

Genesis, Lecture 30: Joseph's Coming to Egypt pre-Hyksos

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Abstract

This lecture explores the historical and chronological questions surrounding Joseph's entry into Egypt in relation to the date of the Exodus. Dr. Robert Vannoy evaluates the arguments for a pre-Hyksos entry, specifically examining the Egyptian hostility toward shepherds, the identity of the "new king" in Exodus 1:8, and the population of the Israelites relative to their rulers. He also addresses a class map assignment on tribal borders in Joshua and concludes that while a definitive date cannot be established, Joseph likely arrived in Egypt between 1900 and 1700 B.C. The session serves as a transition into the next major course topic regarding Israel's deliverance from Egypt in Exodus 1 to 11.

Outline

I. Course Administration: Map Assignment

A. Purpose and Instructions

1. Students must draw a map locating rivers, cities, and tribal lands to familiarize themselves with geography.
2. Recommended to use a Bible atlas as a guide.

B. Due Date and Grading

1. Due date extended from Wednesday to Tuesday.
2. No quiz on the assignment, but it will be tested with a map question on the mid-term exam.

C. Addressing Tribal Border Variations

1. Different Bible atlases display slight variations in tribal border lines.
2. These differences arise from various geographic interpretations of the descriptive, site-based boundary markers in the Book of Joshua.

II. Chronological Problem: When Did Joseph Enter Egypt?

A. Correlation to the Exodus Date

1. Early Exodus date correlates with Joseph entering Egypt prior to the Hyksos period, during a native Egyptian dynasty.
2. Late Exodus date correlates with Joseph entering Egypt during the Hyksos period.

B. Previous Arguments Examined

1. Previous lecture covered arguments supporting a rise to power during the Hyksos rule.

III. Arguments Supporting Joseph's Pre-Hyksos Entry (Early Date)

A. Egyptian Sentiment Toward Shepherds

1. Genesis 46:34 states that "all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians."
2. Proponents argue this sentiment points to a native Egyptian dynasty, as the Hyksos are traditionally termed "shepherd kings."
3. Counterargument: The translation of "Hyksos" as "shepherd kings" is disputed, with some scholars translating it as "foreign rulers."

B. The "New King Who Knew Not Joseph" (Exodus 1:8)

1. Under the early date view, this king is identified as a Hyksos ruler who seized power and oppressed the Egyptians and Israelites alike.
2. This addresses why the Israelites were not expelled alongside the Hyksos; the Israelites and Hyksos were antagonists rather than allies.

C. Israelite Population Statistics (Exodus 1:9-10)

1. The "new king" remarks that the children of Israel are "more and mightier than we" (KJV) or "much too numerous for us" (NIV).
2. Gleason Archer notes that while Israelites could not outnumber the entire native Egyptian population, they could realistically outnumber the ruling warrior caste of the Hyksos.

D. The Need for a Chronological Gap

1. The early date view must posit an unstated chronological gap in Exodus 1 between verses 14 and 15 to shift from the Hyksos period to the 18th Egyptian Dynasty (reign of Thutmose).
2. This assumption is a notable weakness of the early date view as it is not explicitly supported by the text.

IV. Tentative Historical Conclusions

A. Imprecision of Dating

1. Direct biblical and historical evidence remains insufficient to decisively resolve the debate.
2. Chronologies of early Egypt and the start of the Hyksos period are still obscured and subject to scholarly dispute.

B. General Dating Range

1. Joseph most likely entered Egypt between 1900 and 1700 B.C., possibly when the Hyksos were already present in some capacity.

V. Course Progression

A. Next Topic: Deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 1–11)