

Understanding Egypt's chronology in the light of Biblical evidence

1. Predynastic Egypt and Old Kingdom—the Post-Flood World

Most histories begin with the unsubstantiated notion that primitive people slowly developed civilization from rudimentary beginnings. Archaeology around the world has instead revealed advanced ancient technology without discernible periods of evolution. This sudden appearance of cultures possessing advanced technology approximately 4,000 years ago is consistent with the Bible's account of the Flood, the proliferation of intelligent people on the plains of Shinar, and their subsequent scattering from the Tower of Babel.

Mizraim's Family

Each group leaving Babel took with it whatever skills its members possessed.

Mizraim, Noah's grandson, founded Egypt around 2188 B.C., a date consistent with both biblical and secular records. The Egyptians, the Sumerians, and the Mayans all retained the technology to build pyramids. Imhotep designed Egypt's first pyramid for third dynasty pharaoh Zoser. The Great Pyramid of Giza, built for pharaoh Khufu of the fourth dynasty, is "the largest and most accurately constructed building in the world." This pyramid required advanced optical, surveying, mathematical, and construction techniques, an impressive leap beyond the technology demonstrated in earlier pyramids.

Abram and Khufu's Pyramid

Abram's visit to Egypt may explain Egypt's sudden advance. Abram grew up in the advanced but idolatrous culture of Ur about three centuries after the Flood. Josephus wrote that Abram "communicated to them arithmetic, and delivered to them the science of astronomy; for before Abram came into Egypt, they were unacquainted with those parts of learning; for that science came from the Chaldeans into Egypt." Based on Josephus's statement, Abram's visit to Egypt may well have occurred during the fourth dynasty.

2. Middle Kingdom—Joseph and Moses

In contrast to the lack of evidence for an Israelite population in Egypt during the New Kingdom of Ramses' time, there is significant evidence of the Israelite presence during the Middle Kingdom. The 12th and 13th dynasties provide the backdrop for the stories of Joseph, the oppression of the Israelites, Moses, and the Exodus. The biblical dates for these events can provide dates for these dynasties.

Israelite Slavery

The late 12th dynasty reveals evidence for Israelite slavery. Sesostri III, the fifth king of the 12th dynasty, built cities in the delta including Bubastis, Qantir, and Ramses. The building material of choice in the Middle Kingdom was no longer stones but rather bricks composed of mud and straw. A large Semitic slave population lived in the villages of Kahun and Gurob

during the latter half of the 12th dynasty. On one papyrus slave list, 48 of the 77 legible names are typical of a “Semitic group from the northwest,” many listed beside the Egyptian name assigned by the owner. The presence of Semitic slaves in Egypt during this time is consistent with the biblical account of the oppression of the Israelites.

Moses’ Adoption

Traditional chronology has tried to fit Moses into the 18th or 19th dynasty where there is no evidence of Semitic slavery on a large scale, but Moses’ unusual adoption does fit into the late 12th dynasty. Amenemhet III, the dynasty’s sixth king, had two daughters but no sons. Josephus describes a childless daughter of pharaoh finding a child in the river and telling her father, “As I have received him [Moses] from the bounty of the river, in a wonderful manner, I thought proper to adopt him for my son and the heir of thy kingdom.” Amenemhet III’s daughter Sobekneferu was childless and eventually ruled briefly as pharaoh herself, making Sobekneferu a likely candidate for Moses’ foster mother.

The Exodus

In the 13th dynasty, during the reign of Neferhotep I, the Semitic slaves suddenly departed from Tel ed-Daba⁵¹ and Kahun.

Neferhotep I’s mummy has never been found, and his son Wahneferhotep did not ever reign, Neferhotep being succeeded by his brother Sobkhotpe IV. The sudden departure of the Semitic slave population fits the biblical account of the Hebrew slaves’ sudden exodus from Egypt after the tenth plague. The pharaoh’s mummy is missing because he died in the Red Sea with his army when he pursued the slaves, and his son never ruled because he died in the tenth plague.

3. New Kingdom—Israel’s Early Monarchy

1. David and Tahpenes’s Husband

During David’s reign, a young Edomite named Hadad found refuge in Pharaoh’s house and married Queen Tahpenes’s sister. Hadad and the queen’s sister had a son named Genubath. Genubath eventually became king of Edom. Records of the 18th dynasty’s founder, Ahmose, refer to a name that resembles Tahpenes. Later in the 18th dynasty, Thutmose III received tribute from the land of Genubatye.

2. Solomon and the Egyptian Princess

Thutmose I of the 18th dynasty had two daughters, Hatshepsut and Nefrubity. Nefrubity dropped out of the Egyptian records and may have been the Egyptian princess that Solomon married to seal his 1 Kings 3:1 treaty with Egypt.

3. Queen of Sheba and Hatshepsut

Another mysterious Bible character emerges from the 18th dynasty. The female pharaoh Hatshepsut's trip to the land of Punt is famous, but the identity of Punt has remained a mystery despite engravings commemorating the treasures she brought home. First Kings 10 says the queen of Sheba visited Solomon, giving and receiving great gifts. Josephus identified this queen of Sheba as "queen of Egypt and Ethiopia." In Matthew 12:42 the Lord Jesus refers to the queen of Sheba as "the queen of the south." "The south" is a biblical designation for Egypt. Thus, Hatshepsut was probably the queen of Sheba.

God determines what is truth

Isaiah warned against going down to Egypt for help (Isaiah 31:1). This phrase has come to symbolize a warning not to go to the world for truth. God determines truth. Historians examine fragmentary clues and fill in the gaps based on their presuppositions. Those presuppositions may be biblical or traditional. Accepting traditional Egyptian chronology necessitates rejection of biblical truth. Accepting biblical chronology allows a reconstruction of ancient chronology on a foundation of truth. Viewing the evidence from a biblical framework makes the histories of Egypt and the Old Testament fit together like two sides of a zipper.

Source: Answers in Genesis