

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Genesis, Session 29, Joseph's Dates and Egypt Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Vannoy, Genesis, Session 29, Joseph's Dates and Egypt, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture excerpt from Dr. Robert Vannoy's Old Testament History course focuses on the chronology of Joseph's life in Egypt. The lecture discusses the complexities of biblical dating, particularly concerning the reigns of Israelite kings and the impact of different calendar systems. It explores the question of when Joseph arrived in Egypt, considering two possible timeframes: before or during the Hyksos rule. The lecturer analyzes arguments supporting both possibilities, referencing biblical text and historical sources like Manetho and Josephus. Finally, the lecture incorporates a discussion of the literary interpretation of Joseph's story, emphasizing the themes of reconciliation and forgiveness.

2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Vannoy, Genesis, Session 29 – 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 → Pentateuch → Genesis).



**Vannoy_Genesis_Se
ssion29.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Genesis, Session 29, Joseph's Dates and Egypt

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided lecture transcript on Joseph and his time in Egypt:

Briefing Document: Dr. Robert Vannoy's Lecture on Joseph and Egypt

Introduction

This document summarizes Dr. Robert Vannoy's lecture on the biblical figure of Joseph and his time in Egypt, focusing on chronological questions and the redemptive historical significance of the narrative. The lecture explores key events in Joseph's life, and then delves into the complexities of dating Joseph's arrival in Egypt, particularly in relation to Egyptian history and the Hyksos period.

Key Themes and Ideas

1. Course Logistics and Chronological Studies:

- The lecture begins with course instructions, emphasizing the importance of reading assignments and potential quizzes. A key element of the course is the study of biblical chronology, specifically the synchronization of the reigns of kings in Israel and Judah, addressed by Edwin R. Thiele's work.
- Thiele's work identifies difficulties in directly correlating the reigns of the kings in the book of Kings. These difficulties stem from practices like "accession year" vs. "non-accession year" reckoning for the beginning of a king's reign and the existence of co-regencies.
- The lecture emphasizes the need to plan ahead for reading, especially Thiele's book due to limited library copies.
- The lecture also outlines a map study assignment to familiarize students with geographical locations and tribal boundaries in the Old Testament, especially in Joshua and Judges.

1. Redemptive Historical Significance of Joseph:

- The lecture transitions to the story of Joseph, focusing on its significance in the context of redemptive history. Dr. Vannoy notes how Joseph's story reveals how even when the line of the promised seed is through Judah, God is active through

Joseph, "Joseph temporarily becomes prominent although Judah is the line of the promised seed."

- The brothers initially act with malice, selling Joseph into slavery, but God uses this to preserve the family of Jacob. The text reads, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish now what is being done - the saving of many lives."
- Joseph's attitude of forgiveness and his actions after becoming powerful in Egypt lead to the restoration of unity within Jacob's family: "So with that attitude, the family is united."
- Judah's transformation from his involvement in selling Joseph to his willingness to sacrifice himself for Benjamin highlights the theme of repentance and restored relationships. This change is further emphasized by Robert Alter's observation: "In light of all that we have seen, about the story of Joseph and his brothers, it should be clear that this remarkable speech is a point-for-point undoing, morally and psychologically, of the brother's earlier violation of paternal and filial bonds."
- The family is united and brought to Egypt, where in the isolation of Goshen, they become a nation.

1. **Dating Joseph's Arrival in Egypt:**

- A significant portion of the lecture focuses on determining the date of Joseph's arrival in Egypt. The text says, "When did Joseph enter Egypt?" This is complex due to the lack of specific names for Pharaohs in Genesis and the dependence on other biblical chronological factors, such as the date of the Exodus.
- The two key variables for dating the patriarchal period, and thus Joseph's entry into Egypt, are (1) the date of the Exodus (1446 or 1290 BC) and (2) whether to use the Masoretic text (430 years in Egypt) or the Septuagint reading (215 years in Egypt) from Exodus 12:40.
- Dr. Vannoy calculates possible dates for Joseph's arrival based on both early and late Exodus dates and the Masoretic text.
- Early Exodus date (1446 BC): Joseph's arrival around 1896 BC.
- Late Exodus date (1290 BC): Joseph's arrival around 1740 BC.

- These two dates put Joseph into different historical contexts in Egyptian history, one during a native Egyptian dynasty and the other during the Hyksos period, when foreign rulers controlled the country.

1. **Joseph and the Hyksos:**

- The lecture examines the historical context of the Hyksos, foreign rulers who took control of Egypt around 1750-1570 BC. The text says, "The Hyksos were those foreign rulers, who came in and gained control of Egypt for a period of time."
- The possibility of Joseph serving in Egypt during the Hyksos period is explored: "it's always been a question of some interest whether Joseph came into power during the early days of Hyksos rule, or whether he came to power prior to that under a native Egyptian dynasty." This is discussed because dating Joseph's time in Egypt during that period would mean that Jacob and his family arrived at that time.
- Josephus, the historian, is mentioned as suggesting a Hyksos connection to Joseph, though he then makes the inaccurate claim that the Hyksos were actually the Israelites and that their expulsion was the Exodus.
- Arguments supporting Joseph's rise during Hyksos rule include:
- The presence of horses in Genesis 47:17, which were supposedly introduced by the Hyksos.
- The statement in Exodus 1:8, "a new king who did not know Joseph," which might imply a new native Egyptian dynasty after the Hyksos expulsion.
- The fact that the Pharaoh seems to reside in the Nile Delta, which is where the Hyksos had their capital.
- The likelihood of a Semite like Joseph reaching a high position under foreign rule.
- The qualification of Potiphar as "an Egyptian" in Genesis 39:1, which suggests a context of non-Egyptian leadership.

Conclusion

Dr. Vannoy's lecture presents a detailed look at the story of Joseph, blending narrative analysis with an examination of complex historical and chronological questions. The lecture highlights the redemptive purpose behind the events and introduces students to the difficulties in dating ancient events. Ultimately, the exact date of Joseph's time in Egypt is uncertain, and the arguments connecting him to the Hyksos period are plausible but not conclusive. This sets the stage for further exploration of the Exodus, as well as the discussion of how the dating of Joseph's time in Egypt affects the date of the Exodus.

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Genesis, Session 29, Joseph's Dates and Egypt

Old Testament History: Joseph in Egypt Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Thiele, what are two factors that make synchronizing the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah difficult?
2. What is the significance of the "accession year" or "non-accession year" in relation to the dating of a king's reign?
3. Besides the readings in Schultz, what other book was assigned for reading on April 15th, and why is it significant?
4. What were the two options for receiving extra credit and how much was each worth?
5. What was remarkable about Joseph's attitude toward his brothers when he revealed his identity to them?
6. How did Judah's actions demonstrate a change in character when he was trying to secure Benjamin's release from Joseph?
7. According to the lecture, what two variables must be considered when attempting to date the patriarchal period?
8. What is the significance of the Hyksos in the discussion of when Joseph entered Egypt?
9. What is Manetho's interpretation of the term "Hyksos," and how is that interpretation viewed today?
10. What are two arguments made in favor of Joseph rising to power in Egypt during Hyksos rule?

Answer Key

1. Thiele identified accession/non-accession year counting and co-regencies as factors that cause difficulties when synchronizing the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah. These methods changed over time which compounds the problem.

2. The "accession year" or "non-accession year" refers to whether the partial year of a king's reign at the beginning is counted as the first year or if the first full year is considered the first year, thus causing a potential one-year difference in calculations.
3. *A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings* by Edwin R. Thiele was assigned for reading on April 15th, and it is significant because it addresses the complex issues of synchronizing the chronologies of the kings of Israel and Judah using historical context.
4. Extra credit could be earned by reading J. Barton Payne's *Theology of the Older Testament* for 4/10ths of a grade point or by reading one or two of Walter Kaiser's books for 2/10ths of a grade point each, with a total maximum extra credit of 4/10ths of a grade point.
5. Joseph forgave his brothers instead of seeking revenge, stating that God had sent him to Egypt to save lives, demonstrating a remarkable attitude of reconciliation.
6. Judah offered to take Benjamin's place as a slave, showing that he was acting out of empathy for his father's potential suffering and demonstrated how he was no longer jealous of Benjamin.
7. The dating of the patriarchal period rests on the date of the Exodus (either 1446 or 1290 BC) and whether one follows the Masoretic Text or the Septuagint reading of Exodus 12:40, thus making it 430 or 215 years in Egypt.
8. The Hyksos were foreign rulers of Egypt, and depending on whether Joseph's arrival is dated earlier or later, he may have served in the Egyptian court before, during, or after their rule which may have impacted his position and relationship with the Egyptians.
9. Manetho interpreted "Hyksos" to mean "shepherd kings," but most modern scholars believe it means "foreign rulers" or "rulers of foreign lands."
10. Two arguments for Joseph's rise during Hyksos rule include the appearance of horses in the narrative, which is often associated with the Hyksos, and the idea that a Semite such as Joseph would have been more likely to rise to power in a time of foreign rule.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Answer each of the following questions in an essay format.

1. Discuss the significance of Joseph's story in the context of redemptive history, focusing on how it connects to God's overarching plan for the nation of Israel.
2. Analyze the character of Judah and how his transformation demonstrates a movement away from the jealousy of Joseph and toward love and duty.
3. Explore the various difficulties in establishing precise dates for Joseph's time in Egypt, and discuss the different views that have arisen as a result.
4. Compare and contrast the arguments for and against Joseph's rise to power during the Hyksos reign in Egypt, evaluating the strength of each.
5. Evaluate the significance of the literary analysis of Robert Alter in understanding the Joseph narrative in light of the themes of love and reconciliation.

Glossary of Key Terms

Accession Year: The year in which a king begins to reign, where the partial year of his rule is not counted as the first year.

Non-Accession Year: The year in which a king begins to reign, where the partial year of his rule is counted as the first year.

Co-Regency: A period during which two rulers reign simultaneously, often a king and his son.

Masoretic Text: The traditional Hebrew text of the Old Testament, used by most Jewish and Protestant groups, known for a specific method of vowel notation.

Septuagint: The Greek translation of the Old Testament, which sometimes differs from the Masoretic text.

Hyksos: Foreign rulers of Egypt, who controlled the country from approximately 1750 to 1570 B.C.

Redemptive History: The unfolding of God's plan of salvation through historical events, especially in the context of the Bible.

Goshen: The region in ancient Egypt where the Israelites settled, particularly after Joseph's rise to power.

Patriarchal Period: In biblical history, the period of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prior to the Exodus.

Literary Approach: A method of analyzing biblical texts that focus on their literary and narrative qualities, such as plot, character development, and symbolism.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Genesis, Session 29, Joseph's Dates and Egypt, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ: Joseph's Story, Chronology, and Egyptian Context

1. **What are some of the challenges in establishing a precise biblical chronology, particularly when synchronizing the reigns of kings in Israel?**
 - The Bible presents challenges in chronological synchronization due to different methods of calculating a king's reign. These include: the question of whether the first year of a king's reign begins on the date of accession or the following full year, the presence of co-regencies where reigns overlap, and the use of different calendars (religious vs. civil) to mark the start of the year. These variables can lead to significant discrepancies if the numbers are simply added up.
1. **How does the lecture approach the complex problem of Old Testament chronology, and what specific resource is emphasized?**
 - The lecture stresses the importance of understanding the methodologies of chronological record-keeping in ancient Israel. It highlights Edwin Thiele's work, specifically the book *A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings*, for his analysis of synchronizing the reigns of kings in the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel. While Thiele's work is technical, the assignment uses a popularized summary of his work.
1. **Beyond the text, what additional type of study does the lecture encourage for better understanding the biblical narrative?**
 - In addition to textual analysis, the lecture emphasizes the importance of geographic understanding through map studies, focusing on the locations of key cities, rivers, mountains, and tribal boundaries in Palestine during the time of Joshua and Judges. A map question will be on the mid-term exam.

1. **According to the lecture, what is the significance of Joseph's story within the broader context of redemptive history, and how does it restore unity to Jacob's family?**
 - Joseph's story shows how God used seemingly negative events (Joseph being sold into slavery) for good, leading to the preservation of his family during a famine. Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers and his refusal to seek revenge restore unity to the house of Jacob. The family is brought to Egypt where in the isolation of Goshen they grow into a nation. This story is essential in the history of the nation of Israel. Judah's willingness to offer himself in place of Benjamin is a further restoration of familial harmony.
1. **What are the main challenges in establishing a precise date for Joseph's arrival in Egypt, and what are the two main chronological possibilities discussed in the lecture?**
 - The main challenge is that the Bible does not name the pharaoh of Joseph's time, making it difficult to correlate with Egyptian history. Also the dating depends on two variables: the date of the Exodus and whether to follow the Masoretic text or Septuagint in Exodus 12:40 in regard to the number of years spent in Egypt. Using calculations based on the lifespans of the patriarchs and the dates of Abraham and Jacob, the lecture arrives at two possibilities for Joseph's arrival in Egypt: approximately 1896 B.C. (assuming an early date for the Exodus and Masoretic text) or 1740 B.C. (assuming a late date for the Exodus and the Masoretic text). These two dates rest on 2 different possibilities concerning the date of the Exodus.
1. **What is the significance of these two dating possibilities in relation to Egyptian history, and who were the Hyksos?**
 - The date of 1896 B.C. would place Joseph in Egypt during the 12th Dynasty, a native Egyptian dynasty. The date of 1740 B.C. places Joseph's arrival during the time of the Hyksos, who were foreign rulers who controlled Egypt for a period of time. The Hyksos, believed to be from Asia, ruled in Egypt from about 1750 to 1570 B.C.

1. **What arguments are presented in the lecture for Joseph being in power during the Hyksos period?**

- Arguments that favor Joseph being in power during the Hyksos period include: the mention of horses in Genesis 47:17, as the Hyksos are often credited with introducing horses to Egypt, a “new king” in Exodus 1:8 who is described as not knowing about Joseph who is said to be best explained by a native Egyptian ruler coming to power after the Hyksos, the location of Joseph and his family in the Nile delta area, where the Hyksos had their capital, the higher likelihood of a Semite like Joseph rising to power under foreign rule, and the qualifier for Potiphar being "an Egyptian" in Genesis 39:1.
- **What is emphasized about the nature of these arguments for dating Joseph in relation to the Hyksos and why is it a debated issue?** The lecture emphasizes that the arguments for dating Joseph in the Hyksos period, while plausible, are not conclusive, and that none of these arguments force you to the conclusion that he *had* to have been there in the time of the Hyksos. The issue is debated, because different conclusions will influence how the events of the Exodus are interpreted and dated.