

The Story of Joseph

Dating Joseph

Part 28 – October 7, 2012



Last week's theme was the trustworthiness of God, and specifically, how we can trust God when He *appears untrustworthy*. And we talked about what took place in the white space between the end of chapter 40 and the beginning of 41, which says: "When *two full years had passed*, Pharaoh had a dream".

But does that *really* mean "two years"? And if so, when? And is this *really* a Pharaoh from history? And if so, which one?

You see, at the end of the day the credibility of God is founded on the *reliability* of His Word because, when I'm *most* tempted to doubt Him, I have to *rely* on what His Word says *about* Him! Last year I did a message on, "Is the Bible Reliable?" Today, I want to share my journey with the trustworthiness of scripture in regard to researching the story of Joseph in such detail.

I've been referencing historical names and timespans in relation to Joseph, and more and more of you have been rightly questioning where I'm getting these numbers. Well ... *you asked for it!*



WARNING! We're gonna be *heavy* on history and science. But here's the thing: the Bible not only claims to be inspired and authoritative, it claims to be *historically accurate*. And the enemy is waging a negative campaign against its historical authenticity so that he can discredit its *spiritual authority*. I take great offense when pastors reject its historicity, and pass it off as so much poetic, spiritual self-help. So, when I began this series, I wanted to know about when Joseph lived.

Easier said than done; it seemed like *everybody* had a theory! They find a somewhat similar historical figure, title, era, tomb painting, recorded famine, or whatever, and start *forcing* a fit.

Wouldn't it be nice if God had just written down the dates? Much to my surprise, it turns out He *did*, and with surprisingly simple, straightforward, and substantial detail.

[Moses writes] Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt was **430 years**. At the end of the **430 years, to the very day**, [Moses must've had access to Egyptian historical records!] all the Lord's divisions left Egypt. [430 years before the exodus, Jacob/Israel moved his family to the Land of Goshen ... in March/April] – Exodus 12:40-41 NIV

The Israelites set out from Rameses on the fifteenth day of the first month [Nisan] the day after the Passover. [Usually in March/April; it shifts; it's a moon phase/solar year calendar] – Numbers 33:3a NIV

Okay, they “set out from Rameses” in March/April, but when?

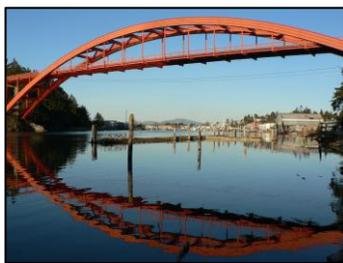
In the **four hundred and eightieth year** after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the **fourth year of Solomon's reign** over Israel, in the **month of Ziv**, [that's] the **second month**, [for any non-Jews who might be reading this 3,000 years later] he began to build the temple of the Lord. – 1 Kings 6:1 NIV

Again to my surprise, scholars almost universally agree, temple construction began on or about 966^{BC}. Simple arithmetic dates the exodus to 1446^{BC}, and Jacob/Israel entering Egypt at 1876^{BC}.

So what's the problem? Well, among others, the city of Rameses didn't exist in 1446^{BC}. And the tomb of the Pharaoh who would've drowned in the Red Sea was discovered ... and he was *in it!* There's more, but you get the idea. This is when panic starts to set in. What if God's Word *can't* stand up to scrutiny?! What do I *personally, truly* believe about the Bible ... *in secret*? Are all the words *God's Word*? The Apostle Paul said ...

All Scripture is God-breathed ... [which doesn't mean *dictated*, but *does* mean *determined*. It reminds me of Genesis 2:7 when God breathed into man and he became a living being; and when God breathed into the heart and hands of His writers, their words became a living thing. And though now ancient, it remains fresh and relevant, the *living Word of God*] – 2 Timothy 3:16a NIV

And in secret, my default is to stand alone on the Word of God as the ultimate standard of authority. In so doing, I've watched it “prove out” in similar situations, again and again and again. So, I accept the timespans at face value, toss the *force-fit theories*, let the chips fall where they may, and *when* there's a problem, search hard for the solution that I *know* is there, even though my peace of mind doesn't rest on my pea brain finding it!



Turns out, city names aren't reliable for establishing certain dates, because later copyists often update them for clarity. If Moses led 'em out of La Conner, I wouldn't say Swinomish, or I'd have to keep explaining how La Conner *was* Swinomish until 1870 when J.S. Conner changed it to honor his wife, Louisa Ann ... that isn't the *story*. Rameses II renamed a city in the land of Goshen *after* the exodus.

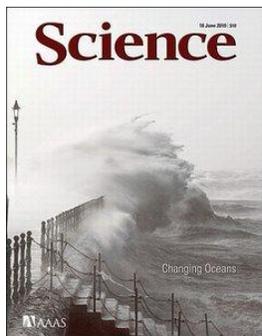


And I was curious about Egyptian chronologies and the competing theories. But again, I was surprised; only two main chronologies were basically accepted by most all serious scholars. And there's a really good reason. An ancient papyrus records an astrological event known as the Heliacal Rise of Sirius (the first sighting on the eastern horizon just before sunrise), to the 9th day, 3rd summer month, 9th year of Amenhotep I (the 2nd Pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty).

This could help sync up dates with modern calendars ... *if* the sighting location was known. If it was in the north (Memphis or Heliopolis), it's 1537^{BC}, if in the south (Thebes), it's 1517^{BC}. The two chronologies are high/north and low/south. And one syncs up *incredibly well* with scripture. So guess which one the secular scholars pretty much universally agreed upon: *the other one!* Human-nature resists bending a knee to the Bible, and the enemy works to confound the mind. How else to explain how exceedingly confident they've been in their conclusion ... *until June 18, 2010.*



An unparalleled radio-carbon dating project, led by an unimpeachable Oxford research team, received unprecedented cooperation from museums (and 211 organic samples directly associated with Pharaohs) so they could prove, once and for all, their *Low Chronology* (the low down one that *doesn't sync* with scripture).



But low and behold, along with their world class colleagues from France and Austria and Israel, they stunned the scientific community, and *themselves*, by confirming the *High Chronology!* They reported their findings for peer review in the highly respected, secular, journal *Science*, June 18, 2010. And their research methods were so well documented, so extensive, so precise, and so above reproach, no one dares disagree.

Now most all serious scholars accept just the one chronology, the one that caught up with God's Word!



So, I'm basing my dates on two things: The timespans at face value from scripture; The High Chronology as agreed upon by most all scholars. So let the chips fall! If the exodus was 1446^{BC}, and Moses was 80, that Heliacal Rising of Sirius (that narrows the day) took place just 11 years before Moses birth in 1526^{BC}!

[Moses' story begins] Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. – *Exodus 1:8 NIV*

And though a 10-year margin of error is considered a bullseye going that far back in history, according to the High Chronology in 1526^{BC} a new king *came* to the throne. His name: Thutmose II!



He has one daughter of the divine line, Hatshepsut, who *perfectly fits* the Bible's description of Moses adoptive Egyptian mom. *Her* mom was Ahmose, her brothers, Amenmose and Wadjmose. Mose or Moses meant "drawn from", so her family simply stuck an Egyptian god's name in front of it. But when Hatie named the little Hebrew, she said, I'm just gonna call you Moses, 'cause I drew you from the water." (Ex 2:10)



Thutmose III

When Moses returns at 80, Thutmose III, one of Egypt's most aggressive and prolific builders, is in power.

In his construction manager's tomb is a mural of Asiatic slaves making his bricks.



Tomb of Rekhmire

He was also the greatest conqueror in Egyptian history; and the *only* Pharaoh known to lead his troops at the *front* of the charge. It's *his* body that was exhumed, though he should've drowned in the Red Sea. But then so what, *bodies don't float*? The Bible says he drowned; it doesn't say he *wasn't recovered*. The guy was king for 54 years; somebody's gonna go looking for him!

[In fact, have you ever noticed this verse before?] That day the Lord saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians **lying dead on the shore**. – Exodus 14:30 NIV



Here's the man I believe chased the Israelites into the Red Sea in March/April, 1446^{BC}. According to info in his court official, Amenemheb's tomb, Thutmose died on March 11, 1445^{BC}. That's a one-year margin of error for the 1446^{BC} exodus, and right on for the March/April Passover!

430 years earlier, Jacob/Israel was entering Egypt. But 10 years prior to *that*,¹ Joseph is going to interpret Pharaoh's dream.



And this is most likely the guy! Seneferu, 4th king of Egypt's 12th Dynasty. His most massive project, the one he's best known for, exists to this day, has always been named after Joseph.

And his son, Seneferu III took a strange side trip, on a military campaign, to conquer a little Canaanite city, called Shechem (where Joseph was sold, and chose to be buried).

That incredible recording of the of the Heliacal Rising of Sirius that helps anchor the chronology, and just happened to happen 11 years before Moses ... well actually, *two* have been discovered.

The other dates to the seventh year of Seneferu III, just 15 years after Joseph is released from prison, 5 years after Jacob/Israel settles in Goshen, and 1 year after the famine ends.

At the end of the day the credibility of God is founded on the *reliability* of His Word. But, what's it matter how truthful or trustworthy it is, if you don't put your trust *in it* and *live by* its truths? Trust it. Read it. Draw the central truth of your life from it and live by it!

What do you *personally, truly* believe about it ... *in secret*?

¹ 10 years = seven years of abundance (Gen 41:53), + two years of famine (Gen 45:6) + one year (estimated) to go home, get dad, pack up the farm, and caravan back to Egypt