

# The Search for Joseph in Egyptian History

## *Finding Waldo – a Needle in a Haystack*

The story of Joseph is the true story according to the Bible, but a fable to skeptics, agnostics and atheists. They won't be convinced unless they see concrete scientific proof.

### **The Mystery of Dating**

For dating in antiquity we have to work backward from the known to the unknown. We use a system that fixes one point in time that is certain to work back from that to what is uncertain. Way back in 525 a Christian monk, Dionysius Exiguus, proposed a fixed point in time for measuring history to be Christ birth. Since then the Birth of Christ is the pivotal point for historical records.

In the 1700s Jewish scholars chose not to use BC and AD for obvious reasons. Modern scientists don't like using a character like Jesus to regulate time so instead of *Before Christ* (B.C.) and *Ano Domini* (A.D.) and they choose to call it *Before the Common Era* (BCE) and *Common Era* (CE), and– whatever!!! They are still dating the past and present by the same fixed point in time.

Science also wants to use Radio Carbon dating where applicable to date carbon based fibers. It is helpful but it has not yet been proven to be totally reliable. So, we are left with speculation based current archeological finds and interpretation of those finds. Be aware however, that even archeologists don't agree on dates of the Egyptian empires. Some differ by more than a thousand years. From time to time new graves or mounds are found that reveal relics of the past and if we are lucky some permanent records in stone and papyrus that give us new insights to the time when certain civilizations were at their zenith.

### **More Complications**

When it comes to dating Egyptian history things get a bit more complicated. We rely primarily on kingslists kept by the Egyptians themselves. The most famous is the Palermo Stone, which covers the earliest dynasties to the middle of Dynasty 5 and the Abydos Kingslist, which Pharaoh Seti I had carved on his temple at Abydos, and one other papyrus, the Turin Canon, that covers the earliest dynasties to the reign of Ramesses II. All are fragmentary and incomplete.

Our greatest go-to document for Egyptian history was left to us by Eusebius, who used a history by a third century B.C. priest of the temple at Heliopolis, Manetho, who allegedly had access to original sources and divided Egyptian history into 30 dynasties.

The problem is that none of these are reliable in themselves, and often disagree with each other. Egyptologists disagree, sometimes vehemently, about the dates of the Pharaohs, which are sometimes 1,000 to 2,000 years off!

**So, where do we turn for a reliable record?** I suggest we start with the Word of God, the Bible. Egyptologists reject the Bible as a reliable source of history because they reject its content and mythological at best. But we can look into the Bible to find reliable events and dates God has conserved for us.

- We have historical geologic events like the Flood.
- We have carbon dating of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.
- We have the genealogies and lifespans of the patriarchs.
- We know the Jews were in Egypt for 430 years. (Exodus 12:40-41)
- Solomon built his temple and counted back 480 since the Exodus. (1 Kings 6:1)

We know the date of Solomon starting to build the temple as 996 B.C.  
Add to that 480 years since the Exodus as I Kings 6:1 clearly states. 480 years  
This gives us the date of the Exodus to be approximately 1446 B.C.  
Add to that 430 years in Egypt according to Exodus 12:40-41.  
All this would give us the date of  $1446+480 = 1876$  B.C. Joseph's date?

To put this into our present day context 430 year in Egypt would be similar to 1589 A.D. to today, 2019. That is a lot of time to pass in Egypt! The Mayflower came to America in 1620.

### **Can We Find Joseph in Egyptian History?**

- Can we find events like the severe famine in Egypt?
- Can we find a historical Egyptian who matches Joseph and his events?
- Are there any ancient papyrus or monuments referring to the events of Genesis 41-50?
- Can we find Joseph's bones brought to Shechem? Joshua 24:32

### **Can We Find Moses and the Exodus in Egyptian History?**

- Can we find upheavals that the 10 plagues would have caused in Egypt?
- Can we find a Pharaoh's daughter who adopted a son?
- Can we find a Pharaoh's son who died suddenly?
- Can we find a Red Sea crossing with tangible evidence left behind?
- Can we find Mount Horeb and Mount Sinai and do they match the Bible?

These would be like footprints in the sands of time that would give us an independent (source outside the Bible) that would verify the stories of the Bible.