

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 2A, Exodus Date, Oppression of Israel, Plagues on Egypt Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 2A, Exodus Date, Oppression of Israel, Plagues on Egypt, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Robert Vannoy explores the historical and theological implications of the Exodus story. It examines the dating of the Exodus, presenting arguments for both early and late dates, considering archaeological evidence and biblical texts. The oppression of the Israelites in Egypt is analyzed, highlighting the escalating phases of hardship and God's intervention. Vannoy discusses Moses' significance as a deliverer and prophet, and then examines the ten plagues as demonstrations of God's power and purpose. He emphasizes that the plagues were intended to reveal Yahweh's identity to both the Egyptians and the Israelites and to underscore the distinction between them.

**2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 2A – Double click icon to
play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Exodus to Exile).**



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ession02A.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 2A, Exodus Date, Oppression of Israel, Plagues on Egypt

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Robert Vannoy's lecture "Exodus to Exile, Lecture 2A."

Briefing Document: Robert Vannoy, "Exodus to Exile, Lecture 2A"

Subject: Analysis of the Exodus Date, Oppression of Israelites, and Plagues on Egypt

Overview: This lecture delves into the complexities surrounding the dating of the Exodus event, examines the nature of the Israelites' oppression in Egypt, and explores the theological significance of the plagues. Vannoy presents arguments for both early and late dates for the Exodus, analyzes the oppression in Exodus, and discusses the role of Moses as the deliverer.

I. The Date of the Exodus:

- **The Problem:** The primary focus is establishing a historical timeline for the Exodus, presenting the debate between an "early date" (1446 B.C., 18th Dynasty) and a "late date" (1250 B.C., 19th Dynasty). Vannoy highlights that there are no "conclusive arguments on either side" and "this is going to be an ongoing discussion."
- **Arguments for the Late Date:**
- **Store Cities:** Exodus 1:11 mentions the Israelites building the store cities Pithom and Rameses. Since Rameses was a 19th Dynasty pharaoh, this supports a later date. "Exodus 1:11 says that the Israelites were placed in forced labor to build these storage cities for the pharaoh...But the store cities were Pithom and Rameses. Of course, Rameses was a nineteenth dynasty pharaoh."
- **Trans-Jordan Population:** Nelson Glueck's archaeological surveys suggested a lack of sedentary population in Moab and Edom before 1300 B.C., conflicting with the Biblical account of settled populations there during an earlier Exodus.
- **Canaanite City Destruction:** Destruction layers in Canaanite cities (mentioned in Joshua) dating to 1250-1200 B.C. have been interpreted as evidence of Joshua's conquest.
- **Silence in Judges:** The book of Judges does not mention Palestinian campaigns by pharaohs Seti and Rameses, which would be expected if the conquest occurred in the 1400s.

- **Merneptah Stele:** The Merneptah Stele (circa 1220 B.C.) provides a terminus for the late date because it mentions Israel in Canaan, meaning the Exodus would have to have happened before this date.
- **Arguments for the Early Date:**
 - **1 Kings 6:1:** This verse states that Solomon began building the temple 480 years after the Exodus, placing the Exodus around 1446 B.C. based on the known date of Solomon's reign. "1 Kings 6:1, which is 480 years after the Exodus, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, he began to build the temple. And here you get the time. We can date the fourth year of Solomon's reign to 966/967—add 480 years and you get the early date at 1446 B.C."
 - **Thutmose III:** Thutmose III was a prolific builder with a long reign, fitting the Biblical timeline of Moses.
 - **Habiru:** Some scholars connect the "Habiru" mentioned in the Amarna letters (referring to attacks in Canaan) with the Hebrews, although this connection is debated. "K. A. Kitchen's statement that the Hebrews may have been Habiru but not all Habiru are Hebrew. The designation "Habiru" seems to be more identified with a social class rather than an ethnic group."
 - **Jericho Excavations:** John Garstang's initial excavations suggested Jericho was destroyed around 1400 B.C., aligning with an early Exodus date. However, Kathleen Kenyon's later work challenged this, dating the destruction to an earlier period. Bryant Wood re-evaluated Kenyon's work and argued for a destruction date around 1400 B.C. "The late British archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon established in the 1950s that while the ancient city was indeed destroyed, it happened around 1550 B.C., some hundred and fifty years before Joshua could have shown up. But archaeologist Bryant Wood, writing in the March/April issue of Biblical Archaeology Review, claims that Kenyon was wrong. Based on a re-evaluation of her research, which was published in detail only recently, Wood says the city's walls could have come tumbling down at just the right time to match the biblical account."
- **Vannoy's Analysis:**
 - Favors the early date, highlighting the difficulty of harmonizing the chronology of the Book of Judges with the late date, as it requires a more drastic compression of events.

- Questions the assumption that destruction levels of Canaanite cities around 1250-1200 B.C. are necessarily evidence of the Israelite conquest, suggesting other potential agents of destruction (e.g., Merneptah, Sea Peoples/Philistines). "That argument is increasingly coming into question...Maybe some of the cities were destroyed by Merneptah?...Maybe the Philistines were the agents of destruction when they came in and settled where some of those towns had been."
- Mentions John Bimson's work on "re-dating" the archaeological periods to align the Middle Bronze Age destruction levels with a 1400s date.
- **Conclusion:** Vannoy quotes Allan MacRae emphasizing the need for objective research rather than proving a preconceived point. He believes the evidence today is stronger for the early date conclusion. "The arguments as to an early or late date of the Exodus often seem to be given in the manner of a lawyer determined to prove a particular point, rather than of a researcher seeking for light in order to determine something that is not yet known."

II. Oppression in Exodus 1-2:

- **Rationale:** The Egyptians felt threatened by the Israelites' increasing population.
- **Phases of Oppression:** Vannoy identifies several escalating phases of oppression:
- **Phase 1: Forced Labor:** Putting slave masters over the Israelites to oppress them and prevent them from becoming too numerous. This includes hard labor in brick and mortar, as well as field work. "They put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor."
- **Phase 2: Killing Male Children:** Step 1: Pharaoh orders Hebrew midwives to kill male newborns.
- Step 2: When the midwives refuse, the order is extended to all Egyptians to throw male children into the Nile. "Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: every boy that is born, you must throw into the Nile."
- **Civil Disobedience:** Vannoy cites Nahum Sarna's commentary, highlighting the midwives' refusal to obey Pharaoh's order as an act of "civil disobedience in defense of a moral imperative."
- **Reversal:** Despite the Egyptians' efforts, Moses is born and becomes the deliverer.

- **Bricks Without Straw (Exodus 5):** After Moses's request to Pharaoh is denied, the oppression intensifies with the requirement for Israelites to gather their own straw for brickmaking while maintaining the same quota.
- **Motyer on the Oppression:** J. Motyer argues that Pharaoh's actions challenged God's covenant with Abraham.

III. The Deliverer - Moses:

- **Significance:** Moses is presented as one of the greatest figures in the Bible and in human history.
- **Historicity:** While generally accepted, some scholars question Moses's historical existence, viewing him as a legendary figure.
- **John Bright's View:** Bright asserts Moses's importance as the founder of Israel's faith, arguing that the events of the Exodus and Sinai require a great personality behind them. "There can be no doubt that he was, as the Bible portrays him, the great founder of Israel's faith. Attempts to reduce him are extremely unconvincing. The events of Exodus and Sinai require a great personality behind them."
- **Vos's Perspective:** Geerhardus Vos highlights Moses's role in bringing the patriarchal promises to fulfillment and his dominant place in the religious development of the Old Testament.

IV. The Plagues:

- **Purpose:** The plagues are described as "signs and wonders" meant to demonstrate Yahweh's power and existence to both the Egyptians and the Israelites. "These signs and wonders are done so that Pharaoh will know who Yahweh is—that he exists and that he's powerful. That becomes a theme that really runs through here."
- **Audience:** The Plagues were not only a demonstration to the Egyptians but also to the Israelites.
- **Structure:** The ten plagues are arranged in three sets of three, culminating in the death of the firstborn.
- Plagues 1, 4, and 7 are introduced by a warning to Pharaoh in the morning by the Nile.

- Plagues 2, 5, and 8 are introduced by a warning to Pharaoh presumably in his palace.
- Plagues 3, 6, and 9 commence without any warning.
- **Recognition of Divine Power:** After the first three plagues, the Egyptian magicians acknowledge "This is the finger of God."
- **Discrimination:** With the exception of the locusts, the last six plagues discriminate between the Egyptians and the Israelites in Goshen, highlighting Yahweh's favor toward his people. "Starting with the flies, you get that distinction and you find that in 8:21-23, with the cattle in 9:4, 6, and 7...The only place that did not hail was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were."

Key Takeaways:

- The dating of the Exodus remains a complex and debated topic with valid arguments on both sides.
- The oppression of the Israelites was a multifaceted process aimed at controlling their population.
- Moses was a pivotal figure in Israelite history, leading them out of Egypt and establishing their faith.
- The plagues served as a powerful demonstration of Yahweh's power and existence.

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 2A, Exodus Date, Oppression of Israel, Plagues on Egypt

Exodus: From Oppression to Deliverance - A Study Guide

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What are the two primary dates proposed for the Exodus, and which dynasties are they associated with?
2. What is the strongest argument in favor of the "late date" theory for the Exodus, according to the lecture?
3. What is the significance of the Merneptah Stele in determining the date of the Exodus?
4. What is the strongest argument supporting the "early date" theory for the Exodus, based on the biblical text?
5. How did Kathleen Kenyon's archaeological findings at Jericho challenge previous interpretations of the Israelite conquest?
6. According to Vannoy, why is the chronology of the period of the Judges a stronger argument for the early date than the late date?
7. What were the different phases of oppression the Israelites faced in Egypt, as described in Exodus 1-2 and 5?
8. How did the Hebrew midwives demonstrate "civil disobedience" in Exodus 1, and what motivated their actions?
9. According to John Bright, what is the significance of Moses to the faith of Israel?
10. What was the primary purpose of the plagues, and to whom were they intended to demonstrate God's power and existence?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The two primary dates proposed for the Exodus are the early date (around 1446 B.C.), associated with the Eighteenth Dynasty, and the late date (around 1250 B.C.), associated with the Nineteenth Dynasty.

2. The strongest argument in favor of the late date is the reference to the store cities of Pithom and Rameses in Exodus 1:11, as Rameses was a pharaoh of the Nineteenth Dynasty.
3. The Merneptah Stele, dating to approximately 1220 B.C., mentions Israel in Canaan, providing a terminus for the late date, as the Exodus and subsequent settlement had to occur before this reference.
4. The strongest argument supporting the early date is 1 Kings 6:1, which states that the temple construction began 480 years after the Exodus, placing the Exodus around 1446 B.C. based on dating Solomon's reign.
5. Kenyon concluded that the destruction layer previously attributed to the Israelite conquest by Garstang actually dated back to around 1550 B.C., long before the possible time of the Israelite conquest, and that the site was largely unoccupied between 1500 B.C. and 1200 B.C.
6. The chronology of the period of the Judges is more difficult to harmonize with the late date, which only allows 324 years between the Exodus and Solomon's reign, whereas the early date provides 480 years, making the compression of the Judges period less problematic.
7. The Israelites faced phases of oppression including forced labor, increased severity of labor, and the killing of male children (first through midwives, then by order to all Egyptians), and later, being forced to gather their own straw for brickmaking.
8. The Hebrew midwives demonstrated civil disobedience by disobeying Pharaoh's order to kill male Hebrew children, choosing instead to fear God and let them live.
9. John Bright argues that Moses was the great founder of Israel's faith, and the events of the Exodus and Sinai require a great personality behind them.
10. The primary purpose of the plagues was to demonstrate to both Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and to the Israelites, the existence and power of Yahweh, the God of Israel, especially since Pharaoh initially claimed not to know Yahweh.

Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the arguments for the early and late dates of the Exodus, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of each position based on biblical and archaeological evidence.

2. Analyze the significance of the plagues in Exodus as signs and wonders, discussing their purpose in demonstrating God's power and revealing His nature to both the Egyptians and the Israelites.
3. Discuss the role of archaeology in the debate over the dating of the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan, focusing on the case of Jericho and the interpretations of Kathleen Kenyon and Bryant Wood.
4. Examine the various phases of oppression described in Exodus 1-2 and 5, and analyze the motivations behind the Egyptians' actions and the implications for the Israelites' identity and relationship with God.
5. Assess the importance of Moses as a historical figure and the role he played in the formation of Israel's faith and national identity, considering both biblical accounts and scholarly perspectives on his historicity.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Exodus:** The event in which the Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt.
- **Eighteenth Dynasty:** A period in Egyptian history (c. 1550-1292 BC), associated with the early date of the Exodus.
- **Nineteenth Dynasty:** A period in Egyptian history (c. 1292-1189 BC), associated with the late date of the Exodus.
- **Pithom and Rameses:** Store cities mentioned in Exodus 1:11, built by the Israelites for the pharaoh.
- **Merneptah Stele (Israel Stele):** An inscription dating to approximately 1220 B.C. that mentions Israel, providing a reference point for dating the Exodus.
- **Habiru:** A term found in ancient Near Eastern texts, possibly referring to a social class of nomadic or mercenary people, sometimes associated with the Hebrews.
- **Amarna Letters:** A collection of letters from the 14th century BC, between city-states in Canaan and the Egyptian pharaohs, referencing attacks by the Habiru.
- **Jericho:** An ancient city in Canaan, the first city conquered by the Israelites after crossing the Jordan River.
- **Kathleen Kenyon:** A British archaeologist whose excavations at Jericho challenged previous interpretations of the Israelite conquest.

- **Bryant G. Wood:** An archaeologist who re-evaluated Kenyon's findings at Jericho and argued for a destruction date that aligns with the early date of the Exodus.
- **Judges (Period of the):** The time between the Israelite conquest of Canaan and the establishment of the monarchy under Saul, characterized by a cycle of oppression and deliverance led by judges.
- **Sea Peoples:** A confederation of naval raiders who attacked Egypt and other regions in the late Bronze Age, some of whom settled in Canaan and became the Philistines.
- **Philistines:** A people who settled on the southern coast of Canaan around 1200 B.C. and became rivals of the Israelites.
- **Allan MacRae:** Founder of Biblical Seminary, his writings on the Exodus emphasize the importance of objective research and methodology.
- **Oppression:** The harsh treatment and enslavement of the Israelites by the Egyptians, as described in Exodus 1-2 and 5.
- **Goshen:** The region in Egypt where the Israelites settled.
- **Midwives:** Women who assisted in childbirth, specifically mentioned in Exodus 1 for their defiance of Pharaoh's order to kill male Hebrew infants.
- **Civil Disobedience:** The refusal to comply with certain laws or demands of a government for moral or ethical reasons.
- **Plagues:** A series of ten miraculous events that God inflicted upon Egypt to persuade Pharaoh to release the Israelites from slavery.
- **Signs and Wonders:** Terms used in the Bible to describe the miraculous events that accompanied the Exodus, emphasizing their purpose as demonstrations of God's power and character.
- **Yahweh:** The personal name of God in the Hebrew Bible, often translated as "LORD" in English.
- **Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT):** A reference work that provides detailed analysis of the meaning of Hebrew words in the Old Testament.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 2A, Exodus Date, Oppression of Israel, Plagues on Egypt, Biblealearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on the Exodus

- **What are the two main proposed dates for the Exodus, and what Pharaohs are associated with each?** The two main proposed dates for the Exodus are the early date (around 1446 B.C.) and the late date (around 1250 B.C.). The early date places the Exodus in the time of Thutmose III and Amenhotep, while the late date associates it with the reign of Rameses II.
- **What is the primary biblical argument supporting the early date of the Exodus?** The strongest argument for the early date comes from 1 Kings 6:1, which states that Solomon began building the temple 480 years after the Exodus, in the fourth year of his reign. Since Solomon's fourth year can be dated to approximately 966/967 B.C., adding 480 years leads to the early date of 1446 B.C.
- **What archaeological evidence is often cited to support the late date of the Exodus?** Arguments for a late date include the store cities of Pithom and Rameses (Rameses being a 19th dynasty pharaoh) mentioned in Exodus 1:11, archaeological surveys of trans-Jordan suggesting a lack of sedentary population before 1300 B.C., and destruction levels in certain Canaanite cities around 1250-1200 B.C. However, the lecture notes highlight the weaknesses of these arguments, such as the uncertainty that the Israelites were the agents of the destruction of the Canaanite cities.
- **How have excavations at Jericho been used to argue for both the early and late dates of the Exodus, and what role does pottery analysis play in this debate?** Early excavations at Jericho, particularly those by John Garstang, suggested a destruction around 1400 B.C., supporting the early date. However, Kathleen Kenyon's later excavations concluded that the destruction layer attributed to the conquest was much earlier (around 1550 B.C. or even 2300 B.C.), seemingly discrediting both the early and late date arguments. Bryant Wood re-analyzed Kenyon's reports, arguing that the absence of specific types of pottery (imported from Cyprus) was due to the excavation site being a poorer part of the city, and other pottery evidence suggested a destruction around 1400 B.C.

- **According to the lecture notes, what is a key difficulty in reconciling the late date of the Exodus with the period of the Judges?** The chronology of the period of the Judges is more difficult to harmonize with the late date than with the early date. With a late date of 1290 for the Exodus, there are only 324 years between the Exodus and the fourth year of Solomon's reign, making it challenging to fit in all the events and time spans described in the Book of Judges.
- **What was the purpose of the plagues according to the text, and how did they discriminate between the Egyptians and the Israelites?** The primary purpose of the plagues was to demonstrate to Pharaoh (and to the Israelites) the existence and power of Yahweh, the God of Israel. Pharaoh initially claimed not to know Yahweh, and the plagues were intended to force him to recognize Yahweh's power. With the exception of the locusts, most of the last six plagues discriminated between the Egyptians and the Israelites. The Israelites living in Goshen were spared the effects of the plagues, while the Egyptians suffered, further proving the power of Yahweh.
- **What were the phases of oppression described in Exodus 1-2, and what prompted them?** There were several phases of oppression. Initially, the Israelites were put to work under slave masters due to their increasing numbers. When this didn't stop their growth, the Egyptians increased the severity of their labor. The second phase involved killing male children, first by instructing midwives to kill newborn boys and then by ordering all Egyptian people to throw Hebrew male children into the Nile. Ultimately, these attempts were frustrated when Moses was born and preserved. Later in Exodus 5, the oppression was intensified by withholding straw for brickmaking.
- **What is significant about the midwives' actions in Exodus 1, and how does it relate to the concept of covenant theology?** The midwives' decision to disobey Pharaoh's order to kill male Hebrew children is described as an act of civil disobedience in defense of a moral imperative. This is significant because it highlights the conflict between obedience to human authority and obedience to God. According to Motyer, Pharaoh's attempt to destroy the Israelites was a challenge to God's covenant with Abraham, in which God promised to bless those who blessed Abraham and curse those who cursed him. The Exodus narrative, therefore, is a continuation of the covenant narrative, with God intervening to defend his covenant people.