

Let us return briefly to the timing of the reign of Sesostris III. With the evidence presently available, it appears that if we use only the secular information, it would be impossible to date the first year of Sesostris III's reign to one and only one year, although 1888 B.C. appears to be the most likely one. If the archaeological evidence is reliable that a Sothic Festival celebrating the heliacal rising of Sirius occurred on Thoth I, A.D. 139 (and the Biblical synchronization of Sesostris III attests to its reliability), then, as we saw earlier, such a festival also would have occurred on Thoth I, 1322 B.C., and on the 16th day of the 8th month in 1882 B.C. This date of the 16th day of the 8th month is in the archaeological record. However, such a festival could have been held on the 16th day of the 8th month of the three succeeding years, 1881, 1880, and 1879, because the heliacal rising of Sirius moves through the calendar one day each four years. The recorded festival occurred in the seventh year of the king, so his first year could have been 1888 or 1887 or 1886 or 1885. As we have seen, either 1888, 1887, or 1886 satisfy the Biblical record. Since a known festival celebrating a Sothic rising occurred in A.D. 139 and this brings us back to 1888 B.C. as the first year of Sesostris III, we suspect that the most weighty secular evidence points to it as being the correct year.

Moreover, the phrase "at the end of two full years," in Genesis 41:1, also places the emphasis on 1888, that is, if this phrase has any reference to the reign of pharaoh. The context surely suggests this for the verse is talking about pharaoh. Let us see why this is so. We know Jacob and his family arrived in Egypt about March/April of 1877. This is known because the Israelites left Egypt 430 years later to the very day (Exodus 12:41). They left on Nisan 15 which was about March/April, 1447 B.C. The Bible testifies that the famine had been in the land two years and five years remained. Genesis 45:6 reads:

For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.

The implication is that at the end of two years, just before the beginning of the remaining five years of famine, was when Jacob entered Egypt. Since we know he entered Egypt in March/April of 1877, the seven good years must have begun about nine full years earlier in March/ April, 1886, which would be the date of Joseph's release from prison. The release of the baker and butler two full years earlier would be March/April 1888 probably just before the death of

Sesostris II. His son, Sesostris III, would have reigned two full years when he had his dreams of the cows and corn. This sequence of time satisfies all of the Biblical possibilities.

The timetable would look like this. Sesostris III's first year ended Thoth I (August/September) 1888.⁸ He began to reign either as a co-regent with his father on Thoth I, 1889⁹ or he began to reign immediately upon his father's death. There is reason to believe his father died on the 14th day of the 8th month (March/April).¹⁰ The birthday feast of Genesis 40 occurred shortly before March/April of 1888. Two full years later (Genesis 41:1), Sesostris III who was now in the third year of his reign, had his dreams and released Joseph about March/April 1886 B.C. In the seventh year of Sesostris III, on the 16th day of the 8th month (March/April), 1882, Sesostris III celebrated the Sothic Festival. This coincided with the beginning of the 5th year of harvest plenty under Joseph's rule as prime minister. In March/April of 1879 B.C. the seven years of plenty came to an end and two years later in March/April, 1877, Jacob arrived in Egypt.

A Slave Becomes Prime Minister

Does it make any sense to believe that young Sesostris III would appoint a slave, Joseph, to the high office of prime minister or "grand vizier"? The answer comes from the archaeological record that indicates that, especially beginning with the 12th Dynasty during which Sesostris III reigned, large changes occurred in the method of government and in the appointment of those governed.

The practice of appointing those who were not of royal blood to high office was apparently common during the 12th Dynasty. Archaeologists have shown that men who were called "viziers" and who also often held the title of monarch ruled over the various provinces of Egypt. The office of monarch was often an hereditary office. During the 12th Dynasty, however, there were many changes. Simpson wrote:

The viziers of the Twelfth Dynasty evidently belonged neither to the ruling family . . . nor to the class of hereditary monarchs.

The Biblical picture of the increased power of the central government during Joseph's era is also verified by secular sources. Hayes declares:

It appears to have been in the reign of King Senwosret III of the Twelfth Dynasty that the administration of the provinces of Upper

and Lower Egypt was taken out of the hands of the hereditary monarchs and reorganized into units called “wrwt” which functioned as departments of the central government.¹²

Simpson also writes:

Students of the Twelfth Dynasty have frequently noted the loss of power suffered by them, onarchs in this reign. This situation certainly requires further study and perhaps reappraisal, but it cannot be seriously questioned.¹³

The archaeological evidence appears to indicate that about the time of Sesostris III the power of administration was transferred more clearly to the central government and out of the hands of the monarchs. This could have been because of the palace intrigue and ferment that resulted in his father’s death or it could have been a result of the total power which was given to Joseph, or both. In any case, the archaeological information that a central government ruled over all of Egypt beginning with the 12th Dynasty agrees precisely with the Biblical information that Joseph ruled over all of Egypt as prime minister.

Joseph’s Long Rule Accords with the Secular Data

When we examine the reigns of Sesostris III and his son Amenemhet III, we notice that both had long reigns (38 years and 48 years, respectively). Since Joseph died 80 years after he became prime minister, he died in 1806 B.C. He out-lived Sesostris III and died four years before Amenemhet III. Amenemhet III died in 1802 B.C.

The long period of Joseph’s life together with the long reigns of the pharaohs under whom he was prime minister would have contributed to a very stable government. Was this in fact the situation? The answer seems to be yes; during these two reigns the land was prosperous and tranquil. Breasted writes of this period:

It was thus over a nation in the fullness of its powers, rich and productive in every avenue of life, that Amenemhet III ruled; and his reign crowned the classic age which had dawned with the advent of his family.¹⁴

Amenemhet III was especially concerned about the water resources of Egypt. During his reign, a large dam and lake were constructed which is called Fayum Lake (Lake Moeris).¹⁵ It is interesting that the canal which supplied water to this lake was named

“Bahr Yusuf” or “Joseph’s Canal.”¹⁶ The archaeological evidence and the Scriptural record dovetail very neatly and provide an exact chronological reference point for this period of history.

In this chapter, we have discovered the exquisite reliability of the Bible all the way to a small pronoun, “he.” We should be encouraged by this to believe anew in the infallible, God-breathed nature of God’s Word. We should see afresh that the Bible is not only trustworthy when it speaks in the area of salvation, but also when it speaks on historical questions.

We saw how the Biblical account with its perfect chronology gives us an exact timetable for the secular account, which accords altogether with the sacred, once the data from both accounts have been synchronized. The practice of appointing grand viziers from other than the ruling class, the short reign of Sesostriis II, the long and tranquil reigns of Sesostriis III and Amenemhet III, all match the Biblical record. Even the construction of Joseph’s canal pointedly calls our attention to the beautiful relationship that exists between the sacred and secular records.

Let us continue our search to see if additional meshing of these two records is possible.

NOTES:

¹ William F. Albright, *Recent Discoveries in Bible Land*, in *Analytical Concordance of the Bible* (New York, Funk & Wagnalls, 21st ed., 1930), p. 27.

² W. F. Edgerton, “Chronology of the Twelfth Dynasty,” in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1942), pp. 308-309.

³ Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 120.

⁴ G. H. Wheeler, “The Chronology of the Twelfth Dynasty” in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, pp. 198-199.

⁵ See Chapter 4 of this volume.

⁶ See Appendix VI for further discussion on this date.

⁷ James H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, Charles Scribner & Sons, Second Edition (1937), pp. 598-599.

⁸ In early Egyptian history, the pharaoh's reigns coincided with the calendar year which began on Thoth 1. See Finegan, Jack, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁹ A. H. Gardiner. "Regnal Years and Civil Calendar in Pharaonic Egypt," in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 31 (1945), p. 27.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹¹ W. V. Simpson. "Sobhemhet, A Vizier of Sesostri III," *J.E.A.*, Vol. 43 (1957). p. 27.

¹² William C. Hayes, "Notes on the Government of Egypt in the Late Middle Kingdom," *J.N.E.S.*, Vol. 12 (1953), p. 31.

¹³ Simpson, "*Vizier of Sesostri III*," p. 27.

¹⁴ James H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, Charles Scribner & Sons, second ed. (1937), p. 208.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

¹⁶ Arthur Weigall, *A History of the Pharaohs* (New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1927), pp. 114-115.

Chapter 8

The Hyksos

We saw the precise agreement that exists between the secular and sacred records when we studied the timetable of the pharaoh, Sesostri III, who ruled during the middle of the 12th Dynasty of Egypt beginning in 1888 B.C. We saw that he was the young pharaoh who made Joseph prime minister or grand vizier.

Before we look for another point of chronological synchronization, we should spend a few moments with the secular record of the Egyptians during Israel's sojourn in Egypt. This is the period 1877 B.C. to 1447 B.C., as established by Biblical reckoning. It covers the period of Egyptian history from the middle of the 12th Dynasty to the middle of the 18th Dynasty. In this chapter, we will not discover any precise synchronization between the secular and sacred records, but we will provide some insights into puzzling archaeological evidence. We shall also provide a background for clearly identifying the pharaoh of the Exodus, who will be presented in the next chapter.

The Hyksos

Archaeological evidence reveals that during the period between the 12th and 17th Dynasties, there were foreign rulers over Egypt who were called Hyksos. They were apparently of Asiatic, Palestinian, or Hurrite origin as indicated by the names of the rulers, as well as by pottery and other archaeological evidence. Archaeologists have commonly described their entrance into Egypt as an invasion of some kind. They have also suggested that it was their presence that provided the sympathetic warm reception for Jacob and his family when they arrived in Egypt.

Since many Bible scholars as well as archaeologists believe that Jacob entered Egypt about 1720 B.C.¹ and that the Hyksos were already reigning at that time, it can be seen how most scholars indicate no identification between the Hyksos and the Israelites. Archbishop

Usher's chronology, which appears in the margins of many Bibles, undoubtedly has done much to foster this idea. He gives the date 1729 B.C. as the date of Joseph's arrival. This would place Jacob's arrival about 1720 B.C. which is near the time when the Hyksos began to reign as pharaohs. This has been a very unfortunate calculation by Usher.

I believe, however, that there is considerable evidence to show that the Hyksos were the Israelites. Let us examine this, because in so doing we will learn something about the conduct of the Israelites in Egypt and the conditions that led to their enslavement.

The Timing of the Hyksos

Most archaeologists believe that the Hyksos began to reign about 1720 B.C. The noted archaeologist, Raymond Weill, however, indicates that in his judgment the Hyksos were already present in the latter part of the 12th Dynasty. In a carving from the reign of Amenemmes IV, a representation of a god is shown who is like the god Seth or Sutekh. Weill wrote:

The assimilation is extremely remarkable, in view of the fact that in the older period there is no evidence of local cults of Seth in Lower Egypt, where he was first installed, in all likelihood by the "Hyksos" kings in Tanis, Avaris . . . This identification in the time of Amenemmes IV seems to indicate clearly that these Asiatic intruders and all the things that came with them were already present in the Delta during the Twelfth Dynasty; and it thus appears to demonstrate the truth of the view recently put forward that the settlement of these foreigners in Egypt began at least as early as that central part of the Middle Kingdom.²

He also wrote:

. . . It now appears . . . that the "Asiatic" or "Hyksos" period in Lower Egypt extends chronologically beyond the Dynasty of the Apopis at each end, and thus this Dynasty was but an episode in a much vaster development in time and perhaps in territory. Let me observe further in support of this statement that since 1929 it has been recognized the "Hyksos" period, that is to say, the incursion of Asiatics and Egypto-Asiatic culture in Lower Egypt, will have begun immediately after the end of the Twelfth Dynasty, if not during that Dynasty itself.³

Therefore, there is good reason to believe the Hyksos were already in Egypt during the 12th Dynasty (that is, prior to 1788 B.C.). This accords with our premise that the Hyksos were the Israelites; they were in Egypt since the middle of the 12th Dynasty. Possibly they did not assert themselves until many years after Joseph's death in 1806 B.C.

How Did the Hyksos Seize Power?

Many archaeologists believe that the mysterious people, who came into power between the 12th and 17th Dynasties of Egypt, invaded Egypt and seized power by force. However, within the last couple of decades, closer analysis of the archaeological evidence has begun to reveal that possibly there was no invasion of Egypt by the Hyksos at all. Rather, it appears that these foreign rulers simply represented a change in the ruling class from among those who lived in Egypt. Moreover, as we have stated, there is increasing evidence that the Hyksos were in Egypt as early as the latter part of the 12th Dynasty. While apparently none of these later writers identify the Hyksos with the Hebrews and still express great puzzlement regarding their precise origin, the evidence they have been presenting increasingly points to the Hyksos as being substantially identical with the Hebrews. Let us look at some of the evidence and see how it relates to the Biblical record

To find evidence of the archaeological fact that this was not an invasion of foreign Asiatics, we turn to the testimony of T. Save-Soderbergh and John Van Seters. T. Save-Soderbergh wrote:

The only literary source that describes how the Hyksos came into power is *The History of Egypt* written by Manetho in the second century B.C., i.e., about 1500 years after the event. Thus, it is a very late source, but derived from earlier documents. It is, however, a typical trait of all the late sources regarding the Hyksos that they are strongly tinged by propaganda against the foreigners. In fact, the later the text, the more hostile it is to the Hyksos.⁴

He wrote additionally:

Now who were these Hyksos? The Egyptian term is *hk32h3swt*, which means "rulers of foreign countries." This seems to have been a usual designation of the sheikhs in Palestine and Syria as

early as the beginning of the Twelfth Dynasty. For instance, such a sheikh who came with 37 Asiatics to bring their products to Egypt is depicted in a tomb at Beni Hasan. In the accompanying inscription he is called “the ruler of a foreign country” (*hk3h3st*) *Abishi* — . . . This term gives us the impression that the Hyksos were only a little group of foreign dynasts rather than a numerous people with a special civilization. According to Manetho’s version it also seems as if the Hyksos rule only meant a change of political leaders in Egypt; and not a mass invasion of a numerically important foreign ethnic element. This view is corroborated by contemporary evidence. There are a great many tombs from the Hyksos period in Egypt, but there is no clear indication of an invasion of a foreign people from the north.⁵

We thus learn that the archaeological information concerning the Hyksos is from the record penned by Manetho some 1500 years after the time they were in Egypt. This should caution us to use great care in accepting Manetho’s conclusions. T. Save-Soderbergh’s conclusion is that there was no invasion by people called the Hyksos but rather there simply occurred a change in the political rulers. He continues:

To sum up, the analysis of the archaeological evidence gives a somewhat negative result, but rather supports the view, mentioned above, that the Hyksos rule was only a change of political leaders, and not an invasion by a numerically important ethnic element with a superior technique and a special civilization. On the other hand, the Hyksos had close connections with Asia, and seem to have favoured the introduction of innovations from this area more than their Egyptian predecessors. But it is only towards the end of their rule in Egypt that they introduce a number of improvements in military technique in an attempt to uphold their political power against the growing Egyptian opposition. Then, first the horse drawn chariots, new types of daggers and swords, bronze weapons, the strong compound Asiatic bow, etc., are imported from the dates of the actual finds of these innovations in Egypt, since they are unknown until the very end of the Hyksos rule.⁶

Although no evidence of chariots as early as the 12th Dynasty (about 2000 B.C. to 1788 B.C.), have as yet been found by archaeologists, the Bible says very clearly in Genesis 50:9, “And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great

company.” Thus, we should expect such evidence to be forthcoming from archaeologists. As late as 1960 archaeologists found evidence of horses that relate to the 12th Dynasty.⁷

Van Seters who calls the Hyksos peoples Amurrites (people of Syria, Palestine), wrote:

The long period of acculturation of coastal Syria and Palestine to Egyptian arts and crafts fully prepared the “foreign rulers” and their supporters for taking control of Egypt. This was achieved, not by a sudden *coup d’etat* from without, but in cooperation with a fifth column Amurrite group already established in the Delta. The strong Amurrite princes of Syria-Palestine became heir to the Egyptian throne in a time of the latter’s dynastic weakness.⁸

He continued:

There was active cooperation between the Asiatics and the Egyptians within Egypt itself in the Amurrite *coup d’etat*. Disloyalty by important noble families may be understood in light of the strong centralization of administration by the Pharaohs of the late Twelfth Dynasty. In the period of dynastic weakness, these families reasserted themselves. With the breakup of the land into the three departments of the previous Middle Kingdom administration, an Egyptian, Nehesy, had control of the North, probably with Asiatic cooperation. It was merely a step for Amurrite princes themselves to take control of Lower Egypt and, in time, the whole of Egypt. No great military conquest was needed to accomplish this, and it is doubtful that any occurred. All that was required for the land to become an Amurrite dynasty was the recognition, by a sufficient number of the Egyptian nobility, of a strong foreign king in the strategic city of Avaris and submission to him as vassals (to their own economic advantage).⁹

The information above indicates that there was in all probability no invasion of Egypt by Asiatic foreigners but rather some kind of internal change in rulers. This accords quite well with the premise that the Hyksos were the Israelites. If we go back for a moment to our earlier contact between the pharaoh of the Bible of Joseph’s day and the pharaoh discovered by the archaeological evidence, we can see what could have happened.

We saw that in the middle of the 12th Dynasty, the year 1888 B.C. to be exact, Sesostri III began to reign. In 1886 B.C., he made

Joseph prime minister, and the central government took on increased strength, especially as a result of the seven years of famine when so much of the land came under the ownership of the central government. It was for these reasons that, in all probability, the hereditary monarchs ceased to have rule over the provinces as they had before. These conditions prevailed when, in 1877 B.C., Jacob and his family came to Egypt and began to grow into a nation.

During the life of Joseph, who died in 1806 B.C., the two greatest pharaohs of the 12th Dynasty reigned (Sesostris III and Amenemhet III) and the kingdom prospered. With the death of Amenemhet III in 1802 B.C., the reigns of two more rulers brought the 12th Dynasty to a close. These latter two reigned a few years (Amenemhet IV, nine years and Sebeknefrure, four years). The next period of some 208 years was the period of the 13th to the 17th Dynasties during a part of which the rulers were Semitic or Asiatic.

Following the end of the 12th Dynasty, a new house took control, seemingly in a very tranquil fashion.¹⁰ However, the reigns of succeeding pharaohs were short and the empire began to dissolve. Breasted wrote:

Rapid dissolution followed, as the provincial lords rose against each other and strove for the throne. Pretender after pretender struggled for supremacy.¹¹

In this kind of atmosphere, the kings with Semitic names began to reign. These were the so-called "Hyksos." We must remember that the Israelites under Joseph had become an important part of Egyptian government. If Joseph continued in office until his death (a period of 80 years), he probably was the most outstanding government employee in the land. Because of his wisdom he was probably highly respected. He also would have had much opportunity for training and introducing many of his fellow Israelites into government service. Consequently, following Joseph's death and the end of the 12th Dynasty several years later, jockeying for political power by the Egyptians, with no strong ruler asserting himself from their number, would have given the Israelites with any governmental ambition at all, the opportunity to gain the rulership. Their aspirations and achievements would amply fulfill the speculative suggestions of T. Save-Soderbergh, Van Seters, and others that this was an internal *coup d'état*. Because of Joseph's superb relationship with the Egyptians, as well as his dynamic leadership as prime minister for

years, many of the later Egyptians would probably have been equally happy to side with the aspiring Hebrews during these troubled times.

The Land of Goshen and the Hyksos

The Bible states that the Israelites were given the land of Goshen to live in by Sesostri III (Genesis 46:34). Does this help identify them in any way with the Hyksos? It does indeed, for Goshen was in the north part of Egypt. The city of Avaris which was later called either Tanis or Qantir was the capital of the Hyksos and was located in the land of Goshen. It probably was made a seat of government during Joseph's term as prime minister. Van Seters' conclusion is very pertinent to this question:

Taking the archaeological evidence together with this, it seems safe to assert that Senwosret III created an important center of government in the North, a balance and perhaps even a rival to Thebes.¹²

Thus, the identification of the land of Goshen with the capital of the Hyksos both as to location and as to time gives added proof that the Hyksos were indeed the Israelites.

One additional fact might be offered concerning Avaris. It is also commonly identified with the Biblical Zoan. Thus, we can find a reason for the Biblical statement of Numbers 13:22:

And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

The statement that Hebron was built seven years before Zoan provides circumstantial evidence regarding the premise that the Hyksos were the Israelites. Hebron is the city where Abram purchased land to bury Sarah (Genesis 23:19). Since it is the only land purchased by Abraham, Hebron becomes a type or figure of a down payment or first fruits of the promise that God's people would inherit that land. Zoan, therefore, regardless of its importance in the minds of the Israelites as a place that gave evidence of the Hebrews' triumph in Egypt, was inferior to God's city Hebron (although Hebron was not occupied by Israelites at that time). So, as we consider that in everything God has preeminence, we realize why the Bible ties the founding of Zoan to Hebron. God would not let Israel, who founded Zoan, or Avaris, forget that He had already decided on their inheritance.

Another interesting sidelight which possibly links the Hyksos to the Israelites is afforded by noting the gods the Hyksos served. Archaeological evidence clearly indicates that their dominate god was Seth or Seth-Baal who was of Canaanish origin. This particular god had become so highly integrated into the Egyptian religious idea that Rameses II, who reigned more than 150 years after the Exodus, identified himself with the god Seth. The god Seth is shown on a stela of Rameses II to be a god represented in foreign attire, wearing a high conical cap with gazelle horns protruding from the front.¹³ However, Seth is also represented as a bull. He is called the “bull of Retjenu” (Syria).¹⁴ In the Egyptian pantheon, Seth is augmented by two Asiatic goddesses as consorts, Anat and Astarte.¹⁵ Anat seems to be represented on scarabs of the Hyksos period as a nude deity with cow ears, horns, and Hathor curls.¹⁶ However, even as Seth is also represented as a bull, so Anat, the female god, is represented as the “milch cow of Seth.”¹⁷ Thus, the Egyptians actually worshipped a god named Seth which was represented by a bull. They also worshipped a god related to Seth which was represented by a cow.

When Moses was on Mount Sinai, the Israelites sinfully asked Aaron to make a calf. When the golden calf was made, the Israelites said very strangely, as we read in Exodus 32:4:

And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

Why would he use the plural “gods” when there was only one calf to worship? The difficulty ceases if we see in this calf Seth, the bull of Retjenu as well as Anat, the milch cow of Seth. These were the gods the Israelites served in Egypt. One calf could equally represent both gods.¹⁸

Joseph Identifies the Hyksos with the Hebrews

While archaeologists have indicated generally their belief that the Hyksos could not have been the Israelites, the reputable archaeologist, Breasted, at least suggests that some kind of relationship existed between the Hyksos and the Israelites. He wrote:

That it was a Semitic empire we cannot doubt, in view of the Manethonian tradition and the subsequent conditions in Syria-Palestine. Moreover, the scarabs of a Pharaoh who evidently

belonged to the Hyksos time, give his name as Jacob-her or perhaps, Jacob-El, and it is not impossible that some chief of the Jacob-tribes of Israel for a time gained the leadership in this obscure age. Such an incident would account surprisingly well for the entrance of these tribes into Egypt, which on any hypothesis must have taken place at about this age; and in that case the Hebrews in Egypt will have been but a part of the Beduin allies of the Kadesh or Hyksos empire. . . . Likewise, the naive assumption of Josephus, who identifies the Hyksos with the Hebrews, may thus contain a kernel of truth, however accidental.¹⁹

Breasted, therefore, concludes that the Hyksos were Semitic in origin and that the Israelites could somehow have been involved in the Hyksos movement. He suggests that the presence of the Hyksos provided a satisfactory environment for the entrance of Jacob and his family. Other archaeologists have echoed these ideas, but hardly anyone has seriously suggested that the Hyksos are one and the same as the Israelites, that is, no one except Josephus, as we have seen from Breasted's writings.

The End of the Hyksos

What does the secular record indicate regarding the end of the Hyksos in Egypt? The secular record indicates that as the years passed, the Hyksos were more and more coming into disrepute with the Egyptians. Finally, about 1600 B.C., their removal from political leadership began to take place. Avaris, the capital in the north, fell after a siege of some years and the power of the Hyksos was broken. This was near 1580-1560 B.C. during Ahmose I's reign. He was the first king of the 18th Dynasty, the Dynasty during which, in later years, the Israelites departed from Egypt.

The conclusions of Van Seters regarding the end of the Hyksos must be identified with the Israelites. He wrote:

The defeat of the foreign dynasty was the result of a civil war, and the foreign population which was probably not very numerous simply continued to live in the Eastern Delta.²⁰

Can this secular solution offered by Van Seters and others regarding the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt be correlated with the Israelites? It probably can be.

The first king of the 18th Dynasty was Ahmose I. He began to reign about 1580 B.C. One of his first efforts was to remove the

Asiatics or Hyksos from political office. Because some of them had become rulers of the kingdom, this amounted almost to civil war. Since we are suggesting that the Hyksos were the Israelites, let us reconstruct this bit of history with this thought in view. Following Joseph's death, the Israelites became increasingly prominent in politics; some became rulers in the land. In 1580 B.C., Ahmose I began to change the situation. Under his energetic leadership, the warlike elements of the Israelites were driven from the land. He probably stripped the Israelites of all political authority and may have begun to enslave them. Ahmose I was followed by his son Amenhotep I who reigned at least ten years and consolidated the gains of his father.

No evidence is presently available as to whether Amenhotep's successor, Thutmose I, was his son, but in 1540 or 1535 B.C., Thutmose I began to reign. One of his major tasks was to bring into subjection the land of Nubia and after that the land of Syria in which the fires of potential rebellion were burning. Biographies of two of his soldiers indicate his conquest was carried into northern Palestine and possibly beyond to the Euphrates River. The battle that followed resulted in a "great slaughter of Asiatics followed by the capture of a large number of prisoners."²¹ This battle did not solve the problem of potential revolt by Syria (Palestine) for it was not until after twenty years of warfare, under Thutmose III, that Syria was finally completely crushed and placed securely under Egyptian domination.²²

This probably sets the background for the Biblical statement of Exodus 1. Joseph had died in 1806 B.C., about 270 years earlier. The Israelites who followed gradually had come into disrepute because of the desire of some of them to rule the country. Possibly as a result of Ahmose I's victory over these Israelite leaders, the people of Israel were already in a condition of servitude. Thutmose I undoubtedly realized that the Israelites, who were ever increasing in number, had to be forcibly removed from power. Moreover, they were originally of the land of Palestine which was a part of Syria and which was now giving him so much difficulty. Therefore, he made his decision. Exodus 1:9-11:

And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did

set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.

It could be that Thutmose I concluded that only by making complete slaves of the Israelites would they be prohibited from being able to rise again in power or enabled to join with the Asiatics of Palestine to attempt an overthrow of Egypt. All knowledge of the benevolent leadership of Joseph had ceased to exist. The Israelites had become a threat to the kingdom, and he believed they had to be dealt with harshly. But the more they were oppressed the more they multiplied. The Bible records that finally the king decreed that all of the firstborn were to be killed. And so we are introduced to Moses and Princess Hatshepsut.

A Queen Is King

Thutmose I, the pharaoh who fathered Thutmose III, had two sons and two daughters by his queen, Ahmose. She was the royal descendant of Ahmose I who was the first king of the 18th Dynasty. Both sons and one of the daughters of Thutmose I died in youth or in childbirth. The surviving daughter, Makere-Hatshepsut, was thus the only child of the old line. Because of her direct descent from Ahmose I, she was heir to the throne, even though Thutmose I had two additional sons by other queens. One of these other sons was to become Thutmose II and the other Thutmose III.

Hatshepsut is of special interest to us because the timetable of her reign coincides with the timing of the Biblical events that involve Moses. She was the daughter of pharaoh. The Bible records that the daughter of pharaoh drew the baby Moses from the water and adopted him as her son. This would have been eighty years before the Exodus, the year 1527 B.C.

The secular record shows that Hatshepsut began to reign about the same time as Thutmose III, which we will see must have been in 1501 B.C.,²³ and that she reigned either twenty or twenty one years. Thus, she must have died about 1480 B.C. The archaeological record furthermore shows that she was a strong, forceful, and energetic ruler. Unfortunately, no information has been found that gives her life span or age when she became ruler, but her mature actions as a ruler together with the relative short duration of her reign suggests that she was not too young when she began to reign. If she was about 15 when Moses was born, she would have been in her early forties when she

became ruler, and in her early sixties when she died. In any event, only she could have been the pharaoh from whom Moses fled when he killed the Egyptian, as we shall see presently. This kind of action, the attempt to kill Moses, is in agreement with the actions of a ruler who as a young princess made the mistake of sparing one of the hated Hebrews who now threatened the kingdom.

Princess Hatshepsut, in all probability, named the Hebrew baby Moses because her own family name on one side was Ahmose and her father's name was Thutmose. Mose in these names actually means son. Ahmose was thus "son of Ah." Thutmose was "son of Thoth." "Moses" coincides quite closely with the Hebrew word *mashah*, which means "to draw out," but it does not necessarily follow, as many would suggest, that this is the reason he was called Moses.²⁴ Moreover, it would be strange indeed if an Egyptian princess gave her adopted son a name that identified him for life with the hated Hebrews. In Exodus 2:10, "And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water," the emphasis more probably should be on "I" rather than on the "drew him out of the water." She had found the baby. He was to be her son. Therefore, "Moses" fit perfectly.

This suggests a very interesting thought. Jesus identified Himself with Israel by the phrase "Out of Egypt have I called my son" (Hosea 11:1, Matthew 2:15). Moses is one of the greatest types of Christ; he, too, was called out of Egypt. Does Moses' name, which means "son," further identify him with Christ because Christ, too, was a "son" [Moses] called out of Egypt?

The next incident in the Biblical passage that relates Hatshepsut to Moses occurred 40 years later. Moses was 40 years old when he killed an Egyptian and fled from Egypt, where the pharaoh sought to kill him (Exodus 2:15). Who was this pharaoh? As we have indicated, it could not have been Thutmose III who began to reign in 1501 B.C. and whom we believe died in the Red Sea. The Bible declares that the pharaoh who sought to kill him died while Moses was in Midian (Exodus 2:23, Exodus 4:19).

The solution to our problem is simply that a co-regency existed at the time Moses fled from Egypt. Two kings were on the throne. One was Thutmose III, who had begun to reign 14 years earlier in 1501 B.C., and as we have seen, the other was Hatshepsut. Because of Hatshepsut's royal blood lines, Thutmose III was forced to acknowledge her as co-regent. She, in fact, became the dominant ruler because of her superior royal blood lines, and she was given the title

of “king” even though she was a woman.²⁵ A typical inscription concerning her reign is that of a base inscription found on the Karnak Obelisks from Hatshepsut’s reign. There we read:

Live the female Horus . . . daughter of Amon-Re, his favorite, his only one, who exists by him, the splendid part of the All-Lord, whose beauty the spirits of Heliopolis fashioned; who hath taken the land like Irsu, whom he hath created to wear his diadem, who exists like Khepri (Hpry), who shines with crowns like “Him-of-the-Horizon,” the pure egg, the excellent seed, whom the two sorceresses reared, whom Amon himself caused to appear upon his throne in Hermonthis, whom he chose to protect Egypt, to “defend” the people, the female Horus, avengeress of her father, the oldest (daughter) of the “Bull-of-his-Mother,” whom Re begat to make for himself excellent seed upon earth for the well-being of the people; his living portrait, King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Makere (Hatshepsut), the electrum of kings.²⁶

Even though he was not a true son of King Hatshepsut, Moses’ position in the palace must have been of the highest stature. When Moses killed the Egyptian, Queen (or King) Hatshepsut no doubt realized the enormous risk she had taken in saving the Hebrew baby from death and raising him as her son. He had manifested superior wisdom and leadership qualities in the Egyptian court (Acts 7:22), but at the age of 40, he showed clearly that his sympathies were with the slaves, the Israelites, his own people. All the fears, which had been expressed by her father concerning a potential uprising by the Israelites, returned to her. What had she done?

The only solution was to have her adopted son killed. King Hatshepsut, then, was no doubt the king who sought to kill Moses. No wonder he fled to the wilderness of Midian to tend sheep. No wonder he hesitated to return even forty years later.

King Hatshepsut was preoccupied with the Israelites, which is clearly indicated in one of her inscriptions: “I raised up that which had gone to pieces formerly, since the Asiatics were in the midst of Avaris of the Northland.” “Asiatics” is a reference to the Israelites. Avaris is the same area of Egypt as the land of Goshen.

According to the archaeological record, Hatshepsut died in about the year 1481.²⁷ which would have been about six years after Moses fled. The Bible records this fact in Exodus 2:23. Thutmose III continued to reign as sole ruler almost until Moses returned to lead

the Israelites from Egypt. Thus, only Hatshepsut could be the pharaoh who sought to kill Moses and who died while he was in Midian.

Summary

We have seen some of the events that occurred within Egypt as Israel grew into a nation of possibly two million souls. We cannot positively identify them with the Hyksos. However, to find no record of this great nation which grew up in Egypt would seem very strange indeed. When we recall that they began with one of the greatest prime ministers Egypt ever had, Joseph, it would seem even more strange if no record of these people was available. On the other hand, what are we to think of all the archaeological findings about these mysterious Asiatics or “Hyksos” whose arrival and removal is so clouded, and who were present in Egypt when the Israelites were in Egypt? Also, it seems very suspicious that the Hyksos capital was in Avaris or Zoan in the land of Goshen where the Israelites lived. It certainly appears that the two peoples must be one and the same.

It could be argued that the Exodus is unrecorded in the ancient secular records. If that is true, why should we expect the Israelites residence in Egypt to be noted in any of the archaeological records? There is a major difference between them, of course, for secular records can be consciously altered to suit the purposes of whoever writes them. The Exodus was a shattering, dreadful defeat for Egypt with not even one ray of victory. There would not be any reason or compulsion to keep records of such an overwhelming, shameful defeat by a nation of slaves. There is, however, indirect archaeological testimony of the Exodus as we shall see in greater detail in the next chapter.

We have introduced a number of pharaohs and dynasties into our discussion. Let us summarize by historical timetable the information thus far presented.

1888 B.C.Sesostris III became pharaoh. He was part of the middle kingdom or 12th Dynasty of Egypt. His father, Sesostris II, probably reigned during the previous 19 years and possibly came to an untimely death.

1886 B.C.Joseph became prime minister or grand vizier of Egypt under Sesostris III.

1877 B.C. The family of Joseph came to Egypt and took up residence in the land of Goshen. The city of Avaris (Zoan in the Bible), which was later called Tanis or Qantir was the capital.

1850 B.C. Sesostris III died after an exceedingly successful reign of 38 years. He was succeeded by another great 12th Dynasty pharaoh named Amenemhet III. Under his reign Joseph continued as prime minister. A canal bearing Joseph's name was constructed at this time.

1806 B.C. Joseph died.

1802 B.C. Amenemhet III died after a 48-year reign. During his reign, Egypt was prosperous, tranquil, and productive. He was succeeded by Amenemhet IV who reigned for the brief period of nine years. During his reign, there was much internal strife for royal supremacy.

1791 B.C. Amenemhet IV died and was succeeded by the last pharaoh of the 12th Dynasty, Sebeknefrure.

1787 B.C. Sebeknefrure's brief reign of four years ended and with it ended the 12th Dynasty. The 13th Dynasty began. The reigns of succeeding pharaohs were short and the empire began to dissolve. The Israelites, who no doubt were the Hyksos of archaeological fame, took advantage of the internal struggles to acquire a strong hand in the Egyptian government and in indeed some of them might have reigned as pharaoh during this period.

1580 B.C. (Approx.) Several dynasties ruled over Egypt since 1787 B.C. At this time, Ahmose I began to reign as the first king of the 18th Dynasty. He forcibly began to remove the Israelites (Hyksos) from political power. The most war-like Israelites were driven from the land and the Israelite nation began to be severely oppressed. Either this pharaoh or a closely succeeding pharaoh, such as Thutmose I could have been the king who "did not know Joseph" (Exodus 1:8).

1560 B.C. (Approx.) Ahmose I was followed by his son Amenhotep I. Amenhotep I consolidated the gains of his father.

1540 B.C. (Approx.) Thutmose I began to reign as king.

1535 B.C. He, too, was a continuation of the 18th Dynasty. He continued and probably intensified the oppressive measures against the Israelites, for he was ruling when Moses was born. His

animosity toward the Israelites was probably heightened by his troubles with Palestine and Syria. His reign was followed by that of his son Thutmose II.

1527 B.C. Moses was born at a time when a royal edict condemned all Hebrew boy babies to be destroyed. Princess Hatshepsut, a daughter of the king found him in the bulrushes and raised him as her son.

1501 B.C. Thutmose III began to reign as the greatest king of the 18th Dynasty. For approximately the first 25 years of his reign he was co-regent with Princess Hatshepsut. She regarded herself as a king and was the dominant ruler during this co-regency.

1487 B.C. Moses fled from Egypt. King Hatshepsut who had raised him to be her son, sought to kill him because of his evident loyalty for the Israelites.

1481 B.C. (Approx.) King Hatshepsut died and Thutmose III continued to reign until the time of the Exodus.

NOTES:

¹ See Chapter 7 for the correct date of Joseph's arrival into Egypt.

² Raymond Weill, "The Problem of the Site of Avaris" in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 21, 1935, p. 25.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴ T. Save-Soderbergh, "The Hyksos Rule in Egypt," in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 37, 1951, p. 55.

⁵ T. Save-Soderbergh, *Hyksos Rule*, p. 55.

⁶ T. Save-Soderbergh, "The Hyksos Rule in Egypt," in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* (1951), p. 60.

⁷ John A. Van Seters, *The Hyksos*, Yale Press, 1966, p. 185.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

¹⁰ James H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, Charles Scribner & Sons, 2nd Ed., 1937, p. 211.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

¹² Van Seters, *The Hyksos*, p. 94.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

¹⁸ The Egyptians had two other gods represented by cattle but they have not been identified with the Hyksos. They are Apis the bull of Egypt and Hathor the cow goddess. See p. 12, Georges Posener, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Civilization*, Methvan and Co., Ltd., 1962.

¹⁹ James H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, Charles Scribner & Sons, 1909, p. 220.

²⁰ *A Dictionary of Egyptian Civilization*, p. 194.

²¹ Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, p. 263.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 259.

²³ A text at Karnak describes Hatshepsut's assumption of the kingship in year 2 of Thutmose III. William C. Hayes, "Chronology," *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Cambridge University Press (1964), p. 18.

²⁴ Merrill F. Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, Zondervan, 1965, p. 136.

²⁵ James H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, Charles Scribner & Sons, 1909.

²⁶ James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, Vol. 11, University of Chicago Press, 1906, p. 130.

²⁷ See Breasted, *Ancient Records of History*, p. 42; and Petrie, *History of Egypt*, p. 251.

Chapter 9

The Exodus

We have arrived in our discussion to the time of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. This great event occurred in the year 1447 B.C., according to the Biblical chronology reported earlier in this study. We saw precise agreement between the secular record of the great Sesostrius III of Egypt's 12th Dynasty and the Biblical statement concerning Joseph who became prime minister during his reign. We also saw much circumstantial evidence that related the Hyksos to the Israelites. While no precise chronological evidence such as astronomical data is available, the Biblical and secular records mesh so closely that we feel justified in identifying the Hyksos and the Israelites as one and the same people, as did the historian Josephus. Moreover, we believe we have identified the pharaoh who sought to kill Moses and who died while Moses was in Midian.

Can we find concordant information that ties the secular to the sacred record in connection with the Exodus? In this chapter, we will answer that question, and in so doing we will find that there is indeed exceedingly close meshing of the two records. In fact, we will discover another astronomical "fix" as we did with Sesostrius III.

Let us begin our search by attempting to identify the pharaoh who would not permit Moses to lead the Israelites from Egypt. Two men are frequently set forth as possible candidates for the pharaoh who refused to let the Israelites go. Conservative scholars often suggest that Amenhotep II, the pharaoh who followed the great Thutmose III, was the pharaoh to whom Moses actually appeared. Under this arrangement, Thutmose III was the pharaoh who oppressed the Israelites but who must have died before Moses returned to Egypt. The problem with this solution is that the secular sources show that Amenhotep II died about 1422 B.C. Thus, this date does not come within two decades of the Exodus.

On the other hand, a great many archaeologists have sought to prove that the Exodus occurred about 150 or more years later, during

the reign of Rameses II. Their major argument is that the Israelites could not have arrived until the Hyksos were ruling in Egypt (about 1720-1580 B.C.), and thus the days of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II were far too early. Furthermore, the Bible declares in Exodus 1:11 that the Israelites built the store cities of Pithom and Rameses. Since no archaeological information has been discovered that mentions a city named Rameses prior to the 19th Dynasty when the Rameses were kings, these chronologists argue that the Israelites still must have been in Egypt during the reign of Rameses II in the 13th century B.C.

It appears that this latter solution must also be discarded. There is no specific evidence in the available secular data on Rameses II that particularly identifies him with the Israelites. His death date does not coincide in any way with Biblical date for the Exodus. The fact that there is no archaeological evidence of a city called Rameses existing before his Dynasty (the 19th) should not be surprising. The archaeological record provides fragmentary evidence at best. For example, until a few years ago there was no archaeological evidence of horses in Egypt before the middle of the so-called Hyksos period (13th to 17th Dynasties), even though the Bible says very clearly that Joseph exchanged horses for food (Genesis 47:17) before the Israelites were in Egypt. Now, however, there is evidence of horses in Egypt in the Middle Kingdom (12th Dynasty), as revealed by the skeleton of a horse found at Buhen in a Middle Kingdom context.¹

Actually, the Bible called the area where the Israelites dwelt “the land of Rameses” in Joseph’s day (Genesis 47:11). Furthermore, names with “Ra” were exceedingly common centuries before Rameses II.² The god Re from whom Rameses II takes his name was a god of the Egyptians way back in the 5th Dynasty.³ We must conclude, therefore, based upon the Biblical and secular evidence, that Rameses was a name given to a province or town of Egypt hundreds of years before Rameses II lived, and that the Israelites built or rebuilt a city by this name years before the Exodus, with no particular relationship to Rameses II or the 19th Dynasty.

If neither Rameses II nor Amenhotep II was the pharaoh of the Exodus, who was? Can we find agreement between the Bible and archaeology? The facts offered by the sacred and secular must agree. Let us see how wonderfully these two records can be meshed.

The pharaoh who we will show to be the pharaoh of the Exodus was the great Thutmose III who reigned during the flower of the 18th Dynasty. We shall see that his life as well as his death coincide with the

Biblical record of Exodus. Let us examine the available evidence concerning the timetable of his reign.

The studies of R. A. Parker are extremely helpful.⁴ He has shown that the accession year of Thutmose III must be one of five dates. This is based on the discovery of the record of a helical rising of the star Sirius during his reign as well as two lunar dates, which require these narrow limits for his accession year. The possible dates are 1515 B.C., 1504 B.C., 1501 B.C., 1490 B.C., and 1479 B.C. While all of these dates are acceptable according to astronomical evidence, most archaeologists favor the period from 1504 B.C. to 1490 B.C. because of other secular evidence. For example, William C. Hayes⁵ favors 1504 B.C. although he believes 1490 B.C. is also a possibility.

Sir Leonard Wooley⁶ also favors 1504 B.C. but concludes that with the present evidence it is impossible to determine with absolute certainty the chronology of the New Empire.

Thus far, we know that our candidate for the pharaoh of the Exodus probably began to reign in one of three years: 1504 B.C., 1501 B.C., or 1490 B.C. Since the Biblical record is concerned with his death, we must know the length of his reign in order to tie his accession year to his death year. This is available from the archaeological record. On the wall of the tomb of one of his officers, Amenemheb by name, the notice is given that Thutmose III died in the 54th year of his reign.⁷ We will look more closely at this text a bit later.

With the time span of his reign known, we know that if he began to reign in 1504 B.C., he must have died 1450 B.C. If his reign commenced 1501 B.C., his death would have occurred 1447 B.C., and if his reign began 1490 B.C., the year 1436 B.C. must have been his death year.

Returning to the Biblical record we have already seen that 1447 B.C. or possibly 1446 B.C. was the date of the Exodus. Of course, 1447 B.C. is also one of the three possible dates of the death of Thutmose III in accordance with the secular record. Thus, he is indeed a leading contender for the dubious honor of being the pharaoh of the Exodus.

Immediately a problem arises, however. If he was the king who died in the Red Sea, who is the king who sought to kill Moses forty years earlier and who, according to the Biblical notice, died while Moses was tending sheep in Midian? How could Thutmose III be the man we are looking for, if he reigned 54 years? He would have been king when Moses fled from Egypt, but how could he have died while

Moses was in Midian and yet be alive when the Israelites left Egypt? We have already seen that this was King Hatshepsut who reigned as co-regent with Thutmose III and who died about 1480 B.C. or about six years after Moses fled from Egypt.

The Napoleon of Egypt

Thus far we have found synchronization between the secular and sacred records concerning the princess who drew Moses from the water, the king who sought to kill Moses and died while Moses was in Midian, and the death date of Pharaoh Thutmose III,⁸ which coincides with the Biblical date of the Exodus. Does Thutmose III qualify as the king to whom God, through Moses, said in Exodus 9:16:

And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

Abundant archaeological materials are available concerning this question. They show that he was a great military man. He extended the boundaries of Egypt to the greatest extent Egypt had ever known. He personally conducted seventeen different military campaigns. Historians often call him the “Napoleon of Egypt.” The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* offers the following summary:

The immense energy of Tothmosis III now found its outlet in war. Syria had revolted, perhaps in the years of inactivity following Tothmosis I's death; now the young king was ready to lead his army against the rebels. Unlike his predecessors, who merely overran one after another a series of isolated city-states, Tothmosis had to face the organized resistance of a large combination, embracing the whole of western Syria and headed by the city of Kadesh on the Orontes. Six carefully planned campaigns had to be fought in order to reach and capture that city. In the 33rd year of his reign he marched through Kadesh, fought his way to Carchemish, defeated the forces that opposed him there and crossed the Euphrates into the territory of the Hurrian king of Mittanni. His annals record 17 separate campaigns in Palestine and Syria and list the immense booty and tribute obtained from that rich country. Egypt was master of an empire reaching to the Amanus mountains, and the neighboring great powers hastened to send diplomatic presents. In the intervals of war Tothmosis III proved himself a wonderfully efficient

administrator, with his eye on every corner of his dominions. The Syrian expeditions occupied six months on most of his best years, but the remaining time was spent in activity at home, repressing robbery and injustice, rebuilding and adorning temples with the labour of his captives and the plunder and tribute of conquered cities, or designing with his own hand the gorgeous sacred vessels of the sanctuary of Amon. In his later years some expeditions took place into Nubia. The children of the subdued princelings in Asia and elsewhere were taken as hostages to Egypt and there educated to succeed their fathers with a due understanding of the might of the pharaoh both to protect and to punish. Thus was an empire established on a sound basis, probably for the first time in history. Tothmosis died in the 54th year of his reign. His mummy, found in the cachette at Dair al-Bahri, is remarkable for the low forehead; yet we consider him the greatest of all pharaohs.⁹

His activity as a military man provides another touchstone between the secular and sacred records. When he pursued the people of Israel, we read in Exodus 14:6-7:

And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them.

This is in complete accord with the personality of this pharaoh. On a tablet that describes a battle at Megiddo, in which Thutmose III captured 924 chariots, we read:

His Majesty set forth in a chariot of fine gold, being adorned with his panoply of war like Horns the Strong-armed, Lord of Action, and like Mont of Thebes, his father Amun strengthening his hands.¹⁰

He had conducted 17 successful and glorious campaigns. The 18th, his last, was to end in terrible defeat.

He was a great builder; pictures have been found that show him in a position of mastery over slaves. In regards to his building activity, Petrie writes:

We see thus the extraordinary activity in building; and probably dozens of minor temples have passed away which are quite unknown to us, as little suspected as the temples of Kom el Hisu, Gurob, and Nubt were a few years ago. As it is, we can count up over thirty different sites, all of which were built on during this reign.¹¹

Certainly this could be the pharaoh whom God allowed to become great for some purpose. There was no other kingdom whose destruction would so clearly reveal God's power and His mighty name. In many ways he identifies with the Biblical account of the pharaoh who died in the Red Sea.

Thutmose III Dies

Continuing our examination of Thutmose III, let us look at how vividly the Bible describes his death in the Red Sea.

When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people. We read in Exodus 14:5-8:

And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand.

Exodus 14:10:

And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD.

Exodus 14:18:

And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

Exodus 14:28:

And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.

Psalms 136:15:

But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy endureth for ever.

An Unfinished Tomb

The language of the Bible that relates to the cause and manner of the death of this pharaoh is very plain. Since the pharaoh of the Exodus experienced such a catastrophic death, one wonders if there is any archaeological evidence of his sudden end. There is. We can see this circumstantially by examining his tomb. In spite of the fact that each pharaoh considered the construction of his own tomb of paramount importance, planning and constructing it in the greatest detail, the tomb of Thotmosis III was never finished. This fact is especially interesting and significant since this great pharaoh did more building and reigned longer than any other pharaoh. We quote Weigall:

This tomb is excavated in a 'chimney' of rock at the southeast corner of the valley. From the custodian's house one walks southwards, turning to the left at the junction of the paths, and thus leaving the tombs of Septah (47), Bay (13), and Tausert (14) on one's right. The path terminates in a flight of steps leading up to the 'chimney.' Ascending these, and crossing a platform of rock, one finds in the far corner the mouth of the tomb, which is approached by a steep flight of steps. The situation is most impressive, and repays a visit; but the descent of the tomb is somewhat difficult. The coffin and mummy of the great Pharaoh, Ra-men-kheper Thothmes III (B.C. 1501-1447) were found at Der el Bahri, where they had been hidden by the priests . . . The tomb has been left partly unfinished, as though the king, occupied by the administration of the great empire he had built up, had not bothered to give much attention to his last resting place.¹²

An unfinished tomb is totally out of character with the pharaohs, unless of course, a pharaoh happened to die unexpectedly! When the pharaoh of the Exodus led his great army in pursuit of the Israelites, he obviously had no idea that within the next few days the sea would close over his head! Thus, his unfinished tomb supports the truth of an unexpected demise for this pharaoh. Please note the accuracy of Weigall's date for Thutmose III.

The archaeological record indicates the finding of the mummy of Thutmose III. How could this be if he drowned in the Red Sea? God provided the necessary information. We read in Exodus 14:30:

Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.

The Egyptians obviously hastened to find the body of their dead king to give it proper burial.

The Month and Day of Pharaoh's Death

Could there be even more evidence that links Thutmose III with the pharaoh of the Exodus? Wonderfully, the well-preserved and extensive records of the early Egyptian civilizations together with the marvelous accuracy of God's Word gives us one final confirmation.

We saw that the Exodus occurred 1447 B.C., which was also the year Thutmose III died. We shall now show that the death date of Thutmose III, as recorded in the archaeological page, coincides with the month and the time of the month of the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea. The following passages of Scripture help us to name the month in which the Israelites escaped from Egypt. Exodus 12:1-6:

And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

Exodus 16:1:

And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt.

Exodus 23:15:

Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:).

Numbers 33:3:

And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.

It is apparent from the above that Abib, the month in which the Israelites left Egypt, became the first month in the original Hebrew calendar. On the 14th day of this month at even, they celebrated the Passover, and very early on the morning of the 15th, the Exodus from Egypt began. One month later, they arrived at the wilderness of Sin. During this 30-day period, the company of men, women, and children, with their flocks and herds, had traveled to the Red Sea, passed miraculously through the Red Sea, rested briefly at Elim, and arrived at the wilderness of Sin. The journey to the Red Sea would have required at least ten days, and at least another ten days would have been required to trek to the wilderness of Sin. Obviously, then, the death of Thutmose III had to occur sometime between the 25th of the first month Abib and the 5th of the second month Ziv. Does the archaeological record relate to this date? Indeed it does.

Let us first relate the Egyptian calendar to the Israelite calendar. The following correlation¹³ between the Macedonian and Egyptian calendars is reported by Finegan.

The Macedonian Calendar in Egypt
(Corresponding names of the month in sequence)

Macedonian	Egyptian	Julian Dates in a Com. Year
1. Dios	Thoth	Aug. 29-Sept. 27
2. Appellaios	Phaophi	Sept. 28-Oct. 27
3. Audynaïos	Hathyr	Oct. 23-Nov. 26
4. Peritios	Choiak	Nov. 27-Dec. 26
5. Dystros	Tybi	Dec. 27-Jan. 25
6. Zanthikos	Mecheir	Jan. 26-Feb. 24
7. Artemisios	Phamenoth	Feb. 25-Mar. 26
8. Daisios	Pharmuthi	Mar. 27-Apr. 25
9. Panemos	Pachon	Apr. 26-May 25
10. Loos	Pauni	May 26-June 24
11. Gorpïaios	Epeiph	June 25-July 24
12. Hyperberetaïos	Mesore	July 25-Aug. 23
Epagomenal days		Aug. 24-Aug. 28

We are indebted to the same author for the following earlier correlation of the “Macedonian Calendar in Palestine.”

The Macedonian Calendar in Palestine

Macedonian Months	Jewish Months	Julian Equivalents ¹⁴
1. Artemisios	Nisan	Mar./Apr.
2. Daisios	Iyyar	Apr./May
3. Panemos	Sivan	May/June
4. Loos	Tammuz	June/July
5. Gorpaios	Ab	July/Aug.
6. Hyperberetaios	Elul	Aug./Sep.
7. Dios	Tishri	Sep./Oct.
8. Appellaios	Marheshvan	Oct./Nov.
9. Audynaivos	Kislev	Nov./Dec.
10. Peritios	Tebeth	Dec./Jan.
11. Dystros	Shebat	Jan./Feb.
12. Zanthikos	Akar	Feb./Mar.

A careful appraisal of the above calendar correlations makes it obvious that the Macedonian month *Artemisios* is equivalent to the Egyptian month *Phamenoth* and to the Jewish month *Nisan*. Hence, the first month *Nisan*, or *Abib* as it is rendered in the Hebrew, corresponds to the seventh month of the Egyptian calendar, *Phamenoth*.

We have established, from the Biblical record, the fact that the Israelites left Egypt on the 15th day of the seventh Egyptian month *Phamenoth* (the Hebrew *Abib* or *Nisan*), and that the Pharaoh must have died at the time of the crossing of the Red Sea, somewhere between the 25th of *Phamenoth* and the fifth of the eighth month *Pharmuthi* (the Hebrew *Ziv*). What can we find from the secular record that relates?

Petrie has provided the following remarkable inscription which has direct bearing on the death of Thutmose III. It appears in early Egyptian records as the work of an officer named Amenemheb who served Menkheperra Thutmose III (see p. 125 of *Petrie's History of Egypt*). It gives the significant truth that Thutmose III died on the 30th day of *Phamenoth* which is the 30th day of *Abib*.