

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 256

Exodus 1, Part 2

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Teacher: Dr. Michael S. Heiser (MH)

Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)

Episode Summary

This is the second of two episodes on Exodus 1. This episode focuses entirely on how the name “Raamses” in Exod 1:11 can potentially be accommodated by either the early (1446 BC) or late (1250 BC) date of the exodus from Egypt. We explore how the name is used in Egyptian texts, why its spelling makes a difference, and why its presence in Exod 1:11 does *not* require the late date of the exodus. We also spend some time talking about the film *Patterns of Evidence* and its use of the work of David Rohl.

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 256: Exodus 1, Part 2. I’m the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he’s the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike, how are you doing this week?

MH: Pretty good. I can hardly wait to wade out into the quicksand [laughs] of today’s episode.

TS: Oh, chronology. You’ve got to love this. Secretly, down deep, you love this stuff.

MH: I used to be a chronology nerd, I’ll confess, but it has beaten me down.

TS: But you’re loving this episode, right? [MH laughs] You were preparing for this. Secretly, you’re like, “Yes! I love this stuff.” Right?

MH: It brought back some memories. Some of them fond, some of them made me shudder. [laughs]

TS: Well, it’s going to be fun to hear you get into the weeds.

MH: Yeah. Into the papyrus, I guess. See, there’s a bad pun.

TS: There you go. Anyhow... I thought that was *my* job.

MH: Right, it *is* your job! You're either *affecting* me or *infecting* me. [laughter] Well, we might as well just jump right in. Again, this is Part 2 of Exodus 1. And basically, textually, our entire focus is going to be Exodus 1:11. I will read that in a moment, because I do want to back up just a tad to verse 8. We mentioned this. And I'm going to read something that I read in the first part to set it up. But we're going to... Exodus 1:11 has a lot going on there. So in verse 8 of Exodus 1, we read:

⁸Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph...

He's not identified here. He's not called Pharaoh until verse 11. Carpenter's quotation that I read last time:

This pharaoh was not acquainted with the previous history of Joseph and Israel in Egypt, or, at least, he did not choose to acknowledge Israel and her past relationships to Egypt (cf. Exod 5:1–2; 33:12, 13, 17). But more importantly, he lacked a knowledge of or refused to grant any significance to the close friendships that Joseph and Israel had cultivated with past pharaohs and Egyptians. The writer does not give the king's name, nor are the pharaohs' names given in Genesis [MH: back in that material that related to Joseph].

We don't get any names. What we do get is a reference (we'll bring this up again) to the district of Raamses in Genesis. But we don't have a pharaoh in Genesis referred to directly as Raamses. I'm saying "Raamses" a certain way for a particular reason. We'll get to that as well. It's the same situation here in Exodus 1. We've got a building or a storehouse city, a city referred to as Raamses, but not a person directly. Now having said all that, we have a pharaoh in view in verse 11. Here's our launching pad, and we're basically tethered to this for the whole episode. We read:

¹¹Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses.

The Egyptians (the king and his people, his administration) were freaked out by the numerical growth of the Israelites. The people who were enslaved built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses.

Now we get these names and if (and that's a big if) there is any prior in Exodus 1 (and you can throw in the earlier reference in Genesis, even though that's going to mess thing up, because there's 400 years between Genesis)... Just remember this, store this away (especially if you're a late dater, this is a problem for you). There are 400 years between the time of Joseph back in Genesis, when we get that name Raamses in the text, and here in Exodus 1. Ramesses II... No pharaoh in the Ramesside dynasty, of course, was 400 years old. And you've got

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a... If you assume out of the gate, that the reference to Raamses here in Exodus 1:11 refers to a person, you really have no hermeneutical right to say that it doesn't back in Genesis. The Ramesside dynasty is not that long. So the late-daters (I'm telegraphing this up front) have a problem with methodology. And that's going to become apparent as we go. The early date has problems. The late date has problems. That's why there's a debate. That's why this whole issue is a quagmire.

Let's just focus on this verse and the names, and I'm going to be taking shots and helping out (doing a little bit of both) to the early date and the late date. I just want you to see what the issues are and why it's difficult, why there is debate. It's not simply solvable by appealing to 1 Kings 6:1 and saying "late date" and that's all there is. It's just not that simple, although you can make a good case for the early date. So here we go. If we look at Exodus 1:11, the issue, of course, is the names of the store cities—both of them, but mostly Raamses.

Now the name Raamses, the spelling of this name, both in Egyptian texts and in the Hebrew, can vary. Here, we have literally "Raamses." There are two "A" vowels in the pronunciation. It's not Ram' ses; it's Ra – am – ses, the way this is spelled. So I'm going to try to be consistent here and say Raamses when I'm referring to Exodus 1:11 specifically, but I'll also just refer to Ramesses II, just as a historical figure. But in the text (and this is going to become important), it's Raamses. The first major chronological battle of the whole fight over the date of the exodus (and of course, if you're dating the exodus, it's the date of the conquest that follows, with Joshua)... Really, this is sort of a lynchpin thing for how we think we might be able to understand and overlap biblical history (history of Israel) with ancient Near Eastern history (Egypt and Canaan, for that matter).

As I said last time, I'll give you the basics of the two dates (early and late). The early date says the exodus happened in 1446, because of 1 Kings 6:1, which says that the fourth year of Solomon was the 480th anniversary of the exodus from Egypt. We know, on very good astronomical grounds, because of both astronomy and the people who used astronomy... Especially the Assyrians, they're very good at this. The Babylonians were very good at astronomy, and then working backwards with their kings and where their kings encountered the Assyrian king and all of this. As I said in the introductory episode, after about 1000 B.C., the chronology, at least with respect to Assyria and Babylon, works pretty well. It's pretty tight. You can really defend it and link it to astronomy. So we've got here an instance where we *can* date Solomon, with a lot of confidence, as taking the throne in 970 B.C. His fourth year is 966. Subtract 480 years (because you're moving backward in time) and you get 1446 for the year of the exodus. The late date says, "Well, not so fast. 480 is 12 times 40. So we might be dealing with 12 generations. And 40 is symbolic for a generation. So we may not be able to just take the math literally." And they don't. They have the exodus occurring during the time of Ramesses, which is 200 years later than the early date. And the reason they want to fix it in the reign of Ramesses or something in

the New Kingdom (the New Kingdom is dynasty 18, 19, 20—those are the dynasties we need to worry about)... The reason they want to put it in there is because of verse like Exodus 1:11—a name reference to Raamses. They feel that that justifies tying it... It's a chronological peg that we assign to the biblical story. And we can back up with Egyptian history—real historical people—and the only thing that it really requires of us (so the explanation goes) is that we not take 1 Kings 6:1 literally. So their defense is, you have stuff in the story (and we alluded to some of this last time)... The reference to pharaoh (*per-a-a*, using that term, which in Egyptian means “great house”) only gets applied to an individual person in Egyptian texts from the 18th dynasty forward. So here we have it in Exodus 1:11. So they're saying, “This has to be stuff going on in the New Kingdom, specifically in the Ramesside dynasty (Dynasty 20).”

10:00 Two hundred years earlier, you get the 18th dynasty, and that's for early daters. It's still New Kingdom, but that's when early daters want to have things going on. So you have this 200 hundred-year differential. And I'm going over this because I want you to see that the late date (a lot of you won't like the late date because you want to take 1 Kings 6:1 literally) is not just a flim-flam. It's not just “let's throw a dart at the board; I don't like biblical literalism. I hate the Bible, so we're just going to throw this number...” No. It's actually based on substance. Forty is a symbolic number. So is 12. You actually *do* have Egyptian material that can very readily situate and anchor these events in the Ramesside dynasty. That's true. It's real. The data are there. The question then becomes, is that the only way to look at the data? Are there other data elsewhere that can allow the early date to appeal to *more* than just 1 Kings 6:1—that they can actually go into Egyptian material and say, “Look, here's the way we need to look at all of this,” and then defend the early date that way? This is a substantive debate. It's not the Bible lovers versus the Bible haters. If you've been taught that, I'm sorry, but you need to disabuse yourself of that immediately. It's just not true. So we're not about caricatures here. We're about actually trying to think—trying to understand—why these arguments (the debates) are what they are.

So Exodus 1:11 is our first signpost for all of this stuff: the name Raamses. Now since the passage (the whole first chapter of Exodus) describes the Israelites of the generation immediately preceding the exodus... So the people who are under affliction in Exodus 1 are the people whom Moses is going to deliver, at least 40 years later, because Moses is going to have to be born in Exodus 2. He's going to grow up. He's going to be 40. Then he's going to kill a man. He's going to flee Egypt. He's going to be out in Midian for 40 years, so now we have 80 years. (Can we take these dates literally or not? All that kind of stuff.) But there's some distance between the deliverance and this generation that's suffering. But you're going to have a lot of overlap here between the people... Maybe they're children who are suffering under Egyptian taskmasters and the actual exodus. So since that's pretty well chronologically close (we have these generations that butt up against each other), and since Raamses (that particular spelling) is used (and he's called Pharaoh)... Since that name and that title is toward the end of the 18th

dynasty and later, people are going to say, “This *has* to be Ramesses. It *has* to be a late date. The early date is impossible.” This becomes really one of the main reasons why this is argued. It is an obvious problem for the early view. It doesn’t jive with the math of 1 Kings 6:1. But there are problems for it and also things that are pretty nice when it comes to the early view, too.

Now, we’re going to throw David Rohl in here, basically at the end. I just want you to know that Rohl’s chronology (he’s the guy that’s in *Patterns of Evidence*—that film that utilizes his work)... He also cannot tolerate an identification of Exodus 1:11 with the pharaoh Raamses (or the pharaoh Ramesses II—Ramesses the Great), but for entirely different reasons. He will be, therefore, predisposed to be on the early-date side of arguments when it comes to Exodus 1:11. And I’ll say something about Rohl and his view at the very end. I don’t want to mess with it in here because this is going to be messy enough.

So some important points before getting into the actual name Raamses in Exodus 1:11. Any date of the exodus (which means any determination of the pharaoh of the bondage period and the subsequent exodus from Egypt) has to factor in other details of the biblical text. And here they are. And I’ll be honest with you. Some of this stuff just gets ignored. You will read defenses of the early date and the late date, and there are two or three things in here (two verses in particular) that... I could pull books off my shelf right now by leading biblical scholars that discuss this date, and these verses are *never cited*. But they’re really important. So we need to think about a number of things, and I’m not going to take shortcuts and leave certain things out. But any view (early, late, Rohl, whatever) has to factor in certain things. A big one is Exodus 2:15 and Exodus 4:19. Now I’m going to read you Exodus 2:15.

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¹⁵ When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.

When Moses killed an Egyptian, Pharaoh sought to kill Moses. So you have an individual person (Pharaoh) who sought to kill Moses. Okay? Now Exodus 4:19 says this. It plays off that reference there in Exodus 2:15. This is when God is talking to Moses at the burning bush still:

¹⁹ And the LORD said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead.”

So he flees from Pharaoh... And Pharaoh is used there as a reference to one person because we’re now in Exodus 2. Exodus 1 started that trend. But it still means the administration as well. But here’s the point: it has to include the individual pharaoh. So when in Exodus 4 God says, “Hey, all the men who were seeking your life are dead,” he’s not excluding Pharaoh. The pharaoh of the exodus and the pharaoh of the oppression *cannot* be the same individual. You’d

be amazed (I can show you commentaries as well) where people just assume that you *can* have the same guy for both events, like these verses just don't exist. They cannot be the same person. You cannot exclude Pharaoh from Exodus 4:19, because it was Pharaoh who sought Moses' life. You can't take him out of Exodus 4:19 when he's in Exodus 2:15. So these references have to at least include the Pharaoh. It can include others, but it has to at least include Pharaoh. And I would say, because Exodus 2:15 is so explicit, that you just can't get around this point. We know that the pharaoh alive at the time of Moses' murder of an Egyptian is not the same pharaoh that's alive at the exodus.

Now Acts 7:23 (here's another little factor) tells us that Moses was about 40 years old when he committed this crime (when he killed this Egyptian). Now that means that the pharaoh at the time of that act *may* have also been the pharaoh of Moses' birth. But he *can't* be the pharaoh of the exodus. So we have a 40-year span. It's possible... There are some pharaohs that reigned for 40 years or longer. Ramesses the Great did. And then there's a candidate for the early date that did as well. But the fact is, even if you have a guy whose reign is over 40 years so that he could be the pharaoh at the birth of Moses (he knows Moses—Moses was raised in Pharaoh's household) and he's the pharaoh of the bondage (he's around when Moses kills this guy, and then he wants Moses dead)... Even though that *can* be the same guy for Moses' birth and Moses' crime, he *cannot* be the pharaoh of the exodus because of Exodus 2:15 and Exodus 4:19. You have to have a different pharaoh there. You have to have a different guy.

Now I would also add this. One way Ramesses II (since he is one of these guys that reigned over 40 years)... For him to be in the picture at all (he reigned 66 years, to be precise), you'd have to make him the pharaoh of the bondage and at the time of Moses' murder, but then you'd have to have him die before the exodus event. So the only way you really get Ramesses in the picture is to have him be the pharaoh when Moses was born and the pharaoh when Moses commits his crime. But he cannot be the pharaoh of the exodus. But if you read late date material, they desperately want Ramesses II to be the pharaoh of the exodus because of Exodus 1:11. You don't have to read Exodus 1:11 that way. All it says is that the Israelites built for Raamses storehouse cities. Now that... He can still be alive then. But he can't be the pharaoh of the exodus, is the point. So if you're a fan of Ramesses II—if you're a fan of the late date—you can still have him in the picture, but you have to be careful with how you use him.

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Now another way the name of Raamses in Exodus 1:11 can refer to a pharaoh and work with the late date is to say that Raamses is a reference to Ramesses I (not Ramesses the Great). Ramesses I is two kings earlier (two kings removed). Ramesses I was the first pharaoh of the 19th dynasty. He reigned two years. Then he was followed by Seti I, who reigned 11 years. Then Ramesses II comes along, and he reigned for 66 years. So this alternative possibility honors Exodus 2:15 and Exodus 4:19. It would posit that the store cities of Pithom and Raamses were built (or at least begun) under the reign of Ramesses I. He then becomes

the pharaoh alive at the bondage and so on and so forth, and he dies. Then we have Seti. Then we have Ramesses II later. You can put these two Raamses/Ramesses pharaohs into the picture. You just have to be careful not to violate Exodus 2:15 and Exodus 4:19. So I'm speaking to late-daters here. If this is what you prefer, don't skip those two verses. Don't do it. They actually matter.

Now, let's talk about late date still some more. Let's talk about Exodus 1:11. What's the late date evidence to connect Raamses in that verse to one of these Ramesside pharaohs (either I or II)? What's the evidence? Why, when we read Exodus 1:11, should we think of the Ramesside dynasty? Of course the reflex response is, "Well, it says Raamses. What else could it be?" Ah, we'll see.

Now I'm going to appeal to Redford's article here to begin. Donald Redford is a very well-known Egyptologist. I think he's still teaching. He was at Toronto for many years. He might have been Hoffmeier's professor. I've never actually done the chronology there myself. But he's at Penn State now. He's been at Penn State for a long time. He may still be teaching. He might be retired, though. Anyway, Redford is a well-known Egyptologist. He's published a lot of stuff, both popularly and scholarly. He has an article specifically on the names and the store cities of Exodus 1:11. I'll just cull a few points from that, where he talks about these names. These are more or less his conclusions—his detailed arguments. The articles are just cluttered with Egyptian words. These are basically his conclusions. He says:

1. Pithom is a term used no earlier than the New Kingdom. That helps late daters. *pr-'Atum* would be the Egyptian way of saying it. With respect to Egyptian grammar (the etymology), *pr-' Atum Pithom* can work. It ostensibly helps with the late date. Redford says:

To sum up: the texts themselves justify us in stating only that in the late New Kingdom the name *pr-'Itm* occurs sporadically in connection with the eastern delta.

So there is Egyptian evidence, and by that I mean textual evidence, that gets this term... If you're wondering what happened to the "R", in Egyptian it's *pr-' Atum* and in Hebrew it's Pithom. If you know both Hebrew and Egyptian, you'd be able to follow Redford's arguments on the etymology. You're going to have to trust me here. I'm just reading his conclusions. You've got the name in the eastern delta. You got it from Exodus 1:11 and you have it in Egyptian texts, no earlier than the New Kingdom.

2. When he talks about Raamses, he notes the spelling (that's going to become an issue). Redford says:

This city [MH: he does think it refers to a city] is usually identified with *Pr R ʿ-mś-św*, the new capital which Ramesses II built somewhere in the delta.

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So that rules out Ramesses I. Redford accepts that the term Raamses refers to the pharaoh, but doubts that the biblical name refers to the royal residence, mostly because what we see in the Hebrew text is not a correct transliteration of the city name. Let me just reiterate that. Redford is looking at the Hebrew text of Exodus 1:11, and he's saying, "Well, yeah, okay." It's usually taken by biblical scholars to say that Raamses refers to *Pr R ʿ-mś-św*, which is Ramesses II's capitol. But if it was... And I'm sorry I'm getting into the language a little bit. I'm going to say it again: *Pr R ʿ-mś-św*, are the Egyptian characters. You'll notice there aren't two "A" vowels there. It's not *Pr R ʿ-mś-św*; it's *Pr R ʿ-mś-św*. So Redford says, "Hmm." If we have somebody writing who was familiar with Egyptian (and good grief, Moses was raised in an Egyptian context—Pharaoh's household; he ought to know Egyptian)... If he wrote this, what we have in the Hebrew Bible, "Raamses" (two "A" vowels, separated by consonants; I'm not going to get into the nuts and bolts too much here)... What we see in the Hebrew Bible is not a correct transliteration of Ramesses II's palace. It's not spelled correctly. It's not correct. It's not transliterated correctly. You would expect a second "A" vowel. So Redford asks,

Is it not strange that if the two Egyptian toponyms [MH: those are place names] were borrowed c. 1200 B.C. by the Hebrews, the element *pr* should be retained...?

This is another thing. He's like, "Okay, well, if Raamses refers to this city, *Pr R ʿ-mś-św*, not only do we have an incorrect transliteration, but what happened to the *Pr*? It's not like with Pithom, where that gets blended with the Atum that follows. It's just gone." And he's thinking, "You know, that's just kind of odd." And he writes, in response to this (the article is very detailed):

Biblical Raamses and the *Pr R ʿ-mś-św*, apart from the personal name, seem to have [nothing] in common.

So he thinks that it is a biblical writer's reference to the name of the pharaoh. But he's like, "It can't be to the place, because they would have known how to write it." If this is a contemporary (and this is key—I'm going to come back to this) writer in this Egyptian period, it's messed up. It's not what it should be. So he's like, okay, maybe the biblical writer of some other period (this is going to open the door for the early date) is thinking of Ramesses. Maybe that's possible, but it's really doubtful. Even if this guy is thinking of the person (the historical figure)—that what they're building back in Exodus 1:11 is the actual palace of Ramesses II... This is an Egyptologist who isn't a Christian—he's not a believer,

he's not an evangelical. He has no ax to grind here on any of the dates. He's just pointing out that this really isn't what we would expect to see.

3. Now Redford believes the Hebrew transliteration we see in Exodus (and the one back in Genesis, too) reflects an even later Greek transliteration of Egyptian.

4. Redford adds that the Hebrew term translated "store cities" is also a late term, because in the Bible it occurs only in 2 Chronicles (5 and 7) and 1 Kings. In other words, it's past Solomon's era, which is way past the exodus.

5. So what Redford is angling for is, "I think these terms come from a much later period." You can find Raamses in Greek literature. You can find that combination of vowels in Greek. So what Redford suspects is that a scribe living in a later period who could read Greek (and lots of Jews could—the Septuagint)... That's where they got this transliteration. Now, if he's correct, there's no way to argue well that the place Raamses in Exodus 1:11 must refer to the actual palace. He thinks that the term wound up in Exodus 1:11 by what a scribe decided to do centuries later. I want you to hold that thought because that's going to become really important when we get to the early date. It's actually useful.

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So let's just get into it. I don't want to drag it out too much. But what about the early date? The early date response to the name Raamses in Exodus 1:11 and other passages (Genesis 47:11)... I'll be honest with you. It's kind of disappointing to me. I put this in the protected folder. If you subscribe to the newsletter, you get the podcast article folder. There's an article in there by Charles Aling. I know Chuck. And he knows Egyptian and he's trained in Egyptology. The article is disappointing, though, in that it was written in 1982 and he does not interact with Redford's 1963 study at all. Zero. He never references it, and I don't know why. So it's a little disappointing, but it still has some good material. What Aling does is he follows another scholar, Rea, with how to deal with the name Raamses in Exodus 1:11. So he writes this:

Rea seeks to show that the city of Ramses was not named after Ramses II but was called Ramses by the Hyksos, an Asiatic group who seized control of the Nile delta [MH: We talked about the Hyksos last time, by the way.] ca. 1650 B.C. during the time of weakness between Egypt's Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom periods... Rea bases his thesis on three main arguments: the contents of the 400-Year Stele of Ramses II, alleged veneration of the god Re by the Hyksos, and use of Ramses as a personal name earlier than Dynasty XIX.

So you're getting back toward the Middle Kingdom here. Now I would say, the first and third of these arguments are most important. There's this thing called the 400-Year Stele. It was written (created) during the reign of Ramesses II. That much is known. It was created at the city of Ramses to commemorate an event that had taken place some years earlier, before Ramses' father, Seti, I had

become pharaoh. So it's a memorial of some event that happened even before Seti was pharaoh.

Seti, while serving as vizier under the late Eighteenth-Dynasty king Horemhab (ca. 1331-1304 B.C.), came to Per-Ramses [MH: the Egyptian city that Redford was talking about— *Pr R 'mś-św*] to celebrate the four-hundredth anniversary of the establishing of the Set cult [MH: you remember, the Hyksos worshipped the god Set instead of the solar deity] in the city... Rea believes that this stele indicates that the Nineteenth-Dynasty rulers were connected in some way, perhaps genealogically, with the Hyksos.

There's no way to prove that the pharaohs of the 19th dynasty were partly Semite. This guy Rea that Aling is quoting wants to argue that... He wants to connect the 400-Year Stele, even though it was written during the period of Ramesses, all the way back to the Hyksos. And this is just not a very good argument. It assumes that the anniversary of the elevation of the Set cult that the stele mentions... It assumes that *that* mention forces readers to conclude that the city in which the Set cult was established was called Per-Ramses at the time the cult was established, way back in the Hyksos era. There's no way to prove that. That's far from clear. The stele could just be saying, "Hey, the cult was established 400 years ago in the place that we know today as the city of Raamses." This is a non-argument. These are disappointing arguments when it comes to trying to connect the name Raamses with a period 400 years prior, because the early date doesn't mind having the exodus be long before the time of Ramesses. That's where they want it. They want the exodus to have occurred 200 years before the time of Ramesses II. So this is one of the ways that they try to argue it, and it's just not a good argument. Fortunately, there are better arguments for the early date. Aling writes this:

While the name [Raamses] did not become popular until the days of Ramses II and later, occasional examples [MH: of the name] are known from earlier periods. A very prominent figure in the late Eighteenth Dynasty [MH: you might massage that with the early date] was Ramose (or Ramses), vizier under Amenhotep III and Akhenaten. [MH: That's still a little late for an early date, but this is what Aling is trying to argue.] Another Ramses is known from approximately Hyksos times [MH: That would be better], and a still earlier Ramses is mentioned on a stele of a man named Ibi-aa, probably of Twelfth-Dynasty date.

So what Aling is trying to do is say, "Look, you have the name Raamses show up a few times earlier than the 19th dynasty." This is what he's trying to do. So he's going to take that and say, "When we see the name Raamses here in Exodus 1:11, we don't necessarily have to conclude that this text has the 19th dynasty period in mind. That's the late date for the exodus. The early-daters want it 200 years earlier. And so they're trying to create sort of an argument by analogy, that

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maybe somewhere in the time period that we need for the early date (in the 18th dynasty somewhere), maybe there were other people called Raamses there, because we have Raamses-es earlier in Egyptian history. This is the argument being made. Aling admits, though... He's citing an article by Alan Gardiner: "The Delta Residence of the Ramessides". He says:

A. H. Gardiner in 1918 published a thorough study on the delta residence of the Ramesside kings, Per-Ramses [MH: In Egyptian, it's *Pr R'-mś-św*]. While his conclusions as to the location of Per-Ramses must now be modified in the light of recent archaeological findings, Gardiner's gathering of all known literary references to all towns bearing the name Ramses is still extremely valuable. From his list of cities we can learn several things. It is very clear that the most important Egyptian city called Ramses, more fully "Per-Ramses Mery Amon," translated "The house of Ramses, beloved of Amon," was named after King Ramses II [MH: and no other person]... We are forced to conclude with Gardiner that the Biblical city and the famous delta capital Per-Ramses were one and the same.

Now Redford, of course, doubts this because of the spelling. But Aling... Surprisingly enough, Aling is an early-dater. And he's actually in *Patterns of Evidence*, if you watch that. So how in the world can he say that Exodus 1:11 does refer to this residence? Redford doubts that. But Redford and Aling are going to get married and have a baby here [laughs] in a moment. Their notions are actually going to blend and support each other.

Now how in the world can you have an early dater say, "Yep, Exodus 1:11, that refers to Ramesses II"? And Redford would say, "Yeah, it might refer to Ramesses II as a person, but it doesn't refer to the residence because it's even later. How in the world can you say these things and come out with any hope for an exodus that occurs 200 years prior to when Ramesses lived? Well, let's see. [laughs] It's actually going to make more sense than you think. How in the world does this work?"

Now what the argument basically is... And it's actually building off (in Redford's case) the notion that a Hebrew scribe—someone who worked on the text of Exodus—did not know Egyptian very well, and he was using a Greek text. That actually *helps* here. In short, Aling believes that the place name of this store city in Exodus 1:11 was editorially updated by a later scribe. There's solid evidence that the original place name that Exodus 1:11 is talking about was Avaris. Remember, I mentioned Avaris in the last episode? Avaris was the capitol of the Hyksos. They were Semites. It's in the delta. It's in Goshen. It is right next to (archeologists know this) Pithom. It's next to some of the other names associated with the exodus itinerary. Avaris was the capitol. So what Aling is hypothesizing is, if Moses (or somebody else) would have written this text at the time of the event, Exodus 1:11 would have said, "They built the store cities of Pithom and Avaris," but a later scribe, after the Egyptians changed the name Avaris to

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Raamses, when Ramesses II came to the throne... A later Hebrew scribe (knowing this as a historical fact) later went back to the text and stuck the term Raamses in there so that his readers would know what place we're talking about. Now this happens in the Bible in other places very clearly, and the Bible actually gives you the name before and after. Luz and Bethel are the textbook example of this. This does happen in the text of the Hebrew Bible, and the Hebrew Bible actually notes it. "Before the city was named this, it was named that." They actually tell you. We don't have that here, but the exercise—the act—would be the same. So that is how Aling as an early-dater copes with not only this reference in Exodus 1:11 but the Exodus 47:11. You had a scribe living later go back and insert the name Raamses so that his readers would know where these places are—what they're talking about. And that's reasonable. I don't know that it's correct, but it is reasonable. The place name Raamses is not a lethal obstacle to an early date for the exodus, if that's correct. Editorial updating would also explain the fact that *Pr-ʿ3* was only used of an individual from the 19th dynasty after. Because the same scribe who's updating the place name would have known that pharaoh (*par-oh* in Hebrew, *per-a-a* in Egyptian) is now used of an individual, so it's okay if I use this term now of one person as opposed to a district or an administration. It also explains that. By the time of the updating, this term had long been used of a person, so it would be normal to use it that way at the time of the scribal updating activity.

Now we've seen to this point that Exodus 1:11 is not a death blow (by any means) to the early date. I want to switch gears now and say, "Look, if you're a late-dater, you have a problem to deal with here." And I hinted at it at the beginning of the episode. Here's the problem. And I think it's a fairly serious blow to the late-dater. You have to explain what your method is here. If you believe (as late-daters do) that Raamses in Exodus 1:11 refers to the pharaoh Ramesses II and/or his residence... His residence got the name there. If you believe that Raamses there fixes—anchors—the story of the bondage and then the exodus in the 19th dynasty (if you believe that Raamses refers to a person there), then why don't you say the same thing in Genesis 47:11? Here's Genesis 47:11:

¹¹ Then Joseph settled his father and his brothers and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded.

You have an inconsistent methodology. You're saying it refers to a person in Exodus 1:11, but you can't say it refers to a person in Genesis 47:11, because there weren't any Ramessides 400 years earlier. You have a problem. And it's one of method. You can't just arbitrarily say, "Here it refers to a person. Here it doesn't. I'm good to go." It's inconsistent. Now if you say, "It was updated editorially in Genesis 47:11," then why don't you say that in Exodus 1:11? Well I'll tell you why: because that destroys—undermines—your late date position. I don't really care one way or the other. I'm just saying you should be consistent with the

way you handle the data. Both views (early and late) can work with the data. Each view has to massage things and frame the data in a certain way. They both have problems. But what I'm saying is, I think the late date... And honestly, if somebody knows of a source or an article that discusses this methodological problem, I'd love to see it. It's not in Hoffmeier. It's not in Kitchen. It's not in the typical go-to resources of why we take it one way in this verse and another way in another verse. You have to, as a late-dater (if you're going to take them both as a person), make an early date kind of argument in Genesis 47:11. Well, there it doesn't refer to a person. It can refer to somebody who's not a pharaoh—Raamses. That's exactly what early-daters say about Raamses when they're plucking out these five or six examples (like Aling does) of people named Raamses.

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So now you have the district of Raamses in Genesis 47:11 named for somebody else other than the pharaoh. Okay, I guess you can do that. You have to do that to disconnect it from the Ramesside dynasty, which is 400 years later. But that's precisely the argument made—the approach taken—by the early-dater. So the least you can do is not make fun of the early-dater for the way they approach this problem. You're in the same boat, fella. You really are. Because you can't have them both be pharaohs. So you've got a methodological problem. So I wouldn't say this is a death blow to the late date any more than I would say how the early-daters talk about the names is a death blow to that view. I'm saying it's a serious problem, and you will not see this discussed in any detail. If you have a source, I'd love to see it. It's just something I think that kind of gets overlooked.

Now let's go (as we wrap up here) to David Rohl, the guy that's featured in *Patterns of Evidence*. It's not his movie. It's Patrick Mahoney's movie. I've said in the intro, I like the film. I think the visuals are great. I think there are issues of chronology that might suggest we need to rethink Egyptian chronology, specifically in the third Intermediate Period, that might allow for a compression of Egyptian chronology that helps align certain texts (not necessarily individuals) from Egypt with biblical texts. So I'm on the record as saying I wish that this would get serious attention and not dismissed. But you're going to find out here in the next few minutes why it is dismissed. I said in this episode, Rohl is going to be on the early-daters' side of the discussion of Exodus 1:11 because he cannot tolerate an exodus occurring under the time (reign) of Ramesses II. Why is going to sound kind of crazy. Rohl cannot tolerate that because he postulates that Ramesses II is the biblical Shishak who reigned after Solomon. Let me repeat that: Rohl postulates that Ramesses II is the biblical Shishak (the Egyptian pharaoh that invades Judah). He believes Ramesses II is actually Shishak, and Shishak, we know from the Bible, reigned after Solomon. Solomon's fourth year was 480 years after the exodus. So you can see why Rohl doesn't want Ramesses II to be the pharaoh of the exodus. But how in the world can you move Ramesses II all the way down to after Solomon? Specifically, Rohl's revised chronology has Ramesses II's first year of reigning as the 37th year of Solomon. What you're led to believe in *Patterns of Evidence* is that "Oh, we just

need this slight 200-year compression and then everything works beautifully.” And I said in the introduction, nobody ever gets into the question in that movie, “What’s the basis for doing that?” What you’re shown in the movie is, “Well, this guy David Rohl says there are problems with the chronology. So I guess we can compress it 200 years.” What they don’t tell you is this other stuff that Rohl believes. Rohl has a whole system—a whole revised chronology. Part of it says that Ramesses II came after Solomon. *Nobody* in biblical studies and *nobody* in Egyptology is going to swallow that pill. There are quite a number of obstacles to it.

Now Rohl has this worked out in his head and on paper. He makes his case. One of his points of evidence is that Ramses was referred to as Sesy or Shesy by close family members. He finds a text or two that has that. So Rohl says Sesy or Shesy sounds like Shishak, so he uses that to unite those two figures, because other things he does in the chronology force him to do that. He has this whole system worked out. But you’re not told any of this. To call this radical is dramatically understated. For lack of a better term, this is a radical shift in Egyptian dynastic chronology. Forward 300 years from where it is presently, which pulls the Middle... Imagine that timeline you see in *Patterns of Evidence*. If you shift Egypt’s chronology (not the Bible, but Egypt’s) forward 300 years... Yeah, if you’re looking in the back—if you’re looking at the back of the garage there. You see the Middle Kingdom inch its way up to the time of the exodus, and then you have all these Middle Kingdom texts that seem to describe plagues and other stuff from Exodus 1. They all... Now they’re in the right category. They’re in the right time frame. Yeah, they are. But now you have Ramesses living after Solomon! Oops. [laughs] When you move time, when you move chronologies, everything moves.

50:00 So this is why I say, “Look, I wish that people would take a look at certain things that Rohl says.” I think there could be fruitful discussion about some of the real problems in Egyptian chronology and how they affect the way that we look at Scripture. But nobody’s going to do it because the system, if you just look at what Rohl lays out, looks so crazy to Egyptologists and biblical scholars. They look at it and shrug their shoulders and say, “This is a waste of my time. This is just nutty.” So what I wish would happen is that they would just look at isolated points that Rohl brings up that might help in certain ways—fix certain problems. But if you’re thinking that *Patterns of Evidence* cures the exodus problem... “Okay, you’ve got a cure now, and now you have another disease going on over here.” Rohl knows what he’s doing, in terms of what this means. Rohl knows that if I shift everything here, everything has to shift. And so what he does is, now he’s in search of ways to align the figures that have shifted together. “How can I align Ramesses with Shishak? How can I align this guy with that guy, and this place with that place, and this battle with that battle?” He has to align everything. He has to come up with ways to tie all things together, and his arguments are tenuous. They are circumstantial. Okay, you have a couple of texts where somebody (maybe his girlfriend) called him Shesy. That doesn’t mean he’s

Shishak. This is the kind of argument that you get. If he is Shishak, then there are other things about Ramesses' reign (which is highly documented) and the biblical story that have to also align. It's not just a nickname. It's so much more.

So I don't want to burst anybody's bubble about this film. I feel positively predisposed to the film. I've seen it. I've talked to Tim Mahoney. He's a good guy. He's sincere. Nobody's trying to pull anything here. But you're not being given the wider picture. You can't just reference this movie and say, "We're done. Cross that problem off my list. I'm doing apologetics." No, you're actually not. You're actually doing a poor job of defending something that might be true (the early date) and when you awaken to that, is that going to damage you or the people you've been talking to? That's more of an issue.

So I know chronology can be boring. Trey says this tickles my fancy. My confession is I used to be a chronology nerd. It's almost like an AA confession. "Hi, my name is Mike, and I used to do biblical chronology." I used to be that guy. And it is interesting. But at the end of the day, what you have is a pile of speculations. You have a pile of things that might look nice, but if you're honest, it's a house of cards. And that doesn't just go for Rohl, it goes for lots of work in ancient chronology. It, by definition, must be subject to revision all over the place. So I'm critical of people who are against Rohl that say, "There's nothing to think about here." There *is* stuff to think about here. Don't let Rohl deter you from this or be an excuse to not see this. There is stuff to think about here. But I'm just as critical of those who think, "Man, I have a big howitzer now in my apologetics belt. It's called *Patterns of Evidence*." No, you don't. It's so much more complicated. It's literally a case where you have lots of evangelicals running around here on this subject that literally don't know what they don't know. You say, "Mike, you seem to live in that town." [laughs] Yeah, yeah I do. That's why... Trey, maybe that's why I have pugs. They just comfort me at the end of the day. I look at all of this and say, "This is just an inextricable, unsolvable mess [laughs], but now I'm going to pet Mori and Norman, and I'll feel better." That's kind of where we end up with this. That's our first foray into the problems—the issues—of biblical chronology. We're going to have other ones as we go through this book. But hopefully this doesn't kill your appetite. Hopefully it whets your appetite a little bit. You realize how difficult and tenuous a lot of this stuff can be.

55:00 **TS:** So Ramesses II is not Raamses...

MH: Ramesses II, the king of the 19th dynasty, the Ramesside dynasty... You cannot conclude that Exodus 1:11 refers directly to him and his reign in real time. It could be an insertion, an editorial change by a later scribe just so that you would know geographically where this stuff is happening. It's not a chronological lynchpin. It might be a geographical lynchpin—a geographical point of orientation—but it is not a chronological one.

TS: Gotcha. You know, Ramesses the Great came to Dallas in 1989.

MH: I saw that. Did you go to that?

TS: I did. I was 14 years old.

MH: Our paths crossed.

TS: Look at that! 1989... And we had no idea. I was there. We went to the opening night, the reception.

MH: I wasn't there opening night.

TS: The exhibit was amazing. They had all of his artifacts. Then they brought him out on stage. We all sat in the amphitheater. They had music, smoke, and they brought his tomb out slowly and unveiled it. It was amazing. I think it has never left Egypt since then.

MH: I think you're right. I don't think it's traveled. Tut has traveled, but I don't think that one has traveled again.

TS: You are correct. So yeah, our paths crossed. Look at that.

MH: I was a student at Dallas Seminary. We lived in Dallas for two years. Drenna and I decided to go see that. Even though I didn't see Trey, I still got to see a lot of good stuff.

TS: Well, we were both there in spirit. [MH laughs] You were probably knee deep in chronology and all of this stuff then.

MH: Yeah.

TS: You were eating it up, I can only imagine.

MH: I'm going to raise my hand, "What about..."

TS: Awesome. Well, next week, we're going to get into chapter 2. So I just want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.