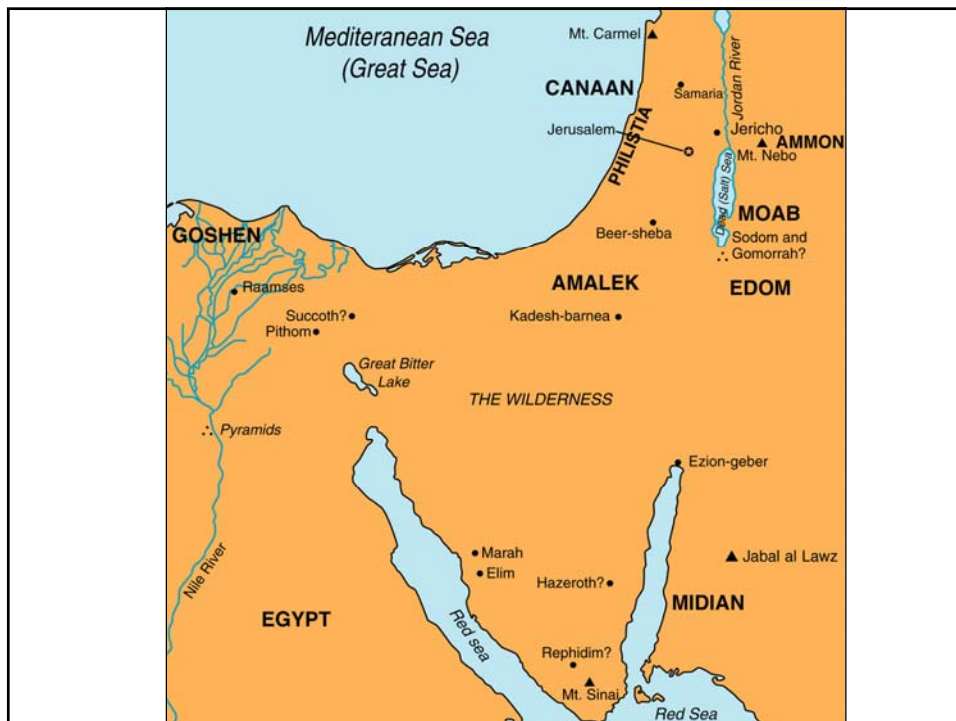


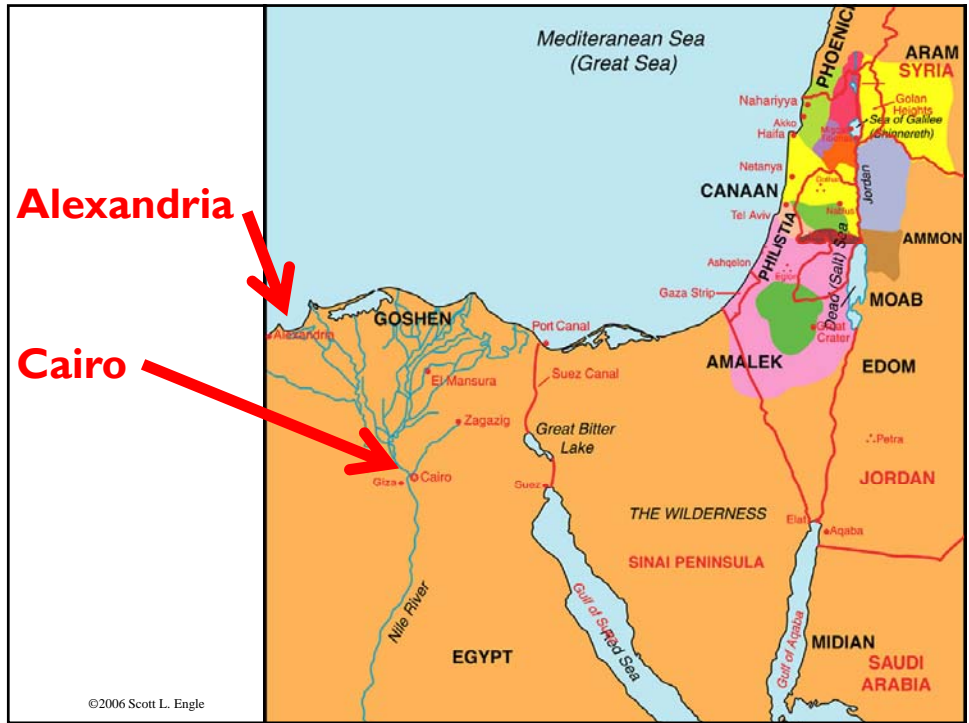


ST. ANDREW  
Bible Academy

*The Biblical Story in Scripture and  
Picture: from Cairo to Rome*

Week I  
Introduction  
Cairo & Alexandria





	Timeline of Events and Kingdoms in Ancient Egypt	Dates (BC)	Significant Events
	Archaic	3411 - 3100	Unification of all Egypt
	Old Kingdom	3100 - 2181	Construction of the pyramids begins
Abraham	First Intermediate	2181 - 2125	Political chaos
Joseph	Middle Kingdom	2125 - 1650	Recovery and political stability
	Second Intermediate	1650 - 1550	Hyksos "invasion"
Moses	New Kingdom	1550 - 1069	Creation of the Egyptian Empire, and Akanaten's religious strategy begins.

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### *The Emergence of Unified Israel (Genesis 47:27 – 50:26)*

- ❖ Before his death, Jacob “adopts” Joseph’s sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Jacob insists that Joseph’s second son get the better blessing – with the right hand.
- ❖ Jacob’s words to his sons can be understood as Jacob’s judgment of his sons’ futures based on his experience with them.
- ❖ When Jacob dies, he is taken to the cave where Abraham et al are buried. Notice the great honor paid to Jacob, even by the Egyptians.
- ❖ After the funeral, the brothers fear that Joseph may now turn on them. They seem to invent final instructions from Jacob.
  - But they have nothing to fear from Joseph. What they had intended for evil, God has intended for good.
- ❖ Before his own death, many decades later, Joseph tells the people that God will take them out of Egypt and he makes them swear that they will take Joseph with them. According to Joshua 24:32, Joseph’s body was buried in Shechem in Canaan.

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### *God’s people in slavery*

- ❖ When Exodus opens, the Hebrews are slaves in Egypt. Centuries have passed since the time of Jacob and his sons.
  - What is left of their “Hebrewness?”
  - What stories do they tell?
  - Do any of them erect altars to worship God as did the patriarchs?
- ❖ In Exodus 1 and 2, God is mentioned only in connection with the piety of the midwives who save Moses. In no way does the author of Exodus claim that God has intervened in the suffering of his people.

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## *God remembers (Exodus 2:23-25)*

- ❖ The Israelites groan under their slavery and cry out to God . . . God *heard* and God *remembered* . . . God *looked upon them* and *took notice of them*.
- ❖ What are we to make of this?
- ❖ These are transition verses and profoundly important. They begin the story that is dominated by God.
- ❖ “Remember” does not imply a forgetful God. Typically, it refers to God determining to take action, to grab the initiative.
  - Does the author really know what was going on in God’s mind?
  - In the Psalms, we see that when the Israelites understood that they had been saved, it was natural to say that God had “remembered” them and “seen” them. It isn’t so much reading God’s mind, as it is knowing that salvation comes from God alone. If it happens, it comes from God.

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## *Past and future*

- ❖ YHWH has identified himself to Moses and announced his intentions and motives.
- ❖ God intends to free the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and lead them to the Promised Land, to Canaan. Why?
  - He knows their sufferings (3:7,9,16;6:5)
    - Of course, other people suffer. Why these people?
  - He had made a commitment to their ancestors that will remain unfulfilled no longer.
- ❖ How will God do this?
  - God will strike Egypt with all his wonders (3:19-20).
  - But also – God will harden Pharaoh’s heart (4:21-23). The Pharaoh will suffer as the Israelites have suffered. Why? What could be gained from the hardened heart?

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## *God, Moses, and Pharaoh*

- ❖ Moses tells Pharaoh that YHWH says he is to let the people go into the wilderness so that they can worship YHWH.
  - Pharaoh knows they won't come back. And he is certainly not prepared to let all this cheap labor walk away.
- ❖ Thus, plague after plague is unleashed. At first, this makes things harder on the Israelites. The magicians are able to match Moses' "tricks."
  - The Nile turned to blood, frogs, gnats, flies, dead livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness
  - All of Egypt is devastated. People, animals, plants . . . All of it.
- ❖ Each time, Pharaoh's heart is hardened. Sometimes by Pharaoh, but sometimes by God.
  - Again . . . Why would God harden Pharaoh's heart? Why not soften it so he lets the people go? Why not just convert Pharaoh!? Is God just toying with Pharaoh? The truth is that many explanations have been offered and few have been very satisfying.
- ❖ But – is God's immediate objective the freeing of the slaves?

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## *God v. god*

- ❖ Why in this way? Exodus 9:14-16; 10:1ff; 14:4
  - "That you may know that there is none like me in all the earth"
  - "to show you my power"
  - "so that my name may be declared throughout the earth"
- ❖ God needs to make a point and Pharaoh needs to stay in the game long enough for him to "get it."
- ❖ It is a bit like Jacob's wrestling match, but reversed. Jacob wouldn't let go of God until he gets his blessing. Here, God wrestles with Pharaoh and will not let him go until Pharaoh acknowledges who is God . . . and who is not.
  - In Egypt, Pharaoh was believed to be a deity. In 5:2, he says that he does not know God . . . But he will.
  - This is why the wonders performed are "signs" (*'oth* in the Hebrew). They are like the miracles in John's Gospel – they are signposts to God.

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## *The Passover*

- ❖ The last plague is this: YHWH will go through Egypt as a destroyer, killing all the first-born, human and livestock (11:4-5; 12:12).
  - Pharaoh will not listen to the warning. Why? “. . . in order that my [YHWH’s] wonders may be multiplied in Egypt.”
- ❖ The bread is unleavened because they are to leave in a hurry. There is no time to let the bread rise. They are to be dressed to run, with staff in hand.
- ❖ The blood of the lamb provides safety and a haven. The lamb dies so that the people may live.
- ❖ Notice the incorporation of children in v.26. How are the children to learn that they hold an odd identity in this world? They are to learn it here. The story and these acts are bound up together.
- ❖ We will come back to the Passover and the Exodus in the last week of the class when we consider our own ritual of Holy Communion.

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## *The Exodus*

- ❖ All the Israelites flee and, at first, it seems that Pharaoh has come to acknowledge that YHWH is God. But God knows better. The wrestling match continues. Pharaoh pursues the people.
- ❖ Only as the water falls upon the Egyptians do they acknowledge whom it is they are fighting (14:25). They confess what the Israelites doubted (v. 11-12) and Moses affirmed (v. 14). YHWH is exalted and glorified as the real sovereign.
- ❖ What happens at the Wonder of the Sea is a witness to the power of YHWH and a summons to faith.
  - To have faith is to trust the power of God.

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