

Jacob Blesses His Sons (1859 BC)

Genesis 49:1–28

1 Then Jacob summoned his sons and said, “Assemble yourselves that I may tell you what will befall you in the days to come.

2 “Gather together and hear, O sons of Jacob;
And listen to Israel your father.

Reuben

3 “Reuben, you are my firstborn;
My might and the beginning of my strength,
Preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power.
4 “Uncontrolled as water, you shall not have preeminence,
Because you went up to your father’s bed;
Then you defiled *it*—he went up to my couch.

Simeon and Levi

5 “Simeon and Levi are brothers;
Their swords are implements of violence.
6 “Let my soul not enter into their council;
Let not my glory be united with their assembly;
Because in their anger they slew men,
And in their self-will they lamed oxen.
7 “Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce;
And their wrath, for it is cruel.
I will disperse them in Jacob,
And scatter them in Israel.

Judah

8 “Judah, your brothers shall praise you;
Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies;
Your father’s sons shall bow down to you.
9 “Judah is a lion’s whelp;
From the prey, my son, you have gone up.
He couches, he lies down as a lion,
And as a lion, who dares rouse him up?
10 “The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet,
Until Shiloh comes,
And to him *shall be* the obedience of the peoples.
11 “He ties *his* foal to the vine,
And his donkey’s colt to the choice vine;
He washes his garments in wine,
And his robes in the blood of grapes.
12 “His eyes are dull from wine,
And his teeth white from milk.

Zebulun

13 “Zebulun will dwell at the seashore;
And he *shall be* a haven for ships,
And his flank *shall be* toward Sidon.

Issachar

14 “Issachar is a strong donkey,
Lying down between the sheepfolds.
15 “When he saw that a resting place was good
And that the land was pleasant,
He bowed his shoulder to bear *burdens*,
And became a slave at forced labor.

Dan

- 16 “Dan shall judge his people,
As one of the tribes of Israel.
- 17 “Dan shall be a serpent in the way,
A horned snake in the path,
That bites the horse’s heels,
So that his rider falls backward.
- 18 “For Your salvation I wait, O LORD.

Gad

- 19 “As for Gad, raiders shall raid him,
But he will raid *at* their heels.

Asher

- 20 “As for Asher, his food shall be rich,
And he will yield royal dainties.

Naphtali

- 21 “Naphtali is a doe let loose,
He gives beautiful words.

Joseph

- 22 “Joseph is a fruitful bough,
A fruitful bough by a spring;
Its branches run over a wall.
- 23 “The archers bitterly attacked him,
And shot *at him* and harassed him;
- 24 But his bow remained firm,
And his arms were agile,
From the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob
(From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel),
- 25 From the God of your father who helps you,
And by the Almighty who blesses you
With blessings of heaven above,
Blessings of the deep that lies beneath,
Blessings of the breasts and of the womb.
- 26 “The blessings of your father
Have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors
Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills;
May they be on the head of Joseph,
And on the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers.

Benjamin

- 27 “Benjamin is a ravenous wolf;
In the morning he devours the prey,
And in the evening he divides the spoil.”

Conclusion

28 All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them. He blessed them, every one with the blessing appropriate to him.

The Death of Jacob (1859 BC)

Genesis 47:28b; 49:29–33; 50:1–21

Jacob’s Death

49:29 Then he charged them and said to them, “I am about to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite,
30 in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field from Ephron the Hittite for a burial site.
31 There they buried Abraham and his wife Sarah, there they buried Isaac and his wife Rebekah, and there I buried Leah—

32 the field and the cave that is in it, purchased from the sons of Heth.”

33 When Jacob finished charging his sons, he drew his feet into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.

47:28b so the length of Jacob’s life was one hundred and forty-seven years.

Joseph Buries Jacob in Canaan

50:1 Then Joseph fell on his father’s face, and wept over him and kissed him.

2 Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel.

3 Now forty days were required for it, for such is the period required for embalming. And the Egyptians wept for him seventy days.

4 When the days of mourning for him were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, “If now I have found favor in your sight, please speak to Pharaoh, saying,

5 ‘My father made me swear, saying, “Behold, I am about to die; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me.” Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father; then I will return.’”

6 Pharaoh said, “Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear.”

7 So Joseph went up to bury his father, and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household and all the elders of the land of Egypt,

8 and all the household of Joseph and his brothers and his father’s household; they left only their little ones and their flocks and their herds in the land of Goshen.

9 There also went up with him both chariots and horsemen; and it was a very great company.

10 When they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, they lamented there with a very great and sorrowful lamentation; and he observed seven days mourning for his father.

11 Now when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, “This is a grievous mourning for the Egyptians.” Therefore it was named Abel-mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan.

12 Thus his sons did for him as he had charged them;

13 for his sons carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre, which Abraham had bought along with the field for a burial site from Ephron the Hittite.

14 After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, and all who had gone up with him to bury his father.

Joseph’s Brothers Fear Him After Jacob’s Death

15 When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “What if Joseph bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong which we did to him!”

16 So they sent *a message* to Joseph, saying, “Your father charged before he died, saying,

17 ‘Thus you shall say to Joseph, “Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong.’” And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.” And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

18 Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, “Behold, we are your servants.”

19 But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in God’s place?

20 As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

21 So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.” So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

The Death of Joseph (1806 BC)

Genesis 50:22–26

22 Now Joseph stayed in Egypt, he and his father’s household, and Joseph lived one hundred and ten years.

23 Joseph saw the third generation of Ephraim’s sons; also the sons of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were born on Joseph’s knees.

24 Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.”

25 Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, “God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here.”

26 So Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years; and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt. [[Heb 11:22](#)]

Israel in Egypt (1806–1526 BC)

Exodus 1:6–22

Israel Fills the Land

6 Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation.

7 But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them.

Oppression Under a New King (Hyksos c. 1730?)

8 Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. [Acts 7:18]

9 He said to his people, “Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we.

10 Come, let us deal wisely with them, or else they will multiply and in the event of war, they will also join themselves to those who hate us, and fight against us and depart from the land.”

11 So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor. And they built for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Raamses.

Continued Oppression (18th Dynasty c. 1570)

12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out, so that they were in dread of the sons of Israel.

13 The Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labor rigorously;

14 and they made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks and at all *kinds* of labor in the field, all their labors which they rigorously imposed on them.

Pharaoh Orders the Murder of Newborn Israelite Males

15 Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other was named Puah;

16 and he said, “When you are helping the Hebrew women to give birth and see *them* upon the birthstool, if it is a son, then you shall put him to death; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live.”

17 But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt had commanded them, but let the boys live.

18 So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this thing, and let the boys live?”

19 The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife can get to them.”

20 So God was good to the midwives, and the people multiplied, and became very mighty.

21 Because the midwives feared God, He established households for them.

22 Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, “Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile, and every daughter you are to keep alive.”

The Birth of Moses (1526 BC)

Exodus 2:1–10

Numbers 26:59

1 Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi.

2 The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months. [Acts 7:20–21; Heb 11:23]

59 The name of Amram’s wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and she bore to Amram: Aaron and Moses

and their sister Miriam.

3 But when she could hide him no longer, she got him a wicker basket and covered it over with tar and pitch. Then she put the child into it and set *it* among the reeds by the bank of the Nile.

4 His sister stood at a distance to find out what would happen to him.

5 The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the Nile, with her maidens walking alongside the Nile; and she saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid, and she brought *it to her*.

6 When she opened *it*, she saw the child, and behold, *the* boy was crying. And she had pity on him and said, “This is one of the Hebrews’ children.”

7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for you?”

8 Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Go *ahead*.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother.

9 Then Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child away and nurse him for me and I will give *you* your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed him.

10 The child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter and he became her son. And she named him Moses, and said, “Because I drew him out of the water.”

Chronological Notes

1) Length of the Sojourn.

A) My chronology places the length of the Israelite sojourn in Egypt at 430 years (see Exodus 12:40–41). For a defense of this view, see the following:

- Harold W. Hoehner, “The Duration of the Egyptian Bondage,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 125 (1969): 306–316.
- Jack R. Riggs, “The Length of Israel’s Sojourn in Egypt,” *Grace Theological Journal* 12.1 (Winter 1971): 18–35.
- Paul J. Ray, Jr., “The Duration of the Israelite Sojourn in Egypt,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 24.3 (Autumn 1986): 231–248.
- Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, (Moody Press, 1994), 238.
- Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, Second Edition, (Baker Publishing, 2008), 93–96.
- Andrew E. Steinmann, “Israel’s Patriarchs,” *From Abraham to Paul*, (Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 68–70.

B) Below is an overview of the various references to Israel’s time in Egypt:

- (1) Paul’s statement in Galatians 3:17 to “the law, which came 430 years afterward” (ESV) refers, not to the original promise to Abraham, but to God’s last promise to Jacob as he was beginning the journey to Goshen in 1876 BC (see Gen 46:1–6). From Jacob’s entry into Egypt to the Exodus in 1446 BC is $1876 - 1446 = 430$ years.
- (2) God’s statement in Genesis 15:13 that “your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years” (NASB, see also Acts 7:6) is a round number referring to the length of time Israel would sojourn in Egypt. From Jacob’s death in 1859 BC to the Exodus in 1446 BC is $1859 - 1446 = 413$ years or about 400 years.
 - (a) The “fourth generation” of Genesis 15:16 should be understood in context. The word “generation” can reference a person’s entire lifetime (see *TWOT* 418c.1). Since Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all lived well over 100 years, the “fourth generation” may well be intended to indicate somewhat less than four complete lifetimes in terms understandable to Abraham.
- (3) Paul’s statement in Acts 13:17–20 that from Israel’s stay in the land of Egypt until the end of the Canaan conquest was “about 450 years” (ESV) is a reasonable approximation of the total time involved. The actual time was 447 years: the 400 year sojourn (Gen 15:13) plus the 40 years of wilderness wandering (Num 32:13) plus the 7 years of conquest (Josh 14:6–12) is $400 + 40 + 7 = 447$.

2) A New King Over Egypt.

A) Some identify the unnamed Pharaoh mentioned in Exodus 1:8 as one of the first kings of the Hyksos (lit. “foreign rulers”). Proponents of this view include:

- George Bush, *Notes on the Book of Exodus*, Vol. 1, (Boston, 1841), 11–12.
- John Rea, “The Time of the Oppression and the Exodus,” *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 3.3 (Summer 1960): 58–66.
- John J. Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*, Second Edition, (BHM Books, 1998), 53–57.
- Bryant G. Wood, “From Ramesses to Shiloh: Archaeological Discoveries Bearing on the Exodus-Judges Period,” *Giving the Sense: Understanding and Using Old Testament Historical Texts*, ed. David M. Howard, Jr. and Michael A. Grisanti (Kregel Publications, 2003) 256–282.

B) Others identify the unnamed Pharaoh as the first king of Egypt’s 18th Dynasty (c. 1570 BC). Proponents of this view include:

- John D. Hannah, “Exodus,” *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, (Victor Books, 1985), 108.
- Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, Rev. Ed., (Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 227–228.
- Douglas K. Stuart, “Exodus,” *The New American Commentary*, (Broadman & Holman, 2006), 62.
- Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, Second Edition, (Baker Publishing, 2008), 75.
- Andrew E. Steinmann, *From Abraham to Paul*, (Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 82.

3) Historical Setting of Moses' Birth.¹A) Kings of the 18th Dynasty ("high" dates from *Cambridge Ancient History*).

- Amosis (Ahmose) 1570–1546
- Amenhotep I 1546–1526
- Thutmose I 1526–1512
- Thutmose II 1512–1504
- Hatshepsut 1503–1483
- Thutmose III 1504–1450
- Amenhotep II 1450–1425

- B) Given a 1446 BC date for the exodus, we can establish the birth date of Moses, a fact of greatest interest at this juncture. The Old Testament relates that Moses was 80 just before the exodus (7:7) and 120 at his death (Deut. 34:7). Since his death was at the very close of the wilderness period, it occurred in 1406. Simple calculation yields a birth date of 1526. Thus Moses was born in the very year of Amenhotep's death.
- C) Amenhotep was succeeded by Thutmose I (1526–1512), a commoner who had married the king's sister. He was probably the author of the decree of infanticide, for, although Moses was in imminent danger of death, Aaron, born three years earlier (Exod 7:7), appears to have been exempt. One must assume that the king who promulgated the policy came to the throne after the birth of Aaron and before that of Moses. Thus the biblical evidence points directly at Thutmose I.
- D) Thutmose II (1512–1504) married his older half-sister Hatshepsut. He died young under mysterious circumstances. Sensing, no doubt, his impending demise, he had named his son Thutmose III (1504–1450) as coregent and heir. This energetic ruler, the most illustrious and powerful of the entire New Kingdom, distinguished himself in many ways. His beginnings were not promising—he was the son of a concubine and married his own half-sister, the daughter of Hatshepsut and Thutmose II—but he eventually went on to achieve notable victories in surrounding lands, including sixteen campaigns to Palestine alone. The first twenty years or so of his reign, however, were dominated by his powerful mother-in-law, Hatshepsut. Forbidden by custom to be pharaoh, she acted out the part nonetheless and by all criteria was one of the most fascinating and influential persons of Egyptian history. Without question, she pulled the strings in the early years of Thutmose III, a relationship he detested but was powerless to oppose. Only after her death did he show his contempt by expunging as many inscriptional and monumental references to her as possible.
- E) The general picture of Hatshepsut leads to the possibility that this bold queen was the pharaoh's daughter who rescued Moses. Only she, of all known women of the period, possessed the presumption and independence to violate an ordinance of the king, and under his very nose at that. Although the birth date of this daughter of Thutmose I is unknown, she was probably several years older than her husband, Thutmose II, who died in 1504 while in his late twenties. She may have been in her early teens by 1526, Moses's birth date, and therefore able to effect his deliverance.

¹ Sourced from Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, Second Edition, (Baker Publishing, 2008), 75–78.