

Historical Consideration of the Old Testament



According to 1 Kings 4:21, the region ruled by Solomon extended from the Euphrates River to the border of Egypt. Among many powerful nations, it is difficult to understand how such vast territory could have been secured in such a short period of time. Archaeological excavations in Israel over a long period of time have failed to uncover any traces of the united monarchy, which proves this point. In the end, one cannot find remnants of myth in reality. Despite large-scale excavations carried out several times in Israel to find traces of the kingdoms of David or Solomon, no evidence has ever been discovered, yet this period is still glorified as if it truly existed in history.

It is said that Abraham left Ur of the Chaldeans, passed through Haran, and arrived in the land of Canaan. However, there are no records confirming that Abraham ever lived in Ur. Abraham's migration to Canaan is estimated to have taken place around 2100 BCE. But since the Chaldeans did not exist before 1000 BCE, the claim that Abraham emigrated from the city of Ur of the Chaldeans is inconsistent. In Genesis, Isaac, Abraham's son, is described as asking for help from Abimelek, king of the Philistines, but the name "Philistines" did not appear until after 1200 BCE.

"Furthermore, the stories of Abraham and the other patriarchs often feature camels. However, camels were not domesticated until around 1000 BCE, and the camel caravans mentioned so often in the Tanakh, carrying gum, balm, and myrrh, only became common in the 8th century BCE." (1)

"In Genesis 23:16, it is written: 'Abraham agreed to Ephron's terms and weighed out for him the price he had named in the hearing of the Hittites: four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weight current among the merchants.' [Shekels—coins used only after the Babylonian exile—author's note.] Some critics argue that at that time minted coins did not exist, the Israelites could neither read nor write, and thus could not exchange documents, nor did they engage in trade with neighboring tribes." (2)

"The expression 'Ur of the Chaldeans' indicates that this book could not have been written before the 6th century BCE. The Chaldean kingdom was founded in southern Babylonia by King Nabopolassar in the 7th century BCE. Babylonia, a vassal state of the Assyrian Empire, saw Nabopolassar rise in revolt after the death of the powerful Assyrian king Ashurbanipal in 627 BCE, establishing the Chaldean Empire. This empire is also known as the Neo-Babylonian Empire, which disappeared when Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon in 539 BCE." (3)

"In ancient Egyptian texts, the Hebrews were referred to as 'Shasu,' meaning 'those who wander barefoot.' They appear as 'Israel' on the stela of Pharaoh Merneptah (reigned 1213–1203 BCE). The inscription in ancient Egyptian reads: 'Israel is laid waste; his seed is no more.' Shasu was a collective term referring to people from Moab, Edom, and the Israelite region." (4)

The "Israel" Merneptah Stele (1205 BC)



As seen in the third installment of this series, The Great Flood and the Exodus, if the Exodus described by Catholic tradition had occurred during the reign of Ramesses II, then his successor Merneptah could not have left such a record on his stela in 1205 BCE. Also, if, as Judaism claims, the Exodus had occurred around 1450 BCE and 400–480 years later the kingdoms of David and Solomon had arisen, then it would follow that David reigned from 1000–961 BCE and Solomon from 961–922 BCE. This at least appears chronologically plausible. (5)

However, records state that Pharaoh Shishak (Sheshonq I, reigned 935–914 BCE) invaded Jerusalem and conquered Judah in 925 BCE (1 Kings 14:25–26). If the division of the united monarchy took place in 922 BCE, and Solomon had reigned until that time, then this would mean Egypt invaded while Solomon was still in power. Yet if Solomon truly possessed the vast royal power described in the Bible, the records would not have left only a simple note that Israel was conquered. Just as with the myth of Moses' great Exodus, the kingdoms of David and Solomon remain nothing more than legends painted in the imagination.

Several Pharaohs are mentioned by name in the Old Testament. The one most often

referenced is Shishak, described as the king who sheltered Jeroboam when he fled from Solomon (1 Kings 11:40). The next Egyptian king is So, mentioned in 2 Kings 17:4. Before the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed by Assyria in 722 BCE, a letter was sent asking for his help. However, because Egypt was divided into several states at that time, it is impossible to identify which king this was.

Another is Pharaoh Neco (Necho II, reigned 609–593 BCE), mentioned in Jeremiah 46:2. King Josiah of Judah (reigned 640–609 BCE) was killed in battle against Pharaoh Neco at Megiddo (2 Kings 23:29, 2 Chronicles 35:22). In Kings he dies by the sword, while Chronicles records that he was fatally wounded by arrows. Thereafter, Judah became a vassal state of Egypt.



Pharaoh Hophra (Apries, reigned 589–570 BCE) appears only once, in Jeremiah 44:30. He is mentioned alongside Zedekiah, the last king of Judah (597–587 BCE), and Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (605–562 BCE).

It is striking that the names of Pharaohs reigning during the Israelites' supposed long residence in Egypt are never mentioned. In particular, neither the name of the Pharaoh whom Joseph served as vizier nor the Pharaoh who pursued the Israelites during the Exodus is given. In fact, most Pharaohs in the time of Moses and later are referred to only generically as "Pharaoh" (with a capital P). This strongly suggests that the events described in the Old Testament never actually happened.

Chronology of Kings Mentioned in Relation to the Old Testament

Hammurabi	1728-1686 B.C.	Old-Babylonian Kingdom (Code of Hammurabi)
Ramesses II	1279-1213 B.C.	Egyptian king, some claim that he was Egyptian ruler at the time of the Exodus
Merneptah	1213-1203 B.C.	Egyptian King, Son of Ramesses II
Shishak	935-914 B.C.	Egypt king, Invade Israel in 925 B.C. and made Israel as a tributary
Shalmaneser III	859-824 B.C.	Assyrian king, made Samaria (Northern Israel kingdom) as a tributary, The battle of Qarqar in 853 B.C.
Ada-nirari III	807-782 B.C.	Assyrian king
Tiglath-pileser III	745-727 B.C.	Assyrian king
Sargon II	722-705 B.C.	Assyria king, 722/721 B.C. destruction of Northern Israel
Sennacherib	705-681 B.C.	Assyria king, made Southern Judah as a tributary
Achemenes	705-675 B.C.	Persian king
Teispes	675-640 B.C.	Persian king
Cyrus I	640-600 B.C.	Persian king
Neco II	609-593 B.C.	Egypt king, killed king Josiah at the battle of Megiddo in 609 B.C.
Nebukadnessar	605-562 B.C.	New Babylonian king, Babylonian Captivity (587-538 B.C.)
Cambyzes I	600-559 B.C.	Persian king
Belshazzar	562-539 B.C.	Last regent king of New Babylonian kingdom
Cyrus II	550-530 B.C.	Destruction of New Babylonia (539 B.C.) Persian control of Israel
Cambyzes II	530-522 B.C.	Persian king
Darius I	522-486 B.C.	Persian king
Xerxes	486-465 B.C.	Fail to invade Greece (480 B.C.)
Artaxerxes I	465-433 B.C.	Prophetess Noadiah and other prophets' opposition to reconstruction (Nehemiah 6:14)
		Standstill of construction of Jerusalem temple (521-432 B.C., Ezra 4:24)
Darius II	433-404 B.C.	Persian king
Artaxerxes II	405-358 B.C.	Persian king
Alexander III	336-323 B.C.	Invasion of Persia 331 B.C.

The Iron Age

Historians generally date the beginning of the Iron Age to around 1200 BCE. However, references to iron appear in the Pentateuch, which supposedly records events that occurred long before this. In Genesis 4:22, iron is mentioned for the first time:

"Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron."

This would place the event around 3100 BCE, when even making tools from bronze was difficult. It is implausible that iron could have been smelted and refined into tools at that time.

In Deuteronomy 8:9, Moses says:

"A land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills."

But this is a record supposedly from the 14th or 13th century BCE, right after the Exodus from Egypt. Whether this was possible at that time is highly questionable.

"China's advanced bronze metallurgy began around 3000 BCE, but it was only around 500 BCE that China acquired the world's earliest cast iron production technology." (6)

In the 1959 film Ben-Hur, Judah Ben-Hur defeats the Roman governor in a chariot race. The governor drives a chariot with beautifully decorated bronze wheels, while

Ben-Hur's chariot has crude iron wheels. When the wheels collide and scrape against each other, Ben-Hur ultimately wins because his iron chariot was stronger. Since this race is set in the late 20s CE, it can be inferred that even at that time, it was still difficult to produce finely decorated iron chariots.



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