

Dr. Elaine Phillips, OT History, Lit., and Theology, Lecture 9

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Preliminaries and Prayer

Introduction to New Unit

We've got a lot to do today and part of it has to do with chronology. And chronology has to do with dates. And dates have to do with things that we have to memorize. Now there is not going to be a lot but if you've looked at the lecture online for today, you know that I'm giving you kind of whole spans and overviews of Egyptian history, dynastic history, just so that we get a sense of where we're going to fit in Israel's sojourn in Egypt and the Exodus. And if you have looked at the notes carefully, then you know that there are some questions about this in terms of when people date the event. So we are going to spend some time on that. And we're going to look at Egypt in general. I've got some pictures to show you of Egypt. And then towards the end of the hour we're going to spend some time looking through Exodus 1-3 as well. That's the direction we're going.

Some questions to get started with for a couple minutes. You had to study for an exam on Friday. What lessons have we learned? What lessons have we learned from these patriarchal narratives? In other words, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and of course, Joseph, who was the son of Jacob the patriarch. Any particular lessons?

[student response]

Yes, that's particularly clear in the Abraham narrative, but also with Isaac trying to manipulate things with his sons. Absolutely and we can compress that into one word: sovereignty. Any other lessons that you think are particularly germane, as we move from Genesis into Exodus?

[student response]

Yes, those folks are just like us. They were not saints back there any more than we're saints. Now granted we are saints in Christ, but the point is that they

had their own failings and foibles and we see God working in their lives in spite of themselves, just as he works in our lives.

Dealing With Ancient Near East Chronology

Sometimes the question comes up, “well how in the world do we know anything about dates in terms of late antiquity?” There are a couple things to keep in mind. First, there are lists of kings, names of Assyrian kings, and interestingly enough they are not just lists but they often indicate very significant events that have taken place in conjunction with those kings. One of them that is helpful for us in terms of dating things is that in 763 BC there was an eclipse. That’s a major astronomical event and it is mentioned in conjunction with one of the kings. Because we can date that astronomically to 763, that provides a benchmark date for us to start establishing relative chronologies between Assyria and our particular region which is Israel. We can do this because we have mentions of Assyrian kings in our document, the Old Testament. Thus, we have a nice benchmark, although that doesn’t solve all the problems. There are issues with coregencies, overlaps, and so forth. But nevertheless this is helpful. So that is the first thing to keep in mind.

The second thing is Egyptian chronology which is a little bit more challenging. There are a number of different systems of figuring out Egyptian chronology. As I’m going to start mentioning some kind of ball park dates with regards to dynasties in Egypt and reigns of particular pharaohs and so forth, I’m going to use the chronology system that the *Cambridge Ancient History* follows. You don’t have to write that down but just recognize that that’s one system. That’s the one I’m following, although not everybody follows it. So you are going to possibly see if you go somewhere else and you look at some particular text on Egyptian history you may see some variation or fluctuation in dates for Egyptian dynastic rulers of about fifteen to twenty years. So keep that in mind.

Why Does the Exodus Event Not Appear in Egyptian Records

Now here is a significant question for you: When we go to Egypt and start

looking at all sorts of texts that have been found in Egypt, why is it that we don't see any evidence of Israel's presence in Egypt? Why is it that there is nothing recorded if the Israelites spent 440 years there, according to what Exodus chapter twelve tells us? Why is there no evidence? Why no mention of the leaving of Egypt in this dramatic thing called the Exodus?

Yes, Chelsea. [student response]

Good; obviously because it was shameful, a total embarrassment, they were not going to write about it. That makes a good deal of sense, and we're going to come back to that. It is one of the major reasons.

Anything else? Becca. [student response]

Good; Egypt didn't look on Israel as a nation *per se*. In fact it was not until 1220 that a pharaoh in the 19th dynasty actually mentions Israel and by that time they were back in the land again. That could be part of the explanation. They were simply part of this much wider group of people, who were enslaved. We have evidence of Asiatics. The Egyptians talk about Asiatics who were their slave labor and there are a number of temple reliefs and so forth that indicate these Asiatics serving as slave labor. Israelites were probably a small part of that.

Anything else? Well here are a couple of additional things just to keep in mind.

The Delta region is where the Israelites primarily settled. When you think of the delta, think of the river Nile flowing and depositing mud flats, centuries and centuries of mud flats. That's not prime territory for very much of anything permanent. In fact, the excavations that have taken place at some sites in the Delta region found some things, but often times they have been inundated by mud. There are very few preserved monumental structures. Obviously if we are talking about a climate like this anything that is made out of papyrus is going to have disintegrated a long time ago.

In addition, the pharaohs would never write about their own defeat. As an example, even one of the Rameses pharaohs claimed a victory over an enemy up

north at a place called Kedesh, actually we have evidence from the other side that says that Ramses really lost that battle.

Even more philosophically, words are important for Egyptian culture as well as Israelite. We think of the inspired Word of God as having power and drama, and it does. The Egyptians also had this sense about words. They considered words as coming from the gods and therefore powerful. Do you see some parallels there? In their world view, if something was written down, that event could possibly recur. And since they had this tremendous defeat, all the shame and humiliation aside, the Egyptians wouldn't write it down because of the possibility of its recurring. On the other hand, if it's not written, it is as though it hadn't occurred at all - period.

Finally, if you move to the fifth item [on Power point], this is now looking at it from the perspective of Israel. No nation would make up a narrative of their origins being in bondage and in suffering and slavery. It probably has some substance, and at least some kernel of truth.

All those things together may help us get some answers with regard to this issue. Now there is a lot more that we could say about that as there are a number of different perspectives, but this should help us a little bit.

Overview of Dynasties of Egypt

Well here we have the overview [Power point] that I was promising you and again it's in your notes that are on Blackboard, so let me just talk through the key points that are here. The Early Dynastic Period is almost five millennia ago. We are really talking around three-thousand years B.C. and the hundreds of years on either side of that. At that time, Upper and Lower Egypt came together and that is pretty significant.

But for our purposes, we move on to the Old Kingdom. When we see pyramids in Egypt, keep in mind that they would have already been there by the time Abraham and Sarah go down to Egypt. The astronomical and architectural ability of these builders tells us something remarkable about this culture.

As we look at the First Intermediate Period, this is probably the time (if we go for an early date for the Exodus) when Abraham and Sarah would have gone down to Egypt with their little entourage. By the way I'm going to spend a lot of time talking about dating the Exodus because whether we like it or not, so much else hinges on it in terms of dating the patriarchs as well as the conquest. At any rate, the First Intermediate Period is a time of division and weakness which might explain why there was an influx of Asiatics. Perhaps Abraham and Sarah were part of that whole picture when they went down during the famine.

During the Middle Kingdom, Egypt again became pretty significant. The major dynasty is the 12th dynasty. Notice how long it lasts; it is a time of expansion for Egypt.

Go ahead, Becca. [student response]

No, not with Joseph. Do you remember when it says that Abraham and Sarah went down to Egypt? It's the Genesis twelve incident. Determining the date of the later famine in connection with Joseph and his brothers, will depend on when we date the Exodus. But I will suggest that Joseph and the brothers and the whole family go down to Egypt in the Middle Kingdom period. This gives us a bit of an indication of how often famine ravaged this area. We don't just have one famine. They seem to happen multiple times because it is such a tenuous existence there.

At any rate, we want to notice two more things which are fairly significant. In addition to our First Intermediate Period we have a Second Intermediate Period during which Hyksos, foreigners, come on the scene. An Egyptian historian much later on called them "shepherd kings." But we are not really sure that's accurate. Nevertheless, they were foreigners who moved into Egypt and actually took over the rule of Egypt for about a hundred and fifty years, from about 1700 down to about 1550. They were not liked by the Egyptians. In fact the Egyptians hated them. That will be important later on as we consider their possible relationship to Israelites.

And finally, the New Kingdom started with a man named Ahmose who booted out the Hyksos and started his own dynasty. Now, the reason this is highlighted [on Power point] is that no matter which date you're going to give for the Exodus, whether it's early or late, it happened during the New Kingdom period. Therefore, we're going to expand the New Kingdom considerably in a moment.

Questions? That's the big overview picture. Here are the pyramids. If you want to get a little bit of a perspective, I'm standing on top of a little pyramid, this is the very top of a little pyramid, one of many built for the various wives of the pharaohs. These large structures are the three major ones: Kufu, Khrafre, and Menekare.

Details About the New Kingdom: 18th Dynasty

Now let's focus in on the New Kingdom. Ahmose is the one in the 18th dynasty who booted those Hyksos out. Then you have a series of Amenhoteps and Thutmoses. Do you see them? The thing to keep in mind is that Amen is a god and so is Thoth. And if you look carefully you notice that there is a "mose" in these, which may *may* have some relationship to Moses - maybe. Kind of hang onto that as well. Now the two things that I want you to note, and I'll talk through this list a little bit more in a moment, are obviously the highlighted names there. If we are going to go for an early date for the Exodus, it's during the reign of Amenhotep the second [I have since changed my mind on which Egyptian chronology is best and place an early Exodus in the reign of Thutmose III – this follows Kenneth Kitchen, Rasmussen's *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible*, and the *NEAEHL*.] Now once we have that established, and its highlighted there, then we can back up a ways. Do you know how old Moses was when the Exodus took place? He was eighty. So, we add eighty years onto the date for the Exodus event and, possibly during the reign of Ahmose, we have the birth of Moses.

Now two additional items that we want to make a note about. Notice the name Hatshepsut. Hatshepsut was the sister and wife of Thutmose II. Hatshepsut

was a remarkably feisty woman. She was not just any old person; she was actually reigning. Co-regency yes but reigning for part of the time and she had her own mortuary temple. It has depictions of her being crowned as ruler by the gods of Egypt. In fact, it turns out that Thutmose III, who reigned after her when she died and had been her co-regent, when she was gone he actually went through the trouble of defacing the materials that were depicting her, because he didn't like the prospect that she had actually been ruling. But she seems to have been a rather powerful kind of woman.

And then notice that we also have the name of someone you might be familiar with, Akhenaten, who was the one who introduced some form of quasi-monotheism into Egyptian culture. It didn't last, but the suggestion is if we are going to have an Exodus occurring before that, maybe there was a tradition of the power of this God who effected an Exodus and brought these people out of Egypt. Maybe that was strong enough to influence his thinking at that point. Again it didn't last; the whole polytheistic culture took over again after his reign.

Here are just a couple pictures to give us a little feeling for this stuff. This is Hatshepsut's mortuary temple. Notice that there are three different levels here. There is one right there in the middle and then a third one back there. All inside, wall after wall after wall are depictions of Hatshepsut, the important things that she had done, the gods and the goddesses that were important as far as she is concerned. By the way, it's on the west side of the Nile. These places that were graves and tombs of the kings were on the west side of the Nile. The temples were on the East side of the Nile. Here is a detail of Hatshepsut being crowned by, as I said earlier the gods.

Just a quick note as well, probably the most significant temple down in the Luxor area which is where Hatshepsut's monumental mortuary temple is as well is the Karnak temple. It's huge and it has major sections from the 18th dynasty in it. But it goes all the way down to the time of Alexander the Great, who also added his own piece to it. So it is very significant. So here we have an obelisk, and here

we have an obelisk that never made it to the temple. They would actually cut these things out of granite, significantly farther south than the building of the temple and then believe it or not, float them up on the Nile river, bring them to the temple area and erect them. You'll notice another student standing right up here, so you get some perspective on the size. Now nothing was ever done with this because it cracked in the process and therefore the granite was imperfect and they couldn't use it as an obelisk.

Well here we are in the actual center, in the Hypostylus of the temple. There are a hundred and thirty-six (I think) columns in this area of the Karnak temple. [Gordon photo op here.] And here is just one of the ceremonial avenues between this particular temple we just looked at and the temple at Luxor itself. That was the Karnak temple; this is the temple of Luxor.

19th Dynasty

We've been looking at the 18th dynasty. If we hold an early date for the Exodus, it's during the 18th dynasty. Now we're going to look at the 19th dynasty. If we opt for a late date for the Exodus, we've got to figure out who is in the 19th dynasty because that is when the late date theory proposes that the Exodus happened. So just a look at major 19th dynasty figures. This is not a complete list but sufficient for our purposes. Seti I gets us started. By the way he makes some forays into the land of Israel but that is beyond our interest right now. Ramesses II is the one you want to highlight. Notice how long he reigns. By the way, you can go to the National Museum in Cairo and still see Ramesses II's mummy there. At any rate we've got a long reigning pharaoh here. His name is what's important. Hang onto that because in Exodus chapter 1 we have a mention of the building of the cities Pithom and Ramesses. Some scholars think that if Exodus talks about the Israelites building this city, it must be named after this Ramesses, who reigned a long time and was a monumental builder. Probably of all of the pharaohs, Ramesses II did more to leave his footprints all over the land of Egypt--temple, after temple, after temple, after major structure. So students look at the text in

Exodus chapter 1 and they say, “that reference to Ramesses must mean that the Exodus happened under the reign of Ramesses II.”

Well then after that we just have to notice a pharaoh named Merenptah. Sometimes you’re going to see it Merneptah - that ‘en’ can turn around - but this is the more appropriate way to read it. He is important for us because he leaves (and you’re reading about it in *Old Testament Parallels*) a standing stone called a stela or monument. It says among other peoples, he was victorious over the Israelites. He calls them “Israel.” And that happens to date to about 1209 B.C. So if that’s true, this is on one of his campaigns through the land that will become Israel - through the land of Canaan. And he says “I’ve got this person, I’ve got them all, got that...I fought Israel.” So we have some indication that Israel is in the land by 1209 approximately. So far so good?

Let’s look at a couple structures of Ramesses. Here is our Ramesses the second. He leaves all sorts of statues of himself, this one is just a close up of one of the very large heads. Notice the cobra as part of his head piece. The cobra was a major deity in Egypt, one that protected the pharaoh. Notice the size of Ramesses. One of his wives is between his knees here and then I’m tickling his toe down there. So you get an idea of how big this statue is. This is one of his significant temples farther south. In fact, it’s right at the border of Egypt a place called Abu-Simbel.

Have I talked about this in here yet? Okay, we’re going to take a little tangent. Gamal Abdul Nassar was the president of Egypt, back in the 1950s and 60s. He had this idea that he was going to build a dam on the Nile river to control the flooding of the Nile – which, by the way, was not a very intelligent thing to do because that meant that the regular flooding of the Nile and the wonderful deposit of silt on the flood plain that made for agricultural productivity was going to be disrupted. But he wanted to control the flooding so he intended to build a dam and of course back behind the dam would be a huge lake. And that huge lake was going to flood out this temple and a sister temple that was actually around the

corner. This was Ramesses's and that one was for his favorite wife, Nefertari.

At any rate the international community was incensed because they knew that all of these remarkable structures were going to be under water and so they raised a fair amount of money. I can't remember how many millions, but it was costly. They cut this thing out of the rock, rock by rock, piece by piece, labeled it all and hauled it up to a location above the level of the lake. This is an artificial mountain, constructed to put this temple and the one of his wife on the other side. This isn't just a façade. You can walk in the doors; I'll show you the inside briefly. The four statues are of Ramesses himself. This second one right here had already fallen down in antiquity. So they left it fallen, once it was repositioned. Those statues are 67 feet tall.

If you walk in through that door right there, go all the way through, there is room after room of depictions of battles and Ramesses' interactions with the gods. But here in the inner sanctum are four gods, one of which is the god of the underworld, Seth. Outside again, these creatures on top are baboons. Baboons were important because they would start rustling and moving around when the sun rose and of course, the major deity is the sun.

That's just a quick look at Egypt, particularly 18th and 19th dynasty chronologies. I've shown you the Ramesses remains because I want you to get a sense of what a remarkable builder he was - and I only showed you a small amount.

Biblical Data in Regard to Dating the Exodus

Now let's look at the biblical data. Exodus chapter 1, verse 6: "Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died but the Israelites were fruitful, multiplied greatly, and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them." Notice the same phraseology that we have in terms of God's blessing right away in Genesis 1 and also after the flood—"fruitful and multiplied."

Continuing with verse 8: "Then a new king who did not know about Joseph came to power in Egypt. 'Look' he said, 'the Israelites have become much too

numerous for us. Let's deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, they will join our enemies, fight against us and then leave the country.' So they put slave-masters over them to oppress them with forced labor and they built [and here are our two cities] Pithom and Rameses as store cities for pharaoh. But the more they oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites and worked them ruthlessly. They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and all kinds of work in the field."

In other words, there were slaves everywhere. You know we often, when we watch movies about the Israelites in Egypt, we're seeing them building the great pyramids, which is historically inaccurate. They were field workers. They were making bricks, yes true, but they were also working as field workers. Pharaoh was afraid that they were going to leave which means he would lose a major part of his economic structure if they left. That is why he was fearful of this.

By the way, when pharaoh wanted to deal shrewdly with these people, he had three different phases of to his plan. First was the oppression. Secondly was the advice to the midwives and thirdly was going to be throwing the baby boys into the river. He dealt with his problem in phases; each one backfired on him terribly, so he was not being so shrewd after all.

At any rate, in terms of our data with which we date the Exodus, chapter two is important as well. Moses murdered somebody, the word got out, and he had to leave. Then, verse 23 tells us: "during that long period, the king of Egypt died." So you've got to have a change of the king of Egypt. Somewhere between the time of the oppression and his flight at the age of forty, and then his return, there has got to be a change over in the pharaoh.

Making a Case for an Early Date for the Exodus

Those people who suggest an early date for the Exodus, do so on the following basis. The starting point is 1 Kings chapter 6, verse 1: "In the 480th year after the Exodus, the temple was built." Because of the chronological

correspondences that I talked about earlier, we can date the reign of Solomon and it's pretty clear that the temple was built in 966 BC. That's a solid date. So all you've got to do now is say 480 years before 966 and we know the date of the Exodus. It is 1446 BC. And of course, interestingly enough, if you go back to the little chart you were just looking at, Amenhotep II has just become king about four years before that. The preceding king is gone, Amenhotep II becomes king. [Given the change noted earlier, it would now be Thutmose III but the principle still applies; there has been a change in pharaoh.] Moses can come back from Midian, and here goes the Exodus.

Now just in terms of thinking about generations, the next point is important and you're going to see why in a moment. When you read 1 Chronicles 6, it says there are 18 generations between Korah, who lived about the time of the Exodus, and a descendant of his named Haman who lived in David's time. Now if you are going to figure approximately 25 years for every generation, then we have just about the right period of time. This doesn't directly talk about the Exodus but it gives us a sense that maybe that time frame is about right.

A couple more things. When we read the book of Judges (which we're going to do in a couple of weeks) we read about this judge named Jephthah who as part of his judging had to do battle with the Ammonites. But he writes a letter first and part of that letter is noted in Judges chapter 11 verse 36. In that text he says: "For three hundred years our people have lived in these cities."

Now, if Jephthah was living towards the end of the period of the judges and that ends about the middle of the eleventh century (mid-1000), then perhaps we can put Jephthah somewhere around 1100. We don't have a specific exact date for him but an approximation. Then all you need to do is add 300 to that and what do you have? You've got 1400, remembering that our Exodus date was 1446. There was forty years of wandering in the wilderness because of the Israelites' disobedience, a conquest around 1400, and then people settled in the cities where Jephthah says they've been living for 300 years.

[this next section is no longer applicable if Thutmose III was instead the Pharaoh of the Exodus] A couple more things on this. If indeed this works together the way that I've suggested then indeed we have Moses fleeing under Thutmose III, who is a fairly significant figure and the one under whom he returned would be under Amenhotep II.

Now let me say one other thing that I haven't got up here. Because it's completely conjecture but it might be interesting. As I said a moment ago, Hatshepsut was a pretty feisty woman. She wasn't a person who just sort of sat back and pretended to be queen. Possibly, since she was a daughter of Thutmose I and Moses would have been born early during the reign of Thutmose I, she might have had enough hutzpah to counteract her father's edict about throwing babies into the river and therefore rescued this little box that had Moses in it and reared this Hebrew child in the court. If a pharaoh's daughter was going to do that, she had to have some kind of clout to do it. And the suggestion is that Hatshepsut might have been that person. We certainly know from what's left in terms of inscriptions on the walls of temples that she was no mean person. **[end of the chronologically revised section]**

The Late Date Position

Okay, let's take the late date evidence. There is actually more evidence than mentioned here. These are the most significant features. We've got the mention in Exodus 1:11, as I mentioned, of a place called Rameses. Therefore the idea is that if Pharaoh Rameses was such a big builder, then perhaps he built this city and that's the city the Israelites were building. Therefore that's when the oppression was taking place.

A further claim is that the 18th dynasty actually did not reside in the Delta area but farther south. However, there is now evidence that they were active in the Delta region and that was a jumping off point for their ventures into Canaan. We will return to this later.

Well then, how are we going to deal with 1 Kings 6:1, which specifically

mentions 480 years? The response is that 40 years is quite a standard number throughout the Old Testament; it shows up a lot. And so the suggestion is that it's meant to be symbolic of a generation and therefore not literally 40 years. Instead, it refers symbolically to a generation. If 40 is one generation, then 480 is 12 generations. Thus, the reference in 1 Kings doesn't literally mean 480 years. Instead, it's referring to 12 generations and, as we said just a moment ago as we were talking about the time extent from Korah to Heman, a generation was generally 25 years. The idea here would be that if we are talking about 12 generations we only have 300 literal years. That then moves our date down to a time when you'd have the oppression and the Exodus taking place in the 1200s as opposed to the 1400s.

Now let's keep going a little bit further. A famous archaeologist, back in the mid-20th century, did a thorough survey of the area of trans-Jordan and concluded that there is no evidence of geopolitical Edom and Moab here during this time period (i.e the 1400s). We're going to see that the book of Numbers claims that the Israelites did encounter Edom and Moab. A king of Edom said, "no you can't go through our territory." If there was a king of Edom there must have been an Edom. And yet Nelson Glueck didn't find anything. Now I need to tell you that since this time the archeologists have turn up some fairly major evidence in southern Transjordan from this time period. But Nelson Glueck's conclusions held sway for a long time.

Likewise from archeology, there is a major destruction level long about 1200 in parts of what would become Israel. And so for quite some time, scholars thought that this was evidence of the Israelites coming through in the conquest at that time. Therefore you've got an Exodus in about 1250 and the conquest long about 1200. I'm going to say more about that in a moment. Likewise, archaeological surveys of the hill country discovered that really we have an uptick in settlement in that region starting about 1200.

Are you convinced? Looks like a pretty good battery of evidence, doesn't it? Most Old Testament scholars along with the majority of those in the field of archaeology will opt for the "late date," if they think there was an Exodus at all. (By the way, there is a whole bunch of them that don't affirm the historicity of the Exodus.) In other words, the Exodus was long about 1260, and then they entered and settled the land.

Oh yes the Merneptah stele... That dates to about 1220 or as late as 1209 depending on whom we're reading. I'll get back to that in a moment. By the way I'm not going to ask you to come down on one side or the other. You just need to know the evidence or at least you need to know that this issue exists because it affects so much else of what we do in Old Testament chronology.

Some Evaluative Observations

If indeed we're going to read these numbers in the book of Exodus literally, Moses was 80 at the time of the Exodus. (There is the possibility that number is also symbolic.) If so, then the oppression started long before Rameses II even shows up as Pharaoh. Furthermore, more recent work in archaeology by James Hoffmeier has indicated that the city that everybody says that the Israelites built under the oppressive reign of Rameses II, actually was founded 70 years before that. The name of Rameses was undoubtedly in use before the time Rameses II. After all if there was a Rameses II there had to be a Rameses I. Even going back beyond that, Genesis 47:11 uses the expression "the land of Rameses" so it was a known name. Now it might be an anachronism; it might be somebody putting that into the text. But nevertheless it's there right at the end of Genesis.

As I noted above, the statement that says the 18th dynasty was not active in the Delta is not true. There is evidence that the 18th dynasty was indeed active in the Delta region. So that's not going to be a good piece of evidence for moving it into the 19th dynasty.

The most significant consideration is this. If indeed you're going to compress these years and say they are symbolic years you'll say then that the

oppression started under Rameses II with his building enterprises. You're also going to have the Exodus under Rameses II. That is necessary in order to have the Israelites into the land of Israel by the time Merneptah comes through in 1220 (or 1209). And therefore there is no change in pharaoh. Yet Exodus 2:23 says the pharaoh from whom Moses had to flee because he killed the Egyptian died before Moses came back. That doesn't work in terms of this late date proposal.

The archeological stuff is a huge and fascinating picture, but there are a few things we want to say. It is quite true that there is a destruction level at about 1200 BC. That could well be due to someone like the Philistines coming through very easily. It does not have to be the Israelites, especially since when you read the biblical narrative itself in Joshua, there were only three cities that were burned - only three: Jericho, Ai, and Hazor. There are battles, but there is not destruction at every site. It says that they go and live in the cities at least some of them. So the archeology isn't going to be that helpful in that particular regard.

Birth and Preservation of Moses

Let's move on. We've got about ten minutes to talk about Exodus 1-3. I'm so glad that you've already got a good sense of the sovereignty of God. Don't lose it, because we are going to see it over and over and over again throughout the rest of this course, but particularly in regard to Moses himself. His birth clearly gives evidence of God's sovereignty.

Just several observations: Don't lose sight of the fact that the midwives didn't tell the truth. They were more concerned to preserve life. And when it comes down to preservation of life and particularly preservation of innocent life, they made the right choice. God blessed them for it. Have you noticed, by the way, that the midwives are named: Shiphrah and Puah. We know their names. The pharaoh, however, isn't named. That's why we have such a horrible time trying to figure out when the Exodus is dated. They didn't bother to name which pharaoh. He's just called a pharaoh which is a title at that point, whereas we have named midwives who are blessed by God because of what they did to preserve the lives

of these children.

A second thing to note is our *tevah*. Where have we seen that term before? What's a *tevah*?

Tim.[student response]

Yes, when Noah built the ark, it was a *tevah* and it was the craft that preserved Noah and his family through the devastating, chaotic, horrifying waters of the flood. Likewise here is the *tevah* again. And this is not a word that is used a lot. So when you see it in these two places there are some interesting parallels that we want to think about. Moses's life was preserved through the chaos, the fearsome nature of the flood waters of the Nile. Water is simply water for us; we look at rivers and they're pretty. Water was fearsome in antiquity. It was perceived as being a place of terror and unrest and chaos.

Also notice the high profile that women have in this narrative. Moses' sister, Miriam, is a key figure. Pharaoh's daughter, as I've already mentioned, also was a key figure. And his mother was significant in giving him his education from the get-go because Moses knew who he was. He knew he was an Israelite. I'm not sure exactly when she weaned him; it may have been 4 or 5 years of age. But Moses had enough background to know who he was and that is important.

He got a further education at the court. You just saw in those pictures all sorts of inscriptions all over these pillars and walls. Moses was brought up in that court. Moses would know how to read and write and how to deal in court procedure. He would be ready to come back into that court even though it was 40 years later. He had a proper preparation, having been brought up in the court of pharaoh, not only on the intellectual side, but also in the social political arena as well with all the protocol that would be part and parcel of that picture.

After his murderous impulse, he fled to Midian and married Zipporah, daughter of Jethro. He shepherded the flocks of Jethro and that's a terrific education. I know you've probably heard this in sermons before but it has to be said. Shepherding flocks in Sinai did two good things for Moses. It got him aware

of the Sinai peninsula he knew it like the back of his hands, so when he was leading people through it, he knew where the water sources were. But secondly, he knew how to deal with dumb sheep, which is a good preparation for dealing with dumb people. And the people would be rebellious over and over and over again. Moses demonstrated his capability of being an extraordinarily good leader. He had preparation.

The Call of Moses

Well, the last thing we want to do is look at chapter 3. Keep in mind what the burning bush symbolized. The ground on which Moses was standing was holy ground. God's presence was there. Fire is often used to demonstrate God's presence and the purifying refining nature of that fire. The bush was burning but was not consumed. Notice it was not an Acacia tree. The Acacia trees are the big trees of Sinai. This was little - the Hebrew word is *sne*. It's a *sne*--a little bush. God had condescended to come into Moses' presence in that particular limiting fashion.

God addressed Moses, saying "I am the God of the covenant and I'm going to keep the covenant." Moses says, "Well, who should I say you are when the elders of Israel ask me about you?" And of course, at this point we have God's revelation of himself. Chapter 3:14-15 is very significant. "God said to Moses, 'I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I am has sent me to you.' The LORD, the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation." In other words, he is the God of past, present and future. The "I am who I am" can also be translated, in fact, probably better be translated, "I will be who I will be." Hebrew only has two tenses and this is a future form. It implies "eternally self-existent" in this context. It's repeated. "I am who I am." The best understanding is "the eternally self-existent God of the covenant." The name Yahweh, which in your King James Bible and ASV comes across as "Jehovah," is in your NIV upper case LORD.

Whenever you read LORD in the NIV, it's translating Yahweh. Yahweh is built from the same consonants that underlie the verb "to be." I am who I am, or I will be who I will be. All this is packed into that name, Yahweh. We're going to do more with that when we pick up chapter 6. But at this point it's ten past so we probably better stop. Somebody remind me on Wednesday to talk briefly about in chapter 4 going back to Egypt.

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