The Exodus and Conquest: Lesson 7

The Plagues of Egypt

Pharaohs in Exodus
By the time we come to the book of Exodus, Joseph had been dead, and the ruling Pharaoh never knew him. It has become very popular to think that the Pharaoh of Exodus was Ramses II. If you watch the movie The Ten Commandments starring Charlton Heston, you will see this. The Pharaoh of the oppression had to be reigning for at least 40 years, while Moses had been exiled. The only qualifying Pharaoh’s would be Ramses II and Thutmose III. However, Ramses lived in the thirteenth century while Thutmose III lived from 1504-1450 B.C. That means that the following Pharaoh, Amenhotep II (1450-1425 B.C.), would be the Pharaoh of the Exodus, which fits with our date of the Exodus as 1446 B.C. There is a lot of controversy surrounding the date of the Exodus. Several scholars believe that the Exodus took place under the reign of Ramses II (1279-1213 B.C.). Without going into all the reasons, you can look at the following chart to help you understand how a 1446 B.C. date of the Exodus lines up with other events in Scripture. Below that you can see statues of Thutmose III, and Amenhotep II. Look for Amenhotep under the cow. You can also see a statue of Hatshepsut, Pharaoh’s daughter who probably raised Moses, and eventually became a Pharaoh. It was customary for the Pharaoh to wear a beard. A false beard was attached to Hatshepsut, which is depicted in the statue.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Confirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 35:9-15)</th>
<th>Exodus and Mosaic Covenant 1445/6 B.C.</th>
<th>Conquest Completed (Josh. 14:7, 10)</th>
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<td>Joseph to Egypt (Gen. 37) 1867 B.C.</td>
<td>Arrival at Canaan 1405 B.C.</td>
<td>1398 B.C.</td>
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<td>Jacob to Egypt (Gen. 40) 1845 B.C.</td>
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<td>1875 B.C.</td>
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**The Date of the Exodus in the Bible**

- 430 yrs. of sojourn (Ex. 12:40-41; Gal. 3:17)
- 400 yrs. of bondage (Gen. 15:13, 16; Acts 7:6)
- 447 yrs. = cir. 450 yrs. (Acts 13:19-20)

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1 Adapted from Harold Hoehner “The Duration of the Egyptian Bondage,” *Bib Sac* 126, no. 504 (Oct-Dec, 1969), 316.
The Plagues of Egypt

It is important that you understand the ten plagues in Egypt and what each one's purpose was. Look up Exodus 7:4-5 and Numbers 33:3-4. Write down what the purpose of the plagues was. Who was God attacking?

In Exodus 6:14-27 we are told about the genealogies of Moses and Aaron. This is written down prior to their appearance before Pharaoh. The author of Exodus was not writing down the genealogies of Moses and Aaron because he got bored. In the ancient world, a person's family is their authority. By writing genealogies, the author is presenting the authority of Moses and Aaron before they approach Pharaoh, who was one of the most powerful persons at that time. When Moses went before Pharaoh, God turned his staff into a serpent. Look at the top of the heads of Hatshepsut and Thutmose II. In Egypt, the serpent was a symbol of Pharaoh's throne. By turning Moses' staff into a serpent, and then consuming the ones that the magicians had made appear, God was showing Pharaoh that Moses had a higher position of authority, which goes back to the promise given to Abraham— that he would be a great nation.

Nile Turned to Blood

Exodus 7:14-25

In Egypt, Khnum was a god believed to have been the guardian of the Nile, and Hapi the spirit of the Nile. It was also believed that Osiris' blood stream was the Nile. These gods were highly esteemed, as the Egyptians depended on the Nile for life. While God was attacking the Egyptian's gods, it is possible that he was also punishing them for throwing the Hebrew children into the Nile.

Frogs

Exodus 8:1-19

Heqat was a frog-headed goddess, who was the god of resurrection as well as mid-wivery. If this god was powerful, and worthy of worship, then she should have been able to prevent the midwives from protecting the Hebrew children from being thrown into the river. And she certainly should have been able to prevent the frogs from being found everywhere.

Vermin (gnats)

Exodus 8:16-19

Set was the god of the desert. If the Egyptians were superior over the Hebrews, then the Egyptian god should have prevented the gnats from coming from the desert. This is the first plague that the Egyptians could not duplicate. The picture shows how the gnats would have come in from the desert into the Nile region.
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**Flies**  
*Exodus 8:20-32*  
Uachit was a fly god who should have been able to keep the flies from ruining the land.

**Pestilence**  
*Exodus 9:1-7*  
Hathor was a mother goddess in the form of a cow. Apis was a bull god. Both of these should have been able to protect the livestock. Notice the horns on the top of the female statue of Hathor. The picture of Amenhotep II above shows him under the cow form of Hathor.

**Boils**  
*Exodus 9:8-12*  
Imhotep was believed to be the god of medicine, who should have been able to prevent the boils from breaking out. **This was the first attack on humans!**

**Hail**  
*Exodus 9:13-35*  
There were three gods here. Nut (pronounced *noot*) was the sky goddess, Isis was the goddess of life, and Seth was the protector of the crops. It is important to understand that the hail was unusual. Somehow it was accompanied by fire, or blew up into balls of fire as it hit the ground. Up to this point, you can see how the plagues became more serious as they progressed. Fire was one of the two most feared things in the ancient world.

**Locusts**  
*Exodus 10:1-20*  
Isis was the god of life and as you know, Seth was the protector of the crops. The locusts blocked the sun, which kept the plants from getting the light they needed. This could be seen as an attack on several sun gods, which you will look at next. However, the primary idea here is that the gods could not keep the locusts from blocking the sun and eating the crops. Locusts were just as feared as fire in the ancient world. Both destroy crops. The Egyptians built great pyramids, but could not come up with pesticides or fire hoses.

** Darkness**  
*Exodus 10:1-20*  
Egyptian sun gods included Re, Atem, Atum, and Horus. Pharaoh was believed to also be a god, and to have come from the sun, Pharaoh's father. This is a direct attack on Pharaoh's father. It is an indirect attack on Pharaoh, because, Egyptians believed that he would become the sun god when he died.

**Death of the Firstborn**  
*Exodus 11:1-12:32*  
This is a direct attack on Pharaoh, because the one who was to become Pharaoh is killed.
Assignment


2. Review dates, maps, reading assignments, Genesis reading and Exodus reading.