

Digging for The Truth

Evidence of Abraham

- Appearance of Abraham coincides with people movements to Mesopotamia ca. 2000 BC
- The domestication of camels in Abraham's day corresponds to available evidence
- Evidence shows that tents were in use in Abraham's day.
- The covenant made in Gen. 15 corresponds to the style of covenant used at that time.

What other evidence exists for the Patriarchs?

- 1.) **Name Games** – Names such as Abraham, Jacob, Ishmael, and Isaac have been found in the archives of Mari. This is significant because these names were most popular during the early second millennium and quickly fell out of use
- 2.) **Old-Time Religion** – The religious practices of the patriarchs are authentically ancient. They make their own altars and offer their own sacrifices without priestly aid. They communicate with God directly without the help of intermediaries, such as the prophets.

Israel in Egypt

Semites in Egypt

- Ancient texts mention Semites entering the fertile northeast region of Egypt in time of famine.
- The Beni Hasan tomb painting (19th century BC) shows Semites going to Egypt for trading persons
- The Hyksos Period (2nd Intermediate Period) was a time when Semitic peoples ruled Egypt.
- A painting from the tomb of Rekhmarie showing Semites making bricks.

Is there any other evidence for Joseph?

- The 20 shekels paid for Joseph (Gen. 37:28) corresponds to the going price for a slave in the 18th century BC (it was less earlier, more later)
- The story of Potiphar's wife, and the *Tale of Two Brothers* have distinct similarities.
- The seventy days needed for mummification of Jacob (Gen. 50:2-3)
- 'Abrek! (Gen. 41:43) – Authentic Egyptian phrase in the Hebrew Bible. Why not Assyrian and Babylonian language?

- Viziers (VPs, what Joseph was) were not always native Egyptians.

The Birth of Moses

- Was the story of Moses' birth a rip-off?

Moses' childhood

- What kind of education did Moses' receive?
- Beginning in the 18th Dynasty of Egypt, foreign princes were given an excellent education for placement in government office (Acts 7:22)

Did Moses really confront Pharaoh?

- What does the snake have to say?
- The snake was a symbol of divine protection, was now being turned into a divine threat.
- Moses' staff turning into a snake would only make sense in an Egyptian context
- The serpent was both a protective symbol for the Pharaoh and the worst enemy of the gods.
- The sign involving the snake demonstrates the power of Yahweh vs. the trickery of magicians.
- If something was to eat something else, it absorbed all of its magical powers.

The Plagues of Egypt

- The plagues demonstrated the non-existence of the Egyptian gods. It was a direct attack on the Egyptian gods "on their turf".
- While some attempt to explain the Exodus in natural terms, it cannot be done convincingly. (It can't explain everything, example: death of the first born)
- Pharaoh is a "god". His firstborn son is the next "god".
- The Egyptians did not record their defeats (literally).

Numbers in the Exodus

600,000 males – 2 to 3 million overall

The term translated as "thousand" (elaph) has a second meaning.

It can also mean commander (commander of 10-20 men)

It is possible that it was actually 20,000 – 30,000 men.

The Exodus – Fact or fiction?

- Pentateuch uses Egyptian names and words, not Babylonian or Assyrian?

- The account of Moses' birth seems to presume familiarity with the story.
- Slave origin of the past – why such a humble past?
- Familiarity with Egyptian calendar (10 day week)
- Lack of mention of plagues was expected.
- Tabernacle looks Egyptian, not Assyrian or Babylonian
- (All of the above accounts for the story to be true, taking place under Egyptian rule, not Assyrian or Babylonian rule.)

Covenants

- Outside the Bible, covenants were never made between people and the “gods”. The “gods” couldn't be trusted.
- Covenants are date specific (the way they were drawn up changed over time)

Your God is One

Did monotheism begin in ancient Egypt?

The Conquest of Canaan – Did it really happen?

- **Joshua**
- The walls of Jericho really did fall
- Evidence at Hazor confirms the Biblical portrait of destruction
- Joshua is written in the style of an Egyptian conquest account

David and Solomon – Real Men or Royal Myths?

David

- An outlaw, Philistine vassal, adulterer, murderer, bad father, vindictive on his deathbed. (Not necessarily the images you want to be portrayed of a king)
- The kingdoms of Israel and Judah were frequent battlefields.
- Jerusalem destroyed over a dozen times.
- Other cities of that time didn't have lots of remains.
- Not much archaeological evidence, but that is expected.

Solomon

- We only have 4 or 5 kinds not mentioned in literature outside the Bible.

Problems with the OT Apocrypha

- Chronological, historical, and geographical areas are incorrect.
- In 1500s was pronounced canonical by Roman Catholics.
- Bad behavior is glorified (Suicide glorified in 2 Maccabees)
- Written 1st, 2nd, 3rd century BC during the Intertestamental Period.