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Tsiyon News

Tsiyon Messianic Radio Newsletter - Vol 8.41 - 08/21/6013 TAM - 10/26/13 AD



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Who Owns You?

Exodus 4-6

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Who Owns You?

Ex 5:2 Pharaoh said, *“Who is YHWH, that I should listen to his voice to let Israel go? I don’t know YHWH, and moreover I will not let Israel go.”*

6 Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, *7 “You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick, as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. 8 The number of the bricks, which they made before .. you shall not diminish anything of it ..they cry, saying, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to our Elohim.’ 9 Let heavier work be laid on the men, that they may labor therein; and don’t let them pay any attention to lying words.”*

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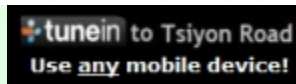
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DID THE EXODUS HAPPEN? AN ANSWER TO THE SCEPTICS

By: Dr. David Lewis

A new wave of scholars is now dogmatically declaring that the Exodus never took place. They insist it’s just a myth concocted centuries later in the time of Josiah to justify the existence of a Jewish state. Some of these new sceptics, such as Zeev Hertzog and Israel I Finkelstein of Tel Aviv University, are Jewish themselves!

The implications of their teaching are profound. They insist that, historically, there really is no such thing as a Jewish or Israelite people descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. There never was an Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. Moses was a myth, and never wrote the first five books of the Bible. The so-called Israelites are just Canaanites that emerged in Palestine, were joined by a few nomads, and concocted a new religion.

Denial of the Exodus and the reality of the Biblical account is nothing new. Neither are these arguments. The sceptics have been around for over 200 years, and much of their teaching has been the accepted wisdom in universities for a long time. The theories are now being recycled because of a lot

of new archaeological evidence that Professor Finkelstein and others have uncovered. This evidence, it is claimed, provides no evidence for the Exodus or the Bible.

Looking in the Right Place at the Wrong Time

Are the sceptics right? They are looking at the right evidence, but at the wrong time. Dating in the history of Egypt and Palestine is based on a couple of assumptions that professors have handed down over the decades. First, they assume the Exodus took place, not when the Bible says it did, around 1450-1447 BC but around 1300 BC. The Bible says the Hebrews built the city of Ramesses and that existed around the time of Ramses II who is dated around 1290. There is no evidence of Hebrews or an Exodus at that time.

What if, however, the Hebrews built the city of Avaris, which existed before the city of Ramesses? Also, what if the Egyptian chronology itself has been wrongly focused? At the very time the historical establishment was more and more rejecting the Biblical record, a handful of archaeologists were questioning the accepted wisdom. In 1991 a group led by Peter James published a book called *Centuries of Darkness*. Four years later British archaeologist David Rohl published *A Test of Time*, marketed in America as *Pharaohs and Kings*. Both of these books argue, that the traditional dating of much of ancient history before 1000 BC in most history books is flawed.

Both James and Rohl did not start out with an agenda of trying to prove the Bible. They just went to the Egyptian tombs and monuments and concluded that several of the later dynasties ruled side by side. This meant that earlier dynasties were placed anywhere from one hundred to three hundred years further back than they should have been. The three hundred year 'Dark Age' which historians describe in Greece, Phoenicia, and other places, shrinks and even disappears.

Move the Timeline and Things Start to Fit

The Pharaoh Shishak who invaded Jerusalem has been identified with Soshenk. But Soshenk never attacked Jerusalem but northern Israel! Another Pharaoh did attack Jerusalem. ..the famous Rameses II. In Egyptian he is Ra Me Shi Sha, the Shishak being a Hebrew nickname for 'The Destroyer'. Rohl concluded that Shishak was Rameses, that the splendid late Canaanite period was the time of Solomon, that the period of the El Amarna letters was the time of Saul and David.

Discovery of Hebrew Names in Goshen

Rohl's biggest discovery, though, was in finding the evidence for the Exodus in the Thirteenth Dynasty. His findings are summarized by John Fulton, a supporter of David Rohl:

'Before Moses, the Bible records that the Israelites were enslaved by their Egyptian hosts (Exodus 1:8-14). In the Brooklyn Museum (p.276, fig. 310) resides a papyrus scroll numbered Brooklyn 35:1446 which was acquired in the late 19th century by Charles Wilbour. This dates to the reign of Sobekhotep III, the predecessor of Neferhotep I and so the pharaoh who reigned one generation before Moses. This papyrus is a decree by the pharaoh for a transfer of slaves. Of the 95 names of slaves mentioned in the letter, 50% are Semitic in origin. What is more, it lists the names of these slaves in the original Semitic language and then adds the Egyptian name each had been assigned, which is something the Bible records the Egyptians as doing, cf. Joseph's name given to him by pharaoh (Genesis 41:45). Some of the Semitic names are biblical and include:- Menahem, Issachar, Asher, and Shiprah (cf. Exodus 1:15-21).

That 50% of the names are Israelite means that there must have been a very large group of them in the Egyptian Delta at that time, corroborating the testimony of Exodus 1:7 which alludes to how numerous the Israelites became. The sceptics look for Israel in the Egypt of the Nineteenth Dynasty and remain sceptics, because the proof is in the Egypt of the Thirteenth Dynasty.

Graves of Israelite Babies

The site of Avaris has been uncovered by the Austrian archaeologist Manfred Bietak in the land of Goshen underneath that of the city of Ramesses. It provides plenty of proof, says Fulton, for Israel's presence and sufferings in Egypt:

'The people who lived in Avaris were not Egyptian but Asiatic Palestinian or Syrian. The finds there included numerous pottery fragments of Palestinian origin. Several factors about the graves were particularly fascinating:- 65% of the burials were of children under 18 months of age, the normal for this period being 20-30%. Could this be due to the killing of the male Israelite children by the Egyptians, recorded in Exodus 1:22? A disproportionately high number of adult women as opposed to adult men are buried here, again pointing to the slaughter of male Israelite babies. There are large numbers of long-haired Asiatic sheep buried which indicate these people to be shepherds. Large numbers of weapons found in the male graves indicate the warlike nature of the people.'

Early Moses as Egyptian General

According to the Bible, Moses was born around 1527 BC, in the reign of Neferhotep I. A few fragments of ancient records from a Jewish historian called Artapanus were preserved by the Catholic historian Eusebius. They say that the Pharaoh's daughter at the time Moses was born was called Merris. She married the Pharaoh Khenephres, also called Sobekhotep IV.

Moses or Mousos, meanwhile became a great general who invaded Nubia and Ethiopia. Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, 2.10.1-2 tells the story. The Ethiopians had invaded Egypt and had practically overrun the country:

‘The Egyptians, under this sad oppression, betook themselves to their oracles and prophecies; and when God had given them this counsel, to make use of Moses the Hebrew, and take his assistance, the king commanded his daughter to produce him, that he might be the general of their army ... So Moses ... cheerfully undertook the business’ and defeated the African invaders by marching through a snake-infested region and taking them by surprise: ‘When he had therefore proceeded thus on his journey, he came upon the Ethiopians before they expected him; and, joining battle with them, he beat them, and deprived them of the hopes they had of success against the Egyptians, and went on in overthrowing their cities, and indeed made a great slaughter of these Ethiopians.’

Josephus was right. A monument in the British Museum tells of Khanferre or Khenephres invading Sudan and Ethiopia, the only Thirteenth Dynasty ruler to do so. Remains of an Egyptian government building with the Pharaoh’s statue has been found hundreds of miles south of known Egyptian territory.

First-born Egyptian Graves - Followed by Exodus

Sobekhotep IV/Khenephres was the Pharaoh of the Oppression from whom Moses fled, about 1487 BC. The forty years Moses spent in Midian were likely to have been 1487-1447 BC. The Pharaoh of the Exodus was Dudimose. Fulton records that the Austrians found evidence both of God’s slaying of the firstborn and the sudden departure of Israel from Goshen:

‘The Tenth Plague to be sent on Egypt just before the Exodus was the plague on the first-born, recorded in Exodus 12:29,30. At the end of stratum G/1 at Tell ed-Daba or the ancient city of Avaris (p.293), archaeologists found shallow burial pits into which the victims of some terrible disaster had been thrown. These death pits were not carefully organized internments; the bodies were simply thrown in on top of one another. Could these be the burial pits of the first-born Egyptians? What is more, immediately after this disaster, the remaining population left Avaris en masse; this fits perfectly with the Exodus of the Israelites following the final terrible plague.’

Collapse of Egypt Reported

Manetho, the Egyptian historian wrote how Egypt collapsed in the reign of Dudimose:

‘Tutimaos: In his reign, for what cause I know not, a blast of God smote us; and unexpectedly, from the regions of the East, invaders of obscure race marched in confidence of victory against our land (Egypt). By main force they easily seized it without striking a blow and having overpowered the rulers of the land, they then burned our cities ruthlessly, razed to the ground the temples of the gods and treated all our natives with cruel hostility, massacring some and leading into slavery the wives and children of others.’

The invaders were the Amalekites Israel encountered after leaving Egypt. They found Egypt, devastated by Divine judgment an easy prey.

‘The continuing archaeological discoveries’ says Fulton, ‘here in the ancient city of Avaris mirror exactly the early Israelites revealed in the Old Testament. For two centuries no evidence was found for the Israelites when looking in the strata of the 19th Dynasty. Now that the chronologies have begun to be amended and the sojourn in Egypt placed in the 12th and 13th Dynasties, we have a wealth of archaeological evidence corroborating the Biblical account.’

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From Eliyahu

In our most recent Midrash we tackle what many Bible scholars call "the most difficult passage in the Book of Exodus." Here it is:

On the way at a lodging place, YHWH met Moses and wanted to kill him. Then Zipporah took a flint, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet; and she said, "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me." 26 So he let him alone. Then she said, "You are a bridegroom of blood," because of the circumcision. Exodus 4:24-26

Many have puzzled over this passage with questions like: Why would YHWH be favorable toward Moses and then suddenly 'want to kill him'? If Moses needed to circumcise his son why didn't he do it himself? Why did Zipporah do it? Why did YHWH relent from killing Moses after that? Why did Zipporah call Moses 'a bridegroom of blood'? Why are Moses' wife and boys missing from the story for many chapters after that? ...and many more.

Unraveling this passage would normally be enough for one message - but not here. Actually, we follow the story all the way to Moses' first encounter with Pharaoh and it's aftermath. You will be surprised how much of this relates to our lives today!

Blessings and Shalom!

Eliyahu ben David

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