

# Examining the Exodus

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Intro:

## **I. Critics Case Against the Exodus**

### **A. Critics on the Exodus (Minimalist)**

1. Most Near Eastern archaeologists believe the Exodus account is a legend invented by Israelite priests of the seventh century B.C. during the reign of Josiah.
2. Minimalists believe the Israelites were actually a powerful Canaanite tribe that rose to prominence in about 1000 B.C.

### **B. Critics Case against the Exodus**

1. No extra biblical records for the Exodus in Egypt or the Near East.
2. Date of Exodus and Conquest do not match the data
  - a) Conservative Bible scholars date the Exodus at 1446 B.C.
  - b) Most biblical scholars favor a later date of the Exodus around 1260 BC.

### **C. Reasons for the lack of Archaeology**

1. While in the desert, Israel remained mobile erecting no permanent settlements or structures.
2. Egypt would not keep records of such a defeat upon their nation.
3. According to many archaeologists, we have yet to excavate a vast majority of sites and there are many more discoveries yet to be made.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Edwin Yamauchi, *The Stones and the Scriptures*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Book House, 1972), 146 - 154.

## **II. The Balanced Approach**

- A. Two extreme approaches to studying biblical archaeology.
  - 1. Some Scholars base their conclusions solely on the biblical text.
  - 2. Other scholars known as minimalists, rely exclusively on archaeology and pay little or no attention to the biblical text.
- B. Dialogical Approach
  - 1. This approach looks at both the Bible and archaeology.
  - 2. When there appears to be a conflict we should examine both sources.
- C. We will also be looking at historical synchronisms.
  - 1. This means we will look at Egyptian, Near Eastern, and biblical histories to see where there are areas of correspondence.
  - 2. Where there is correspondence, we can conclude the time and authenticity of the event.

## **III. Is a Migration of Canaanites Likely?**

- A. The Exodus narrative begins in the Book of Genesis.
  - 1. According to the Bible, Joseph is sold into Egyptian slavery by his brothers.
  - 2. Through the providence of God, Joseph rises from a slave to become the second most powerful ruler in Egypt under the Pharaoh.
- B. Critics argue that the story of Joseph is fictitious for several reasons.
  - 1. A large migration of Asiatics into Egypt is unlikely.

2. Second, it is even more unlikely that the Egyptians would allow a foreigner to arise to such a prominent position as Joseph did.

C. Evidence for the Migration

1. One of the repeating themes in the patriarchal narratives is the recurrence of drought in the land of Canaan.

2. Beni Hasan painting (1890 BC)

3. The Hyksos (1730-1570 BC)

**IV. Date of the Exodus**

- A. Three possible dates for the Exodus: Early Date (1446 BC), Late Date of 1260 BC, and middle date of 1406 BC.

B. Early date 1446 BC

1. Based on passage from 1 Kings 6:1
2. Judges 11:26.

C. Late Date 1260 BC.

1. Exodus 1:11
2. Dynasty 19 is the Rameses Dynasty. (1290 – 1230 BC)
3. Most archaeologists believe that the Israelites entered Canaan about 1230-1220 BC.
4. Problems with the Late Date
  - a) 1260 BC does not match with biblical chronology from 1 Kings 6:1 and Judges 11:26
  - b) Merneptah Stele dates 1210 BC.

D. Problems with both dates

1. The catastrophes of the Exodus would have devastated Egypt.

2. The 1446 BC date shows no collapse of Egypt
3. 1260 Date shows no collapse of Egyptian power
4. The Jericho Problem

E. Case for the Middle Date 1406 BC.

1. 1 Kings 6:1 states 480 years before Solomon began building the Temple in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of his reign but is this the correct reading?
2. Problem of Exodus 12:40 "...the time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years." Is this the correct reading?
3. Reasons for the Septuagint reading

**V. What to look for in the Archaeology for the Exodus**

- A. Why we should not expect to find a record of the Exodus in Egyptian documents
- B. Events of the Exodus to consider
- C. Discovering the date of the Exodus begins with asking the right question, "If the catastrophes of the Exodus occurred, what would have happened to Egypt?"

**VI. The Pharaoh of the Exodus**

- A. 1446 BC date - Tuthmosis III (1497-1443 BC) or Amenhotep II (1443-1417 BC).
- B. 1260 BC Date- Ramses II (1279-1212 BC)
- C. The 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty – The Golden Age of Egypt
  1. Galatians 3:16-17 state from Jacob's entrance to the exodus was 215 years, half of 430 years from God's promise to Abraham to the giving of the law.
  2. The Hyksos Kings By 1800 BC, the Nile Delta was overrun by Asiatics

3. Pharaoh Ahmose - 1<sup>st</sup> Pharaoh of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty
  4. Tuthmosis III (1497-1443 BC) is considered the greatest and most powerful pharaoh of Egypt.
  5. Amenhotep II (1443-1417 BC) continued the control over Canaan and Syria.
  6. Tuthmosis IV (1417-1406 BC)
- D. Collapse of Egypt's 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty
1. Amenhotep III succeeds Tuthmosis IV.
  2. Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten) succeeds Amenhotep III and Egypt continues to decline.
  3. Smenkhkare (1351-1349 BC), and Tutankhamun (1349-1340 BC).
    - a) Ankhesenamun
    - b) Hittite king, Suppiluliuma I

## **VII. Amarna Tablets**

- A. Discovered in 1887 among the ruins of Akhenaten's palace at a site known as el-Armana, 200 miles south of Cairo
- B. Over 300 cuneiform tablets were found.
- C. These tablets were correspondence between Canaanite kings and Egypt during the last 10 years of Amenhotep III and Akhenaten's reign.
- D. In these letters the kings of Canaan pleading with Amenhotep III and Akhenaten to send military aid to the land because it is falling into a state of turmoil.

- E. The invading force in Canaan are the Habiru, a term which means marauding nomads.

### **VIII. The Fall of Mittani**

- A. The Mittani kingdom flourished from 1500–1340 BC.
  - 1. This empire covered the area of modern-day southeastern Turkey, northern Syria and northern Iraq.
  - 2. The Egyptian pharaohs often battled with Hatti and Mittani to keep control of this corridor.
- B. Tuthmosis IV built an alliance with Mittani.
- C. With the death of Tuthmosis IV, Egypt withdraws from the Levant.
  - 1. Hatti seeing Egypt's downfall attacks Mittani.
  - 2. The warrior king Suppiluliuma I, destroys Mittani

### **IX. Ipuwer Papyrus**

- A. There is a famous document named the Ipuwer Papyrus or Papyrus Leiden.
- B. This manuscript dates some time prior to the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC.
- C. Ipuwer laments over disasters that struck Egypt sometime prior to the thirteenth century BC.
- D. Ipuwer describes a series of disasters that struck Egypt which appear to be very similar to the plagues of the Exodus.

### **X. Israel and Merneptah Stela**

- A. Merneptah was 4<sup>th</sup> pharaoh of the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty.
- B. Date is 1208 BCE, the fifth year of Merneptah's reign.
- C. First extra biblical mention of Israel

## **XI. The Rameses Question**

- A. Exodus 1:11 names the city of Ramses?
- B. Most scholars believe this refers to Ramses II who ruled from 1290 BCE and reigned till 1230BC.
- C. Who could Ramses be referring to in Exodus 1:11?
  - 1. The name Ramses existed before 1200 BC.
  - 2. A later editor updated the old name of the city to the modern name of Rameses.