

HISTORY OF OLD TESTAMENT ISRAEL PERIOD #2—THE SOJOURN IN EGYPT; THE EXODUS & WILDERNESS WANDERINGS

Emphasis: “A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS”

This period of Old Testament history is known as the Exodus and Wilderness Wanderings. This period is recorded for us in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The length of this period is approximately 470 years and covers the events surrounding Israel’s bondage in Egypt, exodus from Egypt, the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai and their wanderings in the wilderness.

I. Historical Considerations relevant to this period:

A. Chronology: The dates for this period are 1876 BC to 1406 BC

1-The Calculations: Remember that the basis for Old Testament Chronology comes from the fixed date of June 15, 763 BC, an astronomically dated eclipse of the sun identified in the Assyrian Eponym lists. By using this fixed date and the mention of Kings Ahab and Jehu of the Northern Kingdom of Israel from the eponym list, one can work backward through the divided kingdom, to determine that the Kingdom was divided about 931 BC.

The United Kingdom of Israel divided after Solomon's death due to the oppressive nature of Rehoboam, Solomon's son (cf. 1 Kings 12). Since Solomon reigned for 40 years (1 Kings 11:42), he must have become king about 971 BC.

By taking note of 1 Kings 6:1, Solomon began building the temple during his fourth year as king (966 BC) 480 years after the Exodus from Egypt. This would place Israel's Exodus from Egypt about 1446 BC.

Remember also that Exodus 12:40 tells us that Israel was in Egypt for 430 years. This would place the year that Jacob went down to Egypt at 1876 BC. This would be the beginning point of this period of Israel’s history. Israel would be in Egypt for 430 years and then wander in the wilderness for approximately 40 years so the conclusion of this period of Israel’s history would be about 1406 BC. Thus this period of Israel’s history covers about 470 years.

THE PERIOD OF EXODUS & WILDERNESS WANDERINGS					
Genesis	Exodus		Exodus, Leviticus & Numbers	Numbers	Deuteronomy
Jacob enters Egypt	Bondage in Egypt	Exodus from Egypt	Giving of the Law at Mount Sinai	Wilderness Wandering	On the plains of Moab

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1876 BC	430 years	1446 BC	About 1 year	About 40 years	1406 BC
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2-Important Chronological Considerations: There are certain chronological issues that must be resolved regarding this period of Israel's history. In fact there are two considerations that must be dealt with. The first is the length of Israel's sojourn in Egypt and the second is the dating of the Exodus from Egypt. The problem is that there seems to be conflicting data regarding these events.

Chronological Consideration #1—Israel's Sojourn in Egypt

This particular issue involves the duration of Israel's bondage in Egypt. The problem at hand is that there are passages of Scripture that mention various lengths for Israel's sojourn in Egypt. As a result of this confusion, there are three main positions: 1) The sojourn lasted 215 years; 2) The sojourn lasted 400 years; & 3) The sojourn lasted 430 years. "The length of the sojourn of Israel in Egypt has crucial ramifications for a proper understanding of the patriarchal and Joseph narratives. A 215-year sojourn, for example places Joseph in a Hyksos milieu whereas a 430-year sojourn places him in a native Egyptian dynasty." [Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, p. 75] We will attempt to examine the biblical passages; evaluate the main positions and estimate the length of Israel's sojourn in order to arrive at an accurate Old Testament Chronology and a better understanding of the time frame of Israel's history.

Examining the Scriptures: There are passages, which state three different lengths of time for Israel's sojourn in Egypt.

1) Passages, which mention a 400-year sojourn:

- **Genesis 15:13**, "And {God} said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years."

- **Acts 7:6**, "But God spoke to this effect, that his OFFSPRING WOULD BE ALIENS IN A FOREIGN LAND, AND THAT THEY WOULD BE ENSLAVED AND MISTREATED FOR FOUR HUNDRED YEARS."

2) Passages, which mention a 430-year sojourn:

- **Exodus 12:40-41**, "Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And it came about at the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt."

- **Galatians 3:17**, "What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise."

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3) A passage, which mentions a 450-year sojourn:

• **Acts 13:17-20**, “The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it. “And for a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness. “And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance {all of which took} about four hundred and fifty years. “And after these things He gave {them} judges until Samuel the prophet.”

Evaluating the Positions: There are also three different positions in regards to the sojourn of Israel in Egypt. The following is an evaluation of those positions.

POSITION #1—215 YEARS OF BONDAGE IN EGYPT:

This position takes Galatians 3:17 as stating that the 430 years are from the giving of the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 12:3 to the giving of the Law in Exodus 19. It views 215 years from the covenant with Abraham until the time Jacob went down into Egypt and another 215 years from the time Jacob went down into Egypt until the Giving of the Law on Mount Sinai.

Notice that the advocates of the 215-year sojourn usually distinguish between the 400 years of Genesis 15:13 and the 430 years of Exodus 12:40-41. The 430 years begin when Abraham is called and the covenant is made in Genesis 12:3, but the 400 years begin when Isaac is weaned, thus becoming the heir of the promise (Genesis 21:9). This is how they reconcile the conflicting passages.

The Call of Abram at 75 years old.....	0
Isaac born when Abram is 100 years old.....	25
Isaac was weaned & Ishmael cast out [400 years begin].....	5
Jacob & Esau born when Isaac was 60.....	55
Jacob 130 when he goes down into Egypt.....	130
Remaining years in Egypt.....	215
Grand total is 430 years.	

Arguments in favor of this position:

- It seems to best fit the point of Galatians 3:17 that 430 years elapsed from the giving of the Abrahamic covenant until the giving of the Law in Exodus 19.
- Exodus 6:16-20 and Genesis 15:16 emphasize that they would return to their land in the fourth generation. A 215-year sojourn would seem to be more reasonable than a 430-year span.
- Some will refer to a variety of quotations from the early church fathers to support this position.

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Objections to this position:

- Paul’s statement in Galatians 3:17 does not necessarily have to refer back to the first time the covenant was made. In fact there is a renewal of the covenant on several occasions. (Cf. Genesis 46:3-4)

Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, p. 76

Paul’s reference to the period between the Abrahamic promise and the Mosaic covenant does not unequivocally point to the first time the promise was made. It was in fact affirmed and reaffirmed several times to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the last occasion being precisely on the eve of Jacob’s departure for Egypt (Genesis 46:3-4). Paul may be speaking not of Abraham per se, but of that Abrahamic promise, the last expression of which was to Jacob exactly 430 years before the exodus.

- The genealogy of Exodus 6:16-20 is a representative genealogy, not a complete one. Nearly all scholars agree that there are gaps in this genealogy. It is also possible that the term “generations” in Genesis 15:13 could mean “lifetimes” and thus could refer to a period of 430 years.
- The quotations from the early church fathers are very ambiguous and do not offer any substantial support for this position.
- The inclusion of the weaning of Isaac is really weak in order to corroborate the distinction between 400 and 430 years.
- A 215-year sojourn does not allow enough time for the rapid population growth of Israel from 70-75 family members to 600,000 men (cf. Exodus 12:37), not to mention women and children (a total of about two and half million people).

POSITION #2—400 YEARS OF BONDAGE IN EGYPT:

This position holds that the Egyptian bondage is a period of 400 years as stated in Genesis 15:13 and Acts 7:6. They emphasize that the 430 years mentioned in Exodus 12:40-41 and Galatians 3:17 cover the time period from the confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 35:9-13 to the confirmation of the Mosaic covenant at Mt. Sinai and easily reconciles with a bondage in Egypt of 400 years.

Arguments in favor of this position:

- A literal rendering of Genesis 15:13 and Acts 7:6 would suggest a bondage in Egypt of 400 years.
- Galatians 3:17 specifically dates the 430 years from the confirmation of the covenant. If the final confirmation is Genesis 35:9-13 then the confirmation was 430 years before the Exodus. (They are reconciling the statements of 400 years with those of 430 years)

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- This position uses Acts 13:19-20 as a major support.
 - 1) Acts 13:19-20 states that the stay in Egypt, the wilderness wanderings (40 years), and the conquest of Canaan (7 years) all consumed a period of 450 years.
 - 2) A 430-year bondage means a total of 477 years. [430 yrs + 40 yrs + 7 yrs = 477 years]
 - 3) A 400-year bondage means a total of 447 years. [400 yrs + 40 yrs + 7 yrs = 447 years]
 - 4) The latter figure is much closer to the “about 450 years” of Paul in Acts 13:19-20.
- This position gives sufficient time for the increase of population among the Jews in Egypt.

Objection to this position:

- Exodus 12:40-41 seems to be an explicit statement that the children of Israel were actually in Egypt for 430 years. Being that this is a direct literal statement of their time in Egypt made in the context of the Exodus, it seems best to hold to a 430 year sojourn and reconcile the other passages in light of this clear statement.

POSITION #3—430 YEARS OF BONDAGE IN EGYPT:

This position holds to a literal rendering of Exodus 12:40-41 and a 430-year sojourn in Egypt. This fits with the 1876 descent of Jacob and his sons into Egypt and the 1446 Exodus date. This position reconciles the passages that mention a 400-year sojourn as rounded figures. It reconciles Galatians 3:17 in that the covenant promises was affirmed and reaffirmed several times to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The last such rendering comes in Genesis 46:3-4 just before Jacob’s departure to Egypt.

Arguments in favor of this position:

- Exodus 12:40-41 specifically states that the sojourn in Egypt lasted 430 years. “*Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And it came about at the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.*”

The best sense of this verse is a literal 430-year sojourn in Egypt. There is really no other satisfactory way to render such a specific statement. This statement seems to be concerned specifically with the chronology of the sojourn in Egypt and the Exodus from Egypt. The fact that it is in the context of Israel’s Exodus out of Egypt strengthens a literal interpretation of these verses.

- Genesis 15:13 predicts that the descendants of Abraham would be in a land not their own for 400 years. The 400-year figure is simply a general statement referring to the sojourn. It is an approximation of which Exodus 12:40-41 emphasizes its fulfillment as exactly 430 years. Acts 7:6 is simply a quotation of Genesis 15:13 and is therefore taken as a

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round number as well.

Leon Wood, *Survey of Israel's History*, p. 84

“As to the figure used here being 400, rather than the more exact 430 of Exodus 12:40, this is an employment of a round number, something not uncommon in Scripture. The mention in Genesis 15:16 that the return would be in the fourth generation, may be explained in terms of the length of a generation in Abraham’s experience. God knew that Abraham would be one hundred at Isaac’s birth and here employed this length of time in a multiple of four to stress how long Abraham’s posterity would remain in Egypt.”

- This position allows enough time for the population to increase from the 70 to 75 family members to 600,000 men (cf. Exodus 12:37) while in Egypt. If you begin with the 41 grandsons of Jacob and figure 10 generations of 40 years each, assuming that from each married couple an average of three sons and three daughters for the first six generations and two sons and two daughters for the last four, then by the tenth generation there would be 478,224 sons over the age of twenty with 125,326 sons from the ninth generation still living for a total of 603,550 men by the 400th year. The 430-year sojourn clearly allows enough time for Israel’s population to increase and to be able to reconcile Exodus 12:37.

After examining all of the data, It would be best to interpret Exodus 12:40-41 in a literal manner. Exodus 12:40-41 is thus an explicit statement that Israel was in Egypt 430 years, while Genesis 15:13 is a general statement predicting this future event and thus rounds it to 400 years. Acts 7:6 is simply quoting Genesis 15:13 rather than making an exact statement about chronology. So this 430-year period began with the renewal of the covenant promise to Jacob in Genesis 46:3-4 just prior to his descent to Egypt. That would place the period of the Sojourn in Egypt from 1876 BC until the Exodus in 1446 BC.

Chronological Consideration #2—The Date of Israel’s Exodus from Egypt

The date of Israel’s Exodus from Egypt is probably one of the most debated topics of Old Testament Chronology. Although the biblical evidence seems to settle the question of the date of the Exodus, most of Old Testament scholarship has rejected this evidence for an early date of 1446 BC and settled for a late date of the Exodus around 1266 BC.

Surely the date of the Exodus is a crucially important question because the Exodus is a central historical and theological event in the Old Testament and the interpretation of both antecedent and subsequent history will be greatly affected by the date assigned to the Exodus. [Cf. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, p. 66-67] In other words an accurate Old Testament Chronology rests on the date we assign to the Exodus. Although there are many interpretations for the date of the Exodus, there exist two major positions: 1) The Late Date for the Exodus is about 1266BC; 2) The Early Date for the Exodus is 1446 BC.

POSITION #1—THE LATE DATE ABOUT 1266 BC

Many Old Testament scholars support a late date of the Exodus sometime after 1300 BC.

- Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, p. 193-194: “According to the best

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information presently available the reign of Ramses II is probably dated 1304-1237 BC, and a date for the exodus not too long after 1300 seems more probable.”

- John Bright, *History of Israel*, p. 123: “We may be fairly certain that the Exodus took place nor earlier than the thirteenth century.”

Arguments in Favor of a Late Date for the Exodus:

- (1) Lack of sedentary settlement of the Transjordan.

Eugene Merrill, p. 69:

“For many years Nelson Glueck, the eminent explorer and archaeologist, argued on the basis of pottery finds on the surface and on the slopes of mounds throughout the Transjordan and the Negev that these areas had no sedentary population between 1900 and 1300 BC. Practically all Old Testament authorities accepted this judgment and therefore concluded that references to settled peoples encountered by Moses and Joshua necessitated a date after 1300 BC for the wilderness journeys. It follows that the exodus also could not have been much earlier than that date.”

Response:

It is necessary to note that Glueck’s conclusions are almost universally rejected today. At any rate, the Edomites and Moabites encountered by Israel in Numbers 20-21, may well have been nomadic peoples, leaving little or no archaeological trace.

- (2) Israelite construction of the city of Rameses (cf. Exodus 1:11).

Eugene Merrill, p. 70:

“A Second basis for the late date is found in the biblical text itself. Exodus 1:11 points out that the Israelites, when they were reduced to slavery, constructed certain cities for Pharaoh, including Pithom and Rameses. These cities were originally known as Pi-Atum and Per-Ramesses respectively, and in any case were not built, but rebuilt by the Israelites. The contention that this verse is relevant to the date of the exodus rests on the assumption that the city Rameses was named for Rameses II, the famous king of Dynasty 19. That he did build or rebuild a city by this name (Per-Ramasse) and that he did so with the use of ‘apiru slave labor may be conceded (though the papyrus to which appeal is always made, does not expressly make this assertion.”

It is suggested by these scholars that this construction took place either during the reign of Seti I (1308-1290 BC) or Rameses II (1290-1224 BC).

Response:

- 1) The name Rameses is much earlier than Dynasty 19; in fact it can be traced all the way back to the Hyksos Period of Egyptian history. So there is the possibility that the Israelites rebuilt a city called Rameses long before the kingship of Rameses II.
- 2) The name Rameses in Exodus 1:11 is an anachronism; the name at the time of the Israelites

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labor there was Avaris, but a later editor of the story changed the name to Rameses so that his contemporaries could understand it. Unger theorized that Rameses replaced Avaris so that later readers would understand the location, because they would not know the location of Avaris. If such a change indeed took place, then the city or Rameses in Exodus 1:11 would cease to support a late date for the exodus. (Cf. Genesis 14:14; Joshua 19:47 & Judges 18:29)

- (3) Evidence in Canaan of a thirteenth-century conquest.

Eugene Merrill, p. 71-72:

“The third and by far most commonly adduced argument in support of a thirteenth-century date for the exodus is archaeological evidence of a massive and widespread devastation of the cities and towns of central Canaan during that period. Since there appears to be incontrovertible attestation of such destruction and since, so the argument goes, the only known historical event anywhere near that time which could account for it is the Israelite conquest, the conclusion is drawn that the conquest was in fact the cause of the destruction and that the exodus therefore must have been only slightly earlier.”

Note: a corollary of this argument is the absence of any archaeological evidence of widespread destruction or burning in Canaan from the early fourteenth century BC when the conquest would have occurred according to the reconstruction of the early date advocates.

Response:

There is a clear Biblical reason why there is no evidence of widespread destruction in the fourteenth century—Compare Joshua 11:13, *“However, Israel did not burn any cities that stood on their mounds, except Hazor alone, {which} Joshua burned.”*

In fact the biblical record in Joshua is clear that only Jericho, Ai and Hazor were destroyed. This is in fulfillment of Deuteronomy 6:10-11, *“Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant...”*

There is clearly no record of destruction for the conquest, because there was very limited destruction in the conquest.

The Bible does however offer an explanation as to the archaeological record of widespread destruction in Canaan during the late thirteenth century BC.

The book of Judges makes it very clear that Israel was overrun and oppressed time and time again by enemy peoples from within and outside of the land. This certainly would serve as a valid explanation for the layers of destruction during this time frame.

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POSITION #2—THE EARLY DATE: ABOUT 1446 BC

Although many Old Testament scholars have supported a late date for the exodus, both biblical and archaeological evidence clearly supports an early date around 1446 BC for the exodus.

Arguments in Favor of an Early Date for the Exodus:

- (1) Two explicit statements of Scripture support a mid-15h century BC date.

1 Kings 6:1, “*Now it came about in the four hundred and eightieth year after the sons of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon Ziv which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.*”

As mentioned earlier the fixed date from the Assyrian Eponym Lists of an astronomically dated solar eclipse help pin-point the beginning of Solomon place the fourth year of his reign around 966/967 BC. The explicit statement of Scripture is that the Exodus was 480 years prior to this date, which is conveniently 1446 BC.

Judges 11:13-27, in this passage Jephthah has set out to destroy the Ammonites. He remonstrates them for contesting Israel’s right to the land, which they have held for 300 years. In fact, Jephthah explicitly dates those 300 years from the initial entrance into Canaan. Jephthah’s defeat of the Ammonites occurred at the end of the twelfth century (about 1100 BC), a date, which is widely acknowledged.

This would once again seem to support an early date for the Exodus. If the Exodus was 1446 BC and the Conquest was 40 years later at about 1406 BC then Jephthah’s defeat of the Ammonites would nicely fit about 1106 BC. The late date advocates have to explain away both of these figures in order to make their chronology work.

- (2) Contemporary Egyptian history permits a mid-15th century BC date.

Obviously as discussed earlier, Egyptian history fits very well with the early date of the Exodus.

The political/societal upheaval, which was associated with the reign of the Hyksos consists well with the terror of the Egyptian ruling family at the growth of the Jewish people and with the antipathy felt toward the Jews when a new king arose.

Hatshepsut, daughter of Thutmosis I and pretender to the throne of Egypt is the only woman in all of Egyptian history who fits the profile of the daughter of Pharaoh who found the child Moses and reared him in the palace—and she fits that profile perfectly. Thutmosis III fits precisely with the Biblical data concerning the king who longed for Moses death (Exodus 2:23; 4:19). Further the struggle between Thutmosis III and Hatshepsut explains Moses’ terror when his slaughter of the Egyptian taskmaster was discovered. Thutmosis might have perceived Moses to be his greatest rival.

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The chronology of the Biblical narrative of Moses's time in Midian (40 years) demands that the Pharaoh of the Exodus be immediately preceded by a Pharaoh, who reigned about 40 years. Thumosis III reigned alone after the death of Hatshepsut (1482) for 32 years (1482-1450), and died less than 5 years before Moses returned to Egypt as God's deliverer for the Hebrew people.

Amenhotep II spent much of his life in the delta region in the northern portion of Egypt; thus he would have been easily accessible to Moses. In addition, he was a great military conqueror early in his reign, but had no expeditions toward his latter years. Plus there is evidence that the eldest son of Amenhotep II did not survive and this could be explained by the 10th plague.

- (3) Contemporary events in the land of Canaan suggest a mid-15th century BC date.

Since Israel fled Egypt about 1446 BC, then the Conquest of Canaan would take place about 40 years later around 1406 BC. Many find that there is evidence for an invasion of Canaan at that time from the Armana Letters. These letters describe Abdihiba, governor of Jerusalem, who wrote numerous letters to Akhnaton beseeching Egyptian aid against the encroaching Habiru, if the country were to be saved for Egypt. The conclusion is that these Habiru are in fact the Hebrews and the reference is to the conquest of Canaan by Israel under Joshua. This coincides nicely with the early date of the Exodus.

- (4) Archaeological evidence from the city of Jericho favors a mid-15th century BC date in that there exists a layer of destruction at about the time of the conquest for the early date of the exodus.

CONCLUSION:

Clearly the best argument is in favor of the Early Date of the Exodus around 1446 BC. The weight of any argument must be supported clearly by the pages of Scripture. 1 Kings 6:1 and Judges 11:15-27 clearly pave the way for the early date. Furthermore, Egyptian history and archaeological evidence add to the support of this date. Jacob likely went down into Egypt around 1876 BC. For 430 years the Israelites lived in Egypt until Moses led them out around 1446 BC. For the next 40 years they would wander through the wilderness until Joshua led them into the Promised land about 1406 BC.

B. An Overview of Contemporary Egyptian History

Certainly as one seeks to understand the history of Israel during the period of Egyptian bondage and the Exodus of Israel from Egypt, it is necessary to have an accurate understanding of contemporary Egyptian History; in particular the history of Egypt after the death of Joseph through the time of the Exodus.

Egypt after the death of Joseph:

- At the time Jacob went down to Egypt (1876 BC), Egypt was ruled by the Twelfth Dynasty. Dynasty Twelve ended in Egypt about 1786 BC; with the demise of that

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dynasty the greatness of the Middle Kingdom was over.

- The Thirteenth Dynasty was very weak. The central authority was greatly diminished, which made the incursion of great numbers of Asiatics into Egypt possible.
- One such Asiatic family usurped power in Egypt and established themselves in firm control. These people were known by the name, the Hyksos. This term is a corruption of an Egyptian term, which means, "Rulers of Foreign Countries.
- These Asiatic invaders are known to historians as Dynasties Fifteen and Sixteen and ruled in Egypt from 1730 BC to 1570 BC.
- It is possible that from these Hyksos rulers was the king who knew not Joseph (Exodus 1:8), since Joseph died about 1800 BC.
- About 1570 BC, the native Egyptian rulers at Thebes (Upper Egypt) succeeded in expelling the Hyksos from the Delta. These rulers had established the Seventeenth Dynasty, which was shortly followed by the Eighteenth Dynasty (in rule during the time of the Exodus).

Egypt prior to Israel's Exodus:

The rulers of the Eighteenth Dynasty united the country and inaugurated the greatest period in all of Egyptian History, the New Kingdom. The following is an overview of the reigns of the pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty, who impact the history of Old Testament Israel.

AHMOSE I (1570-1546 BC)

- He was the founder of the 18th Dynasty, brother of the last king of the 17th Dynasty.
- He completed the expulsion of the Hyksos, which had been largely accomplished by the pharaohs of the 17th Dynasty.
- He reigned 24 years; quite effective; crushed sedition against his family.
- It is also possible that this might be the Pharaoh who knew not Joseph, mentioned in Exodus 1:8.

AMENHOTEP I (1546-1526 BC)

- He was the son of Ahmose I; succeeded the throne at the death of his father.
- He completed the consolidation of power begun by his father.
- He reigned 20 years and established the Theban dynasty in control of the entire land of Egypt.
- He brought Egypt to the threshold of a new golden age.

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THUTMOSIS I (1526-1518 BC)

- Amenhotep died leaving no heir; one of his female relatives (sister or daughter) was married to a prominent general, and the crown passed to that general under the name of Thutmosis I.
- He was a very strong Pharaoh who led a raid deep into Syria-Palestine.
- He is probably the Pharaoh who instituted the killing of Hebrew baby boys (Moses was born about 1525 BC).
- He reigned about 7 years; died with no heir in place; however he did have a daughter, Hatshepsut.

THUTMOSIS II (1518-1504 BC)

- Because Hatshepsut was a female, it was considered inappropriate for her to rule; so she was compelled to marry her half brother, Thutmosis II.
- Thutmosis II was a son of Thutmosis I by a lesser wife, whereas Hatshepsut was the daughter of Thutmosis I and his primary royal wife.
- The 14 years of Thutmosis II's rule were very undistinguished.

HATSHEPSUT (1504-1482 BC)

- Thutmosis II died without an heir; a son by a secondary wife was named as King Thutmosis III, but as he was only a lad, Hatshepsut seized the real power and ruled for 22 years.
- Thutmosis III was forced into the background during the years of Hatshepsut's dominance, but he did not entirely disappear from the scene.
- Hatshepsut was a very colorful ruler. She sent trading expeditions throughout the world, building a beautiful temple at Deir el-Bahri, and conducted at least four military campaigns, which were very successful.
- After 22 years of rule, Hatshepsut disappeared from the scene--whether by natural reasons or by foul play it is hard to say. However, some now believe that she possibly died of a tooth infection if they have correctly identified the her mummy.

"The general picture of Hatshepsut leads us to identify this bold queen as the daughter of Pharaoh who rescued Moses. Only she of all known women of the period possessed the presumption and independence to violate an ordinance of the king and under his very nose at that! Though the birth date of the daughter of Thutmose I is unknown, she was probably several years older than her husband, Thutmose II, who died in 1504 while in his late twenties. She may have been in her early teens by 1526, Moses' birth date, and therefore able to effect his deliverance." [Eugene Merrill, Kingdom of Priests, p. 60.]

"For a woman to assume such a position in that day was most unusual, but Hatshepsut was a most unusual person. She had a strong personality and a remarkable gift for leadership, which she used in advantageous circumstances to claim the throne...We may safely think of Moses, then, as having been reared by this remarkable woman. It was she who found him in the river and later received him into the place at Thebes as her adopted son." [Leon Wood]

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THUTMOSIS III (1504-1450 BC)

- Including all the years from coronation to death, Thutmosis III ruled 54 years. However, his effective reign was 1482-1450 BC.
- Thutmosis III was one of the most talented and brilliant rulers in Egyptian history. He led 17 campaigns, mostly Syria-Palestine, creating an Egyptian empire in the Levant.
- Late in life (about 1453 BC), Thutmosis III made his son Amenhotep II, co-regent with him. After 3 years of co-regency, Thutmosis II died, leaving Amenhotep II on the throne.

AMENHOTEP II (1453-1415 BC)

- He was a very militaristic king, but led only three campaigns in years 3, 7 and 9 of his reign (about 1450, 1446, 1444 BC).
- This fits well with Old Testament narrative and the Pharaoh of the Exodus.
- Thutmosis IV, a son of Amenhotep II took the throne in 1415 BC. However, Thutmosis IV was NOT the firstborn son of Amenhotep II, thus fitting well with the Old Testament narrative.

II. An Overview of The Period of Egyptian Bondage; The Exodus & The Wilderness Wanderings:

This period is essentially broken down into two sections based on the location of the nation of Israel. During the first phase of this period the Hebrew people are located in Egypt, while the second and much shorter phase of this period the Hebrew people are wandering in the wilderness between Egypt and the Land of Canaan.

A. Phase 1: Israel in Egypt (1876-1446 BC)

1. Jacob's Descendants in Egypt:

The date Jacob arrives into Egypt is 1876 BC approximately 430 years prior to the Exodus from Egypt according to Exodus 12:40, when Jacob was 130 years old.

Jacob's family settled in the land of Goshen, a fertile land in northern Egypt, on the western portion of the Nile delta. (Genesis 47:1-4)

Jacob's family began to flourish immediately. Exodus 1:7 says, "*But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them.*"

Joseph lived for about 71 years after Jacob's arrival in Egypt and these were probably happy years for Israel.

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2. Oppression of Israel in Egypt: (Exodus 1:8-22)

A king arose who did not know Joseph according to Exodus 1:8, which says, “*Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.*”

There are two positions regarding the identity of this king held among those who accept an early date (1446 BC) for the Exodus.

Position #1—The king who did not know Joseph was a Hyksos King. The Hyksos period extends from 1730 to 1570 BC. Thus, if the king who did not know Joseph was the first Hyksos King, the period of Israelite suffering would have begun as early as 70 years after Joseph died.

The argument for this position is two fold. First, the preposition of Exodus 1:8, “a new king arose *over* Egypt,” often has the meaning “to rise against,” this fits well a foreign family (i.e. Hyksos) taking control of Egypt. Second, if, by reason of their common Semitic ancestry, the Hebrews and Hyksos were on friendly terms, why were not the Hebrews expelled when the Hyksos were expelled about 1570 BC.

Position #2—The king who did not know Joseph was Amosis, the pharaoh who expelled the Hyksos and who established the 18th dynasty.

The reasoning: Because the Hyksos and the Israelites were both semitic, there would have been a natural trust and friendship; thus the good fortunes of the Israelites continued throughout the Hyksos period. But once the Hyksos had been expelled, Amosis perceived the potential danger of this other Semitic family (Israel) living within the land, and took steps to avoid any difficulty.

As a result rigorous servitude was imposed upon the Israelites for at least three reasons:

1-Simply because the new king did not know Joseph, that is had no sense of allegiance or indebtedness to Joseph or to his descendents.

2-The Israelites were regarded as “more and mightier” than the ruling house (Exodus 1:9).

3-The ruling house saw a threat of military alliance between Israel and a potential enemy (Exodus 1:10).

Thus, the Israelites were made slaves and employed in the building of cities (Exodus 1:11). The people of Israel continue to multiply, in spite of the rigorous labor (Exodus 1:12).

Later, further steps were taken to slow the growth of the nation. First, all midwives were ordered to murder the Hebrew male infants at birth (Exodus 1:15-21). Then, a decree was issued that any Egyptian who saw a male Hebrew child was to drown that child in the Nile (Exodus 1:22).

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3. The Birth and Early Life of Moses: (**Exodus 2:1-10**)

Moses' father and mother were of the tribe of Levi (Exodus 6:16-20) and they were godly Israelites (Hebrews 11:23). When Moses was born, his parents already had two children: Miriam (age 7) and Aaron (age 3).

Moses was hid for three months at birth, then placed in a basket of papyrus and put in the river, with Miriam keeping watch. In the providence of God, Pharaoh's daughter saw him, took him as her own, and asked Miriam to find a Hebrew woman to care for the child, who in turn got her mother to care for the child.

The Woman who found Moses was Hatshepsut, the daughter of Thutmose I. She married her ½ brother, Thutmose II, and thus ascended the throne as queen. When he died, Hatshepsut proclaimed herself supreme ruler of Egypt (1503-1482 BC). Hatshepsut was succeeded by a step-son, Thutmose III, who hated her and tried to obliterate her memory throughout Egypt.

4. Moses Departs Egypt: (**Exodus 2-11-25; Hebrews 11:24-27**)

Hatshepsut was ruling, and Thutmose III was growing. Moses was 40 years old, probably occupied important offices and could have anticipated excelling further in Egyptian government. By reason of his unwise choice, Moses was forced to flee from Egypt to Midian.

5. Moses Returns to Egypt: (**Exodus 3:1-4:31**)

-The call of Moses: The place of the call was Mt. Horeb (Exodus 3:11-12). Notice that Moses did not originate the idea of returning to Egypt, in fact, he resisted the idea when God so instructed Him. In answer to his objections, God made for Moses a two-fold provision. First, God gave Moses the capacity to work miracles. Second, God gave Moses a mouthpiece by offering Aaron as his spokesman.

-The Journey back to Egypt: Along the way, Moses' wife returns with their two sons to Jethro, her father, in Midian and Aaron comes from Egypt and joins Moses. Moses' first act upon arriving in Egypt is that he and Aaron assemble the elders of Israel and tell them what God has called them to do (Exodus 4:29-31).

-The Contest with Pharaoh: The pharaoh at this time was Amenhotep II. "A ruler of valor and strength in his own right, Amenhotep II had been carefully trained by his outstanding father. Ascending the throne at the age of 18, he prided himself in his horsemanship and claimed to be a better handler of ships and more expert with the bow than any other. He conducted at least three successful campaigns north in Syria, maintaining his father's holdings there, and was able to continue Egypt's southern boundary...Moses and Aaron would have encountered this man when he was yet young in life and in the early years of his reign." [Leon Wood, p. 123]

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The initial encounter with Amenhotep II is recorded for us in Exodus 5:1-7:9. Moses first requests to go three days journey and sacrifice to YHWH. Moses' purpose in this was likely to test Pharaoh and to heighten his guilt. Pharaoh's response was that of anger and he increased his cruelty to Israel. The response of Israel included discouragement and anger against Moses.

After the initial encounter with Amenhotep II, there were several opportunities in which Moses and Aaron appeared before Pharaoh. Amenhotep II, the ruler of Egypt refused to release the Israelites from slavery. So the Lord sent 10 plagues upon the Egyptians to break Pharaoh's stubborn will and demonstrate God's sovereign power. The following chart covers the 10 plagues, which occurred within a period of about 6 to 9 months:

THE TEN PLAGUES OF EGYPT		
FIRST	The water of the Nile turned to blood.	Exodus 7:14-25
SECOND	Frogs overran the countryside.	Exodus 8:1-15
THIRD	People and animals were infested with lice.	Exodus 8:16-19
FOURTH	Swarms of flies covered the land.	Exodus 8:20-32
FIFTH	Disease killed the livestock of Egypt.	Exodus 9:1-7
SIXTH	Boils and sores infected the Egyptians and their animals.	Exodus 9:8-12
SEVENTH	Hail destroyed crops and vegetation.	Exodus 9:13-25
EIGHTH	Swarms of locusts covered the land.	Exodus 10:1-20
NINTH	Thick darkness covered Egypt for three days.	Exodus 10:21-29
TENTH	The Egyptian firstborn, both of the people and their animals, died.	Exodus 12:29-33

After the final demonstration of God's power through the tenth plague, Pharaoh finally gave in and allowed the Israelites to leave Egypt. It was at this time that the Israelites left the land and were miraculously protected as they crossed the Red Sea on dry ground.

Pharaoh's magicians were able to duplicate only the two initial signs, and then two of the plagues (changing water to blood and the production of frogs). There is question as to how these magicians accomplished this. Notice however, three ways in which the infinite superiority of YHWH was demonstrated in this contest with Pharaoh's magicians. (1) According to Exodus 7:12, the serpent of Moses and Aaron swallowed the magician's serpents. (2) According to Exodus 8:18-19, the magicians could not duplicate any miracle after the second and they even

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acknowledged the third plague to be the “finger of God.” (3) The magicians themselves were afflicted with the plagues such as the plague of boils in Exodus 9:11.

The result of the plagues was two-fold: (1) Israel was finally allowed—even forced to depart Egypt. (2) The name of YHWH was protected and honored.

7. The Departure of Israel from Egypt:

The tenth plague was the death of the firstborn throughout the land of Egypt (Exodus 11:1-12:30). The number of the Hebrew people at this time was approximately 2 ½ to 3 million strong.

God very deliberately led Israel and accomplished their deliverance by three mighty miracles. First, the glory cloud moved from before the Israelites to behind them. It descended upon the Egyptians causing darkness and confusion, but giving light to Israel as they made their way across a dry sea bed. Second, the waters were opened and the sea bed was made dry, so that the Israelites could make their way across the sea. The immensity of this miracle is often overlooked. Up to 3 million Israelites walked across a dry sea bed, while the waters were being held back. Lastly, the waters were closed when the Egyptian army had made their way into the sea, thus engulfing and drowning the Egyptian pursuers. Israel was finally miraculously free from their oppressors.

B. Phase 2: Israel in the Wilderness (1446-1406 BC)

Israel was finally free from their oppression and bondage in Egypt. But now what were they to do?

1. The Journey to Mt. Sinai: (Exodus 15:22-18:27)

Notice that Israel’s first objective after crossing the Red Sea was NOT Canaan for Moses had been instructed to take the nation first of all to Mt. Sinai (Exodus 3:12). The journey to Sinai took about 3 months (Exodus 19:1). The following is a list of events along the way:

- The provision of water at Marah and Elim (Exodus 15:22-27).
- The provision of manna at the wilderness of Sin (Exodus 16:1-36).
- Water from the rock at Rephidim (Exodus 17:1-7).
- The battle with the Amalekites (Exodus 17:8-16).
- The provision of subordinates to aid Moses in judging Israel (Exodus 18:1-27).
- The arrival at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:1-2).

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2. The Giving of the Mosaic Law: (Exodus 19:1ff)

First, notice the appearance of God at Mt. Sinai recorded in Exodus 19:16-25. There was lightning and thunder and a very loud trumpet. God descended on the mountain in fire and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace and the whole mountain quaked violently.

The series of events on Sinai are as follows:

- The pledge of the nation to obey (Exodus 19:3-8). The purpose of the nation was to be “a kingdom of priests.” Through them, would be the coming Messiah and they were to be an ongoing perpetual testimony.
- The giving of the Decalogue/Ten Commandments (Exodus 19:9-20:21).
- The giving of the “Book of the Covenant” (Exodus 20:22-24:4)
- A ratification of ceremony (Exodus 24:4-11).
- The Law given and broken (Exodus 24:12-Exodus 34).
 - The first 40 days on the mountain (Exodus 24:12-18).
 - The worship of the golden calf (Exodus 32).
 - God’s special blessing upon Moses (Exodus 33:1-11).
 - God’s revelation of Himself to Moses (Exodus 33:12-23).
 - The second 40 days on the mountain (Exodus 34).

Now that the people have experienced God’s deliverance, guidance and protection, they are ready to be taught what God expects of them. The people of Israel must now be set apart and walk with God. On Mt. Sinai, Moses receives God’s moral, civil and ceremonial laws, as well as the pattern for the tabernacle to be built in the wilderness. The rest of the text of Exodus (19-40) and the book of Leviticus make up the instruction that Moses receives from God and teaches the people on Sinai. The Law covered three general areas: 1) Commandments, which governed their personal lives, particularly as they related to God; 2) judgments, which governed their social lives, particularly as they related to one another; and 3) ordinances, which governed their religious lives so that the people would know how to approach God on His terms.

The Law taught the people how to conduct their lives until the Messiah would come and make a complete and perfect sacrifice for sin. The Mosaic Law was not given as a way of meriting salvation, but that human beings might realize that they are helpless and hopeless apart from the saving grace of Christ (Galatians 3:19-24). The heart of the Mosaic Law was the Ten Commandments. Note the following chart, which emphasizes the meaning of the Ten Commandments:

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THE TEN COMMANDMENTS		
Number	The Meaning of the Command	O.T. Statement
FIRST	Trust God only.	Exodus 20:3-4
SECOND	Worship God only.	Exodus 20:5-6
THIRD	Use God’s name in ways that honor Him.	Exodus 20:7
FOURTH	Rest on the Sabbath day and focus on God.	Exodus 20:8-11
FIFTH	Respect and obey your parents.	Exodus 20:12
SIXTH	Protect and respect human life.	Exodus 20:13
SEVENTH	Be true to your husband or wife.	Exodus 20:14
EIGHTH	Do not steal.	Exodus 20:15
NINTH	Do not lie.	Exodus 20:16
TENTH	Be satisfied with what you have.	Exodus 20:17

THE MOSAIC COVENANT:

The Mosaic Covenant was an outgrowth of the Abrahamic Covenant in the sense that it was a significant intimate agreement between God and Abraham’s descendents whereby they could achieve their purpose as a nation, to experience God’s blessing and be a blessing to all the earth (Genesis 12:3). It did not change the Abrahamic Covenant but rather it was an additional covenant between God and His people.

<i>An Overview of the Mosaic Covenant</i>	
The Contrast between the Mosaic and Abrahamic Covenants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Under the Mosaic Covenant, Israel had specific responsibilities to fulfill in order to obtain God’s promised blessings (Exodus 19:5). That sense of the covenant to Moses was conditional rather than unconditional. 2. The Mosaic Covenant was based upon an already accomplished act of grace in the exodus from Egypt while the Abrahamic Covenant rested on solely on the promise of God which was the object of Abraham’s trust (e.g. Genesis 15:6).
The Sign of the Mosaic Covenant	The sign of the Mosaic Covenant was the Sabbath (Exodus 31:12-16). The Sabbath served as a reminder to Israel that they, as God’s people, were separate from the nations of the world. It also served to teach them to trust God since work was prohibited on the Sabbath (Exodus 31:15). Recognizing that the Sabbath was the sign of the Mosaic Covenant helps explain why the fourth commandment to keep the Sabbath holy (Exodus 20:8) is the only one of the Ten Commandments not repeated in the New Testament.
The Promises of the Mosaic Covenant	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Israel would be God’s special treasure, enjoying a unique national relationship with God (Exodus 19:5). 2. Israel would be a kingdom of priests, taking the role of the mediator in bringing the nations of the world to God (Exodus 19:6). 3. Israel would be a holy nation, devoted to God and separated from sin and defilement by obeying the Law (Exodus 19:6).

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The rest of the Law of Moses is built upon these covenantal promises. While Israel could have been a testimony to the world of the blessing of God, they experienced those blessings partially due to the partial obedience of Israel. Yet none of the Abrahamic promises were removed since those promises were unconditional.

3. The Tabernacle & The Worship of the People: (**Exodus 25-31; 35-40 & Leviticus**)

There is quite a bit of material in the book of Exodus devoted to the materials of and construction of the tabernacle. The construction of the tabernacle required about 5 ½ months. On the day of completion, the Glory cloud settled over the tabernacle, and God's glory filled it. Aaron and his sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar were consecrated as priests for the tabernacle service. On the eighth day, the priests began their ministry. While the book of Leviticus addresses the issues of the Levitical ministry, more significantly, all the priests are instructed in how they are to assist the people in worship, and the people are informed about how to live a holy life.

4. The Numbering of the People: (**Numbers 1-2 & 26**)

There are two numberings of the people. The first census is taken in Numbers 1 and 2. In fact specific detail in the counting of the men that were capable of going to war. So the purpose of this census was to determine the military might and readiness of Israel as they would be seeking to enter and take the Land of Canaan. The number of fighting men according to Numbers 1:46 would total 603, 550 fighting men. This is the first unbelieving generation of Israelites. If there are that many fighting men then the total of Israelites must have been somewhere between 2 ½ to 3 million people total, once you calculate older men, women and children.

5. From Sinai to Kadesh Barnea: (**Numbers 11-12**)

The total length of time that Israel had camped at Mt. Sinai was 11 months and 5 days (Compare Exodus 19:1 & Numbers 11:10). Four notable events took place between Sinai and Kadesh-Barnea:

- 1-Severe complaint arose because of the difficult trip.
- 2-When the people again complain, this time because of a lack of meat, Moses grew weary and was given 70 elders to help him carry out the burden of this people (Numbers 11:4-30).
- 3-A second provision of quail occurred (Numbers 11:18-23, 31-34).
- 4-Miriam and Aaron challenge the authority of Moses (Numbers 12:1-15).

6. The Failure at Kadesh-Barnea: (Numbers 13-14)

The nation eventually arrives in Kadesh-Barnea just on the doorstep of the Promised Land. This was the southern entrance to the place that God had promised to them. Their journey should have been virtually complete at this point.

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The twelve spies are sent into the land to discover the wealth of the land and the strength of its peoples. The spies return with a unanimous report about the wealth of the land and magnificence of the land, and about the strength of its inhabitants (Numbers 13:27-28). But there was division concerning whether Israel would be able to conquer the land (Numbers 13:30-32).

The nation decides with the doubting majority (ten spies), and wishes to return to Egypt—under new leadership if necessary (Numbers 14:1-4). God, in His righteous anger, decides to destroy the nation, but Moses intercedes (Numbers 14:11-20). Notice that Moses' intercession is based upon God's reputation, not upon Israel's merit or worth.

God decides to destroy the wicked generation, but to do so in a way that will protect His reputation. He will cause them to wander until 40 years had expired, during which time the entire unbelieving generation will die (Numbers 14:20-25, 36-38). The 40 years would refer to the entire time between the Passover in Egypt to the Passover at the Jordan River. This would be the 3 months of travel from Egypt to Mt. Sinai, the 11 months at Mt. Sinai, the travel to Kadesh-Barnea and approximately 37 years for the first generation of Israelites to die off. In response to this, the people tried to storm the land immediately, but were routed by the Amalekites (Numbers 14:39-45).

7. The Years of Fruitless Wandering in the Wilderness:

Very little is recorded from this period in the Scriptures. They were likely camped in the regions around Kadesh-Barnea for nearly all of this time. The one identifiable place to which they journeyed during this period was Ezion-Geber, about 85 miles south (Numbers 33:36). Two events are highlighted from this period. First, a man is stoned for gathering sticks on the Sabbath day (Numbers 15:32-36). Korah and his followers rebel against Moses (Numbers 16). God's purpose in these years of fruitless wandering was the death of the faithless generation.

8. From Kadesh-Barnea to the Jordan River:

The Israelites were around Kadesh-Barnea prior to their movement toward the Jordan River and their conquest of the land. One of the events along the way was the death of Miriam recorded in Numbers 20:1. Then the people complain (sound familiar) that they were thirsty and tired of Manna. Moses and Aaron refused to believe in the power of God to use this nation to glorify Himself. The sin of Moses involved disobeying God's instructions to speak to the rock for water to flow out of it. Instead, He angrily strikes the rock. God provides the water, even though he disobeyed God. However, he would not be allowed to set foot in the Promised Land.

The Israelites would request to pass through Edom, but they were not allowed and would have to go around south (Numbers 20:14-21). Along the way, Aaron would die and his son Eleazar would take his place (Numbers 20:23-29). Also along the way, the people were not happy about having to go around Egypt and they complained against God and Moses. God sent fiery serpents to bite the people and many died. Moses interceded on behalf of the people and was instructed to erect a brazen serpent for the people to look upon and be healed (Numbers 21:4-20).

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Then they would have to face Sihon and Og in the Transjordan (Numbers 21:10-45). God had carefully instructed Israel to avoid conflict with Edom and Moab (Deuteronomy 2:4-5, 9). Sihon refused Israel permission to pass through his domain, and was thus defeated by Israel in battle (Numbers 21:21-24). The land of Og was close by the conquered territory of Sihon, and Israel captured that area as well (Numbers 21:33-35).

God gave Israel these victories to provide the land on the east side of the Jordan River, which was part of the territory promised by God to Israel. He also wished to strengthen Israel's faith for the conquest under Joshua and to frighten the Canaanites who were waiting across the river to do battle with Israel.

Once the first generation of Israelites had died, Moses led the new generation of Israelites to the plains of Moab just across the Jordan River from the Promised Land. It is here on the plains of Moab where Moses reiterates God's instructions. The book of Deuteronomy is a renewal of the Mosaic Law and a charge to the people to walk with God. Moses dies and Joshua assumes command of the Israelite people and will lead them into the Promised Land.

THE PALESTINIAN COVENANT:

The Palestinian Covenant, sometimes called the Deuteronomic Covenant was established in Moab and is found in Deuteronomy 29-30. It is introduced in contrast to the Mosaic Covenant and in spite of being clearly separated from the Mosaic Covenant (Deuteronomy 29:1), it is often considered to be merely a renewal of the Mosaic Covenant to a new generation.

Rather than simply a renewal of the Mosaic Covenant, the Palestinian Covenant is really a further development of the Abrahamic Covenant. We can observe the following elements of the Abrahamic Covenant expanded in the Palestinian Covenant:

<i>An Overview of the Palestinian Covenant</i>	
The Promise Of Land	The Abrahamic Covenant set the promise of the Land of Canaan to the people of Israel. At Moab their ownership of the land was reaffirmed and they will be gathered from the ends of the earth to possess the land, which was promised to them. Their ownership of the land was unconditional and permanent but their possession of the land was based upon their obedience to God (Deuteronomy 30:1-5).
The Promise Of Descendants	The Abrahamic Covenant set the promise of physical descendants to Abraham and his seed. At Moab, this promise was also repeated (Deuteronomy 30:5).
The Promise Of Blessing	The Abrahamic Covenant set the promise that Abraham and his line would be blessed and would be a blessing to all the families of the earth. In Deuteronomy 30:6 we see the evidence of this blessing in the words, which will echo the New Covenant concept of the circumcision of the heart. God will fulfill His commitment to bless His people in spite of their disobedience and this blessing will be ultimately established in the New Covenant, which is another development from the Abrahamic Covenant.

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Therefore, the Palestinian Covenant expanded the Abrahamic Covenant by promising possession of the land in spite of Israel's past and future failure under the Law of Moses. While their permanent future possession of the land was certain, the promise would be enjoyed by each specific generation only as they obeyed the commandments of God.

II. Archaeological, Geographical & Cultural Considerations Relevant to this Period:

There is much that can be learned from this period by examining relevant archaeological discoveries, geographical and cultural considerations.

A. Archaeology:

There are four distinct archaeological discoveries in Egypt that might have some relevance to the biblical narrative:

- *The Amarna Letters*



Fig 10. Amarna Tablet

The Amarna letters were found between Cairo and Thebes, about 200 miles north of Thebes, in a place called Amarna. In 1887 about 350 clay tablets were found at Amarna, the site of Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten's) capital Akhetaten. They are written in cuneiform characters, mostly Akkadian. Most of the letters are dated to the reigns of Amenhotep III (1402-1364) and Amenhotep IV (1350-1334). The letters reflect the lively correspondence between Egypt and kings in Canaan, Babylonia, Mitanni and Assyria. Around 50 of the letters dealt with the political times in Palestine from Jerusalem, Gezer, Askalon, Megiddo and Shechem, many of which stated that the Hapiru were invading them. The Hapiru are references to nomads, mercenary warriors, or various people invading lands. This may be a reference to the Israelites during the conquest of Joshua. While these don't particularly speak to the period of sojourn, exodus and wilderness wanderings, they do give us some indication as to what a post exodus Egypt was like.

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- *The Elephantine letters*

Near the 1st cataract of Egypt is an island called Elephantine. On the island was found evidence of a clan of Jewish people that lived there. Papyri have been found dating from 650 – 399 BC. Of the documents that were found many dealt with legal issues, social life, laws and customs. This unique Jewish community possessed its own temple to Yahweh. The papyri are written in Aramaic. Official excavation of the island began in 1904.

- *The Rosetta Stone*



Fig 7. The Rosetta Stone

An important discovery that significantly helped advance Egyptian archaeology was the discovery of the Rosetta Stone in 1799, named as such for being found at Rosetta. Napoleon's army was attacking Egypt and as they were rebuilding a fort they came across a black basalt stone about four feet tall. The stone had three different languages on it, at the top was hieroglyphic, in the middle was demotic and at the bottom was a Greek script. Each one of these parts told the same story using a different language. The Rosetta Stone was carved in 196 BC during the reign of Ptolemy V (205 - 180). Jean-François Champollion, a Frenchman, deciphered the hieroglyphs by 1822. He was able to crack the code from the Greek to the demotic and then finally to the hieroglyphic

- *Merneptah Stela*

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Fig 4. The Merneptah Stele

The most important mention of Israel outside the Bible is that in the Merneptah Stela (fig. 4). Discovered in 1896 in Merneptah's mortuary temple in Thebes the stela is a eulogy to pharaoh Merneptah, who ruled Egypt after Rameses the Great, 1236-1223 BC. Of significance to Biblical studies is a short section at the end of the poem describing a campaign to Canaan by Merneptah in the first few years of his reign. One line mentions Israel: "Israel is laid waste, its seed is not." Here we have the earliest mention of Israel outside the Bible and the only direct mention of Israel in Egyptian records. This puts Israel as a nation right after the conquest of Canaan by Joshua (1406 BC) and speaks of the desolation of Israel during the time of the judges.

B. Geography:

It is often said that the Egypt to which the Hebrews had come is the Nile. The primary geographical location for Israel during their time in Egypt was the land of Goshen. This is generally believed to be in Northern Egypt along the Nile River Delta.

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Fig 1. The Nile River Delta

The decision to place Israel there was a wise one because:

- 1-The grasslands of the area provided pastureland for the sheep of the Hebrews.
- 2-The area was sparsely occupied and there was room for Hebrew expansion.
- 3-As shepherds, the Hebrews would be an irritant to the Egyptian cattlemen and this location would reduce friction between the two groups.
- 4-Additionally, they would be sufficiently near Joseph for him to look after their interests.
- 5-It would also be an ideal location to quickly leave the nation at the Exodus.

The Nile serves as the main highway of Egypt and the only source for water since there is virtually no rainfall inland in Egypt. For example, modern day Cairo receives an annual rainfall of 1-2 inches a year.

The Nile met other needs as well. Along its banks lay plenty of good clay for brick making to build houses and form into pottery to serve as dishes. Also along the banks of the Nile are

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Papyrus reeds, used for making sheets of writing material, and flax from which linen cloth was made.

C. Cultural Considerations:

The ancient Egyptians lived in comparative isolation and peace. They had built defenses to protect from Semitic incursions from the east and Libyans from the west.

Government-Prior to Joseph's coming down into Egypt, the Pharaoh's had lost absolute power and there was more of a feudal style government. However, the Pharaoh of Joseph's time was able to regain that authority and power due to the administrative wit of Joseph. Most believe the pharaoh of this time to be either Sesostris II or Sesostris III depending on the dating assigned to each of these pharaohs.



Religion-Like many other people, ancient and modern, the Egyptians personalized the forces of nature and there were temples to a wide variety of gods. The Egyptian pharaoh was also recognized as divine. The populace could go and worship the gods directly at shrines set up here and there. Many believe that the ten plagues of the Old Testament constituted an attack on specific Egyptian gods.

Warfare-The Egyptians maintained a regular standing national or royal army, with its effectiveness greatly enhanced by the adoption of new weapons from the Hyksos. Most important of these was the horse-drawn carriage, new types of sword and dagger and the composite bow. The heart of the army consisted largely of a volunteer force, with its ranks filled by second and third sons not in line to take over their father's profession. They chose the military as a means of securing a career, a livelihood and advancement.

Housing-To begin with, it is important to note that mudbrick constituted the main construction material for Egyptian houses. Stone was usually reserved for the pyramids, temples and the very wealthy.

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For making bricks, workers moistened clay, mixed in chopped straw, worked the mixture with a hoe, and then poured it into wooden forms. According to Exodus 1:14, this would have been the work of the Israelites who were in bondage. The following is a picture from the tomb of Rekhmire, vizier to Thutmose III, possibly Pharaoh of the oppression. This picture shows Semitic slaves making bricks.



Fig 10. Brick Making

Floors usually consisted of pressed clay or possibly of brick paving tiles. Ceilings or roofs consisted of trunks of date palms and covered with palm branches, papyrus, matting and/or pressed clay.

Cooking took place in a roofless kitchen or in the courtyard. Houses had very little furniture. The living room contained an earthenware bench or table around which the family squatted. Wooden chests or wall niches provided storage. Built-in platforms covered with matting served as a bed for most, but the wealthy often had wooden beds with a wicker support for a mattress.

Diet-The Israelites complained to Moses while living on the bland and monotonous diet of manna in the Sinai wilderness, saying, “We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic.” (Exodus 11:5)

The diet primarily consisted of bread, whether wheat or barley, and served as a staple for all classes. Egyptians also drank beer, the beverage of choice for the masses; only the rich drank wine. Women made beer from barley, which they formed into loaves and then partially baked so as to make the yeast active but not to kill it. Then the loaves were crumbled and mixed with malted barley and water. They fermented the mash for several days and then strained it through a sieve into a large vat, from which they poured into smaller jars and added spices.

In addition to bread and beer, the people consumed numerous vegetables, fruit and fish. They ate a variety of beans, chick peas and green peas. They consumed garlic, onions, leeks, cucumbers and Egyptian lettuce, which grew up to three feet tall. Dates were the main sugar source for the poor, while the wealthy used honey for sweetening. The wealthy ate a considerable amount of meat, while the lower classes usually ate sheep, goats and pigs. All classes ate poultry and wild birds. It is interesting that all classes of Egyptians washed their hands before and after eating.

Clothing-Most Egyptian men wore a short kilt or apron for almost all activities. The baking sun and high temperatures of the Nile Valley forced the Egyptians to wear light, airy clothing. They chose linen made from flax as their fabric of choice. They would also wear a tunic or cloak

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when they dressed up for certain occasions. Lower class men continued to wear a short kilt or a simple apron, while those who worked in water as fishermen, boatmen, or papyrus gatherers wore nothing at all. Most villagers donned a more conventional kilt when bringing produce to market and carrying on business in town. The women usually wore a long white close fitting dress held up with wide shoulder straps and extending to the ankle.

Family Life-Children in ancient Egypt had a rather shaky beginning due to poor hygiene and a high infant mortality rate. Soon after the birth of their children, poor women went back to work carrying their infant on a sling. The wealthy often did not raise their own children. Boys were normally circumcised at the age of fourteen as a stepping stone to adult life. It provided proof of manliness by the ability to withstand pain.

Marriage was usually within one's own social class. The wealthy often had more than one wife, while the poor could only afford one wife. There was also widespread intermarriage between the Egyptians and other people groups. It is unlikely that there was widespread intermarriage with the Hebrews since the Hebrews were somewhat isolated in Goshen. The chief role of women was to provide their husbands with a male heir. If they failed to do so, they might present their husbands with a slave as a concubine. Sometimes the couple would adopt an orphan. The wife often ruled the household and especially the bringing up of the children.

Though Egyptian life was hard, they did not spend all their time working. Royal craftsmen had one day off in ten and there were numerous official holidays. Since their calendar was lunar they would celebrate the extra five days at the end of the year as a holiday period. Dancing was often considered active relaxation and practiced among many in Egypt.