

Date of the Exodus According to the Biblical Account Sets the Stage for Biblical Chronology

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The Scriptures date the Exodus as having occurred in 1446 BC and Joshua's conquest in 1406 BC. As we approach the date of the Exodus, we quickly discover conflicting opinions among scholars.¹ Some professors date the Exodus as having occurred in the thirteenth century (late date) and others assign a time to the fifteenth-century (early date). The early date, by some scholars, is based upon two factors, as they interpret the data—archaeology and the Bible. On the other hand, some interpreters assert the late date (13th century BC) as the most logical date, based, not upon the Bible's chronology, but rather upon the interpretation of some archaeological findings and the Generally Accepted Dates (GAD) for Egyptian chronology.

Some scholars, in spite of the so-called archaeological data, and rightly so, still rely upon the biblical data in seeking a solution to this most perplexing question as to the time frame of the Exodus.² As we sift through the various scholarly journals and books dealing with the date of the Exodus, we detect that there is no consensus as to the interpretation of the data. This chapter seeks to examine both the late and early date as proposed by liberal and conservative scholars. There is no harmony as to the presuppositions set forth in order to try to arrive at a date that harmonizes with so-called archaeological findings, irrespective of the biblical data.

The objective of this study is to present the various theories advanced by late date (13th century BC) and early date (15th century BC) theologians and archaeologists. Even though this study addresses the interpretation of the data as presented by the archaeologists in establishing the late date (**based on the accepted Egyptian chronology**), nevertheless, **the basic presupposition of this in-depth analysis is that the Bible is the final source of authority in establishing beyond doubt the time frame assigned for the Exodus.**

¹An excellent example of differences among men of equal scholarship is found in Siegfried H. Horn, "What We Don't Know About Moses and the Exodus," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 3, no. 2 (June 1977): 22-31.

²Archaeological data is very fluid; the data set forth by numerous scholars, often times, depends upon the presuppositions of the archaeologist.

LATE DATE (13TH CENTURY BC)

The late date is based upon the so-called archaeological finds of numerous archaeologists.³ John Davis and John Whitcomb (Theology Professor and Old Testament scholar)⁴—both scholars accept the biblical account for the date of the Exodus—explain the position of many archaeologists this way: “Many scholars, refusing to accept the historical accuracy of the numbers of the Bible, date these events in the thirteenth century BC”⁵ One such example is the distinguished archaeologist, Kathleen Kenyon (1906-1978, leading archaeologist of Neolithic culture in the fertile Crescent) who worked for many years in Palestinian excavations. She asserted forcefully her understanding of chronology: “Chronology in Palestine cannot stand on its own feet until one is dealing with a relatively late epoch.”⁶ The relatively late date (13th century) is based upon the so-called evidence from Egypt—two of the cities of Raamses (Tanis and Qantir). Also, the late date is maintained because of the political history of the 19th Dynasty.⁷ This history deals with Ramses II’s Wine-Jar Sealings, Transjordan campaign, Hittite Treaty, and the Form of Mosaic Covenant.⁸

On the other hand, the early date is predicated upon [1] biblical evidence: (a) chronology of 1 Kings 6:1, and (b) Judges 11:26; and [2] Egyptian chronological evidence⁹: (a) Thutmose I [1504-1492], (b) Hatshepsut [1479-1457], (c) Thutmose III [thüt-'mō-sə, 1479-1425], (d) Amenhotep II [ä-mən-'hō- tep, 1427-1397], (e) Thutmose [1397-1387], Son of Amenhotep [1427-1397], and (f) Apiru.¹⁰ **As we reflect upon the confusion, just where do we start in**

³Siegfried H. Horn (1903-1993), “What We Don’t Know About Moses and the Exodus,” Ibid.

⁴**John Whitcomb** (b. 1924) taught at Grace Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana, from 1951 to 1990, and gained much recognition for his work on *The Genesis Flood*, which he co-authored with Dr. Henry Morris in 1961. This book has been credited as one of the major catalysts for the modern creationist movement. **Henry Morris** (1918-2006) is the founder and former president of the Institute of Creation Research. He served as professor of hydrology at the institute's division of graduate study and research. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota and for twenty-eight years taught at major universities, including serving as chairman of the civil engineering department at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. He is the author of *Scientific Creationism* and *Men of Science Men of God: Great Scientists of the Past Who Believed the Bible*.

⁵John J. Davis and John C. Whitcomb, *A History of Israel from Conquest to Exile* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 17.

⁶Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, 5th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1979), 15. **Dame Kathleen Mary Kenyon**, (1906-1978), was a leading British archaeologist of Neolithic culture in the Fertile Crescent. She is best known for her excavations of Jericho in 1952–1958, and has been called one of the most influential archaeologists of the 20th century.^[1] She was Principal of St Hugh's College, Oxford from 1962 to 1973.

⁷See Alberto Siliotti (b. 1950), *Guide to the Valley of the Kings* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1999), 2, for the Generally Accepted Dates for the 18th, 19th, and 20th Dynasties.

⁸William. H. Shea, “Date of the Exodus,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, revised, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 2: 230.

⁹Even though I list the Egyptian chronology based on the Generally Accepted Dates (GAD) for the Pharaohs of Egypt, still, I do not accept the GAD for Egyptian chronology.

¹⁰Shea, “Date of the Exodus,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 2: 230.

order to establish a correct chronology upon which to base our understanding for the date of the Exodus? Another scholar, John Bimson, has suggested moving the conquest back 200 years in order to reconcile the biblical account with chronology of the various periods.¹¹ Still, another archaeologist, Han Goedicke, has also suggested the early date (15th century) for the Exodus based upon a tidal wave. He says that a “Tidal-like wave was transmitted by a volcanic eruption in the Mediterranean Sea.”¹²

Statement of Conflicting Views

Since the late date (13th century) and early date (15th century) are often asserted by both theological scholars as well as archaeological scholars, this in-depth study presents both sides concerning the pinpointing of the date. This evaluation looks at the evidence presented by both sides in order to demonstrate the confusion among scholars in seeking to arrive at a correct understanding of the date. **In seeking to pigeon-hole data as it is revealed from excavations, scholars frequently adhere to the chronology established by Egyptologists.**¹³ Many scholars key their dating of the Exodus to the known (exceptionally vague) historical records of Egypt.¹⁴ Nevertheless, in spite of the questionable chronology of Egypt, many theologians frequently reject the mid-fifteenth century (1446 BC) dating of the Exodus. Why? Since many of the late date scholars reject the early date (1446 BC), many scholars, without question, follow the dating scheme as advanced by others for a late date (1250 BC) based on GAD of Egyptian chronology.¹⁵

As we read in detail this investigation concerning the dating of the Exodus, we will quickly discover that the interpretation of the archaeological evidence¹⁶ and the Egyptian chronology¹⁷ is highly subjective. The late date (13th century BC) is asserted upon the

¹¹John J. Bimson and David Livingstone, “Redating the Exodus,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 13, no. 5 (September/October 1987): 40-53, 66-69.

¹²Cited in Hershel Shanks (b. 1930), “The Exodus and the Crossing of the Red Sea,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 7, no. 5 (September/October 1981): 43-50.

¹³See the following books for a refutation of the Generally Accepted Dates for Egyptian Chronology: Immanuel Velikovsky (1895-1979), *Ages in Chaos: From the Exodus to King Akhnaton*, vol., 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1952); Donovan A. Courville, *The Exodus Problem and Its Ramifications*, 2 volumes (Loma Linda, California: Challenge Books, 1971; and Gary North, *Moses & Pharaoh: Dominion Religion Versus Power Religion* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1985), 299-325.

¹⁴Doovan A. Courville, “A Biblical Reconstruction of Egypt’s Chronology,” *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 2, no. 1 (Summer 1975): 131-159.

¹⁵ I highly recommend listening to Douglas Stuart’s YouTube “Is the Bible Accurate and Reliable?” (Session 1 of 2) for an examination of those scholars who accept the Documentary Hypothesis concerning the writings of Moses—beginning with counter number 50:42 through 1:21:55, see also 118:-3—1:19:50. Accessed: 5-14-2009.

¹⁶See Hershel Shanks, “The Exodus and the Crossing of the Red Sea, According to Hans Goedicke,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 7, no. 5 (September/October 1981): 42-50; Charles Richard Krabmalkov, “A Critique of Professor Goedicke’s Exodus Theories,” *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Ibid., 51-54; Siegfried H. Horn, “What We Don’t Know About the Exodus,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 3, no. 2 (June 1971): 22-31.

¹⁷Courville, “A Biblical Reconstruction of Egypt’s Chronology,” 2:131-159. See also Gary North, *Moses & Pharaoh* (Tyler, Texas: The Institute for Christian Economics, 1985), 299-325.

interpretation of data as presented by certain archaeologists and Egyptian chronologists. The scholars, as a whole, still do not know how to apply the information from the various sources without a tremendous amount of narrow-mindedness in their analysis. For instance, Siegfried H. Horn (1908-1993, Seventh-day Adventist archaeologist and Bible scholar) calls attention to the subjectivity on the part of scholars in their application of the data:

The fact that after more than two hundred years of critical study, scholarly unanimity in this respect has not been approached, let alone achieved, illustrates, in Beegle's words, 'how much subjectivity is involved in a chain of reasoning which attempts to solve inner details of tradition and their development.'¹⁸

THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH DATING THE EXODUS

Archaeologists are continuously revising their findings based upon further studies. Examples of this subjectivity on the part of scholars are found in the writings, as mentioned above, of Siegfried H. Horn. He refers to three scholars of the late date hypothesis—(1) Moshe Pearlman,¹⁹ (2) David Daiches,²⁰ and (3) Dewey Beegle.²¹ Horn critiques²² these three Books by these distinguished scholars concerning the Exodus from Egypt and concludes by saying that one is impressed with how little, not how much one knows about the Exodus.²³

He calls attention to Pearlman who accepts the 13th century date because "current historians and archaeologists" place it in that time frame.²⁴ Horn also asserts that Daiches puts the Exodus under Ramses II (1279-1213 BC) "as most scholars think."²⁵ Beegle, too, presents some evidence—chronological and otherwise—which also appeals to a late date (13th century) in the 19th Dynasty (1295-1188 BC) in the time of Ramses II.²⁶ We almost stand in awe as we look at the material available on this subject. We almost feel that we are entangled in a labyrinth as we seek to find our way out of the dilemma. Horn cautions that we should not reject the early date (15th century) too readily:

It is true that much historical and archaeological evidence points to a 13th-century-BC date for the Exodus, for which reason the majority of scholars currently accept this date. However, the 15th-century date should not so cavalierly be dismissed or completely ignored as our authors do, for not all

¹⁸Siegfried H. Horn (1908-1993), "What We Don't Know About the Exodus," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 7, no. 5 (September/October 1981): 52. Horn retired as Dean of the Theological Seminary of Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. He also served as Director of the Heshbon Archaeological Expedition (1968-1973) and was on the staff of the excavations at Shechem. He is the author of many articles and books, including *Light from the Dustheap*.

¹⁹Moshe Pearlman, *In the Footsteps of Moses* (Jerusalem: Nateev Publishing, 1973).

²⁰David Daiches, *Moses: The Man and His Vision* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975).

²¹Dewey M. Beegle, *Moses: The Servant of Yahweh* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972).

²²See Horn, "What We Don't Know About the Exodus, 23.

²³*Ibid.*, 22.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 23.

²⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶*Ibid.*

the Biblical and extra-Biblical evidence points to the 19th Dynasty as the time when the Exodus took place.²⁷

Horn calls notice to the difficulties encountered by scholars as they seek to disentangle the confusion that exists within the world of scholarship. He drives home his point by zeroing in on the problems of *source criticism*. He employs Exodus 33:7-11 as an example to demonstrate the complexity of the problem in seeking a solution to the date of the Exodus. For instance, he writes:

This passage is attributed to **E** (the Elohist) by Walter Beyerlin, to **J** (the Yahwist) by Murray and to **D** (the Deuteronomist) by Martin Noth. The fact that after more than 200 years of critical study, scholarly unanimity in this respect has not been approached, let alone achieved, illustrates, in Beegle’s words, “how much subjectivity is involved in a chain of reasoning which attempts to solve inner details of tradition and their development” (p. 249). Although there are of course many passages in the Pentateuch as to which there is great agreement, an honest and serious study can only conclude that its ancient compiler(s) used various materials and attempted to create a set of five books which give a coherent picture of what happened, just as Tatian of the second century of the Christian era and many others after him, combined the narrative material of the four Gospels of the New Testament into a Gospel Harmony which tried to harmonize the various conflicting strands of traditions about the life and work of Jesus.²⁸

Horn also calls awareness to two chronological statements from Scripture that attest to an early date—I Kings 6:1 and Judges 11:26.²⁹ He then cites other evidence that supports an 18th-dynasty Exodus.³⁰ He argues that the conditions surrounding Moses are more favorable than under the 19th-dynasty kings “when there was no dearth of sons.”³¹ Horn correctly calls attention to insurmountable problems by assigning the date of the Exodus to the 19th dynasty.³² Having correctly argued his case for an early date (15th century BC) for the Exodus, he then proceeds to examine the number that migrated out of Egypt under Moses—2,000,000.

He rejects outright, without any evidence, the numbers in the census in Numbers (Chapters 1 and 26). He then cites Exodus 12:37, where it states that the Exodus included 600,000 armed adult men, not including dependents.³³ In order to show the disparity among scholars in their denial of the biblical account, he cites Daiches’ numbers involved in the Exodus to be “‘between two and six thousand’ (p. 82).”³⁴ On the other hand, Beegle believes “‘a total of about 16,000’ (p. 142)” would be more accurate.³⁵

²⁷Ibid., 23.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., 24.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

CONSERVATIVE SCHOLARSHIP

William Shea

Scholarship is not always clear as to which position they promote. The scholars of the late date (13th century) have made inroads into the camp of those who hold to the inspiration of Scripture. For example, William Shea, a conservative scholar, calls attention to a representative summary of the dating problem:

The date of the Exodus is one of the most debated topics in the OT studies because of the ambiguous nature of the evidence. Although the biblical texts seem to require a date in the middle of the 15th cent. BC, archaeological evidence seems to point to a date in the 13th cent. BC³⁶

This author (Shea) wants to hold to the 15th century dating (early date), but his justification, so it seems, is diminished because of his presuppositions concerning methodology. His methodology is established upon comparative chronology and comparative archaeology. This supposedly is the neutral scholarship that one needs in order to make rationality of the Bible. He postulates that the mid-fifteenth century, according to the biblical text, is the date of the Exodus.³⁷ His conservative view of the date of the Exodus is based more upon pragmatism rather than the biblical evidence if I understand him correctly. He writes:

While it is possible that these data could have been corrupted in transmission, the most reasonable approach to them is to examine in more detail the historical context in which they date the Exodus. The biblical date for the Exodus has a reciprocal relationship with the events described in Exodus as related to Egyptian history. A pragmatic approach to this date suggest a period in Egyptian history that should be examined for a possible relationship to the biblical Exodus, and considerable agreement of the evidence from Egyptian and biblical sources pointing to that period supports the accuracy of the chronological data (480) years from which that search started.³⁸

He argues for a 15th century date, but he does not begin with the premise that this must be the case, or state of affairs; rather, he appeals to pragmatism as the beginning point of establishing the date.

Roland Harrison³⁹

Another conservative scholar, Roland Harrison, one of the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia's editors (1982), argues for a 13th century BC dating (late date) for the Exodus. His rationale is based upon the assumptions of the late date archaeologists who disagree

³⁶Shea, "Exodus, Date of the," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, revised edition, 2:230.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., 237.

³⁹**R. K. Harrison** (1920–1993) was an Old Testament scholar who earned his Bachelor of Divinity, MTh, and PhD from the University of London. Harrison served as a professor of Old Testament studies at Wycliffe for over 20 years. He also taught at Clifton College and Huron College.

endlessly about the dating of the Bronze Ages (Early, Middle, and Late). He has accepted a classification system that is based upon the 19th century evolutionary social theory.⁴⁰ Harrison mentions that early in the twentieth century a significant change of opinions in favor of the 15th century date for the Exodus dominated the scene.⁴¹ But, at the same time, he is not convinced of the early date (15th century); he says, “The question cannot be settled simply by an appeal to the Book of Kings in the light of an arbitrary dating for the fall of Jericho.”⁴² His argument is ambiguous; his recommended chronology specifically rejects the testimony of 1 Kings 6:1.

G. Ogg

The *New Bible Dictionary* (1987) does not even mention the possibility of a mid-fifteenth century date.⁴³ G. Ogg does not comment upon the clear-cut chronological boundaries of 1 Kings 6:1 in association to the Exodus. He confuses the issue by attempting to bring up the problem of overlapping the period of the Dynasties (There is no evidence to indicate an overlapping of the judges as there is in Egyptian chronology.). This theory of overlapping dynasties, according to many scholars, is the best solution to the Exodus problem. For a case in point, Ogg attempts to neutralize the consequence of 1 Kings 6:1 by appealing to “overlapping dynasties.” Thus, concludes Ogg:

In near eastern works involving chronology, it is important to realize that ancient scribes did not draw up synchronistic lists as is done today. They simply listed each series of rulers and reigns separately, in succession on the papyrus of tablet. Synchronisms were to be derived from special historiographical works, not the king-list or narratives serving other purposes. An excellent example of this is the Turin Papyrus of Kings from Egypt. It lists at great length all five Dynasties 13 to 17 in successive groups, totaling originally over 150 rulers and their reigns accounting for at least 450 years. However, it is known from other sources that all five Dynasties, the 150-odd rulers and 450-odd regnal years alike, must all fit inside the 234 years from c. 1786 to c. 1552 BC: rarely less than two series, and sometimes three series of rulers are known to have reigned contemporaneously.⁴⁴

THE EARLY DATE (15th CENTURY)

Biblical Evidence

The evidence for the early date (15th century) is based upon the comments of the author of 1 Kings 6:1. The following citation is the crux of determining the date of the Exodus:

⁴⁰See Gary North, *Moses & Pharaoh*, 322-325.

⁴¹Roland K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 175.

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³G. Ogg, “Chronology of the Old Testament,” *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd Edition (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale, 1987), 191-192. See also Gary North, *Moses & Pharaoh*, 300-302 for an excellent analysis of Roland Harrison and G. Ogg.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 192.

In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, **in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel**, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the LORD (1 Kings 6:1).

I Kings 6:1 states that Solomon began to build the Temple in the fourth year of his reign (reign began in 970 BC)—480 years after the Exodus. The dates for Solomon’s reign are generally assigned to 970-931 BC.⁴⁵ Armstrong and Finegan write:

There is more reason to accept the literal accuracy of the statements concerning the length of their reigns. While the forty-year figure again gives every evidence of a scheme, it is likely that it is very close to the actual figure in each case. On this basis, David’s reign over Judah would have begun ca. 1010 BC and Solomon over all Israel.⁴⁶

The other text that is crucial to the early date is Judges 11:26: “For three hundred years Israel occupied Heshbon, Aroer, the surrounding settlements and all the towns along the Arnon. Why didn’t you retake them during that time?” **This Scripture may be correlated with 1 Kings 6:1.** In Judges 11:26, Jephthah (ca. 1100 BC) states that the Israelites had lived in the Transjordan for three hundred years. Thus the Conquest would be dated ca. 1400 BC and the Exodus ca. 1450 BC.⁴⁷ The early date is established upon biblical chronology.

Egyptian Evidence

The Egyptian evidence is founded upon the Generally Accepted Dates (GAD) assigned to Egyptian chronology. Shea, as mentioned above, bases his view of an 18th dynasty Exodus upon the so-called historical data, which appears to uphold a 15th century date for the Exodus. The Pharaohs of this period must be dated as accurately as possible before an attempt is made to associate the biblical events with them. The following chronological time frames are the Generally Accepted Dates for the various Dynasties with their kings.⁴⁸ Even though I

⁴⁵See W. P. Armstrong and J. Finegan, “Chronology of the OT,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, revised edition, 1982), 1: 681. The dates listed are 971-931 BC.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷See also John Bimson and David Livingstone, “Redating the Exodus,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 13, no. 5 (September/October 1987): 42, where they write:

Another Biblical text—Judges 11:26—indicates that the Israelites had been settled in Transjordan for 300 years by the time of Jephthah, one of the Judges. Jephthah, by common agreement, can be dated to about 1100 BC. This would place Israelite settlement east of the Jordan 300 years earlier—about 1400 BC, again, almost 200 years before the GAD (Generally Accepted Date—RDB). . . . Admittedly, the figure of 480 years used in 1 Kings and the 300 years used in Judges sound like approximations, round figures rather than precise calculations. The figure 480 is perhaps especially suspect; it is 12 times 40, a frequently used figure in the Bible. Yet, we doubt whether these figures should be dismissed as meaningless, as they have been by most critical scholars. As we will show below, the reasons why scholars originally preferred the GAD to the Biblical chronology have all been undermined in recent years.

consider the dates to be incorrect, nevertheless, I employ these dates in the following analysis.⁴⁹ The chronology of the 18th Dynasty (1550-1295 BC; Shea, 1550-1295 BC) has been established by using three types of data: (1) Sothic cycle dates, (2) new moon dates, and (3) the highest numbered regnal years attested for each of the kings who ruled during this period.⁵⁰ The following analysis is based on Shea's article—"Date of the Exodus."

Thutmose I (thüt- ' mō-sə, 1504-1492 BC)

Moses was eighty years old when he went to negotiate with Pharaoh. Adding these years to the date of 1450 BC for the Exodus, then the date for the birth of Moses would be 1530 BC. According to Shea, the Sothic cycle and the total number of regnal years known for Amenhotep I would place his reign from 1553 to 1532 BC.⁵¹ Since Aaron was three years older than Moses, it seems that the death decree was not in effect during the latter reign of Amenhotep I. Thus Thutmose I would be the Pharaoh who proclaimed the death decree. This assessment is based on the GAD of Egyptian chronology, not the reconstruction of Egyptian chronology as proposed by Velikovsky and Courville.

Hatshepsut (1479-1457 BC)

It is possible that Hatshepsut was the daughter who rescued Moses (see Exodus 2:1-10). If Moses was born c. 1530 BC, then Hatshepsut's father would have been the one to order the death of all male babies. Moses would have grown up during the reigns of Thutmose I and Thutmose II (Hatshepsut's husband).⁵² Since Moses fled Egypt when he was forty years old (Acts 7:23), then it was late in the reign of Hatshepsut (Shea, 1504-1482 BC) and her coregent Thutmose III (Shea, 1504-1450 BC) that Moses returned to Egypt.⁵³

Thutmose III (1479-1425 BC)

The most significant information that has come down is that he died in the Red Sea at the time of the Exodus.⁵⁴ The date of his death is recorded in the biography of Amenemhab, who served in the Egyptian navy under several Pharaohs.⁵⁵

⁴⁸See Alberto Siliotti for dates concerning Egyptian Chronology in Alberto Siliotti, *Guide to the Valley of the Kings* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1999), 9. Just a perusal of the various scholarly journals and books reveal differences in the chronology. I have chosen to utilize the traditional chronology by Siliotti in order to keep the paper more uniform as to dates.

⁴⁹For the reconstruction of Egyptian chronology by Donovan A. Courville, see his essay, "A Biblical Reconstruction of Egypt's Early Chronology," in *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 2, no. 1 (Summer 1975): 131-150.

⁵⁰Shea, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Ibid., 2:233.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid., 233-234.

Amenhotep II (ä-mən- 'hō- tep, 1427-1397)

The coregency of Thutmose II and Amenhotep II should be taken into account. Amenhotep II was the son of Thutmose II. Amenemhab, after giving the date of Thutmose II's death, describes the coronation of Amenhotep II with a reference to the beheading of foreign chiefs brought back to Egypt as captives.⁵⁶ If Amenhotep II held the Hebrews responsible for the death of his father (He was from Egypt at the time of the Exodus.), this factor would possibly explain his reference to 3,600 Apiru⁵⁷ brought back to Egypt from his campaigns in Syro-Palestine.⁵⁸

OTHER VIEWS OF THE EARLY DATE

The New International Version Study Bible

As noted above, Horn sets forth 1 Kings 6:1 and Judges 11:26 to give credence to the late date (15th century BC). It is also significant that the NIV Study Bible's Introduction to Judges also relies upon this passage for an early date for the Exodus. The author of this introduction writes:

Fixing precise dates for the judges is difficult and complex. The dating system followed here is based primarily on 1 Ki 6:1, which speaks of an interval of 480 years between the exodus and the fourth year of Solomon's reign. This would place the exodus c. 1446 BC and the period of the judges between c. 1380 and the rise of Saul, c.1050. Jephthah's statement that Israel had occupied Heshbon for 300 years (11:26) generally agrees with these dates.

Some maintain, however, that the number 480 in 1 Ki 6:1 is somewhat artificially arrived at by multiplying 12 (perhaps in reference to the 12 Judges) by 40 (a conventional number of years for a generation). They point out the frequent use of the round number 10, 20, 40 and 80 in the Book of Judges itself. A later date for the exodus would of course require a much shorter period of time for the judges (see Introduction to Exodus: Chronology).⁵⁹

Hans Goedicke

Hans Goedicke rejects the biblical data in his postulation of the late date. Rather, his theory is based upon a volcanic eruption that created a tsunami, which drowned the Egyptians. He sets forth his presuppositions in the following words:

⁵⁵Ibid., 234.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 235.

⁵⁷See Courville, *The Exodus Problems and its Ramifications*, 2 vols., 1:27 for a discussion of Apiru versus the Hebrews. He maintains, and I think correctly, that the Hebrews were not the same as the Apiru.

⁵⁸ Shea, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 2:236.

⁵⁹See "Background, Judges" Kenneth Barker, General Editor, *The NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 326.

THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA in which the Egyptians drowned was an actual historical event that occurred in 1477 BC. The miraculous episode took place in the coastal plain south of Lake Menzaleh, west of what is now the Suez Canal. The drowning of the Egyptians was caused by a giant tidal-like wave known as a tsunami which swept across the Nile delta, over Lake Menzaleh, inundating the plain south of the lake. The tidal-like wave was transmitted by a volcanic eruption in the Mediterranean Sea.⁶⁰

This citation is the thrust of Hans Goedicke's presuppositions concerning the events surrounding the drowning of the Egyptians, which is totally at variance with an eyewitness account. Hershel Shanks (b. 1930) summarizes the so-called findings of Goedicke, world-famous Egyptologist, who postulates the early date upon new evidence and new conclusions.⁶¹ His so-called evidence for the early date is not based upon the biblical evidence, but rather upon his weird interpretation of a volcanic eruption that created a tidal wave that occurred in the Mediterranean Sea. He rejects the 13th century date as not in keeping with other archaeological evidence, which does appear as sound reasoning. Goedicke believes that the Exodus occurred in 1477 BC, but, at the same time, he denies the biblical account of the Exodus. Shanks summarizes the basic presuppositions of Goedicke in the first paragraph of his review:

The miraculous episode took place in the coastal plain south of Lake Menzaleh, west of what is now the Suez Canal. The drowning of the Egyptians was caused by a giant tidal-like wave known as a tsunami which swept across the Nile delta, over Lake Menzaleh, inundating the plain south of the lake. The tidal-like wave was transmitted by a volcanic eruption in the Mediterranean Sea.⁶²

Shanks objects to his (Goedicke's) theories, if I understand him correctly, since his conjectures go against the bulk of scholarship that advances a late date (13th century BC). Goedicke's theories are diametrically opposed to a massive body of prevailing scholarly thought. Shanks does not cite, as a whole, the work of Goedicke's essay, but rather, he paraphrases the substance of his arguments.⁶³ We cannot argue with every statement of Goedicke, because some of his arguments are in harmony with the Genesis and the Exodus accounts of the background preceding the Exodus and immediately following. But, on the other hand, we cannot agree with his wild conjectures—no evidence—about what really happened. He refuses to consider the eyewitness testimony of Moses who records the events surrounding the Exodus.

In the following analysis, Shanks examines the basic concepts postulated by Goedicke as follows: (1) The Pharaoh of the Exodus was a woman—Hatshepsut, who ruled Egypt from 1487 BC to 1468 BC;⁶⁴ (2) the Israelites were invited to Egypt through the mediation of one of

⁶⁰See Hershel Shanks, "The Exodus and the Crossing of the Red Sea, According to Hans Goedicke," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 7, no. 5 (September/October, 1981): 42.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 42-50.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 42.

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴*Ibid.* See also William Shea, "Date of the Exodus," in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, general editor, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, revised edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 2:230-238, for a thorough discussion of Hatshepsut. These dates are the GAD of Egyptian Chronology.

the group's members—Joseph; (3) one of the chancellors of Egypt was none other than Jacob who was chancellor to a Semite (Hykos) king named Apophis;⁶⁵ (4) Pithom cannot be identified with Tell Mashkhuta, but Tell el-Rataba, which dates to the Middle Bronze Age II (1700—1500 BC);⁶⁶ (5) the store cities of Ra'amezez is incorrectly equated with Pi-Ramesses, the residence of the Ramessides. He affirms that the construction mentioned in the Bible is generally associated with the reign of Ramesses II who ruled from 1290 to 1224 BC, which he says is incorrectly read from the biblical text. If the Exodus people built Pi-Ramesses, it is obvious that the Exodus must have occurred in the 13th century BC.⁶⁷ (6) The store cities of Ra'amezez cannot be identified with Pi-Ramesses, the residence of the Ramessides.⁶⁸

The identification is impossible phonetically. When the royal residence is always referred to, the royal name is always connected with the Egyptian word *pr*, meaning “house” or “residence.” The reference is always in the form per Ramesses;⁶⁹ another reason why the Exodus could not have occurred in the 13th century is that the earliest reference to Israel outside the Bible is in the Merneptah stele.⁷⁰ Merneptah was the successor of Ramesses II. This stele records his military achievements to the fifth year of his reign (1219 BC). By that time Israel had become a significant people, a 13th century Exodus would not allow enough time for Israel to become numerous;⁷¹ (8) by looking for the cause of the flash flood, we will find evidence for dating the Exodus.⁷²

The Miracle of the Sea

Goedicke, instead of accepting the biblical account, believes that “The miracle of the Sea” must be seen as a “real experience and not simply from literary imagination.”⁷³ This statement is true. The miracle of the Sea is not a fiction; it actually happened. But, on the other hand, he refuses to accept the account of Moses—who was there. Instead he postulates that the destruction of the Egyptians came about as a result of a volcano, which erupted about 1475 BC on the island of Thera/Santorini, thirty miles north of Crete. This eruption, according to Goedicke, triggered a huge tidal-like wave (called a tsunami) that drowned Knossos. Then this tsunami reached the Nile Delta and flooded it (621 miles away from the volcano eruption).⁷⁴

⁶⁵Ibid., 42-43.

⁶⁶Ibid., 43-44. The dates given in this analysis come from Goedicke, unless stated otherwise.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸For an excellent analysis of the names, see Bimson and Livingston, “Redating the Exodus,” 42.

⁶⁹See Hershel Shanks, “The Exodus and the Crossing of the Red Sea, According to Hans Goedicke,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 7, no. 5 (September/October, 1981): 43-44.

⁷⁰The Merneptah Stela (ca. 1220) indicates Israel was already an established nation at this time, which rules out that the Exodus occurred in the 13th century. See Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 108.

⁷¹Shanks, “The Exodus and the Crossing of the Red Sea, According to Hans Goedicke,” 43-44.

⁷²Ibid., 47.

⁷³Ibid., 48.

⁷⁴Ibid., 42. As stated above, Shanks sets forth Goedicke's conception as to how the drowning of the Egyptians took place (His dates appear to be contradictory—1477 and 1475 BC dates):

Following this devastation, the tsunami passed through the shallow Lake Menzaleh and drowned the Egyptians waiting to confront the Israelites.⁷⁵ Shanks concludes his paraphrase of Goedicke's conclusions:

At this tense moment, when destruction seemed imminent, a miracle happened. Caused by an outbreak of the volcano Thera, a tidal-like wave rolled through the southeastern Mediterranean, passing through Lake Menzaleh and filling the plain where the Egyptians were encamped. In the early morning hours of a spring day in 1477 BC. Professor Goedicke concludes, the earth did not "swallow up the footprints" of those who had opposed Hatshepsut as she claimed, but instead the pharaoh's troops were drowned, And Israel was born in the 'miracle of the Sea,' the theophany of its God.⁷⁶

When something novel is advanced, it appears that the more outlandish one's presuppositions happen to be, someone will accept the theory as if it were true. One such writer and scholar is Ian Wilson (b. 1941). In his commentary on Exodus, he expresses the views of Goedicke.⁷⁷ Wilson gives documented evidence as to the effects that a volcanic eruption generates, which appears to give credence to Goedicke, but this proves nothing except the fact that a volcano erupted on an Island north of Crete. In conjunction with Goedicke's hypothesis, Wilson draws attention to the volcanic activities of Mount St. Helens,⁷⁸ yet, his presuppositions are not supported by an eyewitness account of what actually happened in 1446 BC. He, like Goedicke, does not accept the biblical account. For example, Moses, an eyewitness and a participant, writes:

The miraculous episode took place in the coastal plain south of Lake Menzaleh, west of what is now the Suez Canal. The drowning of the Egyptians was caused by a giant-tidal wave known as the tsunami, which swept across the Nile delta, over Lake Menzaleh, inundating the plain south of the lake. The tidal-like wave was transmitted by a volcanic eruption in the Mediterranean Sea.

⁷⁵Ibid. For us to fully grasp the arguments of Goedicke, we need to read the complete paraphrase as presented by Hershel Shanks. See also Hans Georg Wunderlich, *The Secret of Crete* (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 149, comments on the "tsunami" in his exposure of Sir Arthur Evan's excavations of Crete and Evan's so-called Palace of King Minos at Knossos in Crete:

In any case the tsunami could not have been dangerous to the inhabitants of Phaistos, situated at a high elevation and on the southern side of the island, away from the Aegean. The same is true for the inhabitants of the mountain valleys. Tsunamis have another characteristic that the layman is usually unaware of. The Japanese name means "great wave in port." A seismic wave is not effective in the open sea, but only along the coasts. The same is true for regular tides as well, which rise only a few feet in Hawaii or the other small islands of the Pacific. It is only where the depth of water lessens over a continental shelf that tides and tidal waves can reach imposing heights. Only continental shelf coasts and large islands are prone to dangerous tsunamis, which dash up against them to enormous heights. Small islands, such as the innumerable rocky islands of the Aegean, for example, are relatively safe from seismic waves (underlining is mine—RDB).

⁷⁶Shanks, "The Exodus and the Crossing of the Red Sea, According to Hans Goedicke," 50.

⁷⁷Ian Wilson (b. 1941), *Exodus the True Story* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1985), 97-127.

⁷⁸Ibid., 115-116.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided,²² and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.²³ The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea.²⁴ During the last watch of the night the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion.²⁵ He made the wheels of their chariots come off so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt."²⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen."²⁷ Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the LORD swept them into the sea.²⁸ The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.²⁹ But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.³⁰ That day the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore.³¹ And when the Israelites saw the great power the LORD displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant (Exodus 14:21-31).

Pillar of Cloud and Pillar of Fire

Goedicke, almost nonchalantly, comments on the "pillar of cloud" and the "pillar of fire" as associated with a phenomenon to the north of Egypt, not with the supernatural from God. He writes:

In Exodus 13:21-22 and in Exodus 14:19 we learn that a "pillar of cloud" by day and a "pillar of fire" by night stood before the departing Israelites. These two signs are of a conspicuously volcanic nature. Moreover, these phenomena stood in front of the emigrants moving north. It is thus necessary to look for the source of the volcanic phenomena somewhere to the north of Egypt, that is, in the Mediterranean Basin.⁷⁹

He seems not to make a distinction between the two phenomena—"pillar of cloud" and the "pillar of fire." We cannot help but wonder how the "pillar of cloud" (volcanic ash) from the volcano—621 miles from Egypt—managed to settle in front of the Israelites and not in front of the Egyptians. On the other hand, the primary source—the Book of Exodus—gives another account of this event:

By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.²² Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people. (Exodus 13:21-22)

Both "pillars" were to guide the children of Israel in their journey. One guided them by day and the other by night. As we reflect upon Goedicke's statement about the "pillar of Cloud," we cannot help but wonder how this cloud of ash from the volcano was able to stand in

⁷⁹Shanks, "The Exodus and the Crossing of the Red Sea, According to Hans Goedicke," 48.

front of 2,000,000 Israelites⁸⁰ and move behind them to protect them from the approaching army of Pharaoh. Moses comments upon this “pillar of cloud” in his Book of Exodus (1406 BC):

Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel’s army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them,²⁰ coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long. (14:19-20)

Goedicke wants, so it appears, to hold on to certain things about the Exodus, as recorded by Moses in the Book of Exodus, but, on the other hand, we witness his discarding the primary source (Book of Exodus) for his own fanciful theory. We immediately recognize a hermeneutical inconsistency of the worst kind. Goedicke’s hermeneutics are clearly dictated by a theological *a priori*, that is to say, presumptive—formed or conceived beforehand.

Charles Richard Krahmalkov

The editors of *Biblical Archaeology Review* invited Charles Richard Krahmalkov to respond to Hans Goedicke’s article.⁸¹ Just a brief perusal of Krahmalkov’s essay also reveals that both accounts concerning the origin of the Exodus are examples of speculation. Neither explanation accepts the biblical description as recorded in the Book of Exodus. Yet, both men refer to the story in the Book of Exodus to refute each other’s theories, but then both men discard the details as given by Moses. Krahmalkov criticizes Goedicke for relying upon his imagination and not upon the biblical text. He correctly criticizes Goedicke’s article for his failure to rely upon the data in the Book of Exodus—the original, or primary, source. He writes:

Let us begin with a fundamental difficulty: In none of the Biblical descriptions of the Exodus is there anything remotely suggesting a huge wave. One may of course respond that the Biblical accounts were written long after the event and, as a result, misunderstand or misrepresent what actually occurred in what was, even then, a remote antiquity. But among the biblical descriptions, at least one is a *primary* source describing the great event.... Professor Goedicke insists that there are

⁸⁰See T. Eric Peet, *Egypt and the Old Testament* (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1924), 106, where he says,

Thus, for instance, if the exodus consisted or appeared to consist of the departure from Egypt of some 70 souls, the same number as those who originally entered Egypt, living apart in a remote corner of the Eastern Delta, it would be almost useless to look for any record of such a pigmy movement in the Egyptian sources; whereas, if the numbers of the emigrants were nearly 2,000,000, which is a legitimate deduction from Exodus 12.37, the movement was one which would have shaken Egypt to its very foundation, and which, even if it had failed to be recorded in one of the numerous monuments which have survived in Egypt, would at any rate have left some unmistakable impression on Egyptian history.

⁸¹Charles Richard Krahmalkov, “A Critique of Professor Goedicke’s Exodus Theories,” *Biblical Archaeology* 7, no. 5 (September/October 1981): 51-54.

“no primary sources such as documents, public inscriptions, or representations which can be connected with the Exodus account.” He must therefore rely on secondary sources and inferences from circumstantial evidence.⁸²

Krahmalkov is correct in calling attention to the biblical descriptions as reported by Moses. He then censures Goedicke for relying upon secondary sources from which he draws inferences from circumstantial evidence. Then, on the other hand, Krahmalkov incorrectly nullifies Exodus 14:15-31 with the poetic song eyewitness account that immediately follows (15:1-10). He says, “The ancient eyewitness account (15:1-10) must take priority over later Biblical traditions (14:15-31).” He seeks to set aside the narrative account (14:15-31) with the poetic account (15:1-10). This explanation is a classic example of liberalism among the scholars.⁸³ Since Moses wrote both accounts, we wonder why Moses would have listed both accounts (narrative & poetic sections) if he thought that the song contradicted his narrative version of the Exodus.⁸⁴

Krahmalkov argues for a 13th century date rather than a 15th century date (as advocated by Goedicke) based on the “poetic song” as reported by Moses, an eyewitness account (15:1-10). Krahmalkov expresses his disagreement with Goedicke with the following words:

This poem presents a far different picture of the Exodus from that inferred by Professor Goedicke. Exodus 15 speaks not of a huge wave, but a raging storm at sea which claimed the lives of Israel’s pursuers. Moreover, it places the event not in the 15th century, but at the end of the 13th century or beginning of the 12th century BC⁸⁵

Just a brief read-through of Krahmalkov’s essay also reveals that he, too, has jumped to a number of unjustified conclusions—assumptions not based upon the biblical text, but rather upon his own presuppositions. He then proposes—a position as preposterous as the tsunami—to offer a solution to the problem of crossing the Red Sea:

When the Egyptians overtook Israel encamped at the sea (Exodus 14:9), they found that their intended victims had already departed by ship. The Egyptians vowed to continue the pursuit by sea. But while at sea a sudden storm arose, capsizing the Egyptian pursuit vessels and hurling horse, chariot and rider into the deep waters with great loss of life (Exodus 15:1-5).⁸⁶

Unlike Goedicke—who postulates a tidal wave theory—Krahmalkov advances the notion that they boarded ships to cross the Red Sea. We must stand in amazement as we read the two

⁸²Ibid., 51-52.

⁸³Liberalism and chronology are discussed more fully under the heading Biblical Chronology Versus Liberal Chronology in this chapter.

⁸⁴Ibid., 52. See this same page for an analysis of the distinction between the narrative and poetic sections. Apparently his prejudice against the narrative section (Exodus 14:15-31) is so deep-seated that a verdict is passed before the evidence is even considered. His prejudice negates the possibility of understanding the two texts.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid., 54.

reports, especially Krahmalkov's criticism of Goedicke for not staying with the biblical account. We can hardly keep from laughing at such scholarship. This is somewhat like the "pot" calling the "kettle" black. Krahmalkov builds his whole theology of the Exodus upon a misreading of the "Song of Moses and Miriam" (15:1-21). Yet, he is honest enough to admit that his theory is "pure conjecture," which we can appreciate. He candidly admits: "Needless to say, the reconstruction is pure conjecture. But it is far better grounded in the Biblical text than in Professor Goedicke's version."⁸⁷ It is evident that neither author allows the Scriptural passages to instruct his polemic.

Krahmalkov seems to rely upon Frank Moore Cross' (b. 1921, Professor of Hebrew and other oriental languages) essay concerning barges in the stormy sea.⁸⁸ Krahmalkov builds his theory upon the poem (Exodus 15:1-21) and, in essence, dismisses the account in Exodus 14:15-31. Cross, too, dismisses Exodus 14:15-31 as from another time period. He develops his arguments for boats from the poem, not the narrative, which he dismisses. He writes:

The absence of these traditional motifs is surprising and requires explanation. So far as we can tell, the Egyptians are thrown from barks or barges into the stormy sea; they sink in the sea like a rock or a weight and drown.⁸⁹

His arguments for a denial of Exodus 14:15-31 are based upon the Graf-Wellhausen Documentary Hypothesis.⁹⁰ We wonder where the ships came from that could transport 2,000,000 Israelites across the Red Sea, plus Pharaoh's army and chariots. Once the Israelites got across, did they take some of the ships back for the Egyptians to pursue them? This theory, too, is just "pure conjecture." Moses did not mention anything about ships in the narrative, not even in the poem. Since Moses was there, perhaps it would be well to read his own account of how the Israelites crossed the Red Sea:

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided,²² and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.²³ The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea.²⁴ During the last watch of the night the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion.²⁵ He made the wheels of their chariots come off so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt."²⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen."²⁷ Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the LORD swept them into the sea.²⁸ The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.²⁹ But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid., 52.

⁸⁹Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973), 132.

⁹⁰Ibid., 112-144. See also my comments below under the caption "Biblical Chronology Versus Liberal Chronology" for an analysis of the Graf-Wellhausen Documentary Hypothesis.

water on their right and on their left. ³⁰ That day the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. ³¹ And when the Israelites saw the great power the LORD displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant (14:21-31).

Eliezer D. Oren

Another scholar, Eliezer D. Oren, a prominent Israeli Archaeologist, censures Goedicke's theories as existing "only in Dr. Goedicke's imagination."⁹¹ Yet, all three scholars—Goedicke, Krahmalkov, and Oren—engage in subjectivity in their analysis of the Exodus event. For example, the editor of the journal (*Biblical Archaeology Review*) summarizes the basic presuppositions of Goedicke, Krahmalkov, and Oren concerning the location of the drowning of the Egyptians:

Professor Goedicke, a distinguished Egyptologist and chairman of the department of Near Eastern Studies at Johns Hopkins University, placed the drowning of the Egyptians in the eastern Nile Delta. Professor Krahmalkov places it in the large body of water south of the Sinai known as the Red Sea. In this issue of *BAR*, Professor Eliezer D. Oren, a prominent Israeli archaeologist and chairman of the Department of Archaeology at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, presents his views. Professor Oren places the drowning of the Egyptians in the Lake Bardawil area of the northern Sinai.⁹²

Oren deals with the utter foolishness of Goedicke's arguments in a forthright manner. One such argument advanced by Goedicke deals with the cloud and fire, as analyzed above, which followed the Israelites. Goedicke attributes this phenomenon to the volcano Thera that erupted on an island 30 miles north of Crete, which was 621 miles from the eastern Nile Delta.⁹³ Oren correctly disapproves of this conjecture:

Literary descriptions and "poetical reflections" aside, it is most difficult to imagine how fire and smoke emanating from an island hundreds of miles away could be observed not only from the eastern Nile Delta but also from different localities (at different times) in the Sinai desert. Let it be remembered, the Israelites experienced the pillar of fire and smoke as being among them, in their very presence (Even the eastern Nile Delta is about 621 miles (1000 km) from Thera.⁹⁴

Oren's arguments against Goedicke's arguments about the "pillar of cloud" are sound reasoning. The biblical account credits this observable fact of the "pillar of cloud" to an act of God, not to the volcano Thera. Again, we stand in astonishment at how the smoke from the volcano (621 miles away) could move from the front of Israel's army and move to the back in order to separate the Egyptian army from the Israelites. On one side of the "pillar of cloud," there was light, but on the other side, there was darkness. Hopefully, repetition may be pardoned here, for the priesthood of liberalism, which prevails in many scholarly journals and

⁹¹Eliezer D. Oren, "How Not to Create a History of the Exodus—A Critique of Professor Goedicke's Theories," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 7, no. 6 (November/December 1981): 49.

⁹²*Ibid.*, 46. These comments by the editor sets the stage for Oren's essay.

⁹³*Ibid.*, 52.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*

commentaries by which the truths of God are undermined or openly denied, leavens the minds of many. Moses gives the following note concerning this miracle:

Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them,²⁰ coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long. (Exodus 14:19-20)

Again, Oren attacks Goedicke's over-all position about the Exodus as "totally confused and has very little to do with the biblical record."⁹⁵ Once more, he correctly assesses the tenor of Goedicke's essay in his criticism of his position concerning Hebrew builders as "militarily experienced mercenaries pursuant to a 'contractual agreement' with pharaohs who engaged the Hebrews as frontier guards"⁹⁶:

Fanciful theories aside, the only source we have for the Hebrew oppression in Egypt is the Biblical text. That text, however, is very explicit: the Hebrews were subjected to shameful servitude and compulsory labor in connection with public building projects.⁹⁷

Oren's analysis is an excellent refutation of Goedicke's essay. After a thorough analysis of the arguments presented by Goedicke, Oren concludes with the following succinct observation:

I regret to say that very little of a positive nature can be said about Dr. Goedicke's hypothesis. It is a good illustration of how a theory is conceived and formulated on the basis of an arbitrary and often misleading culling of selective support from various sources—from the Bible, from Egyptian records, and from archaeological materials. Above all, Dr. Goedicke lacks first-hand control over any of his prime source material. Overall, one cannot help but feel that for Dr. Goedicke, Biblical study, as a scholarly discipline based on explicit textual, stylistic and linguistic guidelines, is completely irrelevant.⁹⁸

BIBLICAL CHRONOLOGY VERSUS LIBERAL CHRONOLOGY

Since liberal chronology does not harmonize with biblical chronology, a brief overview of biblical chronology should shed more light in dealing with the problems of Egyptian chronology. This study sets forth a brief account of biblical chronology in order for us to have some standard by which to judge the correctness or incorrectness of dates assigned to the biblical date for the Exodus. We cannot study biblical chronology without exposure to scholars who deny biblical chronology, as stated above, as well as the genuineness of the Old and New

⁹⁵Ibid., 51.

⁹⁶Ibid., 49.

⁹⁷Ibid., 50.

⁹⁸Ibid., 53.

Testament Books.⁹⁹ The study of biblical chronology is essential to the dating of the Exodus from Egypt. In our study of the Older Testamental writings, we must consider the puzzling question, what is Liberalism? Those scholars who generally reject biblical chronology also reject the basic Christian doctrines of the church as well as the reliability of the biblical text. Perhaps, the following paragraph explains what is meant by liberal scholarship:

Liberal Protestantism is a modern movement that reinterprets the biblical and historic doctrines and practices of Christianity. Reluctant to endorse orthodox doctrines such as the virgin birth, the bodily resurrection of Jesus, the need for renewal by the Holy Spirit and the infallibility of the Bible, liberal Protestants are more interested in adapting religious ideas to modern culture and thought.... Following theologians like **Rudolf Bultmann** (1884-1976), liberal Protestants insist that modern men and women cannot understand or accept the outdated teachings of Christianity in a world so changed by modern science. This is a thinly disguised naturalism—in Bultmann’s case a strident anti-supernaturalism—which insists that the Bible must be “demythologized,” freed of symbolic myths such as the atonement or miracles and reinterpreted to see what Jesus or the Bible’s writers really taught. Biblical Christianity is precisely the story of a great miracle—the resurrection; this view destroys any real possibility of belief in God.¹⁰⁰

Based upon the above definition, liberalism is the denial of the virgin birth, the bodily Resurrection of Jesus, the infallibility of the Bible, Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the miracles of the Bible, the Atonement, and so on. This is *liberalism!* Liberalism is a denial of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Liberalism denies that “men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21). We, as Christians, must be concerned about liberalism. Jesus also confronted liberalism among the religious leaders in His day:

But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say? (John 5:45-47)

⁹⁹See Siegfried H. Horn, “What We Don’t Know About Moses and the Exodus,” *Biblical Archaeologist Review* 3, no. 2 (June 1977), 281, where he says:

He (Dewey Beegle) shows how the different strands of tradition about Moses, the Exodus, and the desert wanderings were put together to form a running story by compiler(s) who wanted to create a harmonious unit. Yet, Beegle’s work also demonstrates that it is almost impossible to disentangle the complex web of sources to arrive at generally acceptable solutions. This fact strongly impresses itself on the reader’s mind when he is repeatedly told that one prominent scholar attributes a certain passage to one source, another equally eminent scholar attributes the same passage to another source, and third scholar to a third source. . . . Exodus 33:7-1. . . . This passage is attributed to E (the Elohist) by Walter Beyerlin, to J (the Yahwist) by Murray Newman and to D (the Deuteronomist) by Martin Noth.

¹⁰⁰Terry L. Miethe, *The Compact Dictionary of Doctrinal Words* (Minnesota: Bethany House Pub., 1988), 127.

Seventeenth Century Liberalism

To understand liberalism today, we must go back to the seventeenth century. The modern-day liberal biblical theology movement has its origin in the writings of **Baruch Spinoza** (1631-1677) and Richard Simon (1633-1712)—a Catholic priest in France. **La Payrene**, a French Calvinist, who challenged the commitment to biblical infallibility by creating hypotheses that contradicted biblical teaching, influenced both of these men.¹⁰¹ During the time of Spinoza and **Simon**, another leader arose, **Jean Le Clerc** (1657-1736), who also questioned the authorship of the Pentateuch.¹⁰² Le Clerc's denial of Mosaic authorship was so radical that even Simon was offended by his proposals. Another liberal, **Jean Astruc** (1684-1766) reflected upon the Simon/Le Clerc controversy (AD 1685-1686) as one of the most intense confrontations in the history of ideas about the Bible.¹⁰³

Documentary Hypothesis

Even though others, from time to time, denied Mosaic authorship, Astruc did not. Nevertheless, Jean Astruc paved the way for later criticism of the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). Up until the second half of the eighteenth century, Mosaic authorship remained the generally accepted position. Although **Astruc**, a French medical doctor, still held to Mosaic authorship, he laid the groundwork for such men as **Graf** (1815-1869) and Wellhausen (1844-1919) in their **Documentary Hypothesis**, that is to say, the dividing of the Pentateuch into four sources (**JEDP**), thus denying Mosaic authorship. Astruc maintained that there were repetitions and contradictions in the Pentateuch, and, as a result, he concluded that Moses used various sources in compiling the Pentateuch. Douglas Stuart,¹⁰⁴ in

¹⁰¹Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (New York: Summit Books, 1987), 20.

¹⁰²The word *Pentateuch* comes from Greek (*pentateuchos*), which means “five scrolls” or “five volumes.” Also called by the Jews “Torah” or the “the five-fifths of the law.” The Pentateuch consists of the first five Books of the Bible. The five Books into which the Pentateuch is divided are respectively Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Version.

¹⁰³See R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 3-18. **R. K. Harrison** (1920–1993) was an Old Testament scholar who earned his Bachelor of Divinity, MTh, and PhD from the University of London. Harrison served as a professor of Old Testament studies at Wycliffe for over 20 years. He also taught at Clifton College and Huron College. He served on the Executive Review Committee of the New King James Version of the Bible. He also translated several of the Minor Prophets in the New International. Also, he was the general editor of the *New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, associate editor for the *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, and editor of *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. He is the author of *Introduction to the Old Testament* and several commentary volumes, including one on Leviticus.

¹⁰⁴**Douglas Stuart** is professor of Old Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts. He is the author of *How to Read the Bible Book*, *New American Commentary: Exodus*, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, and a commentary on *Hosea and Jonah*.

his excellent commentary on the Book of Exodus, writes concerning the liberal element among scholars in accepting the theory of the Documentary Hypothesis:

One popular school of biblical scholarship holds to the “Documentary Hypothesis,” the theory that the book of Exodus is the product of three very different authors: “**J**,” a theological genius who produced most of the narrative portion of Exodus sometime around the ninth century BC in Judah, “**E**,” a northern theologian who added to this narrative from sources and perspectives available to him when he wrote sometime around the eighth century, and “**P**,” a school of priests writing after the Judean exile, that is, mainly in the sixth and/or fifth century BC in Judah, who generated most of the legal materials that dominate the second half of the book. Many different theories exist as to who put these sources together, but just as the sources themselves are anonymous, so is (are) their editor(s).¹⁰⁵

Four Sources: JEDP

Originally, the key for sources (**JEDP**) turned upon the use of the names “Lord” (**J** [Y]ahweh) and “God” (*Elohim*).¹⁰⁶ To this day the different use of names for God is the chief characteristic of source splitting, that is, dividing the Books of Moses into four sources, and thereby denying Mosaic authorship. Herbert Livingston calls attention to these various sources in the naming of the documents:

From Astruc on, the criterion of two divine names, **Elohim** and **Jehovah**, has been elemental to analysis of the Pentateuch and the basis for three of the four documents. The sources **E** and **P** has the name Elohim, and **J** had Jehovah; each of these sources or documents has separate histories....

Julius Wellhausen is the scholar generally credited with resolving the issue of dating sequence. Drawing heavily upon the implications of Hegel’s postulates—thesis, antithesis, and synthesis in the processes of history—Wellhausen opted for the sequence **JEDP**. In his famous Book, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, first published in 1878, Wellhausen argued so persuasively for his position that he won the day. His theory became standard in Old Testament liberal circles for more than half a century and still is a powerful voice.¹⁰⁷ (Emphasis mine—bold)

The Graf-Wellhausen Documentary Hypothesis¹⁰⁸ has had tremendous influence upon modern day scholars. One such scholar is Robert B. Laurin, former professor of Old Testament at the American Baptist Seminary in Covina, California. Thus, Laurin explains his concept of the Documentary Hypothesis with approval:

Three famous sources were used in the formation of the bulk of Genesis through Numbers. The first is called the “**J**” source because it tends to use consistently the proper name “Jahweh” (usually spelled “Yahweh”) for God; it probably comes from the tenth century BC during the reign of

¹⁰⁵ Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 29–30. His commentary calls attention to the various arguments set forth by many scholars as simply based upon assumptions, not facts.

¹⁰⁶Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, 52-53.

¹⁰⁷G. Herbert Livingston, *The Pentateuch in Its Cultural Environment*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 226-227.

¹⁰⁸For an excellent analysis of the Graf-Wellhausen Documentary Hypothesis, see Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 19-32.

Solomon. The second source is called the “**E**” source because it uses the name “Elohim” for God, and perhaps comes from the Northern Kingdom of Israel about a century later, that is, in the ninth century BC shortly after the breakup of Solomon’s kingdom. The third source is termed the “**P**” source because of its dominant priestly interest in worship and law; it appears to have been gathered together during the exile in Babylonia in the sixth century BC ... The Priestly History comprises Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Sometime after the destruction of Jerusalem gathered together some of the older narrative sources, particularly “**J**” and “**E**.” The motive for the formation of this history was Israel’s own situation.... Second, the recognition of sources shows us that the main characters of the Books are the heroes, not the authors, even though a given Book may bear the name of Moses or Samuel or Joshua, this does not mean that it is the product of his hand. The Books are all anonymous, the products of centuries of gradual collection.... Thus, scholars have concluded that such expression as “the Lord said to Moses”: or “Moses said” are not indications of authorship, but rather only general formulas to introduce collections of literature.¹⁰⁹

Age of Skepticism

During this period of skepticism, beginning with Spinoza and Simon, other men of prominence also stand out as major players in the development of cynicism regarding the Bible: **Voltaire** (1694-1778), Hume (1711-1776), **Rousseau** (rù-'sō, 1712-1778), **Diderot** (dē-'drō, or 'dē-də-'rō, 1713-1784), **Lessing** ('le-siŋ, 1729-1781), and **Kant** (1724-1804).¹¹⁰ Another important name that played a significant role in the development of the modern-liberal theology movement was Johann **Philip Gabler** (1753-1826). Gabler was essentially a rationalist, and his approach to biblical theology prevailed for approximately fifty years. With this rationalistic technique of Gabler, scholars began to view the Bible as any other Book. No longer was the Bible the Word of God—it was now just one more Book.¹¹¹

In the meanwhile, **Hegel’s** ('hā-gəl, 1770-1831) views were put to use in the study of the Scriptures. The comments of Livingston may be added for further confirmation of this statement: “The views of Comte, father of logical positivism, and Hegel, champion of logical progression after the pattern of a **thesis-antithesis-synthesis** sequence, were particularly influential among Old Testament Scholars.”¹¹² Livingston explains how Hegelian philosophy was applied to the Pentateuch:

How then did the Wellhausen theory date the four documents? Since the D document was declared to be written in the seventh century and made public in Josiah’s reform of 621 BC, that document became the keystone for the procedure. It was decided that D knew about the contents of **J** and **E**, but not of the Contents of **P**; hence, **J** and **E** were written before 621 BC, and **P**, at a later date.

¹⁰⁹Robert B. Laurin, *The Layperson’s Introduction to the Old Testament* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1991), 2-5. See also Thomas Samuel Kepler, John Knox (1513-1572), Herbert Gordon May, and Samuel Terrien, eds. *Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982). S.v. “Biblical Criticism,” by K. Grobel

¹¹⁰T. C. Smith, *Kerygma and Church: Studies in Acts* (South Carolina: Smyth & Helwys Publishers, 1991), 4.

¹¹¹The rules of interpretation should be applied to the Bible as one would place upon any other book, but we should remember that the Bible is *not* just some fresh book, it is the Word of God.

¹¹²Livingston, *The Pentateuch in Its Cultural Environment*, 226, 227.

Dialectically, the **J** document, with its naïve concepts, could be dated before **E**, and the early phases of the divided kingdom seemed to provide a good historical setting. It could be argued that **J** was the kingdom of Judah's reaction against the establishment of the kingdom of north Israel. The purpose of **J**, then, was to provide Judah with a "historical" document that would justify Judah's and Jerusalem's claim to be the governmental center of all Israel. Likewise, **E** would be the antithetical production of the Kingdom of north Israel, led by the tribe of Ephraim, to show that there were historical antecedents in the Patriarchs and in Joshua for the governmental center to be located in the north.

The theory continued to conclude that after the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel, in 721 B. C., broadminded men during the reign of Manasseh (first half of seventh century BC) felt that the **E** document was too valuable to lose, so they blended it with the **J** document. This new **JE** document became a new thesis and the **D** document its antithesis. The thinking of the **D** document is said to have triumphed, substantially, during the Exile in Babylon and colored the composition of the historical Books Joshua through II Kings. However, the "Holiness Code," tied with Ezekiel, arose as another antithesis to **D**; and slowly, for perhaps a century, the priests in exile and then in Jerusalem put together the **P** document and made it the framework of a grand synthesis, the Pentateuch.¹¹³

Scholars applied the thinking of Hegel to the study of the Bible. Before the time of Hegel, truth was conceived on the basis of antithesis.¹¹⁴ For example, truth, in the sense of antithesis, is related to the idea of cause and effect. In other words, if anything is true, the opposite is false. In plain English, absolutes¹¹⁵ imply antithesis. Hegel departed from the classical methodology of antithesis.¹¹⁶ No longer did men think of thesis and antithesis; now, men thought in terms of **thesis, antithesis, and synthesis.**¹¹⁷ **He and his followers shifted the concept of truth and modern man was born.**¹¹⁸

According to liberal scholarship, the words of Scripture are no longer God's Revelation. Thus, there is no absolute standard by which right and wrong are determined. No longer is the Word of God viewed as the Word of God, but now the Scriptures are simply looked upon as the words of men. **Scholarship, influenced by Hegel, forgot that historic Christianity stands on a basis of antithesis.** Without antithesis, then Christianity is meaningless. Without antithesis there is no way of determining what is right and what is wrong. If there are no absolutes, then who is to determine what is right and what is wrong? The Christian view is that God and God alone is the answer to what is right and what is wrong. God alone is authoritative. Isaiah (739

¹¹³Ibid., 230-231.

¹¹⁴Francis A. Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1968), 177, where he says, "Antithesis: Direct opposition of contrast between two things (As in 'joy' which is the antithesis of 'sorrow')." **Francis Schaeffer** (1912–1984) was an evangelical missionary. After studying at Hampden-Sydney College, Westminster Theological Seminary (where he studied under Cornelius Van Til), and Faith Theological Seminary, Schaeffer pastored churches in Pennsylvania and Missouri.

¹¹⁵Ibid., "Absolute: A concept which is not modifiable by factors such as culture, individual psychology or circumstances; but which is perfect and unchangeable. Used as an antithesis of relativism."

¹¹⁶See Francis A. Schaeffer, *Escape from Reason* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1968), 30-45 for an excellent treatment of Hegel's philosophy.

¹¹⁷Schaeffer, *God Who Is There*, 179, "Synthesis: The combination of the partial truths of a thesis and its antithesis into a higher stage of truth, cf. Dialectic."

¹¹⁸See Schaeffer, *Escape from Reason*, 9-45. I am indebted to Schaeffer for the insights that I present in this in-depth study of the Date of the Exodus.

BC) calls attention to the fact that it is God's Word that is the determinant factor as to what is right and what is wrong: "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn" (Isaiah 8:20). God revealed Himself through His Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit revealed God's will through His prophets and through the Apostles of Christ.

Liberal Chronology: Documentary Hypothesis

In order to understand the impact of the **Graf-Wellhausen Documentary Hypothesis**¹¹⁹ upon the church today, we must understand something of the time frame within which the liberals assign to the Books of Moses. Liberals deny not only Mosaic authorship, but also the authenticity of other Books of the Old Testament as well as New Testament Books. Again, the question is: What is the Graf-Wellhausen Hypothesis? The following explanation sets forth in a nutshell the basic theory:

Graf-Wellhausen Hypothesis. A theory concerning the origins of the Pentateuch which, though having numerous antecedents, was most persuasively argued by **K. H. Graf** (1866) and **Julius Wellhausen** (1876-1884); it added to the existing hypothesis the argument that written documents, combined and revised over several centuries from varying historical and theological points of view, could be (fairly) precisely dated and placed in an evolutionary sequence. A **J** (Yahwist) document (ca. 850 BC) and an **E** (Elohist) document (ca. 750 BC) were, according to this hypothesis, combined by a redactor (**R^{JE}**) around 650 BC; the Deuteronomistic Code (621 BC, called **D**) was added by a redactor (**R^D**) around 550 BC; the Priestly Code (Ca. 450 BC) constituted the final document added by a redactor (**R^P**) around 400 BC¹²⁰ (Emphasis mine—bold)

From the above citation, we observe that the liberals divide the Books of Moses into four documents (**JEDP**), as stated earlier. From these four documents, the following chronology is assigned: "**J**" (J [Y]ahweh) is designated a date around 850 BC (Elohist); "**E**," is allotted a date close to 750 BC; then, "**J**" and "**E**" were combined by a redactor (editor) in 650 BC; "**D**" (represents Deuteronomy) is consigned a date just about 621 BC during the reign of Josiah; "**D**" was combined with "**J**" and "**E**" by a redactor in 550 BC; "**P**" (represents primarily Leviticus) is doled out a date approximately 450 BC; then, finally, "**J**" and "**E**" and "**D**" were brought together in 400 BC. This chronology set forth by many scholars is vastly different from that assigned by the Holy Spirit.

¹¹⁹See F.B. Huey, Jr. & Bruce Corley, *A Student's Dictionary for Biblical & Theological Studies: A Handbook of Special and Technical Terms* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 65, where they say: "**DOCUMENTARY HYPOTHESIS**. A theory that explains the formation of the Scriptures, especially the Pentateuch, as being the result of combining a number of documents from different sources. Source Criticism. JEDP." See *Ibid.*, 109, where they define JEDP: "**JEDP** Terminology used in the documentary hypothesis to designate the documents identified by this method of analysis: **J** = Jahwist, dated ca. 950 BC: **D** = Deuteronomist, dated ca. 622 B. C.: **P** = Priestly, dated ca. 500—450 BC. Proponents of this theory believe that **J** and **E** were combined ca. 750 BC, to which **D** was added ca. 620 BC, with **P** added in the postexilic period, giving the Pentateuch its final form as we know it by 400 BC. This hypothesis was given its classical expression by Julius Wellhausen in 1878. Source Criticism."

¹²⁰Richard N. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 2d ed. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 79.

Biblical Chronology: Exodus and Patriarchs

In order for us to understand more clearly the work of the “destructive critics” of the Bible, it is necessary to perceive a time frame of biblical chronology in order to assess the liberals’ assigned chronology to the Pentateuch. **Does the Bible give any indication as to the dates within which the Old Testament writings can be dated?** Perhaps, one of the most important verses dealing with biblical chronology is I Kings 6:1.¹²¹ This passage sets the stage for biblical chronology that allows us to get a handle on some very key persons in the Old Testament. The writer in First Kings says:

In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the LORD. (1 Kings 6:1)

The author gives an anchor point for biblical chronology. In fact, several important factors are contained in this verse. For instance, consider the following: (1) It is the fourth year of Solomon’s reign; (2) it is the year in which he began to build the temple; and (3) it has been 480 years since the Exodus. We know from internal and external evidence that this fourth year of Solomon’s reign is 966 BC. We also know that Solomon was crowned king in 970 BC. It is common knowledge that David reigned for forty years (I Kings 2:10). Since Solomon came to the throne in 970 BC, then David was crowned king over Judah in 1010 BC. Saul, David’s predecessor, also reigned for forty years (Acts 13:21); therefore, he was crowned king in 1050 BC. Thus, we can quickly see that I Kings 6:1 becomes an anchor point for an adequate knowledge of biblical chronology.¹²²

Date of the Exodus: 1446 BC

An understanding of I Kings 6:1 helps us to assign a specific time period to the date of the Exodus. Since the author of I Kings tells his readers that “it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign” (I Kings 6:1), then we can arrive at a date of 966 BC as the fourth year of Solomon’s reign in which he began to build the house of the Lord. With this data about Solomon’s reign, we can arrive at an exact date for the Exodus. **From the date of Solomon’s fourth year of his reign (966 BC), we can add 966 to 480 (the number of years**

¹²¹See Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology: Principles of Time Reckoning in the Ancient World and Problems of Chronology in the Bible* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1998), 201-208. Our understanding of 1Kings 6:1 sheds light on the date of the Exodus, which is dated around 1446 BC, not 1250 BC. **Jack Finegan** (1908-2000) was Professor of New Testament History and Archeology at the Pacific School of Religion, and pastor of the University Christian Church in Berkeley, California.

¹²²For an excellent treatment of biblical chronology, see Thomas R. Rodgers, *The Panorama of the Old Testament* (Newburgh, Indiana: Impact press, 1988), 9-15. I am deeply indebted to Rodgers for the following analysis of the dates assigned to the patriarchs.

since the Exodus) to arrive at the number 1446 (the year of the Exodus). This combining of these two dates give us the information needed to establish the date of the Exodus as well as the dates of the births of some of the patriarchs.

Date Jacob Moved to Egypt: 1876 BC

Since we now know that the date of the Exodus occurred in 1446 BC, we can now determine the date that Jacob moved into Egypt. The key to unraveling this information is found in Exodus 12:40, where Moses says, “Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt *was* four hundred and thirty years.” If we add 430 years to the date of the Exodus (1446 BC), then we discover that the children of Israel began their sojourn in Egypt in 1876 BC. Thus, from Exodus 12:40, we discover that Jacob moved to Egypt in 1876 BC.

Date of Jacob’s Birth: 2006 BC

As we continue to move back in time, we discern the date of Jacob’s birth. Again, we are indebted to Moses for a statement concerning a conversation that Jacob had with Pharaoh:

And Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The days of the years of my pilgrimage *are* one hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.” (Genesis 47:9)

The sojourn of Jacob began in Egypt (1876 BC) when he stood before Pharaoh, thus the information from Genesis 47: 9 furnishes us with the additional knowledge to determine the date of Jacob’s birth. Since Jacob told Pharaoh that he was 130 years old, then if we add 130 years to the date that Jacob entered Egypt (1876 BC), we arrive at the date of 2006 BC as the date of Jacob’s birth.

Date of Isaac’s Birth: 2066 BC

Armed with the above information about Jacob’s date of birth (2006 BC), Isaac’s son, we can now move further back into time to another statement of Moses that is found in Genesis 25:26 in order to determine the date of Isaac’s birth: “After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau’s heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebecca gave birth to them.” From this data and the data found in Genesis 47:9 about Jacob’s birth occurring in 2006 BC, we are able to add Isaac’s age, at the time of Jacob’s birth and arrive at Isaac’s date of birth as having occurred in 2066 BC.

Date of Abraham's Birth: 2166

Still moving back into time, we also learn from Genesis 21:5 that Abraham, father of Isaac and grandfather of Jacob, was born in 2166 BC.¹²³ Moses writes: “Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.” Since Isaac was born in 2066 BC, then by adding 100 to Isaac's birth, then we arrive at a date of 2166 BC for the birth of Abraham. Moses not only informs his readers about Abraham's birth, but he also records the departure of Abraham from Haran to Canaan as occurring in the year 2091 BC: “So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran” (Genesis 12:4).

If we begin the patriarchal period with Abram (Abraham), then we are considering a time span from 2091 BC when he left Haran until the time when the children of Israel entered Egypt in 1876 BC. This calculation (2091 minus 1876) is a total of 215 years. Some see the patriarchal period as extending from the time Abram left Haran in 2091 BC down to the death of Joseph in Genesis 50:26. Joseph's death occurred in 1805 BC. If we accept this latter span, then we would have a period of 286 years for the patriarchal period.¹²⁴

Biblical Chronology: Date of Old Testament Books

Book of Genesis

Reading from Genesis 1:1 to the final section of Genesis (Chapter 50), we go from eternity past (approximately 6000 BC) to the death of Joseph, which can be shown by tracing the chronologies in Genesis to be, as stated above, 1805 BC.¹²⁵

Book of Exodus: Begins in Flashback to 1876 BC

The Book of Exodus begins in 1876 BC in flashback, because Exodus 1:1 refers to the names of those who came into Egypt with Jacob. **Chapter 1 of the Book of Exodus covers**

¹²³See Lawrence O. Richards, *Illustrated Bible Handbook* (Nashville: Nelson, 1997), 71. **Lawrence O. Richards** is currently a full time author and speaker. He has written over 200 Christian books, including commentaries on every book of the Bible and the best-selling *Adventure Bible* and *Teen Study Bible*.

¹²⁴See John H. Walton, “Chronology of the Patriarchs,” in *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1978), 40. See also, Lawrence O. Richards, *Illustrated Bible Handbook* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), 71. **Dr. John H. Walton**, professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College, spent 20 years teaching at Moody Bible Institute. In his college years, he developed a passion for archaeology and Bible history. Instead of training to be an archaeologist, though, he focused his attention on studies comparing the culture and literature of the Bible and the ancient Near East. He has never lost his fascination with this subject, but comparative studies only provide one of the means by which he tries to get people excited about the Old Testament. He's saddened by how little exposure to and understanding of the Old Testament many Christians have, but he's passionate in doing whatever he can to remedy this spiritual and theological loss.

¹²⁵See Rodgers, *The Panorama of the Old Testament*, 21-22.

the time period from 1876 BC to the birth of Moses as recorded in Chapter 2. We read in Acts 7 that Moses was forty years old when he fled Egypt. He was eighty years old when he returned to lead the children of Israel out of bondage. Since we know that Moses died at the age of 120 (Deuteronomy 34:7), then by using the previous information about the date of the Exodus, we can date the birth of Moses at 1526 BC. Since Moses was eighty years old when he led the children of Israel out of Egypt, then we only need to add 80 to 1446 to arrive at Moses' date of birth. Between Exodus 2:1 and Exodus 3:2, we determine that eighty years transpired. Then, from the night of the Passover until the Tabernacle was set up at the end of the Book of Exodus, we detect a time span of thirteen months.

Turning to Exodus 40:17, Moses writes: "So the tabernacle was set up on the first day of the first month in the second year." We perceive that by this time the children of Israel have left Egypt and have gone down into Sinai; Moses made his two trips up on Mount Sinai, and the tabernacle was constructed. Exodus 40:17 informs the reader that all these events occurred within approximately thirteen months. Thus, we can place a date of approximately 1445 BC alongside Exodus 40:17.¹²⁶

Books of Leviticus and Numbers:

The Book of Leviticus No Date: The Book of Exodus Ended in 1445 BC

Leviticus has no chronology. But, about a month transpires between the sections in Exodus 40:17 and the movement indicated and initiated in the Book of Numbers. For instance, Moses writes: "The LORD spoke to Moses in the Tent of Meeting in the Desert of Sinai on the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt" (Numbers 1:1). The Book of Numbers begins in the second year after the Exodus and covers a period of about thirty-nine years. Since the Book of Exodus ended in 1445 BC, the Book of Numbers also begins with that same year.

Book of Deuteronomy: Moses Died in 1406 BC

Since Moses died at the age of 120, then the death of Moses occurred in 1406 BC (1446 minus 40). With this date (1406 BC) the wanderings were over. From the internal evidence in the Book of Deuteronomy, we are able to date this book with accuracy. For example, Moses gives us the chronology that is essential to date this book: "In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses proclaimed to the Israelites all that the LORD had commanded him concerning them" (Deuteronomy 1:3). From this data, we can write alongside the Book of Deuteronomy, and especially at Deuteronomy 34:7, the date of 1406 BC.

Book of Joshua: From 1406 to 1385 BC

With the death of Moses in 1406 BC, the responsibility of leadership passed from Moses to Joshua. Thus, the Book of Joshua begins with this date. From the internal evidence, it appears

¹²⁶Ibid., 22-23.

that the events of the book required about twenty-one years. Therefore, we may date the end of Joshua at 1385 BC.¹²⁷

Book of Judges: From 1385 to 1050 BC:

The Book of Judges began immediately after the death of Joshua. Again from internal evidence, the time period lasted approximately 335 years. Those years also include the Book of Ruth. Judges can be dated from approximately 1385 to 1050 BC.

Books of First and Second Samuel First Samuel began in 1100 BC to 1010 BC Second Samuel began in 1010 BC to 975 BC

The Book of First Samuel began in 1100 BC. There is a fifty-year overlap between the end of the Book of Judges and the beginning of First Samuel. First Samuel covers a time span from the birth of Samuel in 1100 BC to the death of Saul in 1010 BC for a total of ninety years of history. Second Samuel began in 1010 BC and covers almost forty years of history until approximately 975 BC.

Books of First and Second Kings: First Kings began in 970 BC and Ended in 853 BC Second Kings Covers 267 Years of History

First Kings began in 970 BC and ends with the death of Ahab in 853 BC. This book covers approximately 117 years of history (970 minus 853). Second Kings, using the death of Ahab in 853 BC, continues until 586 BC, which is the year of the Babylonian captivity. Second Kings covers roughly 267 years of history (853 minus 586).

Books of First and Second Chronicles

The two Books of Chronicles begin with a genealogical synopsis from Adam to 539 BC. Thus, Second Chronicles includes forty-seven more years of history than is contained in Second Kings (586 minus 539).

Book of Ezra

Following the Babylonian captivity (586 BC), Ezra takes up the history of Judah from 539 to 457 BC (539 minus 457), which is an additional eighty-two years of the history of Judah. There is no book that covers the history of Judah from 457 to 445 BC (12 years), and as a result of this lack of history, we encounter twelve years that is unaccounted.

¹²⁷Ibid., 23-24.

Book of Nehemiah

Nehemiah picks up the history in 445/444 BC. By adding these years, one has 962 total years of history. This number (444), when subtracted from 1406 (the date of the entrance into Canaan as recorded by Joshua) provides one with the date 444 BC. This is the date for Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem.

Book of Malachi

Following this event, Malachi records the final episodes of the history of Judah, which dates to more or less 400 BC. So, the writing of the Old Testament took place beginning with Moses between 1446 BC and 400 BC, which is a total of 1,046 years.¹²⁸

EGYPTIAN CHRONOLOGY

Having established biblical chronology, we need to turn our attention to the place that Egyptian chronology plays in the interpretation of biblical data by some scholars. Since Egyptian chronology plays a major role among the various interpretations placed upon the date of the Exodus, then it is necessary, so it appears to me, that a brief survey of the problems associated with Egyptian chronology needs to be discussed. It is the chronology of Egypt that has been used to “key” the chronologies of the ancient empires.¹²⁹ Approximately one hundred years ago, **George Rawlinson** (1812-1902), English scholar and historian, alerted scholars of the “hopeless obscurity” of Egyptian chronology. He introduced his chapter on Egyptian chronology by calling attention to its irresolvable problems:

It is a patent fact, and one that is beginning to obtain general recognition, that the chronological element in the early Egyptian history is in a state of almost hopeless obscurity.¹³⁰

As recently as 1960, R. M. Cook reminded students of Greek pottery of the difficulties concerning the establishment of relative and absolute chronologies and their reconciliation.¹³¹ Our knowledge of Egyptian events is sweepingly based upon the disjointed reports of Classical authors, damaged and incomplete written records, and chance records of astronomical phenomena. Immanuel Velikovsky (1895-1979, Russian-born American independent scholar)

¹²⁸This chapter is also designed to assist individuals in establishing the basic principles of biblical chronology. For more detailed studies, we should consult articles on chronology in Bible dictionaries.

¹²⁹See Alberto Siliotti, *Guide to the Valley of the Kings*, 9, for the conventional dating system.

¹³⁰George Rawlinson, *A History of Egypt*, 2 volumes (New York: Hurst & Company, 1886), 2:1. Also cited in Gary North, *Moses & Pharaoh* (Tyler, Texas: The Institute for Christian Economics, 1985), 302. **George Rawlinson** was educated at Trinity College in Oxford before becoming a professor of ancient history at Exeter College. Rawlinson went on to accept the offices of Canon of Canterbury and Rector of All Hallows, Lombard Street.

¹³¹See R. M. Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery*, 2nd ed. (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd: Distributed in the U.S. by Harper & Row, 1977), 261-270.

in seeking to call attention to the problems, cites O. G. S. Crawford (1886-1957), English archaeologist:

A system of relative chronology can be established by excavation in any country that has been long inhabited, but it is left hanging in the air until linked up with Egypt, whether directly or indirectly through a third region.¹³²

Many archaeologists and biblical theologians have used a presumably trustworthy Egyptian chronology founded upon inconclusive Egyptian sources as a means of criticizing the Bible's account of the Exodus. In Velikovshy's *Ages in Chaos*, he stresses the need to reconstruct the chronology of Egypt to correlate with biblical chronology, which is limited primarily to chronology and to documentary records relating to Egyptian chronology. He has emphasized that the documentary records offer no support that the Exodus occurred during the Eighteenth Dynasty or Nineteenth Dynasty. According to Velikovsky, the Egyptian records present no evidence that any successful rebellion of slaves took place. He cites Sir W. M. Flinders Petrie (1853-1942, English Egyptologist) to lend credibility to his findings: "Joshua did not find any such Egyptian hold during his conquest."¹³³ Velikovsky concludes:

No reference has been found that could be interpreted as even hinting at an exodus during the interregnums between the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties, and only the fact that the situation was such as to make an exodus possible favors this hypothesis.¹³⁴

Velikovsky also cites another theory advanced by Karl Richard Lepsius (1810-1884), German archaeologist and linguist:

The next theory reduces the age of the Exodus further: it has for its cornerstone a stele of Merneptah, in which this king of the Nineteenth Dynasty says that Palestine "is a widow" and that "the seed of Israel is destroyed." This is regarded in an Egyptian document. Merneptah did not perish in the sea, nor did he suffer a debacle [a violent disruption]; he obviously inflicted a defeat on Israel and ravaged with the pronounced tradition of Israel, but since it is the first mention of Israel. Merneptah is regarded by many as the Pharaoh of the Exodus (-1200), and Ramses II, his predecessor, as the Pharaoh of the Oppression. Other scholars however consider the mention of Israel in corroboration, but as a refutation of the theory that Merneptah was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. They argue that if he found Israel already in Palestine, he could not have been the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

A further obstacle to placing the Exodus in the reign of Merneptah has also been emphasized. If he really was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, then the Israelites must have entered Palestine at least a

¹³²O. G. S. Crawford, *Man and His Past* (London: Oxford University Press 1921), 72, quoted in Immanuel Velikovsky, *Peoples of the Sea: A Reconstruction of Ancient History* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1977), 205.

¹³³Sir W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Palestine and Israel* (London, 1934), 56. Cited in Immanuel Velikovsky, *Ages in Chaos*, vol. 1 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1952), 8.

¹³⁴Velikovsky, *Ages in Chaos*, 8.

generation later, about–1190 to –1180; on this theory there remains only a century for the events of Judges.¹³⁵

Velikovsky himself did not come up with a final position concerning the date of the Exodus. He felt that either the chronology of Egypt was incorrect or that the biblical account was defective. He concluded his *Book (Ages in Chaos)* with the following summary:

We still do not know which of the two histories, Egyptian or Israelite, must be readjusted. At the same time we observed how the histories of other ancient countries and peoples accord with either the Israelite or the Egyptian chronology; and how the histories of Cyprus, Mycenae, and Crete, in correlating with one side or the other, create confusion in archaeology and chronology.¹³⁶

Donovan A. Courville

Donovan A. Courville (1901-1996, professor of biochemistry),¹³⁷ like Immanuel Velikovsky, calls for a reconstruction of Egyptian chronology. Courville published a two-volume work concerning the date of the Exodus in which he suggested a revision of Egyptian chronology.¹³⁸ The Exodus, he points out, is the first event in Egyptian history for which there is a chronologically detailed parallel in Hebrew history.¹³⁹ Scholars debate over the Pharaoh reigning at the time of the Exodus. The two major questions that confront all scholars are: (1) was the Exodus during the eighteenth century? Or (2) was the Exodus during the nineteenth century? Courville comments:

Both the 18th and 19th dynasty settings suffer from the discovery of the mummies of the pharaohs nominated as the pharaoh of the Exodus. It is thus necessary to either deny the death of the Exodus pharaoh in the Red Sea debacle, which view is contradictory to Exodus 15:5. Since the king, above all others in the army, would certainly wear armor, he would be among the first to wear fine armor, he would be among the first to find his final resting place at the bottom of the sea.

Even more traumatic to the 18th dynasty placement of the Exodus is the failure of the Egyptian inscriptions even to suggest that there was any significant crisis in Egypt at this time. The power and prosperity to which Egypt was elevated in the reign of Thutmose III continued unabated into the reign of Amenhotep II. The attempts to defend this placement of the Exodus have overlooked one important factor—a factor which, standing alone, is adequate to negate this theory as far as meriting serious consideration. This is the well-recognized fact that it would have required far less than the situation described in Scripture to have resulted in a rapid and easy rebellion on the part of the tribute-paying peoples. There would certainly have resulted a complete loss of any empire that Egypt may have controlled at the time. The empire of Thutmose III extended to the widest limits in all of

¹³⁵Ibid., 9.

¹³⁶Ibid., 338.

¹³⁷Donovan A. Courville belonged to the Seventh-day Adventists and maintained an interest in archaeology, Egyptology and biblical chronology. His fame resulted from his massive work on *The Exodus Problem and Its Ramifications*, which consisted of 700 pages.

¹³⁸Donovan A. Courville, *The Exodus Problem and Its Ramifications*, 2 vols (Loma Linda, California: Challenge Books, 1971).

¹³⁹Donovan A. Courville, “Historical Revisionism: A Biblical Reconstruction of Egypt’s Chronology,” *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 2, no. 1 (Summer 1975): 131.

Egyptian History. All the evidence points to the total absence of any such crisis at the death of Thutmose III.¹⁴⁰

According to Courville, Dynasty XIX was short-lived and was a mere offshoot of Dynasty XVIII. Dynasty XIX ended before Dynasty XVIII did.¹⁴¹ He claims that his reconstruction provides solutions for over one hundred chronological problems that now annoy Old Testament scholars.¹⁴² As a result of the reconstruction, the Exodus incident is set at the point of the Hyksos invasion of Egypt. This setting explains the enigmatic statement of Josephus (AD 37-100), first-century Jewish historian that the Hyksos were able to take over Egypt without a battle:

There was a king of ours, whose name was Timaus. Under him it came to pass, I know not how, that God was averse to us; and there came, after a surprising manner, men of ignoble birth out of the eastern parts, and had boldness enough to make an expedition into our country, and with ease subdued it by force, yet without our hazarding a battle with them.¹⁴³

Courville defends his thesis of a revision of Egyptian chronology by asserting that the date of the late Early Bronze Age (EBIV 2300-2200) should be placed in the mid-fifteenth century.¹⁴⁴ Once more, this essay turns again to an observation by Ogg, a contributor to the *New Bible Dictionary*, as to the problem of establishing the accuracy of chronology:

In Near Eastern works involving chronology, it is important to realize that ancient scribes did not draw up synchronistic lists as is done today. They simply listed each series of rulers and reigns separately, in succession on the papyrus or tablet. Synchronisms were to be derived from special historiographical works, not the king-lists or narratives seeing other purposes. An excellent example of this is the Turin Papyrus of Kings from Egypt. It lists at great length all five Dynasties 13 to 17 in successive groups, totalling originally over 150 rulers and their reigns accounting for at least 450 years. However, it is known from other sources that all five Dynasties, the 150-odd rulers and 450-odd regnal years alike, must all fit inside the 234 years from *c.* 1786 to *c.* 1552 BC: rarely less than two series, and sometimes three series, of rulers are known to have reigned contemporaneously. The lack of cross-references between contemporaries (*e.g.* among the judges) is paralleled by similar lack of such references for most of the period of Egyptian history just cited.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 133-134.

¹⁴¹Ibid., 140-141.

¹⁴²Ibid., 143.

¹⁴³Flavius Josephus, *The Works of Josephus*, Book I, Paragraph 14.75, Translated by William Whiston, New Updated Edition (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1988), 778.

¹⁴⁴Donovan A. Courville, *The Exodus Problems and its Ramifications*, 1:77-99.

¹⁴⁵Ogg, "Chronology of the Old Testament," in *The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1962), 192.

Redating Late Early Bronze I and Middle Bronze II (2000-1500)

Stan Vaninger

Stan Vaninger has written a follow-up to Courville's reconstruction of his chronology.¹⁴⁶ He surveys the evidence concerning Canaanite archaeology, and his research reveals that the people who conquered Palestine at the end of the Early Bronze III (2600-2300) were the Israelites. Also, he set forth the idea that the Israelites were the individuals who were involved in the transition period—EBIV/MBI—that corresponds to the time of the Judges. He concludes that the archaeological evidence does not allow for an Israelite conquest of Canaan in the 13th century. The archaeological evidence points to a tremendous disruption in Canaan during the EBIV period [2300-2200], which also includes the MBI (2200-2000) period.

These two time frames represent the transition period of the conquest.¹⁴⁷ In city after city, he calls attention to the fact that there are signs of burning and destruction, indicating an invasion of the region by a militarily powerful army. The conventional dating for this period (EBIV/MBI) is 2300/2000 BC; thus, liberal scholars continue to point to this disruption as having taken place at least seven centuries before the earliest date possible for the Exodus. Furthermore, there is no archaeological evidence, according to liberal scholarship, of any disruption in the fifteenth-century through the thirteenth century BC—Late Bronze I and Late Bronze II (1500-1200), the conventional date of the Exodus.¹⁴⁸

In order to demonstrate that Egyptian chronology is not accurate, Vaninger relates how that the archaeological evidence in Jericho, Ai (ā'ī), and Gilgal (gīl'gāl) points to the Early Bronze IV (2300-2200) and Middle Bronze I (2200-2000 BC).¹⁴⁹ The problems associated with archaeological findings are not related to biblical chronology, but rather to the conventional Egyptian chronology. He cites several archaeologists to confirm that there are no signs of a conquest in the 13th century chronology of Egypt. To illustrate this point, his arguments from archaeological evidence verify his essay that Egyptian chronology is off approximately 700 years:

¹⁴⁶Stan F. Vaninger, "Historical Revisionism: Archaeology and the Conquest of Canaan," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 7, no. 1 (Summer 1980): 110-134.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 133.

¹⁴⁸See Gary North, *Moses & Pharaoh: Dominion Religion Versus Power Religion* (Tyler, Texas: The Institute for Christian Economics, 1985), 319, for an analysis of Stan F. Vaninger's essay on "Historical Revisionism: Archaeology and the Conquest of Canaan." **Gary North** (PhD, University of California, Riverside) is the author of over 40 books on economics, theology, history, and education. His articles have appeared in *National Review*, *American Spectator*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Westminster Theological Journal*. Gary continues to speak and write prolifically.

¹⁴⁹Vaninger, "Historical Revisionism: Archaeology and the Conquest of Canaan," *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 7, no. 1 (Summer 1980):123-128.

The final end of the Early Bronze Age civilization came with catastrophic completeness. The last of the Early Bronze Age walls of Jericho was built in a hurry, using old and broken bricks, and was probably not completed when it was destroyed by fire ... all the finds show that there was an absolute break, and that a new people took the place of the earlier inhabitants. Every town in Palestine that has so far been investigated shows this same break.¹⁵⁰

In other words, the archaeological findings in the 13th century (Egyptian chronology) do not harmonize with biblical chronology of Joshua's conquest in 1406 BC=EBIV/MBI. In other words, the events set forth in Egyptian chronology are off about 700 years. The destruction that occurred in the EBIV/MBI should be moved forward to coincide with the date of the Exodus as set forth in I Kings 6:1.¹⁵¹

Rudolph Cohen

Another scholar, Randolph Cohen, in *Biblical Archaeology Review* sets forth the same findings as advanced by Vaninger as well as many other archaeologists.¹⁵² He dates the **Early Bronze Age** as having occurred between 2200 BC to about 2000 BC¹⁵³ (The traditional date assigned for the **Middle Bronze Age** is 3150-2200 BC). Who were these people of the Early Bronze Age? Cohen speculates the following explanation:

I would suggest that they were a people who migrated slowly, from the south or southwest, into the central Negev [nəg'əv] of Palestine. I would further suggest that the dim, historical memory of their journey powerfully influenced the Biblical author who described Israel's entry into Canaan. In fact, these MBI people may be the Israelites whose famous journey from Egypt to Canaan is called the Exodus.¹⁵⁴

It is interesting, however, to note that this migratory drift, as I have reconstructed it, bears a striking similarity to that of the Israelites' flight from Egypt to the Promised Land, as recorded in the Book of Exodus.... The establishment of the MBI settlements directly over the ruins of the EBII—EBIII sites in the Central Negev is consistent with the traditions that the Israelites dwelled in the area previously inhabited by their Amalekite foes (Deuteronomy 25:17-19). The northeastward migration of the MBI population into Transjordan has parallels in the Biblical recollection that the Israelites remained in Moab before crossing the Jordan River and laying siege to Jericho (Deuteronomy 3:29). In this connection, it is interesting to note that Early Bronze Age Jericho was destroyed by a violent

¹⁵⁰Kathleen Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land* (New York: Praeger, 1960), 134; this quote from Kenyon (1906-1978), leading archaeologist of Neolithic (,nē-ə-'li-thik) culture in the Fertile Crescent, is also cited by Vaninger (p. 120), and he too refers to similar statements by G. Ernest Wright (1909-1974), leading Old Testament scholar and biblical archeologist and an expert in Ancient Near Eastern archaeology, and William Dever (b. 1909), American archaeologist, (see P. 120, note 17).

¹⁵¹This essay by Vaninger—"Historical Revisionism: Archaeology and the Conquest of Canaan—is a well-written document in defense of biblical chronology. His handling of the archaeological evidence is superb. This article is a must reading for a proper foundation of a proper understanding of this subject. This magazine can be ordered from <http://www.chalcedon.edu/>.

¹⁵²Rudolph Cohen, "The Mysterious MBI People," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 9, no. 4 (July/August 1983): 18-29.

¹⁵³Ibid., 16.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

conflagration, and the site was thinly reoccupied by MBI newcomers, who were apparently unaccustomed to urban dwellings.

In the central and northern parts of Israel, the EBIII urban culture flourished. The MBI invaders in the south overwhelmed this urban Canaanite civilization and destroyed their cities but thereafter persisted in a semi-nomadic way of life. This bears a striking similarity to the tradition of Joshua's devastating campaign against the Canaanite centers in central Palestine and his ban on rebuilding some of them (e.g., Joshua 8:28). Both Jericho and Ai were fortified cities at the end of the Early Bronze Age. According to the Biblical account, they were both destroyed by the Israelites; God specifically instructed that these cities should not be rebuilt. Interestingly enough, after the EBIII destruction of Jericho and Ai, both cities lay in ruins for hundreds of years.¹⁵⁵

The only thing Cohen can do is to appeal to the memory of this Middle Bronze Age I (2200-2000 BC) people in the mind of the biblical account. His account corroborates the conclusions of many other well-known archaeologists (see Vaninger's essay). Cohen concludes his article with the testimony of two other well-known archaeologists, who also corroborate his findings of a EBIV/MBI conquest:

The migration of the MBI population from the southwest and their conquest of the early Bronze civilization evidently made a very deep impression, and the memory of these events was preserved from one generation to the next. The late Yohanan Aharoni made a similar suggestion when he noted that the biblical tradition concerning the destruction of the two Canaanite cities Arad and Horma could not be placed, archaeologically speaking, in the Late Bronze/Early although this is the period to which the arrival of the Hebrews is normally ascribed—but had remarkable parallels in MBII, when these two strategic outposts in the Beer-Sheva basin guarded the country's southern approaches. (Aharoni identified Biblical Arad with MBII Tel Masos.) He maintained that the recollection of these two important sites was perpetuated among the local populace and appeared in the Biblical saga of the conquest.

The similarity between the course of the MBI migration and the route of the Exodus seems too close to be coincidental, and a comparable process may have operated here. The Late Bronze Age (1500—1200 BC.)—the period usually associated with the Israelites' flight from Egypt—is archaeologically unattested in the Kadwsh-Barnea area (as elsewhere in the Central Negev, for that matter), but MBI remains abound and seem to provide a concrete background for the traditions of settlement.¹⁵⁶

John Bimson

John Bimson is cited in order to demonstrate that many scholars are conscious that the dating of the Exodus to the 13th century is not factual with archaeological evidence or the Bible. In other words, there are enormous problems, according to John J. Bimson and David

¹⁵⁵Ibid., 28. MBII = Middle Bronze Age II (2850—2650 BC) and MBIII = Middle Bronze Age III (2650-2350 BC. See Gary North, *Moses & Pharaoh: Dominion Religion Versus Power Religion* (Tyler, Texas: The Institute for Christian Economics, 1985, 316. See Donovan A. Courville, "A Biblical Reconstruction of Egypt's Early Chronology," *The Journal of Reconstruction* 2, no. 1 (Summer 1975):140 for a Table on Egyptian Chronology (Traditional). His article should be read as a supplement to Stan F. Vaninger's study in *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 7, no. 1 (Summer 1980): 110-134.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., 29.

Livingston, with the Generally Accepted Date (GAD) of 1550-1200 BC (Late Bronze Age=LBI and LBII).¹⁵⁷ These men argue against the late date (13th century) assigned to the Exodus upon archaeological unearthings. They correctly call attention to the assigned chronologies (GAD) of the Early Bronze Age (3150-2200 BC) and Middle Bronze Age I (2200-2000 BC) that do not agree with the Bible or archaeological evidence.

Both Bimson and Livingston discuss the archaeological findings associated with Jericho, Ai (ā'ī), Gibeon (gīb'ē-ōn), Hebron, Hormah/Zephath (hōr'mā / zē'fāth) Arad (ā'rād), Debir (dē'bêr), and Lachish (lā'kīsh).¹⁵⁸ In other words, according to Bimson and Livingston, the archaeological evidence does not support an early date (13th century) as advanced by many archaeologists, but rather the archaeological findings actually support a late date (15th century), which is associated with the EBIV period. Thus Egyptian chronology is off about 700 years. In other words, Egyptian chronology should be moved forward to 1406 BC in order to coincide with biblical chronology. As a whole the archaeological evidence does not support a 13th century BC invasion of the cities. On the other hand, there is some support for some of the cities for a 15th century invasion of destruction (biblical chronology). These two men call attention to the fact that in 1230-1220 BC that there were no cities, as a whole, for the Israelites to destroy.¹⁵⁹ Also, this essay advances the suggestion that there should be chronological adjustments of the dates to solve the current dilemma, they write:

The first is simple: Move the date of the conquest back about 200 years, to shortly before 1400 B. C. Although this conflicts with the GAD for Israel's emergence in Canaan, it is in fact the date implied by the Bible itself.¹⁶⁰

A lowering of the date for the end of the Middle Bronze Age, from 1550 B. C. to shortly before 1400 B. C. The result is that two events previously separated by centuries are brought together: the fall of Canaan's MBII cities becomes the archaeological evidence for the conquest. These twin proposals create an almost perfect match between the archaeological evidence and the Biblical account.¹⁶¹

CONCLUSION

Based upon the above arguments for the early date (15th century) and the late date (13th century) for the Exodus, I accept the early date. This acceptance of the early date is based upon 1 Kings 6:1. There is much to be said for a readjustment of the Generally Accepted Date as is presently used for dating purposes. We do find corroboration for an early date based upon a parallel between the biblical tradition (1 Kings 6:1) and the archaeological evidence when one places the conquest at the end of **Middle Bronze Age II** (2000-1550 BC), or with the new chronology as proposed by Bimson and Livingston—MB II 1550-1420 BC.

¹⁵⁷John J. Bimson and David Livingston, "Redating the Exodus," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 13, no. 5 (September/October 1987): 40.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., 40-42.

¹⁵⁹Ibid.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., 42.

¹⁶¹Ibid., 51. This essay, too, is recommended reading for anyone who wishes to explore the Date of the Exodus as set forth in I Kings 6:1.

As we peruse the many books and various articles written by the early and late date scholars, we immediately observe the tremendous amount of subjectivity in the gathering of data. As we interpret information, we cannot but be influenced with our set of presuppositions as we approach the data. Our presuppositions frequently taint the known evidence so that we do not read the original evidence correctly. Ron Jenson has graphically expressed the difficulty in assessing the details:

Your world view, of course, is how you view the world. It is the set of presuppositions—that which is believed beforehand—which underlies all our decisions and actions. These presuppositions (our world view) determine our thinking patterns, which in turn influence our actions.

Many factors contribute to our world view including peer pressure, parents, education, mass media, the Bible, church and other forces. Our world view may be conscious or unconscious, but it determines our destiny and the destiny of the society we live in.¹⁶²

It is my opinion that the world at large has been influenced by Darwinian evolution; thus, this epistemology—philosophical theory of knowledge—has permeated every field of science, which includes archaeology. Darwin’s worldview is antagonistic to the Christian’s concept of the world. It is Darwin’s perception that has shaped the thinking of many secular scholars as well as many Christian scholars.¹⁶³ Many individuals have allowed themselves to be baptized into the wisdom of the world. **There are only two worldviews within which we can work from—God’s worldview or man’s worldview.**¹⁶⁴ Many theologians along with numerous archaeologists and Egyptologists disallow the early date (15th century). Their presuppositions—beliefs or deductions—prevent them from looking at the Scriptures objectively. S. Sandmel admits this subjectivity:

While the aim of every archaeologist is to make his final report as perfect as possible, mistakes are inevitably made, problems are left unsolved, and errors creep into his interpretation of the history, chronology, and culture of the site.¹⁶⁵

Also, in this same vein, Vern S. Poythress (b. 1946), Calvinist philosopher and theologian and New Testament scholar, stresses the impact that Darwinian philosophy has exerted even among so-called conservative scholarship:

Theological liberals, for their part, decided that the Bible was scientifically primitive and needed to be updated theologically. Finally, conservative theistic evolutionists thought that they could

¹⁶²Ron Jenson, *Together We Can Deal with Life in the 80’s* (San Bernardino, CA: Here’s Life Publishers, 1982), 27-28.

¹⁶³See Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (New York: Free Press, 2006) for an example of a Christian scientist who has accepted Darwinian philosophy concerning the origin of life.

¹⁶⁴See North, *Moses & Pharaoh*, 322-325 for an excellent analysis of the influence of Darwin’s evolutionary hypothesis upon archaeology.

¹⁶⁵S. Sandmel, “Archaeology,” in *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, 4 Volumes (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 1:200.

reexegete crucial biblical passages and show that the Bible did not intend to teach anything in conflict with the new theories.¹⁶⁶

In conclusion, Gary Kilgore North (b. 1942, an economist and publisher who writes on economics, history, and Christian theology) summarizes the Bible and the archaeological findings very succinctly:

The testimony of the Bible is clear: 480 years before Solomon began to construct the temple, Moses led the Hebrews out of Egypt. The archaeological evidence points to a late Early Bronze Age/Middle Bronze Age conquest of Canaan by a people who invaded from the southwest. The problem for conventional archaeologists and historians is that their dating of the Bronze Age places the archaeological evidence much earlier than fifteenth-century Egypt and therefore fifteenth-century Mediterranean civilization (which is keyed to Egypt).

The Bible is correct; the conventional scholars are incorrect. They have used the flawed chronological reconstruction of Egypt's history to govern their dating of the metallic ages. They have refused to go to the Bible for their chronological keying device. Instead, they use a mistaken chronology keyed to Egypt. It is therefore time for Christian scholars to abandon Egypt at last, and to head for the Promised Land, even if they must wander in the academic wilderness for a generation or two.¹⁶⁷ (Emphasis mine—bold and underlining)

¹⁶⁶Vern S. Poythreass, *Science and Hermeneutics*, Foundation of Contemporary Interpretation Series, Vol., 6 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 23.

¹⁶⁷Gary North, *Moses & Pharaoh*, 324-325. I am indebted to North for his treatment of the date of the Exodus. I have relied heavily upon the writings of North, Courville, and Vaninger for their in-depth insights into many areas.