

Joshua and Judges The Story of Jericho

Interpreting the Text:

1. What questions do you have about the text? Is there anything that bothers you? Consider what may be challenging to read as modern readers.
2. The Hebrew word “herem” is challenging here, both to translate and to understand in the context of the conquest of Jericho. Reread Joshua 6:17 and 6:21, noting the use of the phrase “devoted (for/to destruction).” How does the English translation affect how we read these verses? Feel free to review other English translations of Joshua to compare.
3. In today’s video, Dr. Baden says “my general rule is if priests are taking the lead in a story, priests wrote the story” [05:03]. Where do you see priests showing up as characters in this story? What symbolic and/or practical significance might their presence have had for the storyteller and ancient audience?

Applying the Text:

1. Did this video discussion help clarify any of the questions that came up for you while reading the text? What did you learn?
2. Is it possible to reconcile the problem of God-sanctioned violence (e.g., herem) in this story? Should attempts be made to morally reconcile the violence in this text at all?
3. Do you think this story has value for modern readers given its legacy of violence? Why or why not?