

Week #: 29 Text: -----

Title: Patterns of Evidence #2

Songs: Kadosh – Paul Wilbur (5:54)

Draw Me Close to You – Hillsong (4:02)

I Stand In Awe of You – Beth Croft (4:16)

Videos: Patterns of Evidence: The Exodus

Video: *Patterns of Evidence: The Exodus* ((Start at 38:07 – End at 1:26:00 – Play time: 47:53))

Why have we never heard of these finds?

In the scheme that's used by scholars to date all these events, they're way too early. They're much too early to be Israelites. However, if they don't fit anywhere else, and they do fit here, then why not believe that this is when they were in Egypt?

At the pyramid tomb of Avaris, excavations revealed one other important piece of evidence. The crucial clue, which says that this man with the multi-colored coat is Joseph, is found in the story of Exodus. When Joseph is on his deathbed, he tells his brethren that when they leave, they must take his body with them to the Promised Land. What matches the story even more incredibly is that pyramid tomb was empty when the archaeologists found it. There was nothing in it at all apart from a few fragments of this smashed statue. There were no bones; there were no mummy beads, no coffin wood, nothing. It was cleaned out. It was not the work of a grave robber. Grave robbers don't take the bones. Bones are intrinsically of no value whatsoever and nobody takes the bones. Only people who are treating the body with reverence take the bones. The body was taken out and all the grave goods were taken out.

It is believed that this is the pyramid tomb of Joseph, honored by Pharaoh with a colossal statue, that when Moses decided to take the people out of Egypt, he made sure he fulfilled that promise to Joseph, to take the body out of the tomb and to take it to Shechem and bury him in the Promised Land.

This location, photographed in the 1800's, is where many believe Joseph's bones were finally laid to rest in the ancient town of Shechem in Canaan. The city is known today as Nablus on the West Bank, where a tomb has been at the center of much political and religious tension.

The Exodus is surrounded by controversy on many levels. Even David Rohl suggesting specific evidence of Joseph and the early Israelites' arrival in Egypt is archaeologically controversial, because he looks earlier in time than what is conventionally accepted. But if we stick to the guidelines of this investigation, we need to look for a pattern of evidence wherever it might exist.

David Rohl then told about the remarkable expansion that happened at Avaris which fits the next step of the sequence. What the Bible describes as "exceedingly great multiplication."

Multiplication:

Joseph dies, and his brothers, and their entire generation. The Israelites are multiplying and they are fruitful exceedingly, until they fill the land. We see a virgin land with no population at all, and suddenly a small group of Semitic people settle there in about a dozen houses or so, about 70-100 people all told. Over a period of maybe three or four generations it becomes a very large city, and it's one of the largest cities in the ancient world.

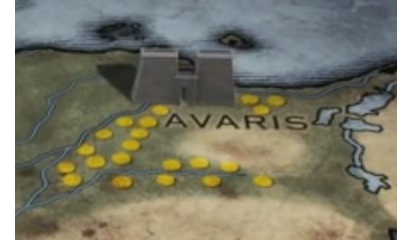


The city is a city of foreigners in the Egyptian Delta and it's been allowed by the Egyptian state. At this stage there are no slaves involved here. We're talking about Semitic peoples coming in, living here, bringing their flocks with them and surviving in such a way that they become quite rich and wealthy.

We do know that there was a large Semitic speaking population that probably came in from Syria, Canaan, sometime during the early part of the second millennium B.C. Their remains have been found at a number of sites. We have tombs that are clearly those of foreigners, Semites. We can tell this by the pottery and by the kinds of weapons. These are not Egyptian type daggers. They have donkeys, in some cases buried with them. This was not an Egyptian practice. We can't say for sure that any of these were Hebrews, but we probably couldn't distinguish a Hebrew from a Canaanite in Egypt culturally speaking anyway.

How many sites would there have been?

You've got a good many settlements- 20 or more which would fit the land of Goshen, where the Bible says the Israelites were settled. Many of these have not been fully excavated yet. We don't know whether they're as big as the Avaris site, until people start digging there. The Avaris site of course, no one knew how big that was until excavation began. So there could be a lot of stuff in the ground waiting to be discovered that would throw a lot more light on this period of Asiatic settlement.



The only time that the archaeology shows massive numbers of Semites living in ancient Egypt is in this earlier period around the Middle Kingdom. This is strikingly different from the New Kingdom and the time of Ramesses when there is no evidence of this.

The question is, does the Middle Kingdom also contain evidence for the next step of the biblical sequence – “slavery?”

Slavery:

Cecil B. DeMille portrayed this slavery in two of his famous films both called *The Ten Commandments*. Although Hollywood likes to focus on the Israelites moving large blocks of stone, the Bible never mentions this.

A new Pharaoh arises and he doesn't remember Joseph. He enslaves the people because they're becoming too numerous and becoming a threat. So he puts them to work and embitters their lives building store cities of Pithom and Ramesses and makes them create bricks out of mud and straw.

It was intriguing to see this type of construction in different parts of Egypt. Were any of these bricks molded by the hands of Israelite slaves? These types of bricks are present throughout Egypt's history and don't prove any connection to the Israelites. Is there any slavery evidence matching the Bible at Avaris, the older city beneath Ramesses?



What does the archaeological record reveal at this location?

We've got a situation of prosperity followed by a lack of prosperity and a shortage of life. We begin to see in the graves of these people Harris lines in the bones, which indicates shortage of food and nutrients. These people suddenly have become impoverished and they're dying at an age typically of between 32 and 34 years of age. How do we explain that? What is the mechanism by which we could understand why these people only lived to such a short age? Obviously the answer is slavery.

The description of slavery was so horrible; downhearted; to take a whole people and make from them an inhumane group of men working so hard. They wanted to free themselves.

The Bible then tells us that the more the Hebrews were oppressed the more they multiplied and the more they spread throughout the land of Egypt. Pharaoh gives the order for all the baby boys who are born to be thrown into the river by the Egyptians. It was during this time that Moses is born and in fear for his life, his mother hides him in a basket and floats it among the reeds of the river

Nile. But God is watching over baby Moses, and Pharaoh's daughter comes down to bathe in the Nile. She finds him, adopts him, and names him Moses, which means "drawn from the water."

Is there anything in Egyptian archaeology that might reflect this biblical detail, the killing of Hebrew infant boys?

At this particular point we start to see an increase in the number of infant burials at the site. Normally in a typical Middle Bronze age cemetery we'll get something like 25% of burials of infants. In this particular case, the figure jumps up to an extraordinary figure.

Dig reports from Avaris refer to what the team called "an extremely high mortality rate of newborns." When all the children's graves aged 10 and younger were identified, it was found that nearly 50% died in the first three months of life.

Could it have been an epidemic that only hit the newborns especially hard?

When the graves of those who made it to adulthood were examined, it was seen that there were 60% females and 40% males. The reduction appears to have been in the male side of the population.

So could this massive increase of infant burials at Avaris be evidence for the killing of the male Israelite children?

It's an intriguing thought, but it's sad to think of what it could have meant – the murder of thousands of innocent boys.

For generations, the Exodus story has given hope to people around the world in their quest for liberation; inspired by the freeing of the slaves from the most powerful nation on earth, but were the hopes and dreams of all those people merely based on a myth?

Who would invent a story about "our ancestors were slaves?" We can see people saying their ancestors were princes, or merchants, or something wonderful and glorious and noble. But "we were slaves?" Why? If you're going to dream up a story, surely you'd come up with a better one than that.

If none of it happened, how do you explain an Egyptian papyrus with a list of slave names that seem to come right out of the pages of the Bible?

There's one particular document which is quite amazing. It's called the Brooklyn Papyrus and this actually is a list of domestic servants from one estate. We have maybe up to 100 people listed as slaves in Egypt. When we look at those names, 70% of them are Semitic names, and you can literally pick up Israelite names in there: Menachem, Issachar, Asher, the names of two of the tribes of Israel; Shiphram, one of the Hebrew midwives in the Exodus story, a name that appears in this document. These are Hebrew Israelite slaves, and they're in a papyrus from the 13th Dynasty, not from the 19th Dynasty, not from the time of Ramesses II in the New Kingdom, but from the 13th Dynasty, the Middle Kingdom.

What does this mean?

This is real evidence for the time when the Israelites were in Egypt as slaves. When you get a text, suddenly you've got history. Archaeology you have to interpret. When you have a text, this is something very different. This slave list is predominantly female, which matches the grave evidence from Avaris.

The fact that they continued to multiply – despite the oppression, despite the slavery, despite the boys being killed – just shows that there was a divine plan here at work and that this whole event was miraculous.

Why do so many Egyptologists ignore the Brooklyn Papyrus?

Although everybody recognizes that this list is a list of Semitic slaves, and everybody recognizes that the names appearing in here are also Israelite names, they say these can't be the Israelites, because it's the wrong time period. The Israelites are supposedly much later in history. So these people we're seeing here in this Brooklyn Papyrus they say cannot be the Israelites. That's why they disregard it. They put it to one side and say it's another coincidence.

So there appears to be strong evidence matching the *Multiplication* and *Slavery* steps of the biblical sequence.

- indication of a rapid expansion of the Semitic population at Avaris
- the only time in Egyptian history that there is evidence of Semites dominating the Delta like this
- these Semites begin free, powerful, and prosperous
- but then they succumb to impoverishment and malnutrition
- there is a sharp rise in the number of infant burials
- near the end of this period comes a list of slaves, many with Hebrew names
- all this occurring 400 years earlier than would be expected with the Ramesses Exodus Theory

What if all these finds in the Middle Kingdom are not a coincidence and the exodus actually did happen much earlier than the reign of Ramesses II?

To see if this is the case, we need to look more closely at the details of the biblical story concerning the next step of the sequence: the judgment of Egypt and the Israelites deliverance from bondage.

Judgment:

The Bible records that Moses fled to the land of Midian. After 40 years of living as a shepherd, Moses first encountered God. Moses sees a bush from the distance, and it's on fire, but it's not being consumed. So, curious, he approaches to see what's going on and God says, "Don't come any closer. Remove your shoes, for this place is a holy place." God said, "I have surely seen the oppression of my people who are in Egypt, and I have also heard their cry."

Like a shepherd rescuing his sheep, God commands Moses to go back to Egypt and tells Pharaoh, "Let my people go so that they may serve me."

Moses comes to Pharaoh, Pharaoh does not listen, refuses to let the people go, and God sends the first of a series of spectacular plagues against the land of Egypt.

In Exodus 5, the God of Israel says, "Let my people go."

Pharaoh says, "Who is the Lord? Who is Jehovah, Who is Yhwy that I should listen to him?"

And so we have setting up there this contest. Who really is the god to be obeyed? Who is the one in control of things? And in the Egyptian view of things, Pharaoh was the god of the Egyptian state. He was responsible for cosmic order. He was responsible for the proper flow of the Nile, the rising of the sun, the fertility of the fields and so on.

Now we have the God of Israel, the God of Creation, of the Bible, who's saying, "Now, wait a minute. That's not what you do. I'm the one who controls all these things."

So He begins with the Nile and ends in the ninth plague with the sun. And these two things that Pharaoh is said to control are completely outside of his control. God protected the children of Israel from these plagues, while the rest of the land was being devastated by them, to where Pharaoh's servants themselves pleaded with him, saying that this was the finger of God and that Egypt was being ruined. But Pharaoh would not relent. He knew that Egypt depended on the work of these foreign slaves.

What effect has the Exodus had upon civilizations in the last 3,000 years?

Although seen by most as a political figure, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was also an author and historian, like his father. He says that Moses was the greatest revolutionary of all time. Remember, in antiquity there were grand empires that were based on one principle, and that is slavery. Moses challenged that twice. He challenged it by taking his people who were slaves in bondage in Egypt and freed them and took them to their Promised Land. He also challenged it by providing a code, a moral code for mankind that said that it is not the king of the emperor that decides the law, there's a higher law and these were absolutely revolutionary ideas.

The text then says that God sent the tenth and final plague to force Pharaoh's hand: the death of the firstborn of man and beast. The Lord told the Israelites that each household was to slaughter a lamb and mark the doorposts with the blood of the lamb. On that horrible night, death passed over all the homes marked with blood. But in every home that wasn't marked, all the firstborn males died. There was crying and wailing in every Egyptian home because each family had lost someone.

The tenth plague, the death of the firstborn, affected everybody. Even Pharaoh's firstborn died that night, and the will of the people, the Egyptians, was completely shattered. The tenth plague broke Pharaoh's defiance of God, and he finally let Moses and the people go. Then Pharaoh changes his mind, pursues the Israelites with his army, and, at the sea, God parts the waters so that the Israelites can escape, while it destroys the entire Egyptian army.

Every year, Jewish families from around the world celebrate the deliverance of Israel from Egypt during the Passover feast. Records confirm that the Passover has been observed for thousands of years. Many believe it is difficult to explain the origin of Passover if there were no real event on which it was based.

While in Jerusalem, Mahoney went to speak with Rabbi David Hartman, the founder of the Shalom Hartman Institute.

Hartman says, "Each year we celebrate the Exodus as if we were there. We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and we dramatically celebrate the Passover Seder as if we are participants. So there's always a renewal, always a renewed giving, a new spirit into the Passover Exodus story. Because in remembering the Exodus, we remember that in the dark conditions of history, God, the Lord, had in some way made possible, through Moses, our liberation."

But what about those who think the Exodus never happened?

Noted Israeli archaeologist, Israel Finkelstein, specializes in the ancient history of the land of Israel. In his influential book, *The Bible Unearthed*, he has argued that the Exodus did not happen in the manner described in the Bible. He proposes that it was based on vague memories of events, written down for political motives centuries later.

Mahoney asked Finkelstein, "Do you believe in celebrating the Passover?"

His answer was, "Sure, celebrating the Passover? Definitely. I think that I make a distinction – in my private life as a scholar, in my life as part of a family – I make a distinction between scholarship and tradition. When I sit at the Passover meal and we read the Haggadah with the family, that evening it's all history from A to Z. Perfect history. Because history is not only about the time of Moses, history is also about all those many generations of my forefathers who were sitting to the same table in Passover at the same time and reciting the Haggadah. This is also history. Which means that I am part of something bigger, you know, which goes on and on for many generations and this is important for me. So yes, the answer is that there is a clear distinction between the two."

Mahoney then asked, "What do you say to people who are concerned with the idea that these stories didn't happen as they were written?"

Finkelstein answered, "I would tell them that this is not important. Whether the stories, whether things happened exactly in that way is not important. I think that it is more important to understand the meaning of Exodus, the moral of Exodus.

Rabbi Wolpe has said that Professor Finkelstein's work has greatly influenced his thinking. The idea of the Exodus and the revelation, however you configure it, it is central to the Jewish tradition. But I think that doesn't mean that you have to believe that the Torah gives a historical account of it. I don't think that the Torah is a book of facts. It's a book of meaning.

However, John Bimson shared a very different view.

Bimson says, "History and theology are tightly intertwined in the Bible. If you took away the historical basis, then you've really deprived it of a lot of its theological truth. So much of what the Old Testament says about the character of God and His purposes in calling Israel are intertwined with the story of these people coming out of Egypt and entering the Promised Land. So history and theology are tightly intertwined in the Bible."

After more than a decade of searching, this is what it comes down to. Is the Bible's account true history, or is it simply the traditions of a devout people?

If the judgment happened as described in the Bible, Egyptian society would have collapsed – loss of their agriculture, loss of their first-born sons, loss of their slave force, and the loss of their army. In fact, Moses recorded that Egypt was still suffering from defeat 40 years after the Exodus.

Critics are quick to point out that there is no such record from Egypt of supernatural judgment and devastation. But others believe there is an Egyptian document that actually gives an eyewitness account of the plagues and chaos surrounding the Exodus.

Mahoney went to Holland to meet the curator of the Leiden Museum, where this significant papyrus is housed. But Egyptologist Maarten Raven sees no evidence for the Exodus in this document or anywhere else.

Raven says, "The story of the Exodus is described in the Old Testament. It's part of the national history of the Jewish people, or so they say. We have no independent evidence that this is a real historical event. We can believe it because we believe in the Bible, but there are no Egyptian sources that describe it. There are no other documents. There are no archaeological sources that could prove this took place as a mass exodus."

Raven's position, again, is that of most Egyptologists today. But there are some scholars who suggest that descriptions found in this Egyptian document bear a remarkable resemblance to the plagues of the Bible, only from an Egyptian point of view.

Written by a scribe named Ipuwer, the papyrus known as *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage* poetically describe a series of calamities and the chaos that followed.

Raven says, "We don't know who Ipuwer was, but he was obviously somebody in a position to address his majesty, the king. There's only one copy of this specific text and that is here in the Leiden Museum. It's a very, very vivid report, or would be a report, of what happens to Egypt when the central power falls away."

Many believe a collapse of Egypt's power is exactly what would have happened due to the plagues of Exodus. As Mahoney compared the book of Exodus to the writing of Ipuwer, he too was intrigued by the similarities.

Biblical story: To convince Pharaoh, God says, "Take some water from the Nile and pour it on the ground, and as it hits the ground it will turn into blood."

Ipuwer wrote: "Behold, Egypt is fallen to the pouring of water. And he who poured water on the ground seizes the mighty in misery."

Biblical story: And all the water in the Nile turned into blood. And the fish of the Nile died, and the Nile reeked, so that the Egyptians could not drink from the Nile.

Ipuwer wrote: "The river is blood. If you drink of it you lose your humanity, and thirst for water."

Biblical story: All the livestock of the Egyptians died. Fire ran down from heaven and the Lord sent hail upon the land. Even the flax and the barley were smitten.

Ipuwer wrote: "Gone is the barley of abundance, food supplies are running short. The nobles hunger and suffer. Those who had shelter are in the dark of the storm."

Raven says, "I see no connection between the papyrus of Ipuwer and the story of the Plagues of Egypt. It is in a way, in a very indirect way, an eyewitness report of a historical period. It pretends to be such a report, but in fact it isn't."

Biblical story: At midnight, the Lord struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, sitting on his throne, to the firstborn of the captive in the dungeon.

Ipuwer wrote: "Behold, plague sweeps the land, blood is everywhere, with no shortage of the dead. He who buries his brother in the ground is everywhere. Woe is me for the grief of this time."

Biblical story: And there was a great wailing throughout the land of Egypt, for there was not a house without its dead.

Ipuwer wrote: "Wailing is throughout the land, mingled with lamentations.

Raven says, "All the time we have to convince ourselves that this person can't have seen all this. He imagined it, or he had received this information from other similar propagandistic literature.

Mahoney asked, "Because it's so fantastic?"

Raven answers, "Yes, it's very fantastic. But he hasn't seen it, he just imagined it. Don't confuse this with the message of the Bible, the Ten Plagues. That's quite a different story. Whether this happened or not is irrelevant. It's a beautiful literary document, and again, yes, God was angry and punished the Egyptians, but this is just a literary cliché."

The influential Egyptologist, the late Miriam Lichtheim, ruled out the possibility that the papyrus, The Admonitions of Ipuwer, referred to a real national calamity. Agreeing with other scholars, she stated the following:

"The description of chaos in the Admonitions is inherently contradictory, hence, historically impossible. On the one hand, the land is said to suffer from total want; on the other hand the poor are described as becoming rich, of wearing fine clothes, and generally of disposing of all that once belonged to the masters."

However, when you read the biblical account, it becomes clear how this apparent contradiction could have happened.

Biblical story: Moses told the Israelites to ask the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing.

Ipuwer wrote: "People are stripped of clothes. The slave takes what he finds. Gold, lapis lazuli, silver and turquoise are strung on the necks of female slaves."

Biblical story: The Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so they gave them whatever they asked. Thus, they plundered the land of Egypt.

The very point that Miriam Lichtheim viewed as *contradictory*, and therefore *historically impossible*, is the very point that most specifically matches the biblical text, but Raven remains unconvinced. He revealed to Mahoney the main reason why.

Raven says, "It's out of the question that this can refer to one and the same event. Conventional chronology has it that the Exodus took place somewhere during the Remesside Period in Egypt, maybe around 1200 B.C. Whereas our papyrus, when you look at the grammar and the literary figures, etc., there's no question that it was composed in the Middle Kingdom and it is 600, 700, 800 years earlier."

Mahoney realized that all the other evidence he had looked at was also converging in the Middle Kingdom, not the time of Ramesses.

Was it just another coincidence that this document was originally composed in the only period when Egypt's delta was dominated by large numbers of Semites?

It became obvious to Mahoney and his team that if people look at the wrong time in history for evidence of the Exodus, they won't find any. So, Ramesses is a giant, standing in the way of connecting this evidence with the Exodus. And for over 50 years, all the books, all the television programs, and all the university professors who've been convincing the world to dismiss the Bible have been doing so based mainly on this one issue, chronology, the dates assumed for the Exodus, and the lack of evidence at the time of Ramesses II.

But if it happened long before his time, then it means they're all wrong. Wrong about the pharaoh, and perhaps wrong about the Exodus never happening.

David Rohl took Mahoney to see the replica of a monument erected just a few years after Ramesses' death, by his son Merenptah. It's important because it shows that Ramesses could not be the pharaoh of the Exodus because in his time, Israel was already a nation, established in the land of Canaan.

Rohl says, "This is the famous Merenptah Stela, or what we call the Israel Stela. It actually belongs to the King Merenptah. Up there at the top you can see him, facing the god Amun. And he lists, in a poetic form, all the different conquered nations, the nations that are at peace. Right at the bottom, we have three crucial lines, because this is where we find a link to the Bible."



Rohl then points to what is written (reading right to left), "We have two reeds, that's the sound **YEE** or **EE**, then a bolt, which is **S** and **R**, a mouth, and **E**, and **AH**, and an **I** – IS-RA-EL. This is the only time that we see this name on an Egyptian monument. After the name Israel, are two seated figures of a woman and a man and three strokes underneath. These strokes mean plural. So it means the people or nation of Israel. And then this is the interesting bit. It says, "*Fekty bin peret f,*" or, "Israel is laid waste, his seed is no more."

Mahoney asks, "Does it mean that they were literally no more?"

Rohl answers, "No, it's a sort of poetical way of saying they'd been overcome, defeated, or pacified. All these phrases are like that. It's a poetical phrase, effectively."

Mahoney asks, "How significant is this then, to the story of the exodus?"

Rohla answers, "Well, for me it's very important, because if we're talking about Ramesses II or Merenptah being at the time of the Exodus of Moses and Joshua, this just does not fit the pattern. It's not tribes wandering around the Sinai, lost in the desert or, you know, during the wandering periods of Moses and Joshua. They seem to be a political entity."

This monument doesn't fit the idea of Ramesses being the Pharaoh of the Exodus because it was written shortly after his death and it recognizes Israel already existing in Canaan as one of the significant powers of the day. And that shouldn't be, because the Bible says that the Israelites did not even begin to conquer Canaan until 40 years after the Exodus. So Ramesses could not have been the pharaoh who let the Israelites go.



Then Mahoney got a lead about another inscription. Charles Aling brought him to see his colleague, historian Clyde Billington, who has extensively researched this newly-discovered find.

Besides the *Merneptah Stela*, there's another reference to Israel. It's called the *Berlin Pedestal*. It's in the state Museum in Berlin, Germany, and this is something that's just now being studied and discussed by scholars.

On the basis of this Egyptian statue, they showed Mahoney name rings, each representing an enemy defeated by Pharaoh in the region of Canaan.



Mahoney asks, "So, would these have been captured people?"

Billington answers, "Realize that pharaoh's all the time exaggerate, to say the very least."

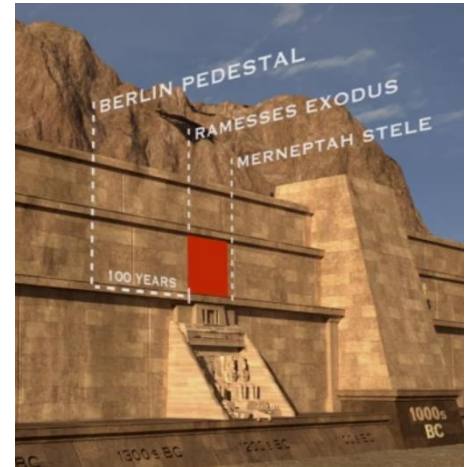
Mahoney: "So is he bragging?"

Billington: "He's bragging. He's saying, 'I've conquered these people. I control these people.' This is the one that's caused all of the excitement because you have, again, a bound enemy, so telling you that these people are enemies of the Egyptians, and the name down here [lower right section], while it's partially broken away, has been reconstructed, and it's the name *ISRAEL*. This dates to around 1360 B.C. This makes the late date of the Exodus impossibility. This is a hundred years earlier. This is very crucial evidence that we see here."

This name ring demonstrates that Israel had already left Egypt and was in Canaan as Egypt's enemy a century before the Ramesses Exodus date, so obviously Ramesses could not have been the pharaoh of the Exodus.

As another test to see if Ramesses really was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, Mahoney would need to find out if there were any signs of major problems during this famous king's reign, such as a sudden collapse of power, that would match the biblical judgment of Egypt.

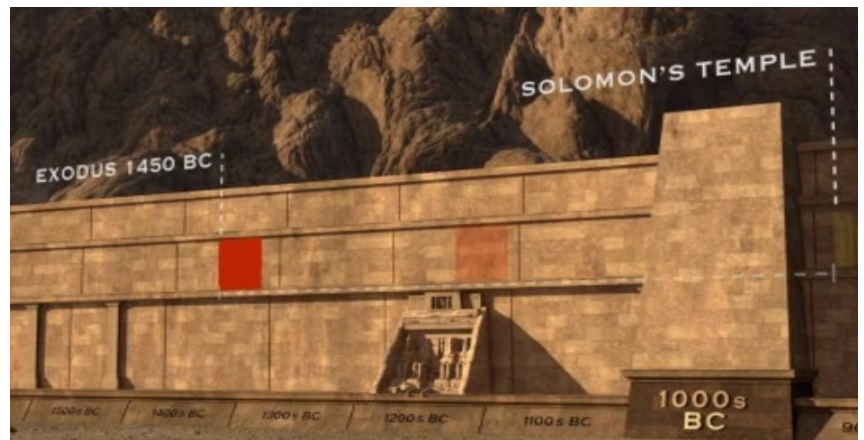
Kent Weeks, Egyptologist, says, "I don't see any evidence that during the reign of Ramesses II there was a significant decline in the strength of the army, in the economic well-being of the country. I don't see anything in the succeeding reign of Merenptah either."



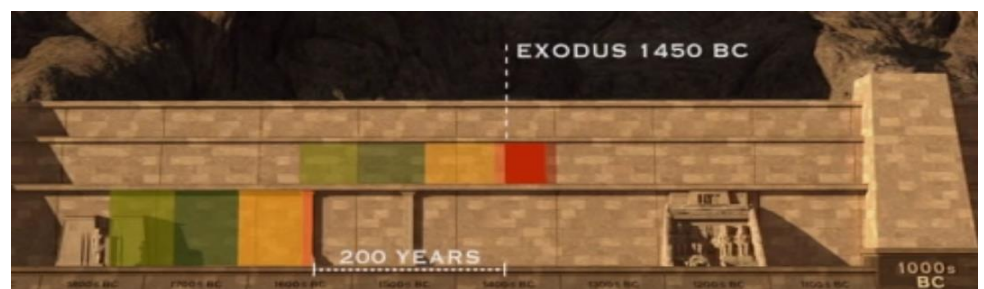
Mahoney asks, "So you're saying there was some type of stability that was formed?"

Weeks answers, "There was a great deal of stability during this period. There had to have been for a lot of these things to have occurred."

But there's more. It came to Mahoney's attention that the Bible itself contains a passage that's been largely ignored. It gives a date for the Exodus hundreds of years before Pharaoh Ramesses II ruled. Yet it clearly says it was 480 years from the building of Solomon's temple back to the time of the Exodus.



Most scholars agree that King Solomon began his reign in 970 B.C., so 480 years before this would place the Exodus around 1450 B.C., 200 years before the Ramesses date. Yet the popular view continues to be that the Exodus occurred in the time of Ramesses.



John says, "It's a date that is based on very flimsy indicators, but this is where the majority of scholars look, almost out of habit really. Earlier periods have just dropped off their radar. I would say that's the bottom line of why they don't find any evidence for the Bible. And I find it deeply ironic."

If Mahoney is going where the evidence is strongest, then he's got to look beyond the Ramesses Exodus Theory. And that's really encouraging, because it means that the events of the Exodus can be shifted 200 years earlier. But the challenge isn't over, because this new biblical date, around 1450 B.C., still leaves the events separated from the Egyptian pattern by 200 years. Mahoney was determined to find an answer for this, and to do so, he continued to explore the pattern that seemed to exist in the earlier period.

Is there any indication in the Middle Kingdom of the next step of the Bible's sequence: a massive and sudden exodus following the death of the firstborn?

Exodus:

Rohl told Mahoney about something amazing that was found at Avaris. The archaeologists who've been digging this are suddenly find lots of pits in the ground. And in these pits are bodies, and they've been tossed into these pits. They're not buried formally. They have no grave goods or anything like that. These bodies are tossed on top of each other. They're lying strewn; you have hands and legs crossing over. What is happening here? What is going on?

Bietak thinks it's actually some sort of plague that's happened; a dramatic event where suddenly they have to bury people very quickly because of contamination of the living population. So it's an emergency burial. And then, all of a sudden, all these Semitic people who were living there suddenly get up, they pack their bags and they leave and the whole mound is abandoned. We don't know for how long, and it just falls to ruin. Isn't that just like the story of Exodus?

120 miles to the south of Avaris, another similar abandonment was uncovered at the town of Kahun. Excavators found a walled and guarded settlement, which supported a large Semitic population. They also found documentation of slavery. Mysteriously, the inhabitants here seemed to have disappeared overnight.

According to Professor Rosalie David, Egyptologist with the University of Manchester, the town's abandonment was "sudden and unpremeditated." Their goods were found in the streets and houses of Kahun exactly where they were left, before being buried by the sands of the desert so long ago.

One of the great moments in Egyptian history is the collapse of Egyptian civilization. When these foreigners invade, these Hyksos rulers come in and destroy the land and the Egyptian native rule is completely suppressed, Egypt is on its knees. That's what we see in the Archaeological evidence of this period and it only happened once in 1,000 years of Egyptian history.

Manetho was an Egyptian priest who wrote the history of Egypt in the 3rd century B.C. If we can link this to a very famous tradition told to us by Manetho, what we end up with is a story like this:

In the reign of a king called Dudimose, one of the last kings of the 13th Dynasty, God smote the Egyptians.

God here is singular; you would expect to see "*and the gods smote the Egyptians,*" but you don't. You only see, "*God smote the Egyptians.*" And then, because of the smiting, whatever the smiting is, foreigners, "*people of obscure race,*" invade Egypt from the north and they conquer the land, "*without striking a blow,*" is the term used. Why? Because God smote the Egyptians. Something had happened to devastate Egypt, which made them unable to defend themselves and these marauding hordes took over the whole country. We call this the Hyksos period and they enslaved the Egyptians. But the point is, they could have defended themselves, they had a mighty army, except for the fact that God had smitten the Egyptians.

The earlier pattern of evidence for the judgment and Exodus steps includes:

- a Middle Kingdom papyrus that describes events remarkably similar to the biblical plagues
- grave pits filled with bodies, hastily buried
- mass abandonment at Semitic sites in Egypt
- an Egyptian source, outside the Bible, stating that a powerful god acted in Egypt's history, delivering a deadly blow, which led to an invasion by foreigners
- and all this coinciding with the only collapse of Egyptian society in 1,000 years

You look for a collapse in Egyptian civilization and that's where you'll find Moses and the Exodus.

((END: 1:26:00))