioning

an ancient monarch falsified his records, rather than expecting the ancients to have justified their own claims somehow for the sake of future critics of history who might cavalierly distrust them. Amenhotep II deserves far better treatment than this.

⁶⁷Yadin, *The Head*, 45.

⁶⁸Betsy M. Bryan, “Antecedents to Amenhotep III,” in *Amenhotep III: Perspectives on His Reign* (ed. David O’Connor and Eric H. Cline; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 46. The latest documented year of his reign is Year 8, which is attested to on the Konosso Stele (Ibid., 48, 54–55).

⁶⁹Yadin, *The Rediscovery*, 59.

⁷⁰Ibid., 63–64.

⁷¹Ibid., 65; idem, *The Head*, 46; Yigael Yadin, Yohanan Aharoni, Ruth Amiran, Trude Dothan, Immanuel Dunayevsky, and Jean Perrot, *Hazor II: An Account of the Second Season of Excavations* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1960), 153.

⁷²Yadin, *Hazor II*, 153. Elsewhere, Yadin defines the pottery as “the very end of the IIIA: 2 type” (Yadin, *The Head*, 46).

⁷³Yadin, *The Head*, 46.

⁷⁴Arne Furumark, *Mycenaean Pottery II: Chronology* (Stockholm: Skrifter Utgivna av Svenska Institutet i Athen, 1972), 115. In an earlier note, Kitchen’s quote reveals that he improperly dated Furumark’s Mycenaean pottery analysis to the 1940’s. However, the publication date here reveals a time 30 years closer to the present than Kitchen declared; Furumark lived until 1982.

⁷⁵Examples of Yadin’s Late-Bronze-I finds include the following: Mycenaean vessels from Tomb 8144 and Tomb 8145, which are contemporaneous with a pear-shaped jar from Tomb 8065, all of which are characteristic of the later stage of IIIA:2; three jars (from Tomb 8065) that belong to the period of later IIIA:2; five stirrup-jars (from Tomb 8065), which are divided into three groups, two of which belong to later IIIA:2, and one of which is typical of IIIA:2 in general, but its later stage in particular; a pyxis (from Tomb 8065) of the IIIA:2 variety, the decorative pattern of which belongs only to IIIA:1, thus indicating that this pyxis actually dates to the same time period as the scarab, late in the final quarter of the 15th century BC (Yadin, *Hazor II*, 150–51).

⁷⁶Yadin, *The Rediscovery*, 64–65. Yadin’s dates for the reign of Thutmose IV are slightly different than the ones accepted here, and his choice of eight years for the regnal length reflects the latest year attested; however, a lack of attestation beyond Year 8 does not require an eight-year reign, because no definitive regnal year for the death of Thutmose IV is currently known.

city in the last quarter of the 15th century BC, immediately after the reign of Amenhotep II. Due to the subsequent occupational gap after the destruction of Late-Bronze-I Hazor, which was discussed above, the city could not have been occupied during the modest reign of Thutmose IV if Amenhotep II truly had destroyed the city. Therefore, Amenhotep II's "destruction" of the city was immediately followed by continuous occupation.

Epigraphically, one piece of evidence that argues conclusively against the destruction of Hazor under Amenhotep II is Papyrus Hermitage 1116A, which contains a list recording the allocation of beer and corn to messengers from Djahy, who are envoys to cities such as Megiddo, Chinnereth, Achshaph, Shimron, Taanach, Ashkelon, and Hazor. This list, which demonstrates the trading relations between these southern Canaanite towns and the Egyptian government, is variously dated to the reign of Thutmose III, to the coregency he shared with his son, and to the sole reign of Amenhotep II.⁷⁷ However, dating the papyrus to the reign of Thutmose III can be eliminated from the realm of possibility,⁷⁸ given that the manuscript is attributed to a regnal Year 18 and bears the praenomen of Amenhotep II—the sign that provides the pharaonic throne-name, and is given to the Egyptian monarch upon his ascension to the throne—enclosed in a royal cartouche. As Redford concludes, "A date for the two Leningrad papyri shortly after [Amenhotep II's] eighteenth year would satisfy all the evidence. But there is no reason to believe that Thutmose III was still alive and reigning at the time."⁷⁹

Because Amenhotep II's Year 18 (*ca.* 1438/1437 BC) was a time when Hazor thrived, it must be emphasized that he launched only two campaigns into Asia: the first in Year 3, and the second in Year 9.⁸⁰ This grossly diminished number of Asiatic campaigns is especially startling given that the Egyptian empire was at its height during the reigns of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II.⁸¹ Immediately after these were waged, a sharp decline in the Asiatic campaigning of the pharaohs transpired. Aharoni attributes this to an underlying diminishment of Egyptian power: "Already in the days of Amenhotep II, the son of Thutmose III, cracks began to appear in the structure of the Egyptian Empire."⁸² Vandersleyen hints at the dissipation of Egypt's might by the end of Amenhotep II's reign when he says that it seems possible to consider this reign as unsuccessful, a time of decline: a few exploits abroad, a few preserved memorials, an almost complete absence of sources after the ninth year of the reign.⁸³ Vandersleyen also notes that this relative military inertness lasted continuously until Horemheb came to power, an event that may be dated to *ca.* 1335 BC.⁸⁴ Since Amenhotep II launched no Asiatic campaigns after his Year 9, Hazor could not have been a functioning city during his Year 18 if he actually destroyed the city, as the long occupational gap rules this out. Thus his "conquest" of Hazor can be equated with that of his father, Thutmose III: a capture and subjugation, with no actual destruction of the city.

VI. JOSHUA AS THE DESTROYER OF THE LATE-BRONZE-I CITY

If Thutmose III is not a legitimate choice for the conqueror of the Hazor of Joshua's day, then what viable options remain? What ancient people, apart from the Egyptians, may have destroyed Hazor? The clear

⁷⁷Rainey and Notley, *Sacred Bridge*, 75.

⁷⁸If Papyrus Hermitage 1116A nonetheless were written during the reign of Thutmose III, and the presence of "Year 18" on the manuscript would date it to *ca.* 1489/1488 BC, the supposed annihilation of Hazor by Thutmose III would have occurred five years later, in Year 23 (*ca.* 1484 BC), the same year in which he besieged Megiddo for seven months before overtaking the city (Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, 156–157). What reason would he have had for completely obliterating Hazor, a city that was clearly a key player in his economic monopoly, and through which great wealth and prosperity was siphoned to Egypt from afar, especially considering how Hazor strategically guarded the Great Trunk Road, the main traffic artery from Egypt to Mesopotamia? As Yadin notes, "[T]he spade revealed that Hazor attained an unprecedented prosperity during the 15th century" BC (Yadin, *The Head*, 6).

⁷⁹Donald B. Redford, "The Coregency of Tuthmosis III and Amenophis II," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 51 (Dec 1965), 109–110. Redford provides several additional reasons for dating Papyrus Hermitage 1116A to the reign of Amenhotep II.

⁸⁰For a discussion of the number and years of Amenhotep II's Asian campaigns, see Petrovich, "Amenhotep II," 94–97.

⁸¹James K. Hoffmeier, "James Weinstein's 'Egypt and the Middle Bronze IIC/Late Bronze IA Transition': A Rejoinder," *Levant* 23 (1991), 120.

⁸²Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas* (New York: Macmillan, 1977), 34. For a discussion of the inexplicable decline of Egyptian power and its possible relationship to the loss of the Egyptian army at the time of the exodus, see Petrovich, "Amenhotep II," 100.

⁸³Claude Vandersleyen, *L'Égypte et la Vallée du Nil*, vol. 2 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1995), 341.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 333. Horemheb reigned from *ca.* 1335–1307 BC.

answer is that during this era of Egyptian domination, over both Palestine and a vast portion of the ANE, probably no nation or city-state would have been bold enough to attack and thoroughly destroy this vital pawn in Egypt's hegemony in Canaan. Amarna Letter (EA) 109 offers an important insight into Egypt's influence in Canaan during the era that *preceded* the Amarna Age: "Previously, on seeing a man from Egypt, the kings of Canaan fled bef[ore him, but] now the sons of Abdi-Ashirta make men from Egypt prowl about [like do]gs."⁸⁵

Certainly no Canaanite ruler—and probably no neighbor of Egyptian Palestine, for that matter—would have dared to launch a destructive attack on powerful Hazor during Late Bronze I. Can a case be made for Joshua and the Israelites as candidates on the exceedingly short list of potential destroyers? To date, there is no archaeological evidence to link the Israelites with this destruction conclusively. Yet the city-wide destruction and conflagration attested by the remains of the Late-Bronze-I city coincide perfectly with the account given in Josh 11:10–11, where Joshua seized control of Hazor, killed the king and all of the inhabitants, and burned the city with fire. Moreover, the violent destruction of the temples provides strong corroborative evidence.

In actuality, several other clues exist to substantiate that Joshua absolutely is a plausible choice for the destroyer of the Hazor of the Late Bronze I Age. The first clue is the uncommonly large occupational gap from the end of Late Bronze I to the beginning of Late Bronze II, which Yadin reported from his findings in the lower city and Ben-Tor reported from his findings on the tel. Being that the present writer was part of Hazor's excavation team of 2007, he can confirm that the occupational gap uncovered in Area M during the 2001 season, still clearly observable as of the summer of 2007,⁸⁶ measures approximately 1.5 m. from the pavement of the later Late-Bronze-II/III city down to the top of the burnline of the earlier Late-Bronze-I city.

No signs whatsoever of occupation exist in the accumulation and debris between the two eras, testifying to a complete and lengthy lack of inhabitation. Epigraphical evidence confirms this phenomenon with the lack of Hazor's appearance on Egyptian topographical lists from the time after Amenhotep II (*ca.* 1418 BC) until the reign of Seti I (*ca.* 1305 BC), though this dearth does not preclude the rebuilding of the city sometime during the 14th century BC.⁸⁷ The occupational gap fits well with what would have occurred after the Israelite conquest and burning of Hazor, since the Israelites also routed all of the surrounding city-states and obliterated their inhabitants (Josh 11:12–13), making Hazor unlikely to have been re-inhabited by Canaanites for a considerable time.⁸⁸ In addition, since the Israelites remained semi-nomadic residents in Canaan immediately after the conquest, they did not rebuild the city either, and thus cannot be expected to have occupied Hazor.

The second clue to substantiate the plausibility of Joshua being the destroyer of Late-Bronze-I Hazor is how this view allows for the veracity of the long period of time implied between the conquest of the city in *ca.*

⁸⁵*Amarna Letters*, ed. Moran, 183. Being that the Amarna Letters include correspondence that may date as early as Year 30 of Amenhotep III (*ca.* 1379 BC), the evidence from EA 109 is consistent with the early-exodus theory, since the decimation of the Egyptian army—which included "all the horses and chariots of pharaoh, his horsemen, and his army" (Exod 14:9), not one of which was spared from being "shaken off" by Yahweh in the sea after they vainly attempted to overtake the Israelites that had passed through the sea on dry land (Exod 14:27–28)—early in the latter half of the 15th century BC would have loosened Egypt's tight grip on Canaan almost completely. Canaanite client kings no longer would need to fear and dread their Egyptian overlords, when no massive or mighty army could be dispatched to Canaan to strike fear into the despots who craved autonomy or considered plotting against pharaoh. Such a thorough extermination of Egypt's fighting force may have crippled their imperialistic prowess for a lengthy period.

⁸⁶See the webpage http://exegesisinternational.org/index.php?option=com_deepockets&task=contShow&id=3&Itemid=30 for photographic evidence of this occupational gap.

⁸⁷Bienkowski, "Role of Hazor," 54.

⁸⁸Hoffmeier unwisely criticizes Wood for associating the *apiru* with the Hebrews of the 14th century BC, asserting that Hazor was thriving during this period and does not sound like a city that just had been demolished and burned down by Joshua and his army (Hoffmeier, "What Is the Biblical Date?," 245). Hoffmeier fails to take into account the 1.5-m. occupational gap, which explains the period of silence after 1400 BC and allows for the rebuilding and reestablishing of Hazor as a major force in Canaan. Hoffmeier assigns 1340 BC as the last year to which Amarna correspondence can be dated, implying that there was not enough time for the city to be rebuilt and reestablished by the time of the writing of the Amarna Letters, which imply Hazor's exalted status in Canaan. In fact, the last possible year for the writing of the Letters is the second year of Tutankhamun (*ca.* 1348/1347 BC), making for an even smaller window of time for Hazor's rebirth and renewal. Due to the lack of early Mycenaean IIIA:2 pottery in datable tombs that yielded pottery from before and after the period of *ca.* 1400–1375, and to the fact that the book of Joshua—written by someone other than him, both after his death in *ca.* 1384 and after the deaths of the elders who survived him, thus probably not until at least 1375 BC—shows no signs of Hazor's rebuilding, the city most likely was not rebuilt until after 1375 BC. However, 25 years suffices for the time that would be needed for Hazor to be rebuilt, then quickly become reestablished as the most powerful city within the land of Canaan.

1400 BC and the later defeat of the future Canaanite overlord, who is known merely as jabin, during the judgeships of Deborah and Barak. The currently-popular solution advocated by Yadin and Ben-Tor, namely that Joshua destroyed and burned down Hazor in the middle or middle third of the 13th century BC, can neither account for all of the historical elements in Joshua 11 and Judges 4, nor satisfy the correlation between the archaeological record and the Bible. The usual solution is either to debunk one of the two Biblical accounts as non-historical or to change the order of events through interpolation, as did Yadin.

However, the view that Joshua burned down Hazor in *ca.* 1400 BC naturally accounts for the subsequent yet delayed Canaanite occupation of Hazor (during Late Bronze IIA-IIB/III), as the Israelites—who should not be expected to have inhabited the city anytime soon after its destruction—did not settle in cities such as Hazor. The post-conquest Israelites are well known for their semi-nomadic lifestyle,⁸⁹ ingrained in them by 40 years of wandering in the desert (Num 32:13), and for their fear of possessing the territories of their tribal allotments that were administered by Joshua (Josh 17:12; Judg 1:27–2:6; 18:1–31). In contrast to what followed at Hazor after the destruction of the Late-Bronze-I city, the destruction of Late-Bronze-IIB/III Hazor was followed by an Israelite occupation during the Iron IA Age (*ca.* 1200–1150 BC).⁹⁰ This archaeologically verifiable fact renders a Late-Bronze-IIB-Age conflagration under Joshua inconsistent with the subsequent historical information in the Bible, which reveals that another Canaanite city succeeded the one that was destroyed in Joshua’s day.⁹¹

VII. CONCLUSION

An examination was made into the destruction of the Hazor of the 13th century BC, which has become the trendy era of choice for the conquest of the city described in Joshua 11. The material evidence for the destruction of the 13th-century-BC city clearly points to the Israelites as the culprits, due in part to the distinct, ritualistic desecration of religious and cultic objects. However, chronologically this destruction fits into the period of the judges, and the context of Judges 4 bears out that not only was the king of Hazor killed, but the city was destroyed and, in large part, burned down by the persistent Israelites. Moreover, the narratives of Joshua 11 and Judges 4 were seen to describe two different encounters, both since their respective episodes were separated in time by over 150 years, and since “jabin” is actually a dynastic title used as an equivalent for “king,” meaning that there were two different monarchs, and thus two completely independent reigns. If Hoffmeier is correct that Hazor provides the only possible evidence for a conquest in the 13th century BC, then late-exodus proponents are officially left without any conflagrated cities that lend support to their position.

With all of this established, an examination of the archaeological record of the Hazor of the 15th century BC was made, in order to determine whether evidence exists for a fiery destruction that can be harmonized with the date of the exodus and conquest as determined by a literal interpretation of 1 Kgs 6:1. Evidence of such a great conflagration was found by Yadin in the lower city, and by Ben-Tor in the upper city, the latter of which occurred during the seasons of 2000 and 2001. Ben-Tor attributes this destruction to Thutmose III, but for several reasons this pharaoh can effectively be eliminated from contention as the actual destroyer: the epigraphical evidence both of conquests under Thutmose III and his son Amenhotep II, and of the subsistence of Hazor nine years after Amenhotep II’s final Asiatic campaign, along with the archaeological evidence both of a large gap in time between the destruction of Hazor at the end of Late Bronze I and the next occupational phase, and of Hazor’s subsistence during the short reign of Amenhotep II’s son and successor, Thutmose IV.

No other rivaling nations or Canaanite city-states are legitimate possibilities for the attackers who decimated Late-Bronze-I Hazor, so ANE history can only judge the Israelites as a perfectly plausible option. In fact, their nomination is supported both by the chronological data in the Biblical text, the post-destruction occupational gap, and the long period of time implied between this city’s destruction and the later defeat of the subsequent jabin during the judgeships of Deborah and Barak. Therefore, the only tenable solution for dating the destruction of the Hazor of Joshua 11 is to place it firmly at the close of Late Bronze I, as the Biblical narrative matches perfectly with the archaeological evidence that relates both to Late Bronze I and the transition

⁸⁹Yadin, *The Head*, 129.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 129–131.

⁹¹Wood, “Rise and Fall,” 487; Wood, “The Biblical Date: 1446,” 256.

into Late Bronze II. The Israelites were the first occupants of the city after the close of the Late Bronze Age, so the destruction of the final Late-Bronze-Age city cannot be associated with the destruction of Joshua 11, as another Canaanite occupation and destruction followed that of Joshua's day, which is made abundantly clear by the narrative in Judges 4. As Wood put it, "The simple (and biblical) solution is that Joshua destroyed an earlier city at Hazor in ca. 1400 BC, while Deborah and Barak administered the *coup de grâce* in ca. 1230 BC."⁹²

This conclusion, borne out by the evidence presented in the preceding discussion, strongly supports the chronological framework of the early-exodus position, and thus the literal interpretation of numbers such as "480th" in 1 Kgs 6:1. Biblical scholars and teachers would do well to give the Biblical text its full day in court before acquiescing to the interpretations of archaeologists or other scholars who use arguments from silence (e.g. the complete lack of material evidence for the Israelite inhabitation of Canaan from 1400–1200 BC) to make claims such as the Israelites' inability to have occupied the Promised Land before the 13th century BC, especially since such conclusions fan the flames of non-inerrantist, liberal scholars determined to undermine the historicity of the Bible. As Aharoni warned, "Don't reject the historicity of the Biblical text so easily."⁹³ The Bible should be interpreted literally, whenever possible, even though popular scholarship may tempt Biblical scholars to take the easy road by reverting to allegorism when interpretive difficulties are encountered.

No cuneiform tablet has yet emerged at Hazor—nor may one ever surface, even if an archive is found—that reads, "Joshua has arrived!" But realistically, none should be expected, as the Israelites' blitzkrieg may not have given Hazor's residents time to write memorials for posterity or compose letters of outrage, even if they did know their attackers by name. The lack of immediate Israelite inhabitation, implied in the Biblical text and confirmed with the spade, also prohibits the expectation that Israelite artifacts will be extracted from the stratum associated with the destruction under Joshua. Finding the archive of Late-Bronze-I Hazor certainly may reveal more about the city's demise in ca. 1400 BC, but much also could be learned from the excavation of larger portions of the lower city, since the destruction under Joshua undoubtedly is preserved far more extensively there than atop the tel, where rebuilding ventures invariably included the destruction of earlier levels.

⁹²Wood, "Rise and Fall," 488.

⁹³Yohanan Aharoni, "Hazor and the Battle of Deborah—Is Judges 4 Wrong?," *BAR* 1:4 (Dec 1975), 3.