

III. THE RISE OF THE TWP EGYPTS Ca 3300? – 3100 B.C .

THE RISE OF EGYPT

The name EGYPT is a Latinized Greek corruption of “Hakeptah:, “home of Ptah”. The Egyptians themselves called their land *Khem or Kam or Ham*, literally meaning “the black land,” and referred to themselves as Khemites, Kemites or Hamites, “the black people” (symbolized by the hieroglyph hmt). This has been thought by many to be a reference to the black alluvial soil of the Nile valley, by others to be a reference to dark complexion, by others to be a reference to their Hamitic heritage as descendants of Noah through Ham. Hmt is the blackest of black terms in the Egyptian language, being of the same derivative as the Biblical “Ham”. The Egyptians also used “Kmtjw” meaning “black men”, to distinguish themselves from others. Black held good symbolic significance for the Egyptian mind. They referred to benevolent deities as “black,” but to malevolent ones as “red.”

Upper Egypt (southern) Capitol: Thebes

There were in early times two separate regions or fledgling kingdoms of Egypt. In terms of political organization and stability, civilization seems to have taken root first in the more hospitable region of Upper Egypt (the southern part near Cush). Thebes, called *No* in the Bible, was the capitol of this kingdom. The Egyptians called it No-Amon or the city of *Amon*. The city is built on the eastern bank of the Nile, with the west bank acting as a giant burial ground which grew into a city of its own – a city of the dead. Today Thebes has the most extensive ruins of any city in the world.

The Egyptian priest-historien Manetho listed five kings who ruled Upper Egypt during the earliest period – *Seka, tau, thesh, Uatchnar, and Mekha*. It is not known how long each ruled – whether years, months or only days. It is also possible that some of them may have ruled contemporaneously in different places.

In religious terms, the southern kingdom was from earliest times devoted to the *sacred bull*. *Ptah* was considered to be the Mind of the Universe, who created gods and men by thinking them into existence. The eastern nomes were united around the worship of the god *Andjtu*. The weteren nomes united around the worship of the god *Horus*, (son of Osiris) whose worship was extended to the whole kingdom when the western nomes conquered the eastern. Later the entire kingdom seems to have been united around the worship of the god *Seth*, perhaps a familiar spirit claiming to be that of their ancient departed ancestor, Seth the son of Adam, and the *triad* of gods *Amon, Mut (the mother goddess), and Khonus (god of the moon)*. From earliest times Egyptian worship has been associated with animals. Live *sacred animals* were often kept in temples. These animals were pampered in life and mummified when they died.

Predynastic Egyptians sometimes *dismembered* the dead. It has been theorized that they did this to keep them from returning to the land of the living, but it may have been done in memory of Tammuz, or as a requirement of the spirit of Tammuz.

The southern kingdom was somewhat shut off from its northern neighbors by the *cataracts* at *Aswan* and the impenetrable *papyrus* swamps of the Sudd. There was early interaction between them and the early peoples of Nubia and Somalia to the south. The early *iron* implements and stone buildings of the two countries bear a strong resemblance. In fact, some researchers have hypothesized that the earliest Egyptians arrived there via Nubia.

Lower (northern) Egypt

Lower Egypt (the northern area around the Nile delta) was difficult to develop at first because its swampy lands provided little security for permanent homes or buildings of any kind. Ancient papyrus paintings show crocodiles and hippos lying in wait as Egyptians maneuver about in reed boats. It was a dangerous place in which to live or to raise animals. Because of this researchers have observed that it tended more to cultural than to political development. Settlements there were isolated year round on sandy mounds above the marsh with little protection or hope of reprieve. Fragments of early Egyptian literature suggest that the nomes of the Delta were formed into coalitions and divided into eastern and western groups. The western nomes conquered the eastern ones, forming a united Northern Kingdom. Manetho lists two kings as having ruled in this earliest period – Ro (or Ru) an Ap (“the scorpion”). Toward the end of the predynastic period, Ap expanded vigorously to the south.

From early pictures we can tell that these ancient Egyptians had reddish-brown skin, long curly black hair, full lips, a long skull, almond-shaped eyes and small hands.

Hieroglyphic (picture) writing developed in Egypt in these very early times. When Menes unified Egypt the hieroglyphic language was fully developed and a logo-syllabic system of writing was also being practiced. Hieroglyphs from this early predynastic period are still extant today. The Egyptian language itself shows a Hamitic African base with numerous Semitic elements later added.

Like their cousins living in the green Sahara region, ancient Egyptians from the beginning displayed a sense of beauty and symmetry, decorating even the most utilitarian objects. Indeed, it was the Egyptian *artists* who inspired the Greek sculptors and artists who followed them centuries later.

MENES TAMES THE NILE, UNITING EGYPT

Early Egypt had a great blessing that was at the same time a great problem – the overflowing of the Nile. King Menes (so called by the Greeks and by the Egyptian priest historian Manetho – called *Narmer Men* or *Aha Mene* on monument inscriptions in Egypt) of is believed by many to be the Mizraim of the Bible, a son of Ham, and brother of Cush, who settled to the south, and Phut, who settled to the west. While some have thought the name Mizraim to be a plural denoting a tribe or clan, Hislop says his name is derived from *tzr* “to enclose” and *im*, “the sea,” making Mizraim “the encloser or embanker of the sea.” Menes is commonly credited in secular histories with uniting the

two kingdoms of Egypt. What is not commonly known is that he did this by building a giant dike where the Nile overflowed through the mountains, turning the water eastward and confining the Nile to its new and more defined bed, thus drying out much marshland and making it habitable. This *dike* was carefully kept in repair by succeeding kings even as late as the Persian invasion. ²⁷ Even as secular a book as Time-Life's THE AGE OF GOD-KINGS recognizes that Memphis was built "to commemorate his triumph . . . on land reclaimed from the Nile." ²⁸ This is in keeping with God's statement in Ezekiel 24:3 that God will judge Pharaoh for his pride, for he said, "My river is mine own, I have made it for myself." Virtually all historians recognize that Egypt is dependent on the Nile for its very life. The annual flooding of the Nile, once controlled, was the gift that made civilization possible.

The traditional date for Menes' feat is usually given as 3100 B.C., based on the king-lists of Manetho. Others have challenged this date, feeling it should be much earlier. (Morris) Menes began his work at *Thinis*, near *Abydos*, in Upper Egypt where there was a temple to Osiris. His first rich capitol was built at Inekham (Hierakonpolis), where the famous *Narmer tablet* was discovered. It is a beautifully carved palette which is believed to be to celebrate the victory of the southern king over the North. The mother goddess appears on both sides of the king's name. On the obverse side are three pictorial strips. In the first, the king, wearing the *Red Crown* of the Delta cities of Buto and Sais, approaches two rows of corpses of native rebels, with bound arms and heads cut off and laid between their feet. Behind the king is seen his sandal-bearer, in front of him his priest and four standard bearers with religious fetishes held aloft from long poles. The king is twice as large as any of other figures, showing his importance and possibly his deity. The central strip features two dinosaur-like monsters with long necks, each with an attendant who holds it to a leash. The two necks are entwined together. This motif appears also on old Babylonian cylinder seals. Some have felt it symbolized the union of Upper and Lower Egypt. In the lower strip there is a bull thought to represent the king, breaking down a city wall and trampling on a vanquished foe, thought to be a Libyan. On the reverse side Pharaoh is the dominant character, this time wearing the *White Crown* of Hierakonpolis, holding a kneeling captive by the hair. A rebus above the victim is believed to say "Pharaoh the incarnation of the hawk-god Horus, with his strong right arm leads captive the Marsh-dwellers." He is again attended by his sandal-bearer. Below the main relief is a strip featuring the sprawled corpses of two foreigners. It is believed that the palette was used for religious purposes. It clearly shows Menes in the status of deity. The tablet is one of the earliest written documents in history.

Soon after Menes' victory, he set up a new capitol at Memphis, near the junction of Upper and Lower Egypt, possibly to symbolize the new unity between the two, and possibly for practical reasons – for ease of control of both parts of the now united kingdom, and for ease of maintenance of the flood control dykes or in celebration of the same. The city of Memphis was built in the bed of the ancient channel of the previously unbridled Nile. ²⁹ A hundred years later (ca. 3000 B.C.?) it was one of the largest cities of the ancient world, with a population of 40,000.

The unification of Egypt by Menes began the first of thirty dynasties of pharaohs. The first two dynasties covered a period of 400 years now known to historians as “Ancient Egypt,” in which 17 kings ruled, bringing Egypt into the limelight of world history as one of the earliest of the world’s great empires. Following him was Djer (or Tcher). If Menes did not start the process of *mummification* of the body of Pharaoh, it is certain that *Djer* did. A vestige of what is believed to be his embalmed arm was found in a plundered *Mastaba* at Abydos.³⁰ At this early stage, the body was preserved simply by wrapping it in bandages soaked in resin.

From the beginning, the pharaohs were thought of as god-kings, who as the *embodiment of Horus* reigned with unquestioned power. They were considered so sacred that their names were never spoken, but they were simply referred to as “*Pharaoh*” – the one who lives in the big house. The deification of the pharaohs really represented no great change in religious thought. From earliest times, the local chieftains of Egypt had claimed mystical powers. With the taming of the Nile, the new ruler was believed to have control over the forces of nature or over the gods of nature. The pharaohs claimed to be the human form or incarnation of Horus, son of Osiris. Upon his death, he became one with Osiris and reigned supreme in the next life, while his heir ruled on earth as the new incarnation of the great falcon-god.”²¹ Ironically, an immense, unfinished statue of “Osiris, lord of eternity” has lain for thousands of years in a granite quarry near Awan, like the unfinished tower of Babylon, a mute testimony to the folly of mortals making their own gods.³²

The first two dynasties, from about 3100 to 2700 B.C. by currently popular dating methods, were collectively called the Ancient Kingdom. There were six or seven kings in the First Dynasty (discrepancies due to various methods of naming) These kings built sturdy tombs in Abydos, the center of the Osiris cult, and at that time the largest city in the world with a population estimated at 20,000. This burial ground was 300 miles south of the royal palace at Memphis. Their tombs are called Mastabas and are constructed of sun-baked bricks with a flat roof and sloping sides and inside compartments for everything the king may need in the afterlife. A shaft led to an underground chamber cut out of rock and lined with bricks, where the king’s body would be received. The tombs were surrounded by burial pits for all the king’s servants, concubines and pets, who were killed and buried with him to accompany him into the next world. King Djer, the second Pharaoh, for example, had 580 members of his court put to death with him. Shortly after the time of Djer, the royal burial ground was shifted from Abydos to Saqqara, much closer to Memphis. Granite and slate were used to make statues at this time, and skillful carving was done in metal, ivory and wood. By the second dynasty, there was an increased use of stone in building. While the Ancient Kingdom was developing in Egypt, *Ur* was rising to significance back in Babylon, and a remnant of the line of Seth (Eber) was remaining true to God in a land given over to idols.

During the second dynasty, there was again some religious and political strife between the two parts of the kingdom, but they were successfully reunited under *Pharaoh Khasekhemwy*. From at least the third dynasty on, the deity and power of the Pharaoh were considered absolute.

The Land

Ancient Egypt was made possible by changes in the geography of northern Africa, notably the taming of the Nile by Menes. This diminished the amount of marshland, added much habitable land, and made possible prosperity through the development of agriculture. At the same time, the Sahara, green and lush after the Flood, was drying out, becoming desert. From a creationist standpoint, this time probably corresponds with the retreat of the northern glaciers. It is believed that with their retreat, summer temperatures rose, rainfall diminished, and the high grassland plateaus began to dry up, causing the animals that had lived there so abundantly to move or die, and causing the hunting population to come down looking for water. The developing desert of the Sahara provided the developing kingdom of Egypt with security from invaders, and also swelled its population as people moved in from the less and less hospitable Sahara region.

Actually in the upper reaches of the river there are two Niles – the *Blue Nile*, bringing potash – rich waters from the plateau of Ethiopia, and the *White Nile*, which arose far to the south in Uganda, bringing decaying vegetable matter from the equatorial lakes. The combination is ideal for fertilization. Both joined at Khartoum in what is today the Sudan, to form the Nile proper. The Egyptians were dependent on the Nile for their existence. The Nile proper was 19 miles long, and interrupted by six cataracts or rapids. The last 750 miles from the first cataract to the sea formed the Ancient Kingdom of Egypt and was best known to the outside world. From the First Dynasty on, *taxes* were computed from the annual flood of the Nile. At first the flood was measured by simple markings on the rocky banks of the Nile at the island of *Elephantine* near the first cataract. Later a *Nilometer* was used – a calibrated stairway that went down into the river. A flood of 26 ft. was considered good – lots of rich soil would be deposited, meaning a good year for crops.

Conservation of natural resources seems never to have been considered. The Egyptian people seemed pragmatic and easygoing. They accepted the bounties of the land and their other resources unquestioningly. The thought that these resources could become permanently damaged is a distinctly modern discovery that these ancient people seem never to have considered for a moment. Life was probably much too daily and needs too immediate to be concerned for future generations, anyway. The process of *desertification* of all but the immediate Nile Valley was augmented by overgrazing by goats and later by camels and by hunting nomads who turned to agriculture only very gradually as it became absolutely necessary.

LITERATURE

Although hieroglyphic writing – both pictographs and syllabic equivalents – were well established before the dynastic period began, the Ancient Kingdom contributed two major linguistic developments. One was the development of the condensed and cursive type of writing known as Hieratic script, adopted by the scribes for everyday notations. (Hieroglyphs continued to be used in relief and in monument inscriptions throughout history.)

Papyrus as a writing material was developed in the Ancient Kingdom, probably during the second dynasty, concurrently with the development of hieratic cursive script. Papyrus was a common plant that grew along the Nile – indeed, in the famous Narmer tablet celebrating Menes’ victory, papyrus reeds over a man’s head symbolize the “marsh-dwellers” that is, the northern kingdom. During the Ancient Kingdom, these reeds began to be gathered by workers, stripped of their hard outer layers, cut into long strips, laid side by side with others across them at right angles, pounded for an hour or more with a wooden mallet, dried and pressed. The result was a thin paper, held together by papyrus juice.

Even though the *hieratic script* and the development of papyrus facilitated and expanded the possibilities for writing, still it was only the scribes, the royal family and important court officials and their children who learned to read and write. Almost all women were illiterate, as was the general populace.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The people of the Ancient Kingdom were far from scientifically ignorant. The world’s first known scientific treatise on *surgery* dates from the time of the first dynasty. By the time Menes unified Egypt, the solar calendar had already been adopted for regular use, showing that from earliest times, they had extensive knowledge of astronomy. By 2800 B.C. the *plough* was in use for agriculture both in Egypt and in Mesopotamia.

V. EGYPT – THE OLD KINGDOM

Pharaohs of the Old Kingdom – Dynasties 3-6

About 30 pharaohs ruled during the 500 years we call the Old Kingdom period. They were from four separate dynasties. One of the best known of these is *Djoser (Tseher)*, the third pharaoh, who built the first *pyramid* and who ruled Egypt about 2650 B.C. During this time the power of the pharaohs was absolute and they were considered as deities –as *god-kings*.

Toward the end of the fifth dynasty there was some weakening of the Pharaoh’s absolute power. Pharaoh *Pepi I* of the sixth dynasty ruled 94 years, from 2364 to 2270 B.C., giving him the distinction of having the longest reign in history for a single king, but during his reign he experienced much internal strife, and the rise of feudal lords led to anarchy.

Other outstanding Pharaohs of the Old Kingdom were *Khufu, Khafre and Menkaure*.

CITIES OF THE OLD KINGDOM

The city Memphis, a beautiful, white-walled city founded by Menes, continued to be important during the years of the Old Kingdom. The city Heliopolis also rose in

importance, along with its patron god, Re, the sun god. By 2450 B.C. the world's largest cities were all in Egypt: Helipolis, Memphis, Abydos, Thebes and Aswan.

THE ARCHITECTURE AND PYRAMIDS OF THE OLD KINGDOM

The greatest phenomenon of the Old Kingdom period is the sudden rise of highly sophisticated architecture. One author has said with amazement, "Within a century after the first Pharaoh of the Old Kingdom mounted his throne, Egyptian builders had graduated from sun-baked bricks to highly sophisticated construction in stone, and their artisans were among the earliest to master this difficult technique."³³ This is practically inexplicable from an evolutionary standpoint, for evolutionary hypothesis demands that techniques be learned gradually over long periods of time and makes no allowance for innate knowledge and ability given by God in the beginning. The sudden rise of the pyramids, one of the great facts of history, fits much better into the Biblical framework of history which assumes people to have been created with innate intelligence, and which recognizes that civilization had reached a high level of sophistication even before the Flood. The survivors brought some of that knowledge with them and passed it on to their descendants. As soon as the demands of life permitted, that ancient dormant knowledge began to be used again.

The first pyramid to be built was the step pyramid, built as a burial place for King Djoser, the third pharaoh of the third dynasty, ca 2650. It is the oldest freestanding man-made masonry structure in the world. Stone – granite, basalt and quartz -- is plentiful in the Aswan area 450 miles south of Saqqara near the first cataract of the Nile. The hills of Tura on the east bank from Saqqara yield fine, white limestone. People who had previously built the most permanent of their buildings – the mastabas, out of brick, suddenly began constructing immense structures of cut stone. Perhaps that is one of the reasons that Egyptians are considered to have been one of the most industrious of ancient peoples.³⁴ It is questionable, however, whether this service was the result of industry or of compulsion. One author has observed that peasants were conscripted in groves for the project.³⁵ The first century B.C. Greek historian Diodorus Siculus described in detail the misery of slaves forced in later years to work in the gold mines of Pharaoh, and we can assume that conscripted laborers were treated no better in earlier days.³⁶

Although Djoser is credited with the *step pyramid*, the architectural genius behind the project was *Imhotep*, the high priest of the sun cult at Heliopolis, an accomplished sculptor and chief counselor to Pharaoh.³⁷ To construct the pyramid, hundreds of thousands of limestone blocks were laid, forming six mastabas of diminishing size, one on top of the other, rising 204 feet into the air. The pyramid is a *ziggurat*-like tower which was expressly intended as "a staircase to heaven" for King Djoser,³⁸ fearfully reminiscent, both in structure and in purpose, to the Tower of Babel their ancestors had once built on the plain of Shinar. It was part of a temple to the sun-god Re, who was coming into great popularity just at that time, but its primary purpose was to exalt the pharaoh, and to guarantee him not only entrance into eternal bliss, but the glory there that he enjoyed here on earth. The pyramid was built at *Saqqara*, closer to *Memphis* than the original mastabas of the earliest pharaohs.

Djoser built not only the pyramid, but an elaborate complex of temples and courtyards surrounding it, with their entrances facing the rising sun in the east. One large courtyard was reserved especially for the annual *sed*, a ritual re-enactment of the pharaoh's inauguration, held in honor of his death. The practice of the annual celebration of death (known in Bantu Africa as "*matanga*") goes back at least to this practice instituted by Djoser.

In the fourth dynasty the Pharaoh *Sneferu* had the step pyramid filled in with rubble and encased in Turan limestone to make it smooth-sided. This act coincided with the emergence of the sun-god *Re* as the country's dominant deity. Because of this, some have perceived the artistic changes in the pyramid as the representing a sunburst in stone.

The *Great Pyramid of Giza* was built by Cheops or Khufu about 2680 B.C. with 2.3 million colossal stone blocks. Its religious interior has been called a Bible in stone by some, predicting in pictorial and pagan terms the end of the world.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE OLD KINGDOM

Science and technology advanced quickly in the Old Kingdom. Although Egyptian concern for science was not one of discovering principles, nor of understanding, appreciating and properly administering the world God made, the solving of the practical problems of life and of the building of the pyramids forced technology forward.

Observation of the Nile for purposes of *flood control* resulted in refinements in the old solar calendar and the adoption of what some have regarded as the first modern calendar, from which our own is derived. ³⁹ Egyptian metallurgists developed the blast furnace for smelting *copper* and *gold* during this time, and gold jewelry was worn by the wealthy from about 2500 B.C. on. The beginnings of *glassworking* also appeared – at first only beads. ⁴⁰ Chemistry also started in Old Egypt, getting its name from kemi, the ancient name of Egypt meaning "black."

Egyptian *medicine* was especially highly developed for the ancient world. The earliest known physician was Imhotep, 2700 B.C. The principal extant medical papyri date from 2000 to 1300 B.C., but they are copies, meaning that the originals were written earlier, very likely in Old Kingdom times. Many medical texts have been recovered from the Temple of Imhotep at Memphis. Bone surgery was exceptionally well developed. *Hippocrates*, *Galen*, and other ancient European physicians studied these medical texts, so that in a real sense it was Africa that taught Europe its first elements of medicine. ⁴¹

MUSIC AND THE ARTS IN THE OLD KINGDOM

From earliest times, *music* had played a large part in the total lives of the Egyptian people. The child sang his lessons rather than reciting them, and adults sang as they worked. Rhythm was prominent in their music, as were *choirs* and *dances*. ⁴ All the Egyptian buildings were painted with brilliant *colors*, showing concern for beauty.

AGRICULTURE IN THE OLD KINGDOM

Egyptians of the Old Kingdom *domesticated* many animals and even attempted to domesticate cranes, gazelles and hyenas, but later this spirit of experimentation died out. Agriculture was developed, and cows were used for plowing.

RELATIONS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD IN THE OLD KINGDOM

The region of *Nubia*, Kush, *Meroe* and Ethiopia, immediately to the south of Egypt, was of interest to Egypt from earliest times because it was a region rich in gold. Indeed, much of the gold of the Pharaohs came from this region. Beginning in the sixth dynasty, Egypt made raids into northern Nubia. The region of *Sudan* just to the west of Nubia was also rich in gold. Beginning in the fourth dynasty, Egypt began to raid the Sudan to obtain gold and slaves. This area was likely the source of the darker skinned blacks who served in the Egyptian army during the sixth dynasty. Egypt also traded regularly with Eastern Punt (Somaliland), on the eastern coast of Africa. They made commercial-exploratory expeditions to Punt during the fifth and sixth dynasties. Wars between Egypt and Libya in the desert to the west began in the third dynasty. Egypt's main non-African relations during the Old Kingdom were with the Semitic and Hamitic tribes of the nearby Sinai. Egypt conducted raids and conquered parts of the Sinai during the fourth dynasty, and raids continued throughout the fifth and sixth dynasties as well.

RELIGION IN THE OLD KINGDOM

It has been estimated that by the time of the Old Kingdom, two to three thousands “gods” were worshiped by the Egyptians, each city having its own deities. Yet they did also believe in the existence of a supreme being whom they called *neter*” or “*nether*”, meaning “the *unknown*.”⁴³ The God who made them and who saved their ancestors from destruction in the Flood had become but a dim memory. He seemed far away because of their rebellion and participation in the antichrist Isis-Osiris-Horus cult had indeed removed them far from His presence, power, and blessing, although God still loved them and longed to make Himself known to them. This distant God was later referred to in the Egyptian *book of moral precepts*.⁴⁴

Another of the Egyptian deities, *Amon*, carried a similar idea of unknowness. “Amon” means hidden, and was considered an invisible spirit, sometimes thought of as the breath that animates all living things, a conception reminiscent of the creation story of Genesis. Amon was sometimes represented by various animals, showing that if his origin was a dim memory of God, that idea had been corrupted.

During the first four dynasties, the last two of which were in the Old Kingdom, people worshipped the pharaohs as their god king, the incarnation of Horus, part of the Isis cult that originated at Babylon. During the fifth dynasty, the sun-god Re gained ascendancy, but as we have seen, this was but another aspect of the same cult. Primarily, however, during the Old Kingdom, each city had its own patron deities and its own priests to serve

them. These priests provided for the daily “needs” of the gods, who were assumed to have the same needs and wishes as human beings. 45

Probably the local deities were in fact what are known today as “*territorial spirits*” that is, *demonic rulers* over geographic and ethnic units of humanity, probably going back to Babel. As the ancestors at that time and in later times gave place to demonic spirits through sin and rebellion, demonic spirits gained the right to rule them, appearing as sacred or mystical animals or in the form of demon-possessed humans such as the pharaohs. It is no accident that many of the place names associated with early Africa can be found in any Encyclopedia of Mythology as the name of *Arapas*, and *Atlas*. In addition, many ancient names of individuals are also associated with pagan gods: *Memnon*, king of Ethiopia, *Amphitemis (Garamus)*, a Libyan chieftain; *Atlas*, king of Mauretania, *Battus Aristoteles*, king of Cyrene; *Capharirus*, a Libyan shepherd; *Cassiopeia*, daughter of *Arabus* who married *Cepheus*, king of Ethiopia; and *Cleopatra*, one of 50 daughters of *Idanaus*, king of Libya, who married one of 50 sons of *Aegyptus*. Of course it is extremely difficult to determine where historical personages end and where demonic entities begin, especially in light of the principle we have already established that demonic entities reincarnate themselves over and over and take different forms and different names in different places and at different times. Still, there seems to be adequate evidence to suggest that powerful territorial spirits have been at work over several regions of Africa from the beginning of human habitation there, and that they have frequently possessed the bodies and souls of human rulers over these groups, while at other time appearing as local deities under the form of idols and/or totem or sacred animals who must be worshipped and appeased.

In addition to these ruling spirits, the ancients also had *gods for various occupations* – spirits who guided and taught them in those occupations. It seems likely that these *spirit guides*, having *supernatural knowledge* inferior to God’s but far superior to human’s knowledge, offered shortcuts to ruling over nature in the way God intended. Thus, in addition to innate human knowledge, they may have had access to supernatural demonic knowledge of the universe, which they exploited in building great monuments to those spirits. Certainly their guiding leaders – the Pharaohs and pagan priests – were demonically possessed and thus capable of superhuman feats.

In Biblical terms the struggle for ascendance between local deities is not hard to understand. Satan’s kingdom is always one of selfishness, pride and strife. The bitter power struggles were inherent in the nature of the demonic gods themselves and represented real, if unseen struggles in the spirit world, into which human beings were often caught up. God told Jeremiah He would bring punishment on the gods of Egypt (Jer. 46:25). This implies they were real, living entities. The prophet Isaiah wrote that “the idols of Egypt tremble” before the Lord (Isa. 19:11).

Yet in some of the gods, we can see faint glimpses of the ancient Faith, corrupted by pagan influences. *Ptah*, for example, the god of Memphis, was believed to have created the world by acts of his heart and tongue, denoting articulate intelligence and will in Creation. 46 Priests of Hieropolis attributed Creation to *Atum*, who was identified as the sun-god

Re. They thought of Creation as the appearance of light in the darkness, another concept that harks back to the historical fact. 47 Almost all Egyptians pictured Creation as an earthen mound rising out of the Chaos of the primordial waters. While it has been suggested that they were influenced by the annual emergence of high points along the river out of the receding Nile Flood, one cannot help but notice also the similarity of this with the historical reality recorded in Genesis 1:2. 48 These similarities with Biblical historical truth are not, of course, contradictory with the idea that the gods were really demonic spirits. Demons would know the Biblical, historical truth, and would seek to use it for their own purposes, distorting it as needed. It has been said that poison is easier to swallow when mixed with a familiar drink.

The importance of the Nile in Egyptian religion cannot be questioned or over-emphasized. The people made great offerings to the river when it flooded in hopes of securing a good crop and a bountiful harvest. 49 As we have seen, the Nile itself was the name of one of their gods. Since Menes was worshipped as the incarnation of Horus immediately after his conquest of the Nile and thus of the northern kingdom, it is entirely possible that he sold himself to the antichrist Isis spirit at that time in return for the wisdom and ability to harness the Nile. It is certain he did not seek that help from God. If so, that act could have provided the door through which the antichrist spirit gained the right to rule in Egypt. Each year, the spirit gave them their gifts from the river he controlled – for a very high price.

In keeping with demonic religion, the Egyptian viewpoint was *fatalistic*. Nothing was to be questioned. The world was made by the gods, they believed, just as it should be. Everything was fixed, eternal, proper. War, pestilence, and drought were just temporary upsets. 50 They entirely overlooked issues of righteousness and the reality of sin as the violation of the moral standard of God.

The ancient Egyptians considered fish as either unclean or as too sacred to be eaten, probably as a result of the fish-god aspect of the Isis-Osiris cult. Certain fish were sacred animals to certain local districts, and the hieroglyph for fish is synonymous with “*abomination*.” However, many hungry peasants ignored the religious rules of the elite, fished and ate their catches. 51

As we study the remains of ancient Egypt, it seems to many that ancient Egyptians loved life and pictured death as its happy continuance, even though their forefathers had learned that God can and does interrupt the flow of human history in judgment. It is frequently observed that they prepared elaborately for death, or perhaps in defiance of it. But much of this preparation was made by the Pharaoh, the demon-controlled ruler. The common people could be buried in pits upon the death of Pharaoh to serve him in the afterlife. From the earliest Pharaohs on, *mortuary temples* and soon after pyramids were designed to last forever. One might see in the masabas and especially later in the pyramids, a defiant attempt to deny the supremacy of God and His right to give, to order, and to take our lives. The pharaoh was worshipped as god, and it seems he was determined to give the impression at least, that he was eternal. In the pyramids, the demon spirit that inhabited the body of the ruler continued to be honored long after his death, indeed, it seems, the intention was that it should be honored forever.

Another possible sign of rebellion against the original revelation of God is found in the fact that *shepherds* were considered an abomination to the Egyptians (Genesis 46:34). Since a *lamb* was one of the prime sacrificial animals established by God, this may well show a rebellion against the whole sacrificial system as established by God, although both human and animal lives were freely sacrificed at the burial of a Pharaoh.

We know that during this period of time between Babel and Abraham, there was a remnant of people who were faithful to God, although it is unknown to what extent the faithful might have been found on the African continent. Job, thought to have lived about this time to the south of Israel near to Egypt, was recognized by everyone in his area as a faithful, godly man.⁶² At the time of Abraham, which occurs at the very beginning of the Middle Kingdom, *Melchisedek*, king of Salem (Jerusalem), is also recognized as being a righteous man and a believer in the true God, although all the kings around him are wicked men. There is, of course, Abraham himself. These few glimpses provide some hope that here and there, a few individuals or small groups of people may have been true to God through this time, although their rulers had almost universally sold out to the antichrist spirit. If so, they were undoubtedly witnesses to God in the areas where they lived.

UNITS III-V

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VI. THE ANCIENT SUDAN AND CUSH

3100-2200 B.C.

Descendants of the Biblical Cush had settled in the Nubian area south of Egypt following the dispersion. They also were Nile dwellers, but separated from Egypt by the cataracts that made the southern Nile impassable from the north, at least by water. Although in predynastic times, the southern kingdom had more interaction with Cush than with their neighbors to the marshy north, with the Unification of the Kingdom of Egypt, much of the action in Egypt moved north, leaving Cush relatively isolated. They had been multiplying and developing their own culture in their ancient homeland, then, since the dispersion.

One or two Nubian kingdoms came into existence concurrently with the Old Kingdom of Egypt. Actually, Egyptian and Sudanic sub-Saharan civilizations were very much alike. The heads of both states were kings whom their subjects honored as deities and who held great power. Both peoples felt that the fertility of the land was dependent upon the health of the king. In both areas, kings were not allowed to die a natural death like common mortals. In order to demonstrate their control over death, they were rather poisoned or ritually suffocated when their death seemed to be drawing near. Both were embalmed,

and people were sacrificed at both of their funerals to provide them companionship in the afterlife. The hair, fingernails, and other relics of the king were preserved as a part of the cult of the royal tomb. A sacred fire was kept burning as a symbol of the king's authority and power, undiminished even in death. Both areas, likewise, showed a strongly centralized political structure and carried on external trade as a royal monopoly. ⁶³

The term "Sudan" comes from an Arabic expression, "Biad- al-Sudan," "the land of the black men." ⁶⁴The population of the Sudan was quite dark complected in comparison with many other populations of northern Africa.

Some have suggested that the Axumites came from the southern tip of Arabia and at some ancient date settled across the sea from their homeland. These people were the most powerful of Cush's neighbors. Though culturally much like the Egyptians, they were darker skinned and had a more negroid type of hair and face. ⁶⁵

The area was rich in precious stones and metals. Job 28:19 speaks of the "topaz of Ethiopia" as if this was well known at that early date. ⁶⁶ The whole Nubian area between the first and third cataracts is rich in gold.

The area was also a center of agricultural domestication. Sorghums and millets were domesticated there in the Sahel area and in the Ethiopian highlands.

The Cushitic and Sudanic people may have had early contact with witnesses for God, or some of them may have remained faithful to the true God for several generations, in spite of Cush's part in the Babel rebellion, for some of their modern progeny, the *Nuer*, have customs that are very different from surrounding Nilotic and Bantu peoples, customs which are highly reminiscent of the Old Testament.

Cattle herding people of the swamps and savannahs of the southern Sudan.

VII. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE *PROTO-BANTU* 3500-1000 B.C.

While Egypt was unifying and becoming a great world power, another people group was developing far away who were ultimately to dominate all of sub-Saharan Africa. These people had originally lived in the Sahara region, but as the Sahara dried out and became desert, they began to migrate out. As some peoples migrated north and east to the Nile valley, so others migrated south and west to the *Niger-Benoue* valley. Today we call these people the Proto-Bantu. At this date they were largely cut off from contact with Egyptian and even Sudanese civilization by desert and distance. As the desert became more and more formidable a barrier, the peoples of the outside world lost the knowledge that these sub-Saharan blacks existed. Yet they thrived and multiplied so that a millenium later they were virtually bursting the seams of their homeland.

Part of the vocabulary of the hypothetical Proto-Bantu language has been reconstructed on the basis of lexical correspondence between related known languages. For instance, if a word exists in all the languages of the Bantu language group, it is assumed to have existed in the parent language, that is, in Proto-Bantu. On this basis scientists have deduced that the speakers of Proto-Bantu who flourished at the edge of the desert between the expanding Sahara and the inhospitable rain forest to the south were familiar with elephants and giraffes, raised melons, made beer and porridge, domesticated dogs and chickens, hunted with spears and arrows, carved drums, smelted iron, and prized cowrie shells. The whole area between the Niger and Senegal rivers is known to have been a major center of domestication of sorghums and millets. The people there were concurrently fishers, hunters of large and small game, and cultivators of domestic agricultural crops like yams and palms. They wove raffia, bred goats, and kept some cattle but did not take them on migrations.

The Proto-Bantu language is thought to be the basis of all the languages in the *Congo Kordofanian group*, and its ancestor is thought by African *language classification* specialist Joseph H. Greenberg to have been spoken about 2700 B.C. 68

The Proto-Bantu like the people of Egypt, maintained a belief in a distant God, a “first cause” of sorts who made everything there is. They did not continue to walk in all His ways or to honor Him in everything, so they began to fear evil spirits as well as the diviners, priests and mediums who claimed to control them. In fact, they blamed witches for most of their problems. They honored their ancestors to the point of worship, prayed to their likenesses, and offered them sacrifices. Because of their turning from the God their first ancestors had known, they lived and died in fear, yet they never totally forgot that there was a God who made them.

VIII. ANCIENT LIBYA, ALGERIA AND MORROCCO

After the time of the Green Sahara, not much is known about the early history of northern Africa west of Egypt, and what we do know is found largely through the writings of later Greek and Roman historians as well as through archaeological digs and investigation of ancient ruins.

It is clear that the family was the basis of social organization, frequently being *polygamous* in nature, especially in the case of chiefs, who commonly had as many as ten wives. Larger units of this early period consisted of villages and pastoral tribes. Hunting and later agriculture seems to have formed the basis of life. Some nomadic groups became traders between the Mediterranean-Egyptian world and the blacks to the South., developing *caravans* of camels that transported goods through the desert.

Religiously, the people were animists, worshipping spirits of earth and celestial beings much like all their contemporaries. *Baal*-worship was also practiced early in North Africa. 69

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IX. THE MIDDLE KINGDOM OF EGYPT

2000-1800 B.C.

The Middle Kingdom of Egypt corresponds with the time of Abraham and the *Patriarchs*, which history is recorded in Genesis 12-50. It includes the eleventh through the fourteenth dynasties of Egypt.

The time period of the Middle Kingdom corresponds with the time God called Abraham Out of his own country at Ur to become the Father of a new nation that would believe God and make Him known in the world. From the beginning, He made it clear that His intention was not just to bless Abraham personally, nor even to bless just his future family. God promised to bless him in order to bless all the families of the earth through him (see Genesis 12:3 and 18:18). God wanted to use Abraham's family to give the world His Word and His Son to be their Savior and Lord, since all spiritual blessings are found in Him (Eph. 1:3). From the beginning God's witness nation, Israel, had much interaction with Egypt.

God wanted Abraham to be a *missionary* to Egypt when he went there in time of famine, since He always wants His people to witness for Him in every place they may go. Abraham knew God and had followed His leading from his home in Ur to the Promised Land. If he had obeyed, he could have become the first missionary to Egypt, to show Pharaoh the glory of the God he and his people had forgotten. Sadly, Abraham lied, telling Pharaoh the misleading half-truth that *Sarah*, his wife, was really his sister.⁶⁰ As a result of Abraham's lie, Pharaoh put Sarah into his royal harem, and God sent plagues upon him. Pharaoh immediately recognized the plagues as God's judgment and discerned the true situation, showing that he did have considerable understanding of God and of His ways. Pharaoh also speedily removed Sarah from his harem and sent them both away with a rebuke (Gen. 12:10-20). Abraham missed his opportunity to call Egypt back to full faith in God by his own unfaithfulness. Pharaoh's actions show that the rulers of this time, unlike the first rulers, had turned away from God, but not completely. One Pharaoh at least was able to recognize God's hand and was fast to repent of specific sin when he discerned God's judgment. His actions hold out some hope that some in Egypt might have maintained considerable knowledge of God, even through the Ancient and Old Kingdoms when idols were multiplied and most of the Pharaohs claimed to be the god Horus incarnate.

Yet in spite of the spiritual acumen of the Pharaoh who dealt with Abraham on his first foray into Egypt, the Pharaohs as a lot were proud and deceitful, often changing the inscriptions on former monuments in order to take credit for the work of their predecessors, which complication does not make the historian's task any easier. Most of the Pharaohs demanded sacrifices to themselves. Before the death of *Ramses*, in 1224 B.C., for example, he built a temple in which the people were expected to make offerings to him forever.

There is considerable evidence that the Egyptians of the Middle Kingdom practiced magic. Magical ropes are found on many hieroglyphs and in pictures found in many pagan temples. The ropes surround the sacred king's name and presumably are meant to protect him from evil, somewhat like an amulet.

God foretold to Abraham that his descendants would sojourn four hundred years in a land that was not theirs (Gen. 15:12-14), and that later God would judge that nation and bring His people out of it again. It is possible that Abraham himself understood that Egypt was likely to be this land. If he did not, God specifically made that fact known to his grandson, Jacob, when He reaffirmed to him the promise first given to Abraham (Gen. 46:3-4).

Abraham's semi-legitimate son *Ishmael* was half African, his mother being Hagar, an Egyptian servant to Sarah. Ishmael also married an Egyptian girl, making his Arab descendants three-fourths African in their origins (Gen. 16:1-12, 21:21). The descendants of Ishmael lived from Havilah to Shur before Egypt, close to the Egyptians, and intermingled with them throughout history. Indeed, as has been mentioned, it is doubtful that the Africans perceived themselves as Africans at that time. They probably felt closely akin to their eastern neighbors.

God renewed His *covenant* to each succeeding generation of Patriarchs, restating to both Isaac and Jacob His intention and purpose to bless all families of the world through them (Gen. 26:4 and 28:14). God's focus had shifted to Abraham's developing family through which the Saviour would be born, but He had not forgotten Africa nor the other peoples of the world. He reminded each of the Patriarchs that the blessings they would know were not for themselves alone, but specifically destined for all the peoples of the earth. Yet God's time to send another missionary to Africa had not yet come. When *Isaac* considered going down to Egypt, God specially forbade him, commanding him to stay in the land God had shown him. (Gen. 26:3)

The Middle Kingdom era was a time of much construction at Thebes, well to the south, and the capitol of the Kingdom was moved to that city, making Egypt more isolated from the Mediterranean – Near Eastern area. Yet during this time, trade was developed with Nubia to the south and with Syria to the northeast, and the Red Sea canal was started. During this time the Pharaoh Ramses the Great added many structures to Thebes for the glory of his god *Amen-Re*. It was a period of great cultural splendor for Egypt. Portraiture as an art form was developed during this time, and the great classical literature of Egypt was written. Temples and all kinds of sculpture were built on a colossal scale. Spoked wheels were used on chariots. By 1990 B.C. Memphis was the largest city in the world with a population of 100,000 (one-tenth of those being pagan priests). The world's earliest *postal system* was developed in Egypt during this time. During the Middle Kingdom the worship of the god *Amon*, the "hidden" or invisible god, became more prominent. Like other Egyptian deities, Amon was represented by various animal forms.

X. HYKSOS INVADERS – THE INTERMEDIATE PERIOD OF EGYPT

The fifteenth through seventeenth dynasties, (1800 to 1500 B.C.) were an intermediate period in which the central power of Egypt decayed, and power was seized by Hyksos "Shepherd" kings from Asia. This domination benefitted Egypt in some ways, such as introducing them to horse-drawn chariots and other Asiatic equipment. Because of the emphasis on the military, there was an overall decline of artistic values during this time, with some notable exceptions. *Spinning and weaving* were improved, bronze came into general use, and new musical instruments such as the lyre, oboe and tambourine were introduced. Toward the end of this time, Nubia and the Sudan regained their freedom from *Hyksos* rule.

Sometime during this period was probably when *Joseph* was sold into Egypt as a slave. The Bible makes it clear that God was working behind the scenes for the ultimate good of the Egyptian and other peoples of the world (Gen. 45:4-8). God sent Joseph as his second missionary to Egypt, and this missionary was faithful both to live for God and to witness for Him. He carried the message of God to Potiphar, head commander of Pharaoh's army, to the royal prisoners and prison keepers, and even right up to the

highest ruler of the nation, the Pharaoh himself (Gen. 41:16-25). As with the Pharaoh with whom Abraham had dealt, this Pharaoh showed some spiritual understanding. He recognized that his dreams had indeed been sent by God and did not attempt to accredit them to any of the idols of Egypt. He accepted both Joseph's interpretation and his suggested plan for the future in storing grain for the coming famine years. This shows that at least in this instance, he believed the word of God and acted upon it, humbling himself in accepting his own relative impotence to both foretell and to control the future (Gen. 41:38-39).

Probably the Hyksos invasion was sent or allowed by God in His mercy to break the yoke with which the ancient Pharaoh-gods had enslaved the nation. The Hyksos, although pagans as well, were not as firmly committed to the idea of their own deity as the previous Egyptian Pharaohs. Although as idolaters they have been influenced by demons, perhaps they were not demon possessed to the extent that the original Pharaohs were. This permitted the faithful witness of Joseph and later of his family to penetrate the land in a way that would have been impossible earlier. The Hyksos Pharaoh was receptive to Joseph's interpretation of his dreams – and to his claim that the interpretation came from God. He was willing to have a Hebrew act as his prime minister and serve the one God faithfully in that position.

Joseph himself received an African name during his stay in Egypt – Zaphnathpaaneah. He took an Egyptian wife, *Asenath*, and his two sons, *Manasseh and Ephraim*, who later became tribes of Israel, were born and raised in Africa and were half African (Gen. 41:50-52). Joseph's father-in-law was the priest of *On* (An or Anu) (Gen. 41:45). From what we know of Joseph's uncompromising character, we can be sure that he told his father-in-law, his wives and all his household about the true God whom he worshipped. Not only the political but also the religious rulers of ancient Egypt had another opportunity to turn back to the God of their fathers. We do not find a turning to God that brought the whole nation to repentance, but it is possible that individuals believed through Joseph's witness, even those who had been involved in idol worship.

Egypt may be thought of as the cradle in which God's redeemer – nation grew to maturity. Jacob's family entered Egypt a tribe, and left a nation comprised of twelve tribes – the nation of Israel from whom the Saviour and the Bible for all the world's peoples would come. The people of Israel spent four hundred years in Egypt, growing into a nation there. Several generations of Israelites never saw their own land, but never only Egypt as home.

The Pharaoh whom Joseph knew was friendly to God's people. Not only did he listen to Joseph's witness and honor him, but allowed him freedom to practice his own faith without participating in the idolatrous worship of those around him. Later, when Joseph's family came to Egypt, he gave them the best of the land of *Goshen* against the cultural tradition, for Joseph's family were shepherds, an occupation considered detestable by the Egyptians, but note that Hyksos were also called shepherd kings. Joseph's father Jacob, moved by the Holy Spirit, uttered the Messianic prophecy of Gen. 49:10 while in Egypt, identifying his son Judah as father of the tribe from whom the

Saviour would come. When Jacob died in Egypt, he was embalmed, as was their custom for important people, by Egyptian physicians. All the major Egyptian dignitaries accompanied Joseph to Canaan to bury his father and to mourn with him (Gen. 50:7-9). What a witness that must have been, as they observed the mourning of people who have hope, not only for the Pharaoh, but for common people. What a contrast the simple, assured faith of the patriarchs must have seemed to the elaborate, proud, self-exalting burials of their own pharaohs!

X. THE NEW KINGDOM OF EGYPT

1600-1100 B.C.

At the beginning of the New Kingdom, Pharaoh Ahmose I ousted the Hyksos invaders, restoring home rule to Egypt. Later, Thutmose III expanded Egyptian rule as far as the Euphrates river, making Egypt ruler of a widespread empire. Many other outstanding rulers came out of the eighteenth dynasty as well – *Maaphepsut*, *Amenhotep IV* (also called *Akhenaton*), *Tutankhamen* and *Haremhab*. *Seti I* and *Rameses II* distinguished themselves by maintaining Egyptian power and repelling the Hittite threat. However, under *Merneptah*, the military power of Egypt declined. During the twentieth dynasty, the *Rameside Pharaohs* ruled (Rameses III-XI), and invasions were repelled from Libya and sea peoples. However, Egypt lost its Asiatic dependencies, and poverty and lawlessness within the country itself increased.

CITIES, BUILDINGS AND TEMPLES OF THE NEW KINGDOM

The great temples built to pagan deities at this time dominated the cities around them. Amenhotep III built a temple at Luxor, Hatshepsut built one at *Deir el Bahri*, Ramses II built one at Thebes, and a rock-cut temple was built at *Abu Simbel*. Elaborate tombs were also built in the Valley of the Kings and the Hypostyle Hall at *Karnak*. It was a time of energetic building activity. Thutmose III was considered the ablest of all the pharaonic builders. The world's two largest cities were still in Egypt: Thebes, with a population of 100,000, and Memphis, with a population of 74,000.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE NEW KINGDOM

Glassworking reached new heights during the New Kingdom. The first definitely dated glass dates back to 1550 B.C., although glass beads had been produced much earlier. Pressed and molded glass was being produced by 1200 B.C. After the dynasty of Tutankhamen, the art of glassworking went into decline and was lost for a thousand years. The Greeks and Romans later had to reinvent it all over again. The New Kingdom was a time of opulent craftsmanship in carving. In addition, much literature was produced.

RELIGION IN THE NEW KINGDOM

The great activity of this period in building temples to honor deities shows that the people as a whole had not responded to the faithful witness of Joseph. The change in rulers explains the sudden change of heart of the Pharaohs. Instead of befriending God's missionary family and allowing them, at least, freedom of worship, the new Pharaohs made them slaves to build the Pharaonic treasure cities of Pithom and Raamses, treated them cruelly, denied them *freedom of worship*, and twice tried to institute a program of systematic genocide against them (Ex. 1:8-22).

Sometime during this period, probably around 1290 B.C., God sent his second and greatest missionary team to Egypt: *Moses and Aaron*, who confronted the wicked, stubborn and deceitful Pharaoh and his court magicians. The signs Moses and Aaron performed at God's bidding, and the judgments God sent to Egypt were directed specifically against their false deities, clearly and powerfully intended to show anyone of open heart and mind that their idol gods were unable to help them, but that there was a supreme God who had power over all their idols, and power to help them in the hardest of difficulties (Exodus 5-12, Numbers 33:4).

In the first *plague* God turned *water to blood*, demonstrating his power over *Hapi*, Isis, and guardian of the Nile, as well as the Pharaoh himself, in a sense "made" the Nile. In the second plague, He filled the land with *frogs*, showing His power over *Heget*, the frog-headed goddess of birth. In the third plague, he changed the dust of the earth into swarms of *gnats*, (or mosquitos), implying power over *Set*, god of the desert. In the fourth, he sent swarms of *insects* (or flies) upon them, showing his power over *Uatchit*, the fly-god. In the fifth, he sent a sudden *epidemic* which brought death to their livestock. This was clearly aimed to show God's superiority over *Hathor*, the cow-headed goddess, *Mnevis*, the sacred bull of Heliopolis, and *Apis*, the bull-god and symbol of fertility. Since the Egyptians kept many of these sacred animals in their temples, pampering them as gods, their sudden death must have been a strong signal indeed of God's power. In the sixth plague, God sent *boils* on both people and animals. This showed his power over *Sekhmet*, the goddess who had power over disease, *Sunu*, the pestilence god, and Isis, the goddess of healing. In the seventh plague, God sent a destructive *hailstorm*, showing His power over *Nut*, a sky goddess, Osiris, god of crops and fertility. *Set* god of storms, and *Seth*, protector of crops. In the eighth, He sent swarms of destructive locusts to eat their food and crops, reaffirming His priority over these same gods on whom the Egyptians depended for success in agriculture. In the ninth plague, God sent sudden *darkness* over the land for three days, showing power over the deities the Egyptians held especially powerful – the sun gods named *Re*, *Aten*, *Atum*, and *Horus* and the sky goddesses Nut and Hathor. Finally, God sent the death of the firstborn, demonstrating that He was greater than *Min*, the god of reproduction, Iosis, the goddess who protected children, Heqet, the goddess of birth, and Pharaoh's *firstborn* son, thought to be the incarnation of

the god Horus. Of course, all were clearly directed against the power of the Pharaoh himself, who ruled a god-king, and who clearly sought eternal status. (Gen. 7-12). 61

There are signs that the people commonly practiced magic and the ancient arts of *cursing*. A curse on a tomb in Thebes is enjoined on anyone who might dare to disturb it. Objects Found in Tutankhamen's tomb appear to have magical intent. There is the eye of Horus to protect against sickness. Both men and women wore *jewelry* for magical protection. Of course, the plagues showed the futility of *charms and amulets* for protection and demonstrated that God's power was far superior to all their magical practices. Even in the beginning of the contest with Pharaoh, before the plagues started, God showed His power over the magicians. The first contest involved Aaron casting down his rod to become a serpent. The magicians of Pharaoh duplicated this, but Aaron's *serpent (rod)* swallowed up their (Gen. 7:1-12). The magicians also duplicated the turning of water to blood and the appearance of frogs, but from that time on were not able to duplicate the rest of the plagues (Gen. 7:22, 8:7 and 18). The magicians, at that point, recognized that "This is the finger of God" (Ex. 8:19), and told the Pharaoh so. As if in confirmation of this, during the plague of the boils, the magicians were so smitten that they were not even able to stand (Ex. 9:11).

The Pharaoh did not heed God's message – either the warnings and pleas of Moses and Aaron or the visual demonstrations of God's power, nor the admission of his own magicians. Although at one point it seemed he might be getting the message (Ex. 9:27), he soon reversed his position, hardening his heart as before. Throughout the contest, his basic position was not changed from that which he originally boasted, "who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice . . . I know not the Lord" (Ex. 8:2).

This Pharaoh apparently believed in his own infallibility and invincibility – much like the original Pharaohs. He could not be depended upon to keep his word. He did not value truth and honesty, but changed his mind on a whim without explanation to anyone. How many times in contest with Moses? After his firstborn son died, he hastily commanded Israel to leave Egypt, but then changed his mind and chased after them. Pitting the best of the military strength of Egypt against the Lord was disastrous – his entire army was drowned in the Red Sea which God had opened for His people but closed upon the army of Pharaoh with all their chariots and horses.

The plagues or judgments and the overthrow of Pharaoh's army provided a mighty testimony to everyone in the whole land that their "gods" were powerless, and that the Lord's might was supreme. Indeed this was God's plan from the beginning, for He declared, ". . . the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord" (Ex. 7:5). To Moses He explained, "and in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth" (Ex. 9:16) . . ." and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord (Ex. 14:18). The judgements were seen and experienced, not only by Pharaoh, but throughout the whole land. When the Nile turned to blood, it was known to all, for the lives of all were dependent upon that river. Darkness covered the whole land. Frogs, lice, etc. came into every home. Boils broke out on every person. When the people of Israel put the blood of the lamb over their doorpost, doubtless they were observed by their Egyptian neighbors, and probably many

asked questions and were told why they were doing it. It is possible that some Egyptians could have believed God and obeyed his command as well as the Israelites. In every home where the people believed and obeyed God's command, the family was safe, but in all the others the oldest child died. We do not know of any who turned to God, but it is possible some did. Certainly they had abundant testimony and abundant opportunity! It is possible that the plagues were known not only in Egypt but in Cush to the south and in Sudan to the east, which border directly on Egypt. Certainly the news must have spread far, for when Joshua crossed the Jordan river some forty plus years later, Rahab of Jericho said, "we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of The Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt . . . Joshua 2:10). If the Canaanites knew, it is highly probably that all of Africa north of the rain forests also knew.

During the *Exodus* the people of Israel quickly lapsed into the Egyptian-style idolatry with which they had been surrounded in their former homeland. They made a golden image of the Egyptian bull-god Apis, claiming it was the Lord who had delivered them from slavery in Egypt (Ex. 32:4). They declared this a feast to the Lord (Ex. 32:5), but this *syncretism* was not accepted by God, but punished quickly and severely (Ex. 32:19-20).

During the Exodus, Moses, God's appointed leader, married an Ethiopian woman, his first wife apparently having died previously. *Miriam and Aaron* complained about this, probably because the woman was dark-skinned, but God rebuked them strongly, striking Miriam with leprosy until she repented (Nr. 12:2). Apparently Moses had no children by his second wife (I Chr. 23:15).

The time frame of the New Kingdom includes not only the time of Israel's exodus, but their wilderness wanderings, entry into and conquest of the promised land, and the period in which the judges ruled (Bible books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua and Judges). During this time Egypt did not have direct relations with Israel, although it seems likely (???) Israel was just becoming established as a nation in her own land, and the later years of the judges were years of spiritual decline, apathy and anarchy.

One of the Pharaohs of the New Kingdom, *Amenhotep IV*, a ruler of the eighteenth *dynasty* who ruled somewhere from 1600 to 1350 B.C., tried unsuccessfully to overthrow polytheism and Amen worship. He ordered the name Amen removed from inscriptions and abolished the priesthood of that deity, hoping to replace this with the worship of Aton, a single, universal god, the source of all life. *Aton* was received as one, self-created, self-subsisting, self-existing god, needing none other/ Tjos see,s ;ole a return to more Biblical principles, but Aton was represented by the *sun's disk* and strongly identified with the sun. Amenhetep changed his own name to Akhenaton in honor of the new deity, abandoned Thebes and built a new capitol called *Aknutaten*, also called Amarnah or Tallal-Amarnah. He built temples to Aton and himself officiated as the high priest of the new religion. Some of the literature he wrote in support of the new religion sounds quite Biblical. His "Instruction of Amenhotep" is very close to Proverbs in spirit in choice of phraseology, yet Proverbs had not yet been written. His "Hymn to Aton" declares:

Hoe manifold it is, what thou hast made,
 O sole god, like whom there is no other!
 Thou didst create the world according to thy desire,
 Whilst thou wert alone.
 All men, cattle and wild beasts,
 Whatever is on earth, going upon its feet,
 And what is on high,
 Flying with its wings!

Yet Amenhotep's attempts at *reform* ultimately failed. Within 25 years after his death, his capitol was in ruins and his memory was treated with contempt. Some have suggested that the reason he failed was that Aton was not presented as a god for the people. He and his own royal family worshipped Aton privately, but the people were denied direct access to the deity. Why he did this is unknown. Perhaps he felt the people were not ready to accept the reform, perhaps there were pressures unknown to us, or perhaps he was just selfish or considered the people unable of comprehending this deity. For that matter the very idea that he denied access to the people is only conjecture. Perhaps he tried and failed, or was opposed by powerful idol-priests.

Was Amenhotep a *seeker* after truth who moved back in a more Biblical direction, even if falling short of understanding God completely? Or was he just another idolator, substituting his pet deity for others and making grandiose claims for him? It seems that the former might have been the case, and if so at least one more family in Egypt's history followed the truth of God, even if they were unable to introduce it officially to the nation. Ultimately, God is the One who will judge Amenhotep, as He will each one of us. We can only guess about this Pharaoh's heart before God, but we can be sure that "the Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Timothy 2:19)./

KING TUT

The son of Akenaton was the famous King Tutankhamen, who ruled in about 1300 B.C. He is famous because his tomb alone escaped the plundering ploys of grave robbers and remained untouched until this century. In his tomb were found a throne of ebony and ivory and a box with two balls of hair wrapped in linen which some believe represents a marriage contract.

The hieroglyphic symbols for Tutankhamen's name refer to Amen, Egypt's protective god, and literally mean "living image of amen," evidence that the Pharaohs still claimed divinity, or that it was ascribed to them by the people.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES DURING THE NEW KINGDOM

During the eighteenth dynasty, Sudan became a tributary to Egypt, contributing greatly of its wealth. The Nubian area was conquered up to the foot of the fourth cataract of the

Nile. However, wars broke out with the Nubians and their allies again during the nineteenth dynasty.

XI. LATE DYNASTIC PERIOD – DECLINING POWER IN EGYPT 1100-400 B.C..

During the Late Dynastic period, ten dynasties ruled Egypt -- the twenty-first through the thirtieth. During the first of those, Egypt became divided, one group of kings ruling in the delta and priest-kings ruling at Thebes. During this dynasty, they also became dependent upon Libyan mercenaries. *David* was king of Israel during this time, and his son King *Solomon* made an alliance by marriage with Egypt, but Egypt later invaded Israel and plundered the *Temple* of God *Solomon* had built there.

The next dynasty, the twenty-second, was composed of kings of *Libyan* origin. Growing dissension encouraged invasion by the *Nubians*. *Shishak* (Shashanq), was the first ruler of this dynasty, and the first specified by name in the Biblical account. He invaded Israel during the reign of Rehoboam (I Kings 14:25).

Then Egypt was briefly ruled by the kings from southern Egypt during the twenty-fourth dynasty (two kings), then by the Nubian pharaohs in the twenty-fifth. The fourth of these was *Tirhakah* (Aalji Mefer-Tem-Ra Tahar Qa) during the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah.

In 671 B.C. the Assyrian *Esarhaddon* captured the Egyptian capitol at Memphis, but no sooner had he withdrawn his troops than the people rebelled. He set out two years later to take the city again, but died on the way. His son Ashurbanipal received rule of part of the *Assyrian* kingdom, and soon reconquered Memphis. He extended Assyrian rule as far as Thebes, sacking that city.

In the twenty-sixth dynasty, independence from Assyria was achieved and Egypt had a strong commercial fleet, trading with Greece. Ruling from the delta city of Sais, the Pharaohs extended Egyptian rule as far as *Napata* in the south and controlled the coast of Libya and the *Sinai peninsula*. During this time Necho II (610-595) began a canal connecting the Nile with the Red Sea, and sent *Phoenician ships* exploring who circumnavigated the continent in about three years time. Pharaoh *Ahmose* refurbished Sais, and Egypt enjoyed a prosperous time of flourishing commerce. *An old man, he died just as the Persians approached in battle*. His son *Psamtik III* was easily defeated at the Battle of Pelusium and the *Persian Cambyses* ruled. He honored the Egyptian gods and took the title of Pharaoh, but proved to be an increasingly despotic ruler. Heading home to Persia when he heard of an insurrection there, he died on the way. *Darius* soon gained control of Persia.

In the twenty-seventh dynasty the Persians were expelled with help from the Greeks and a real Egyptian king enthroned again at last. During the twenty-ninth dynasty, Pharaohs from the *Delta region* ruled briefly, with the thirtieth and final dynasty bringing the rule of the last native pharaohs and the reconquest of Egypt by the Persians.

During this time (753 B.C.) the city of *Rome* was founded in Italy, a late development in contrast to the ancient cities of Egypt. Romans, however, subsequently reckoned their dates from the founding of Rome using the acronym AUC, meaning “anno urbis conditae” or “ab urbe condita.” By 660 B.C. the Egyptian city Memphis was the fourth largest city in the world with a population of 99,000 (following *Ninevah*, *Loyang*, and *Yenhsiatu*)⁶² This was the first known time that Egypt fell behind other world cities in population.

The *Khons Temple* at Karnak was the only major temple completed during this era. Even so, the Late Dynastic period was a time of thriving craftsmanship. Bronze casting was perfected and skilled metal work done. It was a time of new realism in sculpture. As Nubian rulers encouraged study of the past, a new cultural renaissance began. Incised inscriptions were faultlessly made. Pharaoh Achoris erected numerous monuments and Egyptian art went through its last flowering. Glassmaking continued to improve. During this time Darius I of Persia commanded the codification of Egyptian law.

RELIGION

In anticipation of the Temple that his son Solomon would build, David wrote Psalm 68, in which he speaks of envoys coming to Jerusalem to worship God in the Temple from Egypt and Ethiopia (verse 31). David saw the Temple not just as the glory of his people Israel, but as a call to worship for all the peoples of the earth.

Solomon, one of the greatest of all Israel’s kings, made an alliance with Egypt by marrying the Pharaoh’s daughter (I Kings 3:1). Her father was probably either *Siamun* or *Psusenne II*, last kings of the twenty-first dynasty, (Libyan pharaohs). The Egyptian princess was present in Israel through the great period of the Temple building. She was witness to Solomon’s great wisdom, and quite possibly the author of the observation that his wisdom was “greater than all the wisdom of Egypt” (I Kings 4:30). It is possible that through her communication with her homeland, the *Queen of Sheba* was drawn to visit Israel. The Queen may have been from Africa, or from an African-Arabian kingdom. Some have felt she was from the Sudan-Kush area (I Kings 10:1-13). Ethiopian legends attributed their monarchy to a son supposedly born to the Queen by Solomon.

Solomon extended the borders of Israel until they met the border of Egypt to the southwest (I Kings 4:21). He made a beautiful house in Jerusalem for his wife, Pharaoh’s daughter (I Kings 7:8), so there was doubtless frequent communication between the two countries and ample opportunity for Egypt to see firsthand the glory of God. Trade between the two Kingdoms must have flourished Solomon’s throne was inlaid with *ivory* that probably came from Africa, from the Sudan or the *rain-forest* near there. Solomon ran a prosperous import-export business in horses and chariots between Egypt in the south and Asia Minor in the north (I Kings 10:28-29).

A large group came from Egypt to the dedication of Solomon’s Temple to God (I Kings 8:65). Perhaps the princess’ own family was there. They must have heard Solomon’s

dedicatory prayer, in which he showed concern that all nations might know God's name. Surely at that time they had an opportunity to learn of the true God their fathers had forsaken long ago.

One of Solomon's adversaries was an *Edomite-Egyptian alliance* headed by *Hadad*, an Edomite prince who fled to Egypt when only a boy, when David conquered Edom, including probably his father. The Pharaoh not only gave Hadad refuge, but made a close marriage alliance with him. When Hadad heard that David was dead, he returned to Edom, causing trouble for Solomon. The Bible explicitly says God raised up this adversary (I Kings 11:14), possibly to keep Solomon from becoming proud.

It is a matter of great shame and sorrow that in his later life Solomon allowed his foreign wives to turn his heart toward other gods so that he forsook the example and witness he had earlier given to Egypt and to other lands as well. Again, a man who had served as a great witness to Africa failed. Pharaoh's daughter, however, does not seem to have been the main temptress, but rather Solomon's *Moabite and Ammonite* wives (I Kings 11:4-6).

Other kings of Judah continued to have contact with Africa, allowing some witness of the true God to be made known even in the midst of their own failures.

King *Jeroboam* fled to Egypt to escape when Solomon ordered him to be executed for his rebellion. *Shishak* offered him asylum there, and the two probably laid plans or at least planted the seeds of thought for Shishak's later invasion against Jeroboam's rival, *Rehoboam* (Jeroboam ruling the northern kingdom called Israel and Rehoboam ruling the southern kingdom called Judah).

Rehoboam, Solomon's son, was king in Judah, but it is not likely that he was any witness for the true God, since he later introduced idol worship into the land, probably due to the influence of his mother, an ardent Moabite idolator, and the unfaithfulness of his father in later years. In the fifth year of the reign of Rehoboam, Shishak, Pharaoh of Egypt of the twenty-second dynasty, together with the Libyans, Libyan mercenaries called Sukkim, and Cushites – in essence, all of North Africa – invaded Israel as far as Jerusalem (ca. 975 B.C.). They took the gold shields Solomon had made and the temple treasures (2 Chronicles 12:2-4), showing contempt for Israel and for her God. Pharaoh Shishak wrote about this exploit of the *temple of Arnuk* at Karnak (at "Thebes).

King *ehoshaphat* of Judah (ca. 897 B.C.) built ships specifically to go to *Ophir* for gold, but they were wrecked at Ezion-Geber before setting sail. (Ophir is identified as part of the eastern coastal area of Africa and part of the western coastal area of Arabia. This shows that the area was widely known for its gold (I Kings 22:48).

Hoshea, a king of Israel in *Samaria*, an evil king but not amongst the worst, tried to break away from bondage to the Assyrians. He sent envoys to make an alliance with Pharaoh so *Sais* or *Osorkon*, and refused tribute to Assyria. This act resulted in Hoshea's imprisonment and the defeat of the northern kingdom of Israel. Whether Egypt intended to help or not is not stated in the Biblical record, but it is explicitly stated that God was

angry with His people for turning to the nation from whom His hand once delivered them, and that this, added to their other sins, brought final judgement upon them. (2 Kings 17).

Tirhakah, a Cushite Pharaoh, wittingly or unwittingly aided *Hezekiah*, king of Judah (ca. 710 B.C.). He attacked *Sennacherib* of Assyria as he was set against King Hezekiah of Judah at Jerusalem, dividing his attention and diverting Sennacherib's full attention away from Hezekiah's plight (2 Kings 19:9). Sennacherib had been taunting Hezekiah, saying that if he was trusting in Egypt, that was like leaning on a bruised reed, and if he was depending on the Lord, they had already defeated Him by taking away His altars. God told Hezekiah that he would work so that when Sennacherib received a certain report, he would return to Assyria and God would have him killed there. As God had promised, Sennacherib received a report that he was being attacked by *Tirhakah* of Egypt. That night an angel slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. Sennacherib withdrew and returned to Assyria, where he was assassinated by one of his own countrymen while worshipping in his idol temple.

Zerah the Ethiopian with 300 chariots fought King *Asa* of Judah, but God helped *Asa* to rout them (2 Chronicles 14:9-13). *Uzziah*, king of Judah, was also known as a strong king clear down to Egypt (2 Chronicles 26:8), and was a king who sought God and gave glory to Him for his victories.

Pharaoh Neco (second king, twenty-sixth dynasty, ruled 610-595 B.C.) allied himself with Assyria against the growing power of Babylon and killed King *Josiah*, the last of the godly kings of Judah, in a battle against Assyria (2 Kings 23:29). He then deported the new ruler of Judah, *Josiah's* son *Jehoshaz*, to *Riblah*, his military headquarters to the north of Israel, where he died. Pharaoh Neco replaced him with his own hand-picked as ruler of Judah, -- *Eliakim*, *Jehozabab's* older brother, changing his name to *Jehoiakim*, and obliged him to pay heavy tribute to Egypt (2 Kings 23:33-35). Later *Jehoiakim* was also conquered by Babylon (2 Kings 24:7).

During the last days of Judah, a Cushite official in Jerusalem named *Ebed-Melech* showed kindness to *Jeremiah* by bravely interceding for him and ultimately freeing him when he had been imprisoned in a muddy pit because *King Zedekiah* did not like his prophecies (Jer. 38:7-13). Because of this act, God rescued him when the Babylonians overtook the city (Jer. 39:15-18). God promised, "I will save you; you will escape with your life, because you trust in me" (Jer. 39:18).

During the final siege of *Jerusalem* (586 B.C.), *Pharaoh Hophra* (fourth king of the twenty-sixth dynasty) marched out to help Jerusalem, causing a temporary withdrawal of the *Babylonian* forces. Later, when the Egyptian army withdrew, the Babylonians returned, sieged and destroyed the city, including the Temple built by Solomon (Jer. 37:5-8, ch. 39).

One of the witnesses who was faithful was the prophet *Jeremiah*. He was spared by the Babylonians when they conquered Jerusalem. Many of the remaining people wanted to

flee to Egypt for safety. Jeremiah delivered God's warning that they must not go, but they refused. Apparently Jeremiah was obligated to go with them. He was taken to *Tohpanhes* in Egypt, where he continued to live for God and to speak and write the prophecies God gave him. Amongst Jeremiah's prophecies are a number of judgements specifically directed to places in Egypt. While the Jewish remnant were in Egypt, many of their wives were drawn into the Isis goddess cult and began burning incense, pour out drink offerings and making cakes to Isis, the Queen of Heaven. They blamed God for the destruction of Jerusalem and credited the goddess Isis with their momentarily improved situation in Egypt (Jeremiah 44:15-20). Many of Jeremiah's warnings were directed to his faithless brethren, while others were directed at the Egyptians and other nations. For instance, the prophecy of Jeremiah 46:25 is directed against "the multitude of No" (Thebes, in the Delta area). God says He will punish them, along with Pharaoh, and all Egypt, and their gods. He will punish the Pharaohs who claimed to be gods, and all who trusted in them. Jeremiah also prophesied against the people of *Noph* (*Mephis*) because they saw the destruction of Jerusalem, yet refused to listen to the warnings of the prophets (Jeremiah 44:1). This passage is significant because it shows clearly that God sent the prophets not only to Israel, but to Egypt as well, and held them responsible to turn from idols to God because of the message the prophets brought. Because they refused, Jeremiah said Memphis would become a waste (Jeremiah 46:19). Jeremiah prophesied that God would hand over Pharaoh Hophra (called Apries by Greek historians) to his enemies, just as He had the faithless *Zedekiah*, king of Judah.

Other prophets had also spoken concerning peoples of Africa. Isaiah (ca. 714 B.C.) prophesied against Egypt in chapters 19 and 20 and against Ethiopia in chapter 20, but his prophecies are sprinkled with grace, looking forward to a time when Cush will bring presents to the Lord (18:7), and there will be an altar to the Lord in the heart of Egypt, and a monument to the Lord at its border" (Isa. 19:19) . . ." so the Lord will make himself known to the Egyptians, and in that day they will acknowledge the Lord" (19:21) . . ." The Lord will strike Egypt with a plague; he will strike them and heal them. They will turn to the Lord, and he will respond to their pleas and heal them" (19:21) . . ." the Lord Almighty will bless them, saying, 'Blessed be *Egypt my people*'" (19:25). But Isaiah also scolded Israel for making an alliance with unrepentant Egypt in 30:13-16.

Ezekiel (ca. 589 B.C.) pronounced judgment upon Egypt because of her proud Pharaohs and her idols (Ezekiel 16:20, ch 29-30), assuring us that the goal of the judgements is that the peoples of Egypt will know that God is the Lord. To this end, God will break Egypt's power, disperse her amongst the nations, then restore her to her land, but never again to world power. He also mentions soldiers of Phut from Africa as being in the army of *Tyre* with soldiers from other nations, which army God will judge.

Finally, the prophet *Nahum* (ca. 713 B.C.) used the destruction of Thebes by *Assurbanipal* (666 B.C.) as an example to warn *Ninevah* of God's coming judgment upon them (Nahum 3:9), and *Zephaniah* predicted the fall of Ethiopia, along with that of other nations (Zeph. 2:12).

The fortunes of Cush were largely interwoven with that of Egypt from the New Kingdom on. The word “Ethiopian” comes from two Greek words meaning “burnt faces,” which describes how the Cushites appeared to the lighter-complected Greeks. Jerusalem 13:23 also mentions the Ethiopians as being dark skinned. The area of Nubia was ruled by Egyptian pharaohs beginning with the New Kingdom, and the culture of the region became distinctly Egyptian at that time. It was during this period that Moses married an Egyptian woman (Numbers 12:2). However, Ethiopia broke away and became independent during the last days of the New Kingdom, in the time of David and Solomon. David wrote a prophetic psalm, predicting that with the building of God’s temple in Jerusalem, “Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God” (Ps. 68:13). His prophecy was fulfilled when the Queen of Sheba, ruler of a kingdom probably extending through Ethiopia, Somalia and the western coast of Arabia, visited Solomon at Jerusalem. She has been identified as Makeda, daughter of king *Arive-Negus*. She may have come to know God, and passed this knowledge on to her son, who became *Emperor Menelik I*. Old Ethiopian texts report that a serpent or dragon-god cult called *Arwe* existed side by side with the practice of Mosaic law. King *Arwe-Negus* was apparently the shaman of the serpent cult, and according to tradition was capable of changing himself into a serpent. Other Cushitic groups (the Beja and Aguew) worshipped the spirits of natural objects like trees, rivers, mountains and animals and made annual or seasonal offerings to them. Semitic groups from southern Arabia worshipped nature in its terrestrial and celestial forms. Some influential travelers proselytized for their own local gods, resulting in some religious diversity.

III. THE BANTU HOMELAND

Ca. 1,000 B.C. – The Birth of Christ

As Egypt was developing her magnificent civilization in the Nile Valley, the darker Bantu peoples who had migrated out of the Sahara and settled in the Niger River Valley to the southwest were also developing significant cultures, now largely cut off from Egyptian and Mediterranean civilizations by the Sahara, which was still growing, both in size and in inhospitality to life. For the most part, the other cultures of the world simply forgot that south of the desert, other peoples existed. Berber traders crossed the desert, but they were non-literate and interested in obtaining wealth rather than advancing knowledge. According to *Pliny, Hannno*, an admiral of *Carthage* on the northern Mediterranean coast of Africa, sailed down the African Atlantic coast, probably to *Senegal*, where black men attacked his ship with stones. It seems likely that commercial and possibly military routes were opened across the Sahara as early as 1,000 B.C., so although it was not common knowledge, some were aware of cultures on the other side of the desert.

One of the most outstanding of the early Bantu cultures is the *Nok* culture of Mauritania and northern *Nigeria*. Carbon dates of about 1,000 B.C. have led some to theorize that the area must have been inhabited by these people beginning about 1200 B.C. At first these people built large villages of dry stone houses, made pottery and gathered wild grains. By 1,000 B.C., more towns were built and fortified by tall stone walls. The people gathered wild millet and cultivated some, too. They may have herded cattle, and

their art suggests they were prosperous and had time and substance to spend on beauty. They are known for their *terra cotta sculpture* associated with the cult of the ancestors, and the kinship between their terra cotta figures and others suggests connections between the Nok and *Yoruba* traditions. These people made stone tools and jewelry of a very good quality. From the period of about 800 B.C. over two hundred towns have been discovered, some with populations of several thousand. At this time the fortifications had disappeared, suggesting that it was a time of peace. The people were probably secure now by sheer virtue of their increasing numbers.

The Nok people learned *ironworking* as early as 400 B.C., but still continued to make tools of stone. In fact, the Nok iron smelting furnaces at Tauga dating back to 400 B.C. are the oldest so far discovered in West Africa. Iron smelting was not known at *Meroe* (Cush) until a century later. Some believe iron smelting began there and was introduced later into Europe.⁶³

From 600 B.C. to 300 B.C., fewer and smaller towns of Nok culture are found, and these are located in heavily fortified natural rock formations, as if the people were hiding from a powerful enemy. Herodotus, the Greek historian, may have referred to the Nok people when he wrote of a people who lived in “holes.” Rock paintings from this time also show carts. There is no evidence that they were threatened by the cultures to the east, so it must be that the threat came from the northern Berber tribes or from intertribal fighting amongst themselves, possibly resulting from overcrowding. We know that from 1200 to 200 B.C. the *Phoenicians* and *Carthaginians* invaded North Africa. Possibly they displaced Berber tribes or maybe even themselves made forays as far as the Niger Valley. The Berbers, too, were short of land and intertribal strife was constant.

The Bantu peoples venerated their ancestors by constructing shrines into which terra cotta images representing their ancestors were placed for worship, much as the Bakongo do even today, but the people never lost their awareness that there was a Creator who made all things. They had long ago ceased worshipping the Creator alone, turning instead to spirits of nature and of ancestors as more accessible mediators, since God seemed remote and detached from daily life. Yet they never forgot that He existed.

XIV. THE PTOLEMAIC PERIOD (EGYPT UNDER GREEK PERIOD 400 B.C. – 30 B.C.)

Egypt having been successively conquered by the *Assyrians* and then the *Persians*, the Greek military commander *Alexander the Great* conquered Egypt in 332 B.C. The Egyptians actually welcomed Alexander to liberate them from the odious rule of Persia. He offered sacrifice to the Egyptian gods at Memphis, then headed south to the desert shrine of *Ammon* (whom the Greeks equated with *Zeus*), where he intended to pay tribute to their deity Ammon, but a priest there greeted Alexander as a god, saying “Hail, son of Ammon.” Soon the rumor spread that Alexander was really the son of the last Egyptian

pharaoh, whom they imagined had visited his mother in *Macedonia* disguised as a fortune-teller. Hence Alexander became an Egyptian deity. From a Christian standpoint, it seems possible that the spirit in the pagan priest recognized a kindred spirit in Alexander.

Three Macedonians ruled during this time -- Alexander the Great, *Philip Arrhidaeus*, and *Alexander II*. On his death, Alexander's generals divided up his empire and one of his generals, *Ptolemy I*, a childhood friend of Alexander and his first biographer, seized control of Egypt, founding what is now called the Ptolemaic Period or dynasty. The Ptolemaic empire also included Cyprus, Phoenicia and Palestine.

The city of *Alexandria* was established in honor of Alexander on the site of a fishing village called *Rhacotis* on the Nile *Delta*. It had a fine double harbor and a 440 foot *lighthouse* that was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. (Actually, Alexandria, Egypt was the second of 16 Alexandrias founded by Alexander, the first being in Syria.⁶⁴ It was built up further by the ruler *Ptolemy I Soter* (323-285 B.C.). By 320 B.C. Alexandria had become the largest city in the world with a population of 300,000, a center of Greek culture and learning, rich and cosmopolitan in nature, an intellectual and commercial center, the most important Greek city in the world. During this time one of the world's all-time great *libraries* was built at Alexandria, established by Ptolemy I. This library at one time contained over 700,000 ancient manuscripts. In fact, the vast majority of books in the whole world were in fact located at Alexandria, with China as runner-up with about 50,000 volumes. Ptolemy I also started a museum and a college at Alexandria.⁶⁵ A large part of the Great Library of Alexandria was destroyed by fire in Julius' Caesar's wars for control of North Africa in 48 B.C.

Jews had moved to Egypt shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Alexander had been favorably disposed to the Jews, so after he conquered Egypt, many of them emigrated from Palestine and settled around Alexandria, where they were admitted to full citizenship. The ruler *Ptolemy I (Soter or Logi)* brought thousands of Jews from Jerusalem, giving them religious freedom and other favors. His son, *Ptolemy II (Philadelphus)* (285-247 B.C.) was generous to Jews like his father. Thus Alexandria developed a considerable and prosperous Jewish population.

A Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint was needed because by the time of *Ptolemy II*, *Greek* had become established as the everyday language of Egypt and of the whole east, as had been Alexander's desire. The work was begun about 280 B.C. at Alexandria, possibly on the quiet island of *Pharos*, beginning with the books of Moses, using manuscripts from Palestine as the basis of the translation. The claims that it was completed in 72 days by 42 scholars from Palestine, was written in gold and was divinely inspired were based on a letter that has since been shown to be a forgery making exaggerated claims. In reality the work continued until about 180 B.C. It is now believed to be the work of Alexandrian Jews because (1) it shows imperfect knowledge of Hebrew, (2) it contains many Egyptian and even uniquely Alexandrian words and phrases, (3) it contains errors of place-names in Palestine, (4) it is a "free" translation which would not have been made by Palestinian Jews who held the exact wording of the

Nebrew text in great reverence, and (5) it seems very unlikely that good Palestinian Jews of the time would have translated the Scriptures into a heathen language, but highly likely that the Hellenized Jews of Alexandria would have done so.⁶⁶ An extremely important translation in the history of the early church, the Septuagint has been evaluated by one Biblical scholar as being free in places, but “on the whole a close and serviceable translation.”⁶⁷ Miler feels the best translation was that which was done first – the Pentateuch. Psalms, Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings he sees as also being well done, but Isaiah and Job as not so well done (it is admitted that these are difficult books to translate). Ecclesiastes, Ezekiel, Song of Solomon and Chronicles are seen as stiffly literal at the expense of meaning, in contrast to Jeremiah and Proverbs, which take excessive liberties with additions, omissions and changes. Daniel is so excessively free in translation that it was considered unusable by the early church.

The translation problems seem great to those who have studied linguistic principles, but it must be remembered that the *Septuagint* was probably the first lengthy work ever translated into another language. There were no other translations to consult or compare with – this was the first time the Bible was ever translated. The translators were truly pioneers, feeling their way along in a new field with no one to show them the way, no rules and no standard to use for evaluation. It has been observed that “no sharp distinction was made in those days between the work of translation and that of interpretation. Thus the Septuagint is in some places a translation, in others a paraphrase, and in others a running commentary.”⁶⁸ Its object was not a scholarly, exact translation, but a popular one, making the Old Testament understandable to the common people who were unfamiliar with its contents.

A problem has been posed by the inclusion of several *Apocryphal* (non-Canonical) books in the earliest extant manuscripts of the Septuagint (350 A.D.). These books must have been added later, by Christians, not Jews, possibly as the result of the common practice of storing books as individual scrolls together with others of various origins. Comparative quotations from the Septuagint by *Philo*, an Alexandrian Jewish philosopher (20 B.C.-50 A.D.) and others, strongly suggest that the non-canonical books were not in the original version of the Septuagint but were added later, in Christian times. *Jesus and the Apostles* quoted from the Septuagint, but never from any of the non-canonical books, and *Cyril of Jerusalem* (315-368) wrote that in his day the Septuagint contained only 22 books (the canonical number).⁶⁹

Several pagan temples were built during this time in Egypt – notably the *temple of Isis at Philae*, the *temple of Horus at Ediu*, the temple of Kom Ombo, and the temple of Hathor at Dendera.

XV. THE PUNIC (CARTHAGINIAN) WARS IN NORTH AFRICA 264-140 B.C.

The Biblical *Ludim* had peopled North Africa from early times, speaking Hamito-Semitic languages commonly called “Berber” comprised of three major dialects – *Rif*, *Atlas*, and *Sblauh*. Their languages were rarely written. Numerous but brief Bible passages mention

them as warlike people who sometimes allied themselves with Egypt against Israel and other enemies. Jeremiah 46:9 mentions Libya (Ludim) as associated with bows and arrows. The Berber tribes were apparently a nomadic hunting people who had learned to use their bows and arrows as weapons of war. The Berbers called themselves “imazzaghen,” meaning “free man.” They were a nomadic, aggressive white race, but finally settled down somewhat as agricultural-pastoral people living in tribal units and sometimes in federations of several tribes. Their society was socialistic in structure because of strong family ties and the scarcity of available land. Therefore,, grazing, irrigating and such projects were usually done collectively. The Berbers engaged in constant inter-tribal fighting throughout all known history, possibly aggravated in later times by Carthaginian aggression and the shortage of land.

The city of Carthage on the northern coast of Africa had been originally settled by Phoenician sailors and maritime merchants. In 300 B.C. the population of Carthage was triple that of Rome and it governed a small empire including 20,000 square miles in North Africa, where subject peoples cultivated wheat, olives, and fruit, including grapes for wine. The Carthaginian empire also included footholds in *Spain*, *Sardinia*, and some control over *Sicily*. The Phoenicians brought to North Africa the *Punic language*, which was developed from Phoenician and related to *Hebrew*. In structure, it was much like *Arabic*.

Carthage and Rome stumbled into conflict when each was asked to intervene in a matter involving Sicily. The resulting *First Punic War (264 B.C.)* was Rome’s first step outside Italy. The war seesawed for 2 years with heavy losses on both sides and no clear victory. Carthage by that time had taken control of *Algeria and Morocco* in North Africa and used these lands as a base from which to invade Spain. They were later led by Hannibal, who began to attack Rome directly. The second and worst of the Punic Wars was fought in 218 B.C. on Roman soil. The third and final Punic War ended in 146 B.C. when the Roman general *Scipio* burned Carthage, plowed its ashes, and sowed the furrows with salt so that nothing would ever grow there again. All but 50,000 of the population of 500,000 (those remaining were sold into slavery). The surrounding region was then controlled by the Romans, becoming the base of the new *Roman province of North Africa*.⁷⁰ The Ptolemaic Period in Egypt, however lasted until 30 B.C. when Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide and Egypt became a Roman province with no independent power.

There was also a Jewish presence not only in Egypt but throughout North Africa, going back to the times immediately following the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon (586 B.C.). Jews lived even as far from Palestine as Morocco.

XVI. ROMAN CONQUEST OF NORTH AFRICA

146 – Birth of Christ

In Egypt, the later Ptolemaic period was riddled with factional struggle, and the *Roman Caesar* and his legions came to impose order. In the ensuing fighting, the 15 year-old king, *Ptolemy XIII* disappeared, thought to be drowned. To replace him, the Roman

Caesar put Ptolemy's sister and wife, *Cleopatra* on the throne, leaving her pregnant with his son.

Later, when *Julius Caesar* was killed by a conspiracy of Roman senators in Rome (44 B.C.), his right-hand man, *Mark Anthony*, was given control of Rome's eastern empire. Anthony formed a strong political bond with Cleopatra's Egypt, and soon became romantically interested in the world's wealthiest woman. Cleopatra had three children by Anthony, but he was unfaithful, making political marriages elsewhere. His rival Octavius became angry, declared war on Anthony, and defeated his ships in a naval battle (31 B.C. – *Battle of Actium*). The couple Anthony and Cleopatra committed suicide rather than be captured.

Octavius then had sole power. He took the title "*Augustus*", meaning "the revered one," and adopted the Egyptian symbol of the sphinx as his seal. This marked the end of Ptolemaic (Greek) Egypt, the end of the Roman republic, and the beginning of the Roman Empire which ruled North Africa in the early Christian centuries. 71

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