

## Moses in Egypt

Although the bible never specifically identifies the pharaoh of the Exodus by name, it does tell us the exact date of the Exodus. 1 Kings 6:1 states that Solomon began building the Temple in the fourth year of his reign, 480 years after the Exodus. Most bible scholars agree that the fourth year of Solomon's reign was 967 B.C. So the date of the Exodus can be calculated:  $967 + 480 = 1447$  B.C. And according to history, Pharaoh Rameses did not begin his reign until around 1290 BC., so he couldn't have been the Exodus pharaoh. Depending upon which history book you read, there are two possible candidates. The first is pharaoh Amenhotep II who may have ruled from (1450-1425 B.C.). He was the son of Thutmose III, who ruled from either (1490-1450) or (1490-1436 B.C.), the other possible candidate. Scholars disagree as to the exact dates that these two men ruled which makes it difficult to pin point the exact one. To get some clues, lets look at what the bible says about the events surrounding the life of Moses.

The first place we will start is with the date of his birth. According to Exodus 7:7 "Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh." Adding 80 years to the date of the Exodus in 1447 B.C equals 1527 B.C., the approximate year in which Moses was born. The ruler of Egypt at this time was Pharaoh Thutmose I (1540-1504 B.C.).

Although the bible never records her name, the Jewish historian Josephus writing in the first century does. He states:

"Pharaoh's daughter, *Thermuthis*, was walking along the river bank. Seeing a basket floating by, she called to her swimmers to retrieve it for her. When her servants came back with the basket, she was overjoyed to see the beautiful little infant inside ... Thermuthis gave him the name Moses, which in Egyptian means saved from the water ... Having no children of her own, she adopted him as her own son."

Josephus says the daughter of pharaoh was Thermuthis, which sounds an awful lot like the royal name Thutmose or Thutmosis. Either Thutmose II or Thutmose III would have been in power around this time. Since historians are not sure on the exact dates for their reign, lets go through the two possibilities.

If Thutmose II was the Pharaoh from whom Moses fled, Thutmose III would have been the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

The Jewish historian Josephus wrote the following: "The Pharaoh, from whom Moses fled, died, and a new Pharaoh had become ruler."

After the death of Thutmose II, his son, not by Hatshepsut, became pharaoh. Thutmose III co-reigned with Queen Hatshepsut until her death in 1482 B.C. He then ruled alone until approximately 1450 B.C. It is also known that Thutmose III was so jealous of the acts done by Queen Hatshepsut that one of his first acts, after her death, was to purge her name off of all monuments in Egypt.

An interesting thing recorded in history about Thutmose III was that he was the greatest conqueror in Egyptian history, he was known as the Napoleon of ancient Egypt. During his reign he had recorded that he subdued the Ethiopians.

Although the bible doesn't mention these events, the historian Josephus states the following: "A state of war broke out between the Egyptians and the Ethiopians. At this time Moses had grown to be a man. The two sides fought a great battle in which the Ethiopians were triumphant, and they pushed to conquer all of Egypt. The Egyptians looking for help inquired of their priests. The priests revealed to them that they should make Moses their general ... Moses then became the commander of a great army ... In a surprise attack against the Ethiopians, Moses led his troops to victory."

It may be that Thutmose III, being jealous, took credit for victories over the Ethiopians, even though Moses achieved them.

Josephus also mentions that Moses married an Ethiopian woman after this conflict: "Because of the bravery of Moses, The daughter of the king of Ethiopia, Tharbis, saw Moses and fell madly in love with him. She sent to him a delegation of her most trusted servants to propose marriage. He accepted, on the condition that she would surrender the city over to him ... After Moses had punished the Ethiopians, he praised God and then celebrated his marriage."

The bible also mentions his Ethiopian wife in Numbers 12:1: "Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman."

Josephus also writes: "The Pharaoh, from whom Moses had fled, died, and a new Pharaoh had become ruler. Moses traveled to his palace and told him of the victories he gained for Egypt in the war against Ethiopia ... He also spoke to Pharaoh about what had taken place on Mount Sinai, and when Pharaoh laughed, Moses showed him the signs."

According to the bible, after the ten plagues God sent against Egypt, Israel departed, but Pharaoh led his army in pursuit of them at the Red Sea. The bible records the following:

"So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the armies of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained." Exodus 14:23-28

The bible says in Psalm 136:13-15:

"To him who divided the Red Sea asunder, and brought Israel in the midst of

it, but swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea."

This passage says Pharaoh was killed in the incident. If so, the date of the Exodus in 1447 B.C., as calculated from the Bible, is synonymous with Pharaoh Thutmose III death which most historians approximate at 1450 B.C.

If indeed Thutmose III was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, his acts recorded in history would have been consistent with how the bible portrays him as personally leading his army against the Israelites.

The following inscription was found in Egyptian records detailing one of his well known military campaigns where he personally led his army against the Canaanites at the fortress of Megiddo:

"Then the king moved to the front of his army . . .Where his majesty [Thutmose III] triumphed over them as leader of his troops."

Some people don't believe that the Pharaoh perished in the waters of the Red Sea because the tombs of both Pharaoh Thutmose III and his successor, Amenhotep II, have been found.

But if one reads Exodus 14:30 carefully it states the following: "So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore." This passage indicates that the dead bodies of the Egyptians were deposited on the shore of the Red Sea. This would have allowed the Egyptians access to his body for burial.

One amazing fact about Amenhotep II was that his successor was not his firstborn son nor his heir. This would confirm the biblical passage in Exodus 4:22-23 which states:

Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn."'