

## **Robert Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Lecture 1A**

### **Course Overview, Title of Exodus, Date of Exodus**

#### **I. A. Course Overview**

Let me make some comments on these handouts that will explain what we will be doing for the next 13 weeks. Take first the course description page. Let me read through that first course description; I don't think that is published in the catalogue. This course takes a close look at the deliverance of the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt, their establishment as God's covenant people at Mount Sinai and the ways in which the Israelites either embraced or rejected their covenantal obligations from the time they left Mount Sinai, approximately 1400 to 1200 B.C.—that precise date is debatable; we will get into that question pretty quickly—until they returned from exile at about 500 B.C. So this long period of time that's moving from the time of the Exodus and the formation of God's people as a nation at Mount Sinai through the period of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, into the exile and return in Ezra and Nehemiah. The focus of classroom discussion will be on the narrative material of the Pentateuch and the books of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel. I'm going to do very little with Kings and Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah. I will heavily weigh classroom discussion towards the book of Exodus, which is the foundation for everything that follows in the Old Testament.

#### **1. Assignments**

The outside assignments will look at how one is to find meaning for today from Old Testament historical narratives. Now that's a rather large and complex question. Are these narratives to be understood primarily as providing illustrations from the lives of Old Testament rogues or saints, of either ungodly or godly behavior that God's people today should be like? That's what's called an illustrative use of the character study of the Old Testament history. There are books written about character studies where you take someone like David or Daniel, Abraham or Isaac and you illustrate from their lives things that they did well that we should imitate or follow. Is that the way you find meaning for today from these narratives? Or, are these narratives more properly understood as

intended to describe how God was at work in the Old Testament period to bring to pass his great plan of redemption? In other words, instead of being focused on what men do or don't do should the focus be on what God is doing? Of course, often through human individuals you have a theopocentric focus instead of an anthropocentric one. There is an enormous difference between these two. Or, is it some combination of both these perspectives? How does one's point of view on these questions affect the way in which contemporary meaning and value is found in Old Testament narratives?

Part of the intent of the course is simply familiarization with the content of Old Testament historical narratives and their historical setting in the ancient world including the archaeological findings in their literary, historical and social context. That's certainly an important piece of the course. The overriding purpose of the course is to discern the theological perspective that comes to expression in some of the greatest narratives ever written.

## 2. Theo-Drama [Vanhoozer]

I don't know if many of you have come across some of the books of Kevin Vanhoozer; he speaks of the Bible as a whole as a theo-drama. That's an interesting term, I believe he coined it because you see what God is doing. I think that has more commonly been termed as a redemptive historical approach to the narratives of the Bible. The Bible is basically a story of redemption from Genesis 3:15 where the promise was given that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head. Of course, the serpent was Satan. The rest of the Bible is the outworking of that promise as you go from Abraham to David to Matthew 1:1, "Jesus Christ, the son of Abraham, the son of David." So the early history of Israel provides important background for understanding the nature of God's redemptive force on behalf of Israel. This course provides a survey of Israel's history as recorded in Exodus through 2 Kings with special attention given to selective texts where it also addresses the hermeneutics of biblical narrative. The prerequisite is Genesis, which is The Foundation of Old Testament History course. I'm not sure how rigidly that's enforced as a prerequisite but generally you should have The Foundations in

Biblical History before taking this course.

The method of the course is as a three credit hour graduate course approximately 9 hours of work required a week, one hour in class and two hours outside of class per credit hour. That is the general expectation. Some of you may not need that amount of time and some of you may need more, but that's the general idea of the amount of work involved.

### 3. Assignments

The reading assignments are an important part of the course. We will look at the assignment schedule in a minute as to what it is exactly. But notice this, lectures are designed to supplement rather than duplicate material covered in the readings. I'm not going to try to survey Israel's history from Exodus to exile in the class lectures. You're going to get that from your reading. In other words, you'll get the basic content of the movement of history from Exodus to exile in your reading. A reading assignment is given each week. Look at the assignments schedule. There is the possibility of a quiz on each due date limited to readings from Eugene Merrill. I'll say something about that in a minute. It is advisable to read the assignment material carefully, taking good notes while reading. Study the notes for quizzes and review the notes for midterms and finals. Factual knowledge, as well as understanding concepts, will be required. In other words, I consider the reading as important as what we're doing here in class. It's almost like a reading course and a lecture course running in tandem alongside each other.

You are going to get way ahead of me in your reading. You are going to be through the Pentateuch into Joshua, Judges and Samuel while I'm still in Exodus. Don't let that bother you. I'm not trying to integrate what your reading each week or what I'm talking about in class each week because I'm trying to deal with some more particular problems of interpreting, exegesis and so forth, particularly in Exodus. I don't expect to get into Samuel until the last week or two of the class. Kings is probably going to get about 15 minutes. Now Kings has a lot of material; you see you're going to become acquainted with that material through our reading not by what I'm lecturing on here in class. So the reading is important, and I'm going to give you several quizzes on Merrill's

readings over the course of the semester just to keep you accountable and make sure you do the reading every week.

I'll come back to those assignments in a minute but go to the back of page 3. Lectures will center on the Exodus and Mount Sinai material. I've already mentioned that 1 Kings will not be addressed until the last class and then only very briefly. I'm going to focus on the Exodus-Sinai materials along with treating some specific interpretive issues rather than attempting to cover the entire span of the Old Testament history. So again a lot of the content for the course is dependent on the reading assignments.

#### 4. Grading

Grading. There are three components: one third is quizzes on the reading, and there will be some written work on Hebrew narrative. When we look at the assignment page, the written work and the quizzes are one third of your grade. The midterm and final each are also a third. So there are three factors in your grade. Notice the bold underlined statements: quizzes may not be made up or missed except in the case of extreme emergency. In other words, if you come in here and there's a due date for a reading assignment and I give a quiz and you haven't read it you can't come up here and say, "Well this or that happened, may I make that quiz up next week?" Now if there's an extreme emergency then I'll accept that, but you'll have to make a case for it.

#### 5. Required Texts

Required texts. The main text for the course is Eugene Merrill's book *Kingdom of Priests* which I think is out in paperback edition now. Then there are several other required readings. Let me go at this point to that second handout that gives the assignment schedule because some of the reading will appear over there. As we look at this assignment schedule, the dates are due dates. I want you to read the first two chapters of Merrill for next week. Now obviously I can't quiz you next week so you are on your own to be responsible for doing that reading. I'm not going to come back the following week and quiz you, but in order to get all these assignments in I needed to keep an

assignment on that date.

Let's get back to the first page up through the middle of February. You're reading two chapters each week in Merrill. When you come to class you may have a quiz, you may not. I will probably give three quizzes or so out of the seven listed there. February 19 is the midterm exam. Then we get into some reading material outside of Merrill that deals with this question of finding meaning for today from biblical material. So for Monday, February 26 I'd like you to read chapter 9 of the book by Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*, called "Preaching Hebrew Narratives." Now if you are going to preach Hebrew narrative of course you're asking the question, how do we find meaning for today from Hebrew narratives? I want you to read that along with an article that Sidney Greidanus wrote called, "Redemptive History and Preaching" in the journal *Pro Rege*. Chapter 9 of *The Modern Preaching of the Ancient Text* plus his article "Redemptive History and Preaching" are on reserve in the library photocopied. Sidney Greidanus is a professor at Calvin Theological Seminary and has been along with others wrestling with this question of how to find meaning for today from biblical narratives. He is a strong advocate of the redemptive historical approach, that is, seeing what God is doing in these narratives moving his redemptive program forward. Sidney is very skeptical of finding illustrative or exemplary means of using the biblical narrative. I think he goes a bit too far against that. What he has done is a great service particularly in the evangelical church through heightened awareness of this redemptive historical perspective, which in most evangelical churches is almost completely ignored.

I want you to read chapter 7 of Sidney Greidanus's book called *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*. He has written a book-length treatment on that topic of preaching Christ from the Old Testament. Chapter 7 is a more practical chapter in the book where he speaks of steps from Old Testament text to a Christo-centric focus. He lays out a formula there as to how we go about doing that. I might say the whole book is well worth the read. It might interest you. It is a difficult read though, so just read chapter 7 for this course.

## 6. Writing Assignment

Then I want you to write a two-page discussion on 1 Samuel 17. First Samuel 17 is the story of David and Goliath. It is a story you've grown up with in the church. You've known it since childhood but in general ways. The story of David and Goliath has become a story promoting the underdog. Now, it's about an insignificant person up against government or the powerful cooperation or a whistle blower or something like that. The real question is how do you find meaning for today from that very well known story? I want you to do this reading of Greidanus and then write a two-page discussion on the meaning of 1 Samuel 17 in its Old Testament context and its meaning for us today, giving attention to the way in which a redemptive historical perspective both informs and governs the significance that this passage has for the contemporary reader. In other words, take this theoretical redemptive historical approach to biblical narrative and apply it to a text and see if you can work out a meaning for today working with that concept. You will be looking for what God is doing in moving his redemptive program forward. In a general way, attempt to implement the suggestions of Sidney Greidanus for finding contemporary meaning for Old Testament historical narratives. I don't want you to go and just try it with some kind of mathematical formula but take all these suggestions and work it out. You will need your own creative insights but be informed by some of the ideas of Greidanus. See what you come up with. So that's a three-week assignment. I think that gives you some idea of how I view the importance of this concept. I want you to think about the concept and then try to take the concept and apply it to a specific text.

## 7. Reading Assignments

For next week you are reading chapters 1 and 2 of Merrill, which covers Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Of course, that's most of the Pentateuch, four of the five books. I would like you to read that biblical material along with the reading of Merrill so you're not just reading Merrill but you are reading the biblical text, too. Now for that first assignment I will say what I'm interested in is the flow of the narrative. I'm not so much concerned with all of the legal material in Leviticus all the way through

Deuteronomy and some of it in Exodus because we won't go through it verse by verse. But I want you to read the narrative sections.

Then there are a couple more Merrill assignments after that redemptive historical exercise, and then the final exam. So if you go back to that first handout where I had the texts, you notice all the readings are listed there, first Merrill and the three by Sidney Greidanus, and then you notice next, I want you to read the historical books of the Old Testament, Exodus to Nehemiah, along with Merrill.

I will make reference to numerous other books and articles in the lectures to enable the interested student to work further in a particular problem of a selected bibliography. If you take these next two handouts, the class lecture outline and the selective bibliography which is keyed to the class lecture outline, I will follow the outline in the class lectures, and you see there are Roman numerals and capital A and then Arabic numbers. The bibliography is keyed to the first heading. "The historical issues" is just some general resources for the Old Testament historical books. But if you go over to page two you will notice Roman numeral I, "The deliverance from Egypt, Exodus 1 to 11," that's the same as Roman numeral I in your class lecture outline. Then as you go down to 1A and 1B and so forth you have bibliographic entries that correspond to the headings of the class lecture outline. So what I'm saying is, on any one of these given points in the class lecture outline there are bibliographic resources there if you want to further your own studies, there are some resources there for you to follow up on as you are reading.

## 8. Citation Selections

Now to take that one step further, there is that other piece of material called Citation Selections that is also keyed to the class lecture outline. What that does is takes some quotations or citations out of some, not all by any means, but some of those bibliographic references in the bibliography keyed to the class lecture outline. So I'll take a paragraph here and there which gives you a resource. Now if you go to the library and

find it and read it then you will have it. I'll make use of that citation document during the lectures. The other piece of the handouts is that packet of PowerPoint slides.

Going back to the assignment schedule, there's a third page. That is extra credit options. Extra credit may be gained from this course by reading one or more of the following books and submitting a three-page typed report for each book summarizing the most important thing you've learned from the book. The two books are by Tremper Longman. These are semi-popular books. They are not technically academic treatments but the first is *Making Sense of the Old Testament: Three Crucial Questions* and the second, *Immanuel in our Place. Seeing Christ in Israel's Worship*. You can raise your final grade by 5/10 of a grade point for an A on your report; 4/10 for a B; 3/10 for a C; and no points for less than a C. So you see that means if you read both of those books and get an A on your reports you can raise your grade a full grade point. There are also a couple websites listed that you may find useful.

## 9. Purposes for the Course

Now go back to course description and go over to page 3. I have listed five purposes for this course. Here are five things I hope you will achieve and be able to do as a result of the study of this course. First, I hope you'll be able to demonstrate a knowledge of the main facts, persons, places and events in the Old Testament historical narratives of Exodus through Nehemiah. In other words, purpose number one is simply mastering biblical content. Probably coming into this course there's an enormous variation of familiarity with that biblical content for students. Some of you come with a good biblical background and some of you may come with very little. But whatever level you come into this course, I hope you'll raise it a few notches. So you're going to read through the entirety of the historical material from Exodus to Nehemiah and you're going to read a discussion of Merrill; all these major events and people as well as all that basic content that comes from that reading. Don't minimize its importance because it is elementary. In a certain sense, it's necessarily foundational. You have to know it and there's an increasing lack of knowledge of Bible content in churches today.



Two, I hope you'll be able to demonstrate the knowledge of the meaning and significance of Old Testament events in the contexts of redemptive history. That gets back to what I've discussed in terms of the readings from Sidney Greidanus. You are working on that 1 Samuel 17 David and Goliath passage. Once you know the principles, you will be able to apply them across the board to all historical narratives and also in the New Testament as well.

Three, you will be able to demonstrate a knowledge of some of the archaeological findings of variable credibility that elucidate Old Testament history. When we get into the period of Joshua and Judges and then on into Kings there is increasingly more and more of that archaeological research that is useful. That is what has opened up the whole history of the ancient world in a way that a hundred years ago nobody knew anything about. So we'll talk about some of that in class. Those of you who have had Foundations in Biblical History—we discuss this there—there is a section there where I discuss what it is that archaeology can and cannot do. Now I don't want you to see archaeology as some sort of a final authority that rules over the way in which you view Scripture. It is not some sort of scientific established truth that can force you to abandon or reject the historical findings of the Old Testament itself. You'll find if you get into archaeological research and the writings of archeologists there are as many different opinions on how you interpret archaeological data as there are differences of opinion on how you can interpret biblical questions. On the one hand, conservatives will tend to use archaeology to prove the Bible. On the other hand, non-conservatives will tend to use archaeology to disprove the Bible. It is that sort of debacle. We do want to look at some of the places where archaeology has thrown light on the Old Testament history.

Four, I hope you'll be able to demonstrate an awareness of some of the arguments in the reading against the reliability of the historical status of the Old Testament along with appropriate responses that can be made to such allegations. I think one of the fundamental questions of modern theology from the middle of the 1800s right up to today is this question of the relationship of the historical truth of the Bible to the message of the Bible. Can you hold onto the message of the Bible when you begin to question the

historical reliability? Can you separate between the theological proof and historical proof? Can you say the Bible is theologically true but historically false? That's a question that's been debated back and forth. Unfortunately in the evangelical world there are some who would say what we are interested in when we read the Bible is not history but its the message of redemption in Jesus Christ. Then my question is: Can you hold on to the message of redemption in Christ and the truthfulness of that message once you start down the road of questioning the historical reliability of biblical narratives? I don't think you can. I think that's an extremely important discussion.

Five, demonstrate an ability of practicing sound methods of biblical interpretation, particularly as this relates to the narrative sections of the Old Testament. I'm not going to discuss hermeneutics *per se* but we're going to do a lot of work with the biblical text and go through that process. We will learn something about how to deal with the narrative sections of Scripture in a responsible way.

## I. The Deliverance from Egypt, Exodus 1-11

### A. The Book of Exodus

#### 1. Its Name

Let's begin looking at Roman numeral I, which is "The deliverance from Egypt, Exodus 1-11," and A. under that, "The book of Exodus." I want to make just a few general comments on the book of Exodus under "Its name." The English title of "Exodus" comes from the Septuagint. The Septuagint, of course, is the Greek translation of the Old Testament Hebrew (ca. 200 B.C). The title in the Septuagint for this book is "ex odos" which is the Greek word that means, "exit" or "departure." That Greek phrase "ex odos" became the title "Exodus" as found in our English Bibles through the Vulgate translation, which was the Latin translation of the Old Testament by Jerome (ca. 400 A.D.). So the title we have for the book is really the Latin word which means "exit" or "departure."

The title for the book in Hebrew tradition or Jewish tradition is *weleh shemot*, which means "and these are the names." The tradition or the practice in Jewish tradition

for the names for the five books of the Pentateuch is to take the title from the first words of the first verse of the book. If you look at Exodus in your English Bible the first verse says, “These are the names of the sons of Israel.” So you get *weleh shemot*, “these are the names.” They simply take those first few words and use it for a title.

Now I think it’s much better that we have the title “Exodus” than “these are the names.” Exodus at least tells you something about the content of the book. “These are the names” tells you almost nothing, it’s only the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt.

However, even though “Exodus” is a better title than “these are the names,” it can still be misleading because it really only tells you about what happens in chapters 1-15. You read in the early chapters about the oppression of the Israelites, next you read about the birth of Moses, and then Moses is forced to flee into the wilderness. Then he comes back and demands that Pharaoh let Israel go, and you go through all these negotiations with Pharaoh resulting in the ten plagues. The Egyptians told the Israelites to leave. Then they leave and get trapped at the Red Sea—that’s in chapters 14-15 which celebrates that victory. That’s the first 15 chapters.

When you get beyond chapter 15 you learn about two more very important matters. One is the establishment of the covenant between the Lord and the people of Israel at Mount Sinai and all that’s related to that. There is the revelation of the divine that is given to Moses and Israel connected with the establishment of that covenant and the people’s affirmation and acceptance of those laws. So you get that, and then you also get pretty extensive descriptions of the building of the tabernacle. You get the instruction of how it is to be built. Later you get a description of the actual construction, and at the end of the book in the climax God comes down and takes up residence in the tabernacle in the midst of these people. So “Exodus” as a title captures only one important thing that’s going on in the book.

## 2. Content of Exodus

Let me go from this discussion of the name to a brief discussion of content, which

flows into that. As far as content goes, what you have is a description of the establishment of Israel as the covenant people of Yahweh. That's what the heart of the book is about—the establishment of these children of Israel as descendants of Jacob through his 12 sons who had gone down into Egypt and there became a very numerous people. As they leave Egypt they go to Mount Sinai to be established as the covenant people of Yahweh.

So you have a different situation than what you have in Genesis. In Genesis you have the stories and narratives about a family, initially Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and his sons, particularly Joseph. But you're dealing with a family. You read at the end of Genesis and the opening of the book of Exodus that group of people are forming down there, who were numerous. Those people are the descendants of Abraham to whom God had promised that he would make him into a great nation. That goes back to the covenant promised to Abraham in Genesis 12, verse 2, "I will make you a great nation." The most important event in the book of Exodus is the formal establishment of this nation as God's covenant people.

Now we get back to what we have talked about with the title "Exodus." Exodus is the means to that end. In other words, it's the Exodus that enables Israel to go to Sinai to meet with God and become established as his covenant people. So in that sense the focal point is what goes on at Sinai. The Exodus is a means to that end. The tabernacle is the divinely appointed place where God takes up residence among his people. As their divine ruler he was to be their king. They were to follow his law. The tabernacle had in the holy of holies, the Ark of the Covenant with the cherubim at either end of it. You read in psalms that Yahweh is enthroned above the cherubim. The ark is the throne seat of Yahweh and inside the ark is the law, that's what was to govern Israel. So when the tabernacle is built it's really the king who comes to take up residence among his people. That's the climax, you might say, of everything that is going on in the book.

So that if you go back to what Exodus is about I think you can say there are three primary things going on. The first is liberation; that's the Exodus. Second, is the covenant; that's what happens at Sinai. The third is the tabernacle. So these illustrate the

important things that are going on in the book: liberation, covenant and tabernacle.

Tabernacle is something that you might not always pay attention to. But as I mentioned before you had instructions how to build the tabernacle in chapters 25-31. That's seven chapters. It's kind of tedious detail listing all the materials and ways in which things were to be built. But then later chapters 35-39 you have the detailed description of the actual construction of the tabernacle, that's five more chapters. So you have 12 chapters of the book, that's about 1/3 of the book, dealing with the tabernacle. And in chapter 40 when God comes to dwell in the tabernacle in the midst of his people, that is the climax of the whole book. Now I mentioned tabernacle instructions are in chapters 25-31 and actual construction is 35-39. In between is chapters 32-34. Does anybody know what's there in chapters 32-34 between the instruction of how to build the tabernacle and the actual building? You have that golden calf incident and Israel's apostasy, the turning away from the Lord. One writer says that in chapters 32-34 what you have described is Israel's anti-tabernacle project—the golden calf worship. That's the way Israel was not to worship the Lord. So viewed as a whole I think you can say the book describes the establishment of the theocracy. Now the theocracy is God as the ruler. This is a nation in which God is recognized as the supreme ruler—it is a theocracy. The nation was to be governed by the Lord himself through his covenant mediators, Moses and the high priests being the major representatives, in accordance with the stipulations of the covenant that was given at Sinai.

### 3. Exodus' Place in the Pentateuch

Now, this book Exodus is placed with the flow of Scripture generally. I think when you look at the Pentateuch you find that Genesis provides the background for the Mosaic era. In other words, Genesis explains history up to the time of Moses. Of course, the early chapters explain how sin came into the world and what the effects of that were. So Genesis gives the background for the Mosaic era and the Mosaic era is in turn foundational to everything else that's in the Old Testament. Now particularly Sinai is the foundation on which everything else is built when you get to the prophets. For example,

the prophets are sometimes said to be religious innovators and promoters of brand new ideas. The prophets, on the contrary, were more than religious reformers. They were calling people back to their covenantal foundations. They were calling people back to God. Now, yes, there are some of the predictive sections pointing forward to what God is going to do, but it's all built on the foundation of what was established at Sinai.

#### 4. Green's 4-fold Way of Looking at the OT

Just to elaborate on this a little bit more, there was an Old Testament scholar at Princeton Seminary in the 1800s by the name of William Henry Green. He was living and writing about the same time as Julius Wellhausen and interacted with and argued against him. He talked about the structure of the Old Testament. He came up with a great way of looking at the Pentateuch, or the law of Moses, saying that it is foundational to the whole of the Old Testament. Certainly that's correct. That's why we will spend more time in Exodus than in the other historical books. The Law of Moses is the foundational basis. Green says the historical books are the providential application of what you find in the Pentateuch. The poetic books he speaks of as the subjective appropriation of the Pentateuch foundations. The prophetic books he speaks of as the objective enforcement of the Law of Moses. So the historical books are providential applications, poetic books are subjective appropriation and the prophetic books are objective enforcement, all pointing forward to the covenant of Christ. So you kind of see a structure for the various types of material you find in the Old Testament that have as their foundation the Pentateuch or Torah.

#### 5. Articles on the Coherence of Exodus

Before going on to B., go in your bibliography over to page two. I just want to call your attention to two articles. Under 1A, that's where we are, there are two articles by Arie Leder. One is called "Reading Exodus to Learn and Learning to Read Exodus" and the other is "The Coherence of Exodus: Narrative Unity and Meaning," published in 1999 and in 2001 in the Calvin Theological Journal. I think you might find those sources

interesting and helpful. I want to read a paragraph from the article, “The Coherence of Exodus,” that second article. Leder says, “Adam and Eve were expelled from God’s presence in the Garden of Eden for refusal of divine instruction. In Exodus when the glory cloud fills the newly constructed tabernacle God dwells in the midst of the descendants of Adam and Eve through Abraham and Sarah.” Now Adam and Eve were in the presence of God and got expelled from his presence. Now what he is saying is God is coming to dwell again in the midst of the descendants of Adam and Eve through Abraham. “Adam’s descendants are in God’s presence not because they found their way back, but because God has brought them to himself.” That’s from Exodus 19:4 where it says as they came to Sinai, “I have brought you to myself.” “Moreover they are not in his immediate presence. Israel’s sinfulness requires a distance that can only be overcome by a special appointed priesthood.” And now you see there is meaning there in that distance. Only the high priest could enter into that direct presence once a year. But nevertheless there’s been a measure of restoration of the situation prior to the fall when there was this communion between God and his people. God was present with his people and now God takes residence again among his people.

#### B. Historical Setting of Exodus: Date of the Exodus

Let’s go on to B., which is, “The historical setting” for the book. And I have first “The problem of the date of the Exodus.” Remember in one of those preliminary handouts I said the Exodus occurred somewhere around 1400-1200 B.C. There’s long been a debate and it’s still going on and will probably continue to go on for many years to come about how exactly to see the Exodus in the historical context of Egypt. The Bible does not give us a great deal of information about the history of ancient Egypt nor does it give us the names of the pharaohs of either the oppression or the Exodus. In those early chapters of Exodus there are two pharaohs spoken of. One is the pharaoh of the oppression who died, and then Moses, after he had gone out into the wilderness comes back to Egypt after the death of that pharaoh. So there is the pharaoh of the Exodus and a previous pharaoh of the oppression. The question of historical setting tries to determine

who those two pharaohs were. I think the fact that we don't know the names, and the Bible doesn't seem to be particularly concerned about giving them to us, in some way points to the special nature of biblical historiography as having its own interests and its own concerns and that's the history of redemption not a history of Egypt.

### 1. No Names of the Pharaoh

On the other hand, it's interesting that just giving the title "pharaoh" to the ruler at this period of time in Egyptian history corresponds to the way the Egyptians themselves spoke of their rulers. In Egyptian literature the title of "pharaoh" was used without the addition of a personal name before the tenth century B.C. In other words, it wasn't until the later times of the 900s that you begin to see the name of the pharaoh linked with the title. Now the interesting thing here is, that parallels exactly with what you find in the Bible. In other words, before the tenth century the reference to the Egyptian leader was simply designated as "pharaoh." When you get to the tenth century and beyond it's Pharaoh Shishak or Pharaoh Necho or Pharaoh Hophra. It was Shishak who was mentioned in 925 B.C. who invaded Palestine at the time of Rehoboam, you find that in 1 Kings 11:40. Pharaoh Necho is spoken of in 2 Chronicles 35:20, so that's the time of Josiah in the 600s. Pharaoh Hophra is in Jeremiah 44 just prior to 586 B.C. In other words, the fact that the Bible doesn't mention the names of these pharaohs is nothing unusual; in fact, it's perfectly consistent with even Egyptian usage of the time.

### 2. Two Views of the Date of the Exodus

Among the evangelical scholars who would generally accept the historicity of the biblical story of the Exodus, there have been two views on the date of the Exodus for a long time. Some scholars argue for what's been called an early date of the Exodus, that is an 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty date somewhere in the 1400s. Generally those who argue for that say that Thutmose III was the Pharaoh of the oppression and the pharaoh of the exodus itself was Amenhotep II. I've given the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty rule on the power point; you see how they deal with the dates for them. If you take a 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty date, which some others hold, the "late



date” of the Exodus, you would have Seti I as the pharaoh of the oppression and Raamses II as the pharaoh of the Exodus in the 1200s.

#### a. Survey of the Literature

If you look at your bibliography under 1b, you’ll notice almost two pages of references there. Let me just run down a couple of these writers and give you an idea of some of the early date advocates and some late date advocates. Gleason Archer, the first entry there, is an early date advocate. John Bimson, *Re-dating the Exodus and Conquest*, and several other articles, these are all early date. K. A. Kitchen is a late date advocate. Go over to page 3, Eugene Merrill, you will be reading him, he’s an early date proponent. Bruce Waltke and Bryant Wood are both early date. So I think those are the some of the key people that make the arguments for one or the other.

What I want to do from this point is look at the major arguments that have been advanced on both sides of this question. In other words, what are some of the arguments for a late date in the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty in the 1200s and what are some of the arguments for the early date, 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty position in the 1400s. I want to give these arguments in brief form. We could spend hours on this question. It can get extremely complex, but I think you’ll have some idea why there’s a difference of opinion with respect to placing the Exodus in Egyptian history.

### 3. Late Date Arguments

#### a. Exodus 1:11: Pithom and Raamses

So what I want to do first is to give you some of the major arguments for the late date. We will start with this 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty. The first argument is really the key text from the Bible that supports the late date. The first argument for the late date is what is said in Exodus 1:11. You read in Exodus 1:11, “The Egyptians put slave masters over the Israelites to oppress them with forced labor and they built Pithom and Raamses as store cities for Pharaoh.” So the Israelites in their oppression are forced to build these two cities for the pharaoh, one of which is called Raamses. Now you see Raamses was a 19<sup>th</sup>

dynasty ruler. There's been a lot of discussion about site identification with respect to those two place names, Pithom and Raamses. If you look at that print off of the slide, you see right, in the middle, Wadi Tumilat and then right below it Tell el-Retabeh or Tell el-Maskhuta. Pithom is usually regarded as one of those two places. For a long time the other site Raamses was linked with the central site called Tanis at the top of the map, but more recently excavations and investigation have led most scholars to conclude that either Qantir or Tel el-Dab'a, and in parenthesis under, Avaris, is one of those two sites; we see those two right next to each other. Now excavations tell us that there was construction done at both those sites, by Seti I who was 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty, and Raamses II. They both built there. Now what has often been said in connection with this late date is that no pharaoh had built in the delta area capital since the time of the Hyksos.

#### b. Hyksos

Go back to the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, there was a period of Egyptian history in which there were foreign rulers that controlled the land and they were called the Hyksos. It was the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty that drove the Hyksos out. The Hyksos are normally placed at 1750 down to 1570. You see Ahmose I in 1570 B.C. drove the Hyksos out of Egypt and established the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty in Egypt. What's often said is that there was no delta capital since the time of the Hyksos. The Hyksos were up there in the capital but then the capital is located much further to the south and it's only with the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty that you find construction again by pharaohs back up in the delta area. There was no evidence of 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty construction in the area of the delta in the northern part of Egypt.

#### 4. Exodus 1:11 in Light of Recent Archaeology: Raamses as a later gloss

Now I said until very recently that was often argued; archaeologists hadn't come up with evidence for 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty construction work up in the delta. However, that claim now is invalid because in the 1990s, fairly recently, a team of Austrian archeologists found 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty construction at the site of Avaris, that is one of those two sites that some argue was the site of Raamses in Exodus 1:11, Pithom and Raamses. That work

went on at Avaris from the time of Ahmose I, the pharaoh at the time the pharaohs expelled the Hyksos, all the way down to the time of Thutmose III. There's a book written in 1997 listed on page 2 of your bibliography by J.K. Hoffmeier called *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition*. That's a very good book, if you're interested in very serious archeological, historical material and the Egyptian setting for the Exodus tradition. It was published by Oxford Press in 1997. In that book on page 123, Hoffmeier addresses this discovery of 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty construction at Avaris. He says, "This unexpected development means that for the first time there is evidence of substantial building in brick in the Avaris-Pi-Raamses region," You see that's the region where those two dots are on that map, "immediately following the departure of the Hyksos and the continued presence in the area until the midpoint of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty. Could the construction associated with Ahmose's fort and associated facilities mark the beginning of the Israelite oppression and brick making referred to in Exodus 1?" He puts that as a question. "If so, then the name Raamses would have to be understood as a later gloss from the Raamses period." In other words, there was an archaic place name, the name was changed later, but the Israelites were working there earlier. But we will come back to this question later. As far as late date advocates are concerned, 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty dates, the key biblical text that pointed to the support of this late date is the reference to Pithom and Raamses in Exodus 1:11.

#### 5. Nelson Glueck and Trnas-Jordan and the Situation of Numb. 20:14-17 Didn't Exist before 13th Century

Let me give to you one more argument for late date then we'll take a break. The second argument comes from archaeological surveys done by a man named Nelson Glueck in the area of trans-Jordan, that is the area east of the Jordon River. Nelson Glueck traveled in the areas that were in Old Testament times the regions of Moab and Edom. He did archeological surveys and his conclusion was that there was no "sedentary population" in Moab and Edom prior to 1300 BC, or about five centuries before that. When you go to Numbers 20, when Israel left Egypt and was making its way up to the

promised land you read in Numbers 20:14 that Moses sent messengers from Kadesh, where they were camped, to the king of Edom, saying, “‘This is what your brother Israel says you know about all the hardships that have come upon us. Our forefathers went down to Egypt we lived there many years. Egypt mistreated us and our fathers but when we cried out to the Lord he sent his angel and brought us out of Egypt. Now we are here at Kadesh on the edge of your territory. Let us pass through your country. We will not go through any field or vineyard,” That sounds like sedentary population with vineyards and cultivated fields, “Or drink water from any well; we will travel along the king’s highway not turning to the right or the left until we have passed through your country.’ Edom answered, ‘you may not pass through you can try and we will attack you with the sword.’ The Israelites replied, ‘We will go along the main road and if we or our livestock drink any of your water we will pay for it, we only want to pass through on foot.’” Then they got the answer, you cannot pass. Then Edom came out against them with a large and powerful army. “Since Edom refused to let them go through the territory Israel turned away from them.” Now Nelson Glueck comes along and he says in the areas of Moab and Edom there were no sedentary civilizations five centuries prior to 1300 B.C. So the early date for the exodus in 1400, the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, doesn’t work according to Nelson Glueck and his archeological survey.

Now look at that citation collection I gave you. Page 4, paragraph c in the middle of the page. This is the paragraph out of Jack Finegan’s book *Light from the Ancient Past*. Finegan agrees with Glueck saying, “But the Early Bronze Age civilization of Transjordan disappeared about 1900 B.C. and from then until upon the eve of the Iron Age there is a gap in the history of permanent sedentary occupation in that land. Not until the beginning of the thirteenth century” that would be the 1200s, “did a new agricultural civilization appear belonging to the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites and Amorites. Therefore the situation presupposed in Numbers 20:14-17 did not exist before the thirteenth century B.C. but did prevail from that time on, exactly as reflected in the Bible. If the Israelites had come through southern Transjordan at any time within the preceding 600 years they would have found neither the Edomite nor the Moabite kingdoms in

existence and only scattered nomads would have disputed their passage. But coming sometime in the thirteenth century as we have reason for believing they did, they found their way blocked at the outset by the well organized and well fortified kingdom of Edom.”

#### 6. More Recent Archaeology has Sedentary Population in the Trans-Jordan in the 1300's

Now that's the second argument, no sedentary population in Moab and Edom for five centuries prior to the 1300s, which seems to conform to a later date for the Exodus. However, I will not take time to go into this. If you look on your bibliography, page 3, there's an article by Gene Mattingly called, "The Exodus-Conquest and the Archaeology of Trans-Jordan: New Light on an Old Problem." Mattingly argues that there is evidence of sedentary populations prior to the 1300s. So we shouldn't be so quick to jump to the conclusion that the situation is as Nelson Glueck's book describes it. The archaeological evidence is ambiguous. But that's the second argument for the late date of the Exodus. I think we need to take a break. We will stop here and pick up and go further when we return from the break.

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