

Week #: 28 Text: ----- Title: Patterns of Evidence #1
Songs: Kadosh
Worship Medley: I Sing Praises / I Just Want to Praise You / We Exalt Thee – (Reggie Royal and Judah)
Videos: Patterns of Evidence: The Exodus

Video: *Patterns of Evidence: Exodus*

Exodus 13:3

“And Moses said to the people: “Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out of this place...”

For over 1500 years, Western civilization accepted the Bible as being true. But after the 1950s skepticism grew when archaeologists found mounding evidence contradicting the early history of the Bible. Today that skepticism has only increased.

The Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt and their journey to the Promised Land is one of the most influential and important stories in all of world history.

“The stories in the Bible are the most powerful narratives ever told. It’s not a coincidence that this book has held the imagination of mankind for thousands of years, because the stories are remarkable.” Benjamin Netanyahu

“It’s the most amazing book, if you think about it. It’s a book that covers about 4,000 years of history and it really is the first history book until the time of the Greeks. Herodotus was supposed to be the first historian, but in fact I think Moses was.” David Rohl

“He remains without any competition the greatest legislator of all time. And as for the Ten Commandments that he brought down from Sinai, it is the foundation of our civilization. Take away the Ten Commandments and we are out of business.” Shimon Peres

Did the Exodus happen? Many leading archaeologists and Bible scholars today say, “No.” Others argue that there may have been a small group of slaves that escaped Egypt, but the historical events didn’t happen the way they are described in the Bible. Even among evangelical scholars who accept the biblical account as historical, there is a debate regarding the date of the Exodus. If the leading scholars agree with the most outspoken atheists and agnostics, if even some rabbis agree with the most skeptical archaeologists that there’s no evidence at all that the Exodus ever really happened, then what are the rest of us supposed to think? If it never happened, then the two religions of the Bible, Judaism and Christianity, are both based on a gigantic lie.

This troubling question led filmmaker Timothy Mahoney to probe more deeply. Little did he realize how far this journey would take him. He began a 12-year quest to discover if the Exodus really happened as it is told in the Bible, or not.

The Exodus is believed by most scholars to have occurred in the reign of Ramesses II. Ramesses was Egypt’s greatest builder king. If experts say there’s no evidence of the Exodus during the time of Ramesses II, then why do they say he’s the Pharaoh of the Exodus? How does the history of ancient Egypt relate to the Bible?

Imagine a wall of time extending back to the earliest moments of civilization. The first level is Egyptian history. Above it, the events recorded in the Bible. The bottom is a timeline of absolute dates - an immovable base to gauge the events of history. Great pylons mark every thousand years.





Over the course of 2,000 years, Egypt experienced three great periods of power:

- Old Kingdom: Great Pyramids
- Middle Kingdom: high point of art and literature
- New Kingdom: vast empires that dominated foreign lands
- These great periods of power were followed by dark periods of disunity and weakness.

Ramesses II was a Pharaoh of the **New Kingdom** who ruled a grand empire and filled Egypt with his monuments. There's one crucial passage in the Bible that leads many to chain the Exodus event to the time of Pharaoh Ramesses II.

Exodus 1:11 "Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Ramesses."

This mentions the slaves making bricks for building of the storage facilities in the city of Ramesses. This city has a very narrow history of no more than 200 years. By around 1100 B.C. the city is gone.

So if this building project that the Israelites are involved in is Ramesses II's Delta residence, then we have no escape but to say this in an important chronological marker, and that can only be somewhere in the 13th century B.C. This *Ramesses Exodus Theory* places the Exodus at about 1250 B.C.

We need physical evidence of the cultural group that the Israelites were a part of: Semites, coming down to live in Egypt from a land called Canaan. The problem is that no archaeological evidence has turned up for these Semites in the city built by Ramesses II.

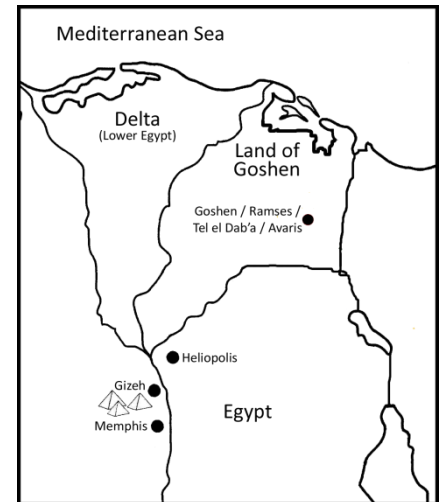
New archaeological discoveries were made of a city and a people that appeared to match the biblical story, made at the very location of the city of Ramesses, where the Bible places the Israelites. The ancient city of Avaris which has been excavated over the past 30 years shows evidence for an ancient Semitic/Canaanite people.

Avaris lies just below the southern sector of the City of Ramesses. They have discovered the following remains:

- huge town of 250 hectares (617.763 acres)
- approx. 25-30k individuals
- people who originated from Canaan, Syria, Palestine
- originally came as subjects of the Egyptian crown or with the blessing of the Egyptian crown
- town enjoyed some kind of special status, a free zone or something similar
- evidence of shepherds with huge herds – pits with goats and sheep

This sounds remarkably like the Biblical account, but archaeologists say it cannot be the Israelites because it's in the wrong time frame for the city mentioned in the Bible – that the physical evidence of these people is centuries too early to be connected to the events of the Exodus

This is profound, because no Israelites in Egypt means to Exodus, and no Exodus means that the foundation of Judaism is a myth. And for Christians, it means Jesus Christ and the writers of the New Testament got it wrong, because they all accepted the reality of Moses and the Exodus, and built their teachings on them.



One of America's leading Egyptologists, Professor Kent Weeks – the archaeologist who rediscovered KV5, the tomb of Ramesses and the Valley of the Kings – brought up a crucial issue when considering the problems with these events: How can it be proven that Ramesses II is the Pharaoh of the Exodus? The chronology of Egypt is still a bit ambiguous, correlations between Egyptian chronology and that of other cultures in the ancient near east is even more confusing. We don't know precisely when the Exodus happened. Some people say it was Ramesses II. It makes nice theater because he was a great powerful ruler, everybody knows his name. He built fantastic monuments. Everything really is appealing to have him be the one to choose. But other Egyptologists disagree. Almost any Pharaoh could be the Pharaoh of the Exodus if it can be proven there even was an Exodus.

If Ramesses II wasn't the Pharaoh of the Exodus, then who was?

Looking for the Exodus in a different time or reign could be the solution. It needs a clear scientific approach, beginning with taking a closer look at the details of the Biblical story.

The oldest accounts of the Exodus were written in Hebrew in the first five books of the Bible, known as the Torah. The story of the Exodus begins before the Israelites leave Egypt. It begins with Abraham, when God brings him to the land of Canaan and makes a covenant with him, and in that covenant, spells out the entire Exodus (Genesis 17).

The Lord said to Abraham, "All this land you see, I will give to you and your offspring forever. Go; walk through the length and breadth of this land, for I am giving it to you."

On that day, the Lord made a covenant, a formal promise to Abraham. He said, "To your descendants I give this land." God led Abraham outside and he said, "Look up to heaven and count the stars. If you can. So numerous will your offspring be." And God said, "Your descendants will be foreigners in a country not their own. They will be enslaved and oppressed. But I will judge the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions and return here."

According to the text, the events of the Exodus were not a historical accident. They were directed by the God of Abraham every step of the way.

These Biblical events formed a sequence that could guide the entire investigation.

- the arrival of Abraham's descendants in Egypt
- their tremendous multiplication
- their descent into slavery
- the judgment of the nation that enslaved them
- their deliverance and exodus out of Egypt
- in Canaan, their conquest of the Promised Land

If the Exodus really happened, there are elements in the story that are so big that you'd think some remnants of evidence would have been left behind somewhere in Egypt's history. Science solves problems by looking at patterns of evidence and a truly scientific approach looks for those patterns no matter where they exist. Can a pattern matching this sequence be found?

Arrival:

The book of Genesis tells us that the first descendant of Abraham to arrive in Egypt was his great-grandson, Joseph the son of Jacob. Joseph's brothers had sold him as a slave to a caravan of traders who brought him down to Egypt. Then, in an amazing turn of events, he rises to become the highest official in Egypt. He saves the country from a terrible famine, enables his father Jacob and his entire family to settle in the best part of the land, a place called Goshen.

Is there any specific evidence that has been uncovered of this Semitic family-group arriving in Egypt as told in the Bible?

David Rohl, author, historian, and Egyptologist, is an agnostic, someone who remains unconvinced of the existence of god. Yet, he clearly sees archaeological evidence of the biblical Joseph, Jacob, and the early Hebrews in the Nile Delta region of Egypt. Rohl believes that many Egyptologists have missed evidence for the Exodus because they have looking for it in the wrong time period. While most scholars think that the events of the Exodus happened in the New Kingdom, David Rohl's view would put the Exodus in an entirely different period, the earlier Middle Kingdom, where he claims evidence for the Exodus can be seen.

Rohl believes that the mention of the city of Ramesses in the Bible is what is known as an *anachronism*. It's something that's been added into the text later by an editor. So what the editor is basically saying is, this is the place where the Israelites built the store city and we know it today as Ramesses. In the ancient times it was called *Avaris*. This is added so that those who know the region, the people of the Bible, would have known where Ramesses was, and therefore where their ancestors actually built the city.

The Bible, in the book of Genesis, uses the word *Ramesses* hundreds of years before Pharaoh Ramesses or his city existed to describe the land where Joseph's family settled. So if the Ramesses in Genesis does not refer to Pharaoh Ramesses II, then why should the mention of Ramesses in the book of Exodus be any different?

Avaris is the city which lies under the Biblical Ramesses. Ramesses of the New Kingdom. Avaris of the Middle Kingdom, the 13th Dynasty. It lies underneath the city that's mentioned in the Bible.



Evidence:

- At the end of the 12th Dynasty, at the heart of this community, we see a Syrian house appear. The Austrians call them Mittelsaal houses. This type of house is found in North Syria, the area where Abraham came from. It's exactly the same style of house you would expect Jacob to build for himself in Egypt. We know the Israelites sought their brides Harran in that region. They all went back to get their brides from there, so the culture that turns up in Egypt at the end of the 12th Dynasty seems to have come from North Syria originally.
- The connection with Joseph at Avaris: After this house of Jacob is built, eventually it's flattened, and on top of it an Egyptian palace is constructed, with Egyptian architecture this time. However, the occupant was not Egyptian. The palace had courtyards, colonnades, audience chambers, even a robing room. It obviously belonged to some high official of state that was very important to that state, because when someone gets a palace like this given to them; it means they're being honoured for what they've done for the state. In the garden behind the palace, the archaeologists found 12 main graves with memorial chapels on top of them.
 - How many sons did Jacob have? 12
 - How many tribes were there? 12
 - The palace had a façade, a portico with 12 pillars
 - 12 sons, 12 tribes, 12 pillars, and 12 tombs – is it all a coincidence?



The 12 pillars in front of the heart of the palace (Copyright 2014, Patterns of Evidence, LLC.)



The 12 primary tombs behind the palace (Copyright 2014, Patterns of Evidence, LLC.)

- One of these 12 graves was very special, because it was a pyramid tomb. This in itself is extraordinary because only pharaohs and queens had pyramid tombs at this time. Yet the person buried in this tomb was not a king. Even so, he was honoured with a king's burial. Inside the chapel of the tomb, was a statue. What we know from the statue is that this man had red hair, pale yellow skin, which is how Egyptians depict northerners. He had a throw stick across his shoulder, a unique symbol of office made for this Asiatic official living in the land of Goshen. On the back of his shoulder we see the faintest remains of paint, coloured stripes from a multi-coloured coat. This matches exactly with the story of Joseph in the Bible. The multi-coloured coat is a gift which shows that he was the favourite of the father. It almost becomes him insignia, this coat. It's the thing we remember about him most of all.
- There are no other statues of a Semite of this kind in Egypt – not in the whole of Egyptian history.

Professor Charles Aling, an Egyptologist who has also investigated the events of the Exodus and its connection to Egypt. According to him, it would not be unusual for a tomb to have a statue, but it is unusual to have one as large as this statue is. It stands probably twice the size of a normal human being. This tells you that this is a very important person.

This is not a Pharaoh's tomb or palace, but you can identify the man who lived there by his nationality by looking at the fragments of the statue.

- The hairstyle is often referred to as a mushroom hairstyle.
- The weapon he carries over his shoulder, called a throw stick, which we would associate with an Australian boomerang.
- The colouration of the skin is yellow.
- Combined, these things indicate that this would have been a Syro-Palestinian.

Either this is Joseph, or it's somebody who has a career remarkably the same as Joseph did. It's incredible to find this at this time period.

The Exodus was a story about the birth of a nation. Mahoney then went to Israel. He then had the unique opportunity to meet with Israel's president Shimon Peres, and hear his perspective about the character of Joseph and his rise from slavery to governing Pharaoh's court.

Tolstoy is said to have said of Joseph that it is greatest story ever published in human literature. Joseph was the first Jewish advisor on earth, and he advised the most powerful empire in the vicinity. He conquered the heart of everybody he saw, men and women.

With God's help, Joseph was able to save Egypt by warning of a coming calamity. Seven years of plenty could be followed by seven years of terrible famine. Pharaoh is so impressed that he puts Joseph in charge of preparing for the famine, and makes him second in command over the entire country. He managed to achieve this by the foretelling of the dreams of Pharaoh, about cattle coming out of the water of the Nile. First seven fat cows, and then seven lean cows come out and devour the fat cows. It's an extraordinary story, but the clue here is that these cows are coming out of the Nile. It's the Nile itself that's the cause of both the plenty and the famine.

If this is correct, then the regulation of the Nile may have been key in planning for the coming famine.

There's a canal, or a waterway, that connects the Nile to the Fayum basin, which is a large lake area, which has the name of



Statue of the high Semitic official found in the shrine of the pyramid tomb and a digital reconstruction. (Copyright 2014, Patterns of Evidence, LLC.)



Bahr Yusef, which means the waterway of Joseph. This goes back thousands of years, as far as we can tell. It is believed that Joseph made this canal. It was under his instructions as vizier of Egypt that that canal was cut. It was cut to divert water from the Fayum basin. The water levels are just right for growing crops. It's still in use today. The construction of this water diversion system is dated to the same period as the early settlement at Avaris.

Joseph gathers up all the grain during the seven years of plenty in Egypt. He gathered as much as the sand of the sea. And then the famine comes to the entire region, and only Egypt has bread. So everyone comes to Joseph for what they need for survival. When their money runs out, they sold their animals. When that ran out, they sold their land, and eventually they sold themselves. So Pharaoh, by the end of the seven years, owns everything in Egypt.



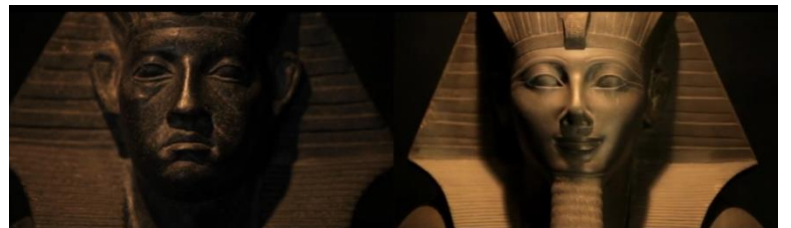
Is there a time in this era when a dramatic shift of wealth and power occurred between the people of Egypt and the Pharaoh?

Dr. Bryant Wood is an archaeologist who spent many years studying the Exodus and the Conquest.

When we look at Egyptian history, we find something very significant that happened at this exact time. Egypt was divided up into areas called nomes, kind of like districts, all over the country. The leaders of these nomes had tremendous wealth and tremendous power. We get to a point in Egyptian history when suddenly that all changes and all the wealth is concentrated with the Pharaoh. What on earth happened here? If you read the Egyptian history books, there is no explanation for it. They don't know what happened, how it happened. This was a tremendous socio-economic change. We have the answer in the Bible, and it is Joseph's famine policy, and how he brings the wealth into Pharaoh. This fits exactly with Egyptian history.



It is believed these events occurred during the reign of two important Middle Kingdom Pharaohs. This key time is during the co-regency between Senuseret III and his son, Amenemhat III. This could be the time of the famine, and that Amenemhat was Joseph's Pharaoh. Amenemhat is depicted with worry lines. His ears are turned out so that he can listen to the concerns of the people. He's not depicted in the usual bland way that you see in all the other statues of past and future Pharaohs. It is an indication that in his time, Egypt was experiencing serious problems.



Amenemhat built his pyramid right next to Bahr Yusef, the Waterway of Joseph.

The amount of archaeological evidence matching the first step of *Arrival* in the Biblical sequence seems overwhelming.

- a Syrian style house that appeared in the Delta along with a palace fit for royalty
- whose occupant was a high Semitic official from the Canaan area
- who wore a multi-coloured coat
- the waterway of Joseph, contemporary with the rise of Avaris
- the end of influence and wealth for the regional governors as the power of Pharaoh reached new heights
- these events converged at a time when the statue of the Pharaohs were depicted in a unique care-worn way, the tell-tale signs of a kingdom in distress

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