

Searching for Moses

Derived from a work by David Down, Creation Ex Nihilo-Technical Journal (TJ) 15(1) 2001 p.63

Traditional Egyptian chronology says the 18th dynasty was from 1550 - 1320 BC.

The Bible says the Exodus occurred about 1446 BC. [around 1491 according to "Evidentialism — the Bible and Assyrian Chronology" by Larry Pierce -TJ Vol 15 Issue 1, www.Answersingenesis.org/tj/v15/i1/chronology.asp] According to modern historians, this aligns with the Egyptian 18th dynasty.

"There is no evidence of the Exodus[, Moses, or the plagues] in the 18th dynasty records - nor is there evidence of an invasion of Palestine under Joshua during this period. ...But there are a number of scholars who claim that a gross error in chronology has been made in calculating the dates of Egyptian history, and that they should be reduced by centuries. Such re-dating could bring the 12th dynasty down to the time of Moses, and there is plenty of circumstantial evidence in that dynasty to support the Biblical records."

If you reduce the chronology of Egypt and align the 12th dynasty to the time of the Exodus, there is abundant evidence for the presence of large numbers of Semitic slaves, devastation of Egypt, and the sudden departure of those slaves.

If you adjust the time of the secular chronology, at Jericho, you find toppled walls and evidence of a great fire that had been deliberately set.

The Pharaoh of Moses' Birth

"One of the last kings of the 12th dynasty was Sesostris III. His statues depict him as a cruel tyrant quite capable of inflicting harsh slavery on his subjects." His son was Amenemhet III who was equally disagreeable. Moses would have been born near the beginning of his reign. Amenemhet III may have had one son known as Amenemhet IV who was an enigmatic character. Amenemhet IV could well have been Moses. Amenemhet IV mysteriously disappeared off the scene before the death of Amenemhet III.

"Amenemhet III had a daughter whose name was Sobekneferu. It is known that she had no children. If she was the daughter of Pharaoh who came down to the river to bathe, it is easy to understand why she was there. It was not because she had no bathroom in her palace. She would have been down there taking a ceremonial ablution and praying to the river god Hapi, who was also the god of fertility." When the basket carrying the baby arrived, she would naturally have considered it the answer to her prayer.

When Moses grew up and identified himself with the people of Israel and fled Egypt, there was a vacuum left on the throne. When Amenemhet III died, and there was no male successor, Sobekneferu ascended the throne and ruled as Pharaoh for eight years. When she died, it was the end of the 12th dynasty, and it was succeeded by the 13th dynasty.

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Israelites in Egypt

It was the Semitic slaves (Israelites) who built the pyramids of the 12th dynasty.

Ex.1:8-11

Excavation of the city of Kahun in the Faiyum has revealed that "Asiatics" were present in the town in considerable numbers. The reason for their presence in Egypt remains unclear. However, the excavators could not identify the Semetic slaves with the Israelites because they held to the traditional chronology which placed the Biblical events centuries later than the 12th dynasty.

Another interesting discovery is the presence of wooden boxes under the floors of many houses at Kahun. These boxes contained babies, sometimes two or three to a box, and aged only a few months at death.

Ex.1:16, 22

Israelites leave Egypt

Shortly after this, the slaves suddenly disappeared off the scene.

Dr. Flinders Petrie:

"It is apparent that the completion of the king's pyramid was not the reason why Kahun's inhabitants eventually deserted the town, abandoning their tools and other possessions in the shops and houses.

There are different opinions of how this first period of occupation at Kahun drew to a close.... The quantity, range and type of articles of everyday use which were left behind in the houses may indeed suggest that the departure was sudden and unpremeditated."

Think of that... "The departure was sudden and unpremeditated"!

The Ten Plagues on Egypt

If the plagues were real, the effects should have been devastating, and a record should exist. It does.

In the Leiden Museum in Holland is a papyrus which is a copy of a papyrus from an earlier "unidentified" dynasty (likely the 13th). It reads,

"...Plague stalks through the land and blood is everywhere.... Nay, but the river is blood. ... Nay, but gates, columns and walls are consumed with fire.... Nay but men are few. He that lays his brother in the ground is everywhere.... Nay but the son of the high-born man is no longer to be recognized.... The stranger people from outside are come into Egypt.... Nay, but corn has perished everywhere. People are stripped of clothing, perfume and oil. Everyone says "there is no more." The storehouse is bare.... It has come to this. The king has been taken away by poor men." (pp.55-56)

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Documentation of Pharaoh of the Exodus

"There are records of slavery during the reigns of the last rulers of the 12th dynasty -- Sesostri III, Amenemhet III, and Sobekneferu (some include an obscure figure known as Amenemhet IV before Sobekneferu). With the death of Sobekneferu the 12th dynasty came to an end as she had no children born to her. Moses, the adopted heir, had fled to Midian."

"A period of instability followed the demise of the 12th dynasty. [The idea of dynasties was] ...the invention of Manetho, the Egyptian priest of the 3rd century BC who left a record of the history of Egypt and divided the kings into dynasties."

Many short rulerships took place in the succeeding years, and there was general anarchy until Neferhotep I took the throne.

Pharaoh of the Exodus

Khasekemre-Neferhotep I was the pharaoh from whom Moses demanded Israel's release. p.56

[Archaeologist Flinders] "Petrie found scarabs of former kings at Kahun. But the latest scarab he found there was of Neferhotep who was apparently the pharaoh ruling when the Israelite slaves suddenly left Kahun and fled from Egypt in the Exodus. According to Manetho, he was the last king to rule before the Hyksos occupied Egypt 'without a battle'."

Without a battle? Where was the Egyptian army? It was at the bottom of the Red Sea." p.56 The mummy of Khasekemre-Neferhotep I has never been found. His body is also likely at the bottom of the Red Sea.

Rameses

"In the movie 'The Ten Commandments' Pharaoh was named Rameses." This was the result of a misunderstanding of the Bible.

"Rameses[, as mentioned in the Bible is a location, and] can be linked to an Egyptian word which means 'door of two roads.'" [It was the point at which travelers leaving Egypt had to choose the road to Canaan heading north, or the road to Succoth heading south, because the desert wilderness was to the east.]

This word matches with archaeological finds for evidence of Israel in Egypt. But not to pharaohs later called Rameses.

It should be noted that the Bible does not mention a Pharaoh named Rameses, but refers to the region of northeastern Egypt from which travel was either to Canaan or to Midian. Gen.47:11 So Joseph settled his father and his brothers in Egypt and gave them property in the best part of the land, the **district of Rameses**, as Pharaoh directed. When Moses and the children of Israel left Rameses, they left the region, not a person.

Ex.1:11 So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built **Pithom and Rameses as store cities** for Pharaoh.

Ex.12:37 The Israelites **journeyed from Rameses** to Succoth. There were about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children.

Num.33:5 The **Israelites left Rameses** and camped at Succoth.

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So, we have “evidence for Israelite slavery in Egypt, sudden disappearance of these slaves, devastation of Egypt by ten plagues, [and] the destruction of the Egyptian army -- if we look for it at the right time, and time is a vital element in the interpretation of ancient history.”

Conclusion

“According to the Biblical records, the Exodus occurred 480 years before Solomon laid the foundations of his temple at Jerusalem (1Ki.6:1). This would place the Exodus about 1446 BC. God's covenant with Abraham was 430 years earlier (Ex.12:40, Gal.3:16,17) about 1850 BC. From the ages of his predecessors back to Noah, given in Gen.12&13, it can be calculated that the great universal flood occurred 427 years earlier, about 2302 BC. But according to most authorities on Egyptian chronology the pyramids were built about 1550 BC and the first dynasty of Egypt ruled about 3100 BC.”

This presents a conflict between traditional Egyptian Chronology and the Bible. Egyptian dynasties could not have existed before the Flood. One of them is incorrect. Which one will you believe?

Also *Solving the Exodus Mystery, Vol.I* by Ted Stewart as related in a book review by Ruth Beechick in TJ 17(2) 2003. 436 synchronisms indicate the 12th dynasty should be about 300 years later than modern historians place it.

Pharaohs of the Bible:

Amenemhet I

Joseph sold into Egypt

Sesostris I

Joseph elevated to Governor. This was the son of Amenemhet I

Ameni

This is a person referenced in Egyptian inscriptions at the time of Sesostris I who had charge of the treasury and public works. I believe this was Joseph.

Sesostris II

Amenemhet II

Sesostris III

Oppressed the Hebrews. This was the one who decreed that all the children of the Hebrew slaves two years and under be slain.

Amenemhet III

This was Sesostris's III son who wanted to kill Moses.

Amenemhet IV

I believe this was Moses. Amenemhet IV disappeared off the scene before the death of Amenemhet III.

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Sobekneferu

Either the daughter of Sesostris III or Amenemhet III who drew Moses out of the Nile and raised him. She ascended to the throne after Amenemhet's III death. She ruled 8 years and when her rule ended it is called the end of the 12th dynasty.

Khasekemre-Neferhotep I

Forty years into the 13th dynasty, this is the Pharaoh from whom Moses demanded Israel's release. His mummy is not in its tomb. Where is it? At the bottom of the Red Sea. The Hyskos took over Egypt without a battle. How? The entire army was at the bottom of the Red Sea.

Rameses?

As mentioned in the Bible, is a location. It is associated with an Egyptian word which means 'door of two roads.' Gen.47:11; Ex.1:11; Ex.12:37; Num.37:5. There were several Pharaohs named Rameses, in the 18th dynasty, but they lived long after the time of Moses. They used the name to indicate their dichotomous power: joy and despair, wealth and poverty, life and death