

## Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 272

Exodus 12, Part 2a

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### Episode Summary

Scholars who accept the historicity of the biblical story of Israel's exodus from Egypt have argued for centuries about when it occurred in real time. There are several theories, but the two main approaches are the "Early" Date (1446 BC) and the "Late" Date (1267 BC). This episode explains how each date is defended and debated.

### Transcript

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 272: Exodus 12, Part 2a. 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. Busy. We're starting to think about boxing stuff up. Yes, I know it's going to be months and months till we actually move, but it's going to be just a few weeks before I have to find room for the library that I keep at work. [laughs] We're already chucking stuff, making room for that.

**TS:** When is the actual date of moving?

**MH:** The plan is to move right after Christmas, maybe the first week of January. Something like that. Or a few days later, after Christmas. We aren't going to be putting out a big spread for Christmas; the kids just want to try to have Christmas at the house. So that's the plan.

**TS:** Yeah. What about the kids that are there in Washington? Are they sad that you're leaving, or are they going to stay? Are they coming to Florida?

**MH:** Everybody's coming along. The only one that's hemming and hawing is Calvin. So Calvin is caught between this "I want to get out of the house and get a roommate and be on my own" as opposed to doing that in Florida. So we'll see. It's up to him. But my oldest, who lived in Seattle... She and her husband have been back in our little town here for probably a year, but they're going to move with us, too. So everybody's going. The only question is Calvin. And my other

daughter is already on the East Coast, in North Carolina. So yeah, everybody's in moving mode. [laughs] Even though it's a long way away.

**TS:** Yeah, that's a big exodus from Washington state. No pun intended.

**MH:** That was clever, Trey. I saw what you did there. [laughs] We're not leaving any bondage, though. [laughs] It's not precipitated by any plagues or anything like that.

**TS:** I got you. At least we don't have to argue about the date, like we have been and are going to do.

**MH:** Yeah. A hundred years from now, "When did Heiser actually move? Was it December or January?" [laughs]

**TS:** Right. 2020/2019. A thousand years from now, people will be doing podcasts about Mike Heiser's exodus from Washington state.

**MH:** There you go. That'll be a big item of concern, I'm sure.

**TS:** We also want to mention... I'm curious. I want to know where people come down on the date issue, so we asked people to have a conversation, and hashtag it with #NakedBible. I want to see what the people are saying out there. So after this podcast and after the last podcast, if you have an opinion, hashtag it #NakedBible and let us know.

**MH:** Yeah, that's not a bad idea. We're going to spend the whole episode on the date of the exodus. Before we jump in there, I really... This is kind of funny. But I thought I should mention, there was somebody that reviewed *Unseen Realm* yesterday, and I happened to look at the Amazon page and clicked through the reviews. So there's this guy. He gave the book a really good 5-star review, but then he put in it, "I was a little concerned about him citing Ellen White. That's my only reservation." And it made me laugh, because he's thinking the Ellen White (of the 19<sup>th</sup> century or early 20<sup>th</sup> century... I can't remember when she wrote) of the Seventh Day Adventist founding. This is not the same Ellen White. [laughs] If you look in the footnotes at the book by her that I cite, she is a recent Ph.D. student of Mark Smith. I reviewed her book and interact with it a little in *Unseen Realm*. But it made me laugh. I thought that maybe I should say something on the podcast, for people who read footnotes. No, it's not that Ellen White. So if you get a chuckle out of that, good, because I did.

**TS:** At least he didn't knock you a star for that. At least he gave you five stars.

**MH:** Right! Yeah, I've been knocked stars for some really head-scratching reasons. "Too much information. Two stars." Okay, I guess I deserve that, then! [laughs] You know? But that happens.

5:00

So yeah, all kidding aside now, we are going to spend the episode on the date of the exodus, as I telegraphed last time. So what I decided to do... On the web page for this episode, there are going to be links to several articles. The two main ones I'm going to mention here in a moment. But what I figured what I would do for this is interact with a fairly recent (10 years old or so) treatment of the date of the exodus that appeared in theological journals. And it's nice that back in 2007, the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* had both sides (scholars who take different views) write essays (and they're responsive to each other as well) on this topic. So what I'm going to do is interact with both of these. I'll bring a few other things in where it matters. But all of these articles are going to be accessible to listeners, if you want to go up and read them for yourself. I'm going to basically go through five items (points) that get discussed in these articles, and you'll be able to see who takes what side and how they respond to the other side and what the arguments mean (how they're presented, how they defend their respective views).

So for listeners who maybe didn't catch the earlier episodes when we talked about chronology or are just not up on this topic at all (maybe they've never looked at it)... "The date of the exodus? What that about?" There are two main dates. There are more than two views of this, but the two main positions are what has become known as the early date (that is 1446 BC)... And a guy like Bryant Wood who has his Ph.D. from the University of Toronto in Syro-Palestinian archeology... Bryant is an evangelical. I happen to know him. He is an early-dater. He would be representative. So I will be referencing him and his article, which is titled, "The Biblical Date for the Exodus is 1446 BC: A Response to James Hoffmeier." That is in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, back in 2007. There's a link to that on the episode page. So naturally, the other side is going to be Jim Hoffmeier. He's going to hold the late date, which typically you'll see pegged at some time between 1270 and 1260 BC (so not quite 200 years later than the early date). Jim Hoffmeier teaches at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He also has his Ph.D. from the same institution as Bryant Wood—the University of Toronto. But Hoffmeier's degree is in Egyptology. So his article is entitled, "What is the Biblical Date of the Exodus? A response to Bryant Wood."

So they go back and forth in the same issue of the journal. And that's how I'm going to proceed through this topic. I'm going to take five items of argumentation that both sides will interact with, and then at the end listeners can draw their own conclusions about which arguments were better, or however they want to look at it. And I'll mix in a few of my own gut responses to arguments and attempted rebuttals of those arguments as we go on. There are points where I think the rebuttals on both sides are kind of weak (I would put the label "uncertain" on them), which means, if we were keeping score, the side that they were trying to rebut would get a point on my scorecard. But I'm not going to keep points in this

episode. You can keep points if you want. We're just going to go through the material.

So the first item for discussion would be these two verses considered in tandem: 1 Kings 6:1 and Exodus 12:40. So this is item number one, these two verses. Now in the Wood article, he's obviously going to take 1 Kings 6:1 as a basic starting point. That's the verse. I'm just going to read it to listeners. It says this:

**In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of the LORD.**

10:00

So this places the... Basically, if you take this at face value, it says, "In the fourth year of Solomon, when he began to build the temple," that was 480 years removed from the exodus. So it's just a simple mathematical thing. Now the date of Solomon's accession to the throne is really not disputed. I've made the comment before that when you get down past 1000 BC, especially when the Bible starts to interact with Assyrian kings, the Assyrian chronology is a lot more secure than Egyptian chronology. It's astronomically based, with sure techniques—very well understandable, correlatable techniques with modern astronomical tools. So it's just a matter of finding lynchpins with Assyrian rulers and biblical figures, and then you can start to build a chronology for the Bible. So the dates of Solomon's reign are really not controversial at all. Just about everybody's going to agree within plus-or-minus a year that Solomon came to the throne in roughly 970 BC. That would make his fourth year 966 BC (because we're going in the lesser direction, because this is BC dating). So from 966 BC, if you go back 480 years, you have 1446 BC. That would be your date of the exodus. So that's a really simple thing. We've talked about that number before. We also talked about Exodus 12:40 in the last episode:

**<sup>40</sup>The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years.**

So what Wood says in his article... This is where he starts. And he writes as follows. And he's specifically commenting at this point on Exodus 12:40:

...although the LXX data differ from the MT at some points [MH: we talked about that in the last episode], the LXX certainly does not support a 13th century exodus date.

Let me just stop there. So Wood's saying, "Look, I know all about Exodus 12:40." If you recall the end of the last episode, I had a quote from Hoffmeier there where Hoffmeier says, "Look, if we take the 430 from the Septuagint..." And we should, because Paul uses the Septuagint when he talks about Moses and Sinai. He has

the same number (430) even though you'll recall that Paul loops Abraham in there and Exodus 12:40 in the Septuagint doesn't actually do that by name. But anyway, Hoffmeier would say, "If you're going to take the Septuagint seriously, and you've got that number (430) and it includes some of the patriarchal era in that number with the duration of the bondage and all of that, lots of people have noticed that 430 is neatly divisible into 215 and 215," so Hoffmeier and others would argue that the sojourn in Egypt (the period of affliction) is 215 years, and then the 215 years prior to that... You have the two sides of your equation there. So that's how they would do chronology.

Wood is saying, "Look, I know all about that. But just because we have this number (this 430 number), that doesn't actually tell us where to put that number in terms of what century the exodus occurs." And he's right there. It doesn't. It doesn't really tell you where to put it. Hoffmeier says that if you take the 215 and the 215 in the way that he and many other scholars want you to take it, you wind up with Joseph being back in the Hyksos period. If the dividing line between the first half and the second half (215 years each) is the before affliction/after affliction (if that's the way we should look at that), then there's no other conclusion to draw. Joseph was in the Hyksos period, and that's going to work with other arguments that he has. And Wood is saying that the verse doesn't actually say any of that. It doesn't tell us how to use the 430. And then Wood goes on, and he says, "Now, there's too much assumed from the math anyway."

So he references an article by Ray, which I also have linked on the episode page. Ray basically has a number of arguments about this number (430) and what can and cannot be said from it. So the general way to summarize this is that Ray agrees, "We're making too much of the math. Who cares if it's neatly divided into two halves of 215? Why do we assume that 430 is 430 to give us a 215-year pre-affliction and affliction? Why do we make these assumptions?" So Ray presents a panoply of arguments about why this is not a necessary conclusion for the number 430. But I'll simplify to what I think to be the most significant problem that Ray notes, or at least the objection. He writes this:

It will be pertinent to begin our analysis with the two OT passages which are the most relevant to our discussion, Exodus 12:40 [MH: because remember, Ray's article is about the number 430 in this passage] and Genesis 15:13–21 [MH: again, that should be familiar from the previous episode of the podcast], noted at the outset of this article. The former is given within a chronological statement in the context of the account of the Exodus itself, and the latter is in the setting of God's ratification of His covenant with Abram [MH: because that's what Genesis 15 is about], which included both the confirming of the promises of the seed (vss. 13–17) and the land grant (vss. 18–21).

15:00

So he's saying, "Look, there's a context for these two passages, and Genesis 15 actually gives us the number of 400, whereas Exodus 12:40 gives us 430. But

the contexts for both are different.” And I should remind you of what the Septuagint actually says here at this point, because Ray is going to do something with this. So if you’re reading the Septuagint (at least one edition of the Septuagint), you would read this at Exodus 12:40:

**Now the sojourn of the children of Israel, during which they dwelt in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, was four hundred and thirty years.**

Now Ray points out that even if we accept the 430 years with the Septuagint in that verse, and even if we accept the Septuagint’s inclusion to loop Abraham in there (even if we assume that), and then we seek to define the sojourn as part of this (as an equal half, 215), even if we do that (like all the late-daters want us to), we still have a contradiction with Genesis 15:13-16. Genesis 15:13 is very plain. I’m going to read it to you:

**<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years.**

So we have a problem. If we take Exodus 12:40 and we explain the 430 as including the patriarchs (we go with the Septuagint)... If we, with Hoffmeier... Wood would argue (along with Ray)... If we say that that 430 is to be split in half and gives us a 215-year duration of the affliction, which puts Joseph in the Hyksos period rather nicely for the late date and works out with Ramses on the other side as being the pharaoh of the exodus... Even if we let him do all of that, there’s still a question that remains. You have a 215-year affliction now, but Genesis 15:13 says point blank, “It was 400 years.” So you’re barely over half for an affliction of what this other verse outside of Exodus 12:40 says. It’s a plain contradiction. So basically they (Wood and Ray) would argue that Genesis 15:13 defies the math imposed on the 430 years of Exodus 12:40. And the only way to avoid this obvious contradiction is to take the 430 and not divide it into 215 and 215, but to divide it another way. So here’s how you would do it. The way to avoid this is to take the 430, then have the reference to dwelling in the land of Canaan in the Septuagint of Exodus 12:40 as having to do just with Jacob (his time in Canaan, the good years in Egypt). So Jacob’s time in Canaan plus the good times in Egypt while Joseph was alive, and then followed by a period of affliction.

Now Jacob lived in Egypt for 17 years. We know that because Genesis 47:28 says that. Which would then leave 413 (430-17) for the affliction. So the 400 of Genesis 15 could be viewed as a rounded off number. That’s workable. But that’s a problem for Paul’s apparent use of Exodus 12:40, since he loops Abraham into the picture in Galatians 3:16-17. We spent a lot of time talking about this in the last episode. He says,

**The Law came 430 years after the promises were made to [not to Jacob, but to] Abraham.**

So Paul links the 430 with Abraham—very plain language there in Galatians. There's just no way to divide the 430 into two halves of 215 and have Abraham be in the picture, which is what Paul does. And this must mean, for Ray and for Wood and the early date, that Paul is not reading the 430 years the way that the late-daters do. So this is part of Wood's argument. He saying, "Look, I know all about the Exodus 12:40 thing, but it doesn't help you. It actually creates problems for the late date with other verses. It creates problems with Genesis 15." So after referring to Ray to criticize the math of Exodus 12:40, Wood writes this:

20:00

...the key chronological data for determining the date of the exodus are 1 Kgs 6:1, Judg 11:26 [MH: which we'll get to] and 1 Chr 6:33–37. Judg 11:26 and 1 Chr 6:33–37 are the same in both the MT and LXX, while, as Hoffmeier points out, 1 Kgs 6:1 is 440 years in the LXX rather than the 480 years of the MT. If one chooses to utilize the LXX reading of 1 Kgs 6:1, the exodus still falls in the 15th century BC, not the 13th century.

So Wood is saying, "Look, I'll concede the use of the Septuagint in Exodus 12:40, but I'm going to insist that you don't impose math on it, and you still have to deal with Paul's inclusion of Abraham. And I'll even let you have the Septuagint in 1 Kings 6:1, because if you take off another 40 years, then you still have the exodus in 1406 BC, not 1446." So he's like, "This can work for me. I can take the Septuagint just like you want me to, Jim, and I can still come out with a late date, because I'm not going to impose artificial math on Exodus 12:40, because if I do that, it creates contradictions with Genesis 15." So what Wood is trying to do here is neutralize or eviscerate the Septuagint appeal to Exodus 12:40 that the late-daters will invariably use to defend their system. And of course, Hoffmeier is one of these. So this is how he does it.

And for Wood, 1 Kings 6:1 ultimately is a benchmark date to be taken at face value, whether you use the Masoretic Text or the Septuagint. It's either 480 or 440, and the numbers mean what they say. For Hoffmeier on the other side, if you've scrunched the affliction down to 215, that's going to affect the way you look at 1 Kings 6:1, and your whole system (the 215, putting Joseph in the Hyksos period, as we're going to see, having the Ramses of Exodus 1:11 be Ramses II), there's no way that you can get 480 literal years between the fourth year of Solomon and the time of Ramses II. So Hoffmeier is going to have to not take 1 Kings 6:1 at face value. "The 480 doesn't mean 480; it's symbolic of something." And Wood, of course, knows this. So he's saying, "I can take the Septuagint. It doesn't matter. We need to take the numbers at face value here in

both these verses. The math you impose on Exodus 12:40 creates problems for you.” And Wood is ultimately going to object to making 480 symbolic.

Hoffmeier, when he’s forced to deal with the 480 of 1 Kings 6:1, he’ll say, “It’s very obvious that 480 is divisible. It’s 12 times 40. And 40 is typically the number for a generation. (When a son gets married and starts having children—40 years—that’s a generation.) And there’s 12. Twelve is a symbolic number. Twelve generations of 40, 12 tribes of Israel. So he’s like, “There’s obvious symbolism here.” So Hoffmeier views the 480 years as symbolic. And since he doesn’t need to take it literally and he does need to have Joseph in the Hyksos period and he does need and want Ramses II to be the pharaoh of the exodus, he’s pretty precise. He’ll actually date the exodus to precisely 1267 BC. Hoffmeier believes that the Hebrew slaves were used in the construction of the new capital of Ramses II. So since he connects those two things, he can be pretty precise as far as the dating. So that’s his date: 1267 BC.

25:00

Now Wood knows all of this. This is the basic beginning point for the entire discussion: what do we do with 1 Kings 6:1? Does 480 mean 480? How can it mean 480 if you want to take a late date like this, because 1 Kings 6:1 mentions the fourth year of Solomon? Everyone knows when that was. It was 966. You do the math. There’s no way you wind up with 1267. You wind up with 1446 BC. So everybody knows that the late-daters are going to take 480 as a symbolic number. They’re going to use Exodus 12:40 (especially with the Septuagint) to work out or to align with that scenario. And Wood is saying, “Look, I’m not opposed to the Septuagint. I’m opposed to your math. And there’s just no way that this is going to work if we take the number at face value. But I know you don’t take the number at face value, and I just think that’s the wrong method.” So what Wood tries to do is to argue that this is the wrong way to look at the numbers. He does a few things. Let me just read a little bit from him. So Wood is writing of Hoffmeier’s position of the late date position. He says:

It is not feasible to fit the events of Exod 1:11–12:36 in a three-year timespan.

Now let me stop there. Wood says, “Okay. Not only do I object to the way you symbolize 480, but if you want to pinpoint the exodus to 1267 BC (three years after Ramses II gets to the throne)...” And this is what Exodus 1 is about. It’s about this building program of Ramses, and he uses the Israelites in there. If you want to argue that, then what you’re forced to do is read the entirety of Exodus 1 all the way through Exodus 12 (all the way up to the Passover) as happening in three years. And late-daters do. They do have to do that. So Wood says, “It’s just not feasible to fit the events of Exodus 1:11 to 12:36 in a three-year timespan.”

Following the building of Pithom and Rameses the Israelites experienced a growth in population: “the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread” (Exod 1:12), which had to have taken place over a considerable period of

time. This was followed by an escalation of the oppression (Exod 1:13–14). Next, the king decreed that male Hebrew babies should be put to death (Exod 1:15–19). When the midwives ignored the order, “the people increased and became even more numerous” (Exod 1:20), again indicating a long passage of time.

So Wood is like, “How in the world can all of that happen in three years?” And honestly, it does seem hard to believe, for me anyway, that one could place these items in a three-year span, as Hoffmeier’s view of the late date requires. And Wood asserts that (this would be obvious) the early date doesn’t give you any of these problems. It gives you plenty of time. Now of the symbolic view of the 480, Wood writes this:

The second major premise of the 13th century model [MH: the late date] is that the 480 years of 1 Kgs 6:1 is, in reality, “a symbolic number that derives from 12 X 40, 40 years being a symbolic number for a generation.” Hoffmeier does not comment on the fact that 1 Chr 6:33–37 indicates that there were 19 generations from the time of Moses to the time of Solomon, not 12. Hoffmeier’s treatment of the 40 years as a generation is even more problematic. As he himself demonstrated by his partial list of the occurrences of 40 years in the Hebrew Bible, which I provided in full, the use of the number is always associated with an elapsed period of time in the history of Israel and never as a generation.

Now what Wood means here is that the number 40 is used of reigns and other occasions in Israel’s history to represent a specific period of time. It’s never clearly (he would say) symbolic for a generation. Now Wood gives a complete list of the occurrences of the number 40 in an earlier article against the late date. And there’s also a link to this one on the episode page. It’s called “The Rise and Fall of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century Exodus-Conquest Theory.”

30:00

Now the comeback to this, Hoffmeier would say (I think this is an obvious comeback) is, “Come on. Doesn’t it strike you as odd that so many things happen in 40s? The writer may not have to explain to the reader that 40 isn’t about a precise counting of years, but the elapse of a generation.” Okay, yeah. There’s literally 19 generations between Moses and Solomon. Good. Good for 1 Chronicles. Good. But that isn’t what Hoffmeier is arguing. He’s not arguing against that. He’s not saying the number 19 is wrong there. He’s saying, “This number in 1 Kings 6:1 (480) is symbolic because 40s happen everywhere. It’s just so odd... If that represents an actual time period, it’s just incredible that everything happens in units of 40.” So to Hoffmeier, the fact that so many things happen in units of 40 (and I’m going to read you the list), it just seems like 40 must mean something different. There must be a reason why the writers keep using 40, because it just feels artificial that everything would be literally happening in units of time of 40 years. It’s just so odd because there are so many of them. Hoffmeier would reference things like in Jesus’ genealogy in Matthew, everybody knows this is an artificial genealogy in terms of its structure (14, 14,

14). Everybody knows this. Nobody argues about this. So Hoffmeier is saying, “Sometimes when it... It’s not that these people are not historical; it’s just that the way that the time of these generations (their span)... It gets talked about in an intentionally symbolic way. And since 40 is just so ubiquitous, it just seems like that’s the right way to take it. So that’s in a nutshell what Hoffmeier would come back with. He would say, “The writer knew this. The readers would have known this. They know that it’s not about a specific chronology. There’s something else going on here. There’s some symbolic meaning to this.”

Now the following is from Wood’s list. Wood is the writer between the two that gives you the grocery list of all the things that happened in 40s. So here is the footnote he lists in that one article I just mentioned. Here are the things that he lists. And just ask yourself, “Do all these things happening in 40s give the impression of literal coincidence or artificial symbolic use?” That’s the question a late-dater would pose to you. So here’s Wood’s footnote [bullets added for transcript; single paragraph in original article]:

- During the flood it rained for 40 days and nights (Gen 7:4, 12, 17);
- 40 days after the ark landed Noah sent out a raven (Gen 8:6);
- Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah (Gen 25:20), as was Esau when he married Judith (Gen 26:34);
- The embalming of Jacob took 40 days (Gen 50:3);
- The spies spent 40 days in Canaan (Num 13:25; 14:34);
- Joshua was 40 when he went with the spies to Canaan (Josh 14:7);
- Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness (Exod 16:35; Num 14:33, 34; 32:13; Deut 2:7; 8:2, 4; 29:5; Josh 5:6; Neh 9:21; Ps 95:10; Amos 2:10; 5:25);
- Moses was on Mt. Sinai 40 days and nights the first time he received the law (Exod 24:18; Deut 9:9, 11), as he was the second time (Exod 34:28; Deut 10:10);
- Moses fasted 40 days and nights for the sin of the golden calf (Deut 9:18, 25);
- There were 40 years of peace during the judgeships of Othniel (Judg 3:11), Deborah (Judg 5:31), and Gideon (Judg 8:28);
- The Israelites were oppressed by the Philistines 40 years (Judg 13:1);
- Eli judged Israel 40 years (1 Sam 4:18);
- Ish-Bosheth was 40 when he took the throne following Saul’s death (2 Sam 2:10);
- David reigned for 40 years (2 Sam 5:4; 1 Kgs 2:11; 1 Chr 29:27), as did Solomon (1 Kgs 11:42; 2 Chr 9:30) and Joash (2 Kgs 12:1; 2 Chr 24:1);
- Elijah traveled 40 days and nights from the desert of Beersheba to Mt. Horeb (1 Kgs 19:8);
- Ezekiel lay on his right side for 40 days for the 40 years of the sins of Judah (Ezek 4:6);

- Ezekiel predicted that Egypt would be uninhabited for 40 years (Ezek 29:11–13);
- Jonah preached that Nineveh would be overturned in 40 days (Jon 3:4).

There's a lot of stuff happening in 40s. The question is (and Hoffmeier would say), "It just strikes me as too coincidental to believe that all of these uses of 40s are supposed to be understood as literal progression of time (40 years, 40 days, whatever it is)." And we haven't even gotten into the multiples of 40, like the 480 is for 1 Kings 6:1. So Hoffmeier says, "There's a lot of other things that really indicate that the exodus occurred during the time of Ramses II. And if that is the case, then not only does it seem like we should take the 480 of 1 Kings 6:1 as symbolic, but we really *have* to.

And that brings us to the second content item: Exodus 1:11 and "Rameses." So for early daters, the 480 of 1 Kings 6:1 is like a lynchpin argument. It is for that view, because they'll argue that if you don't look at it that way, you have these other chronological problems that develop. Since that is the lynchpin argument for them, this is the lynchpin argument for the late date.

35:00

So here we go—Exodus 1:11 and Rameses. We've had a whole episode on this before, and you know basically the scholarly infighting that goes on over this. Wood obviously rejects the idea that the Raamses in Exodus 1:11 is Rameses II. Wood rejects that. Wood views Ramses or Raamses in the verse as a place-name updating (if you remember that from the earlier episode). It says Ramses there because a later editor put it there—changed an older name that the place would have been named during the early date of the exodus. Before Ramses was born—before we had a Ramesside dynasty—it was called something else (Tanis, Avaris, that whole area). And so later on, an editor changed the name to Ramses so that his readers would know what geographical place we were even talking about. Because it *did* change in real time, and so the Bible had to be editorially updated in terms of this place-name. So that's Wood's view. Now Hoffmeier raises some objections to this, because this is a real lynchpin issue for the late date. I'm going to go through a couple of these. He says:

... in places in the Hebrew Bible where a place name is updated, there is consistently formulaic language of explanation by the writer:

I'm going to read you a few of these and see if you can detect a pattern to your ear.

**Genesis 14:2**

**<sup>2</sup>these kings made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar).**

So he's saying, "Bela (the place), in other words, Zoar."

**Genesis 14:3**

<sup>3</sup> **And all these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).**

So again, it's an editorial about the place.

**Genesis 14:3**

<sup>7</sup> **Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh) and defeated all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who were dwelling in Hazazon-tamar.**

**Genesis 23:2**

<sup>2</sup> **And Sarah died at Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.**

**Genesis 28:19**

<sup>19</sup> **He called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz at the first.**

Hoffmeier cites Gen 14:2; Gen 14:3; Gen 14:7; Gen 23:2; Gen 28:19. I didn't read you these five. This is a different five that Hoffmeier is referring to here. I don't want to create confusion. He says:

Of the five instances in which the OT has the name Rameses as a toponyms [MH: a place-name], NONE of the instances has this formulaic, explanatory language.

So here's his argument. He's like, "Look, Bryant. I know that biblical writers do update place-names. I get it. But when they do that, there will be the language of explanation when they do it." "So-and-so (that is, this place)...They called the place this, but unto this day, it's that." There's some sort of explanatory, formulaic language (usually "that is" or "in other words") going on. Every time Ramses as a name occurs in the Old Testament, none of that happens. So consequently, Hoffmeier argues that this is not an editorial updating. He argues that the name Ramses (Raamses in Hebrew) is not an updating. It is one of the pharaohs named Ramses. And Hoffmeier argues on the basis of where they're at in the delta and the slavery and all that stuff. He argues that it's Ramses II. So that's his first challenge to Wood. "Where's the formulaic language? Where does the biblical writer explain this as an updating? Oh, they don't. So why are you calling it an updating? Oh, I know why you're calling it an updating. Because you need to. You can't have the pharaoh of the exodus be Ramses II because you're taking the 480 in 1 Kings 6:1 at face value. There's no way you could live with the

name Ramses in Exodus 1:11 actually being Ramses II. You have to get rid of that.”

Second, Hoffmeier charges that the editorial updating argument fails for inconsistency in another respect. Here’s what he writes in his article. He says:

...if the text was changed from an earlier name, such as Avaris to Rameses, then why was the name not subsequently updated to Zoan/Tanis, the delta capital that replaced Pi-Ramesses around 1070 BC and prospered into Roman times?

Now let me stop there. He saying, “If you’re arguing that a later editor took the name Avaris, got rid of it, and put in Ramses, well guess what, Bryant? Ramses didn’t stay the name of that place. It changed again 200 years later. So why didn’t the biblical writers after 1070 BC (like during the time of David somewhere or the monarchy) change it *again*?” Back to Hoffmeier:

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Zoan/Tanis, and not Rameses, is used by Asaph in Psalm 78 when he describes the miraculous deeds that resulted in the exodus...

I’m going to read that again, because that’s really important. He says, “We know that some editor did do that. They did note the second change to the place-name Zoan from Ramses because it shows up in the Bible. So if there’s an editor fiddling around with Exodus 1:11, why didn’t that editor also put Zoan in Exodus 1:11 if he didn’t want readers to be confused that this wasn’t the pharaoh Ramses (that it wasn’t named after that pharaoh at that time of the pharaoh)? Because elsewhere in the Old Testament, they do put Zoan in there. They do update it.” He mentions Psalm 78. It’s verse 12. Here’s the quote of the verse. Hoffmeier:

"In the sight of their fathers he [God] wrought marvels in the Land of Egypt, in the fields of Zoan" (Ps 78:12). Again in Ps 78:43, "the fields of Zoan" is mentioned, followed by reference to six of the ten plagues (Ps 78:44-51). So, plainly, during the first half of the first millennium BC when Psalm 78 was composed, and Pi-Ramesses [MH: the city stores, Ramses there from Exodus 1:11—that place] had ceased to exist some centuries earlier, Asaph [MH: the biblical writer] used Zoan/Tanis because it was the delta capital. If the five references to Rameses represent an updated toponym, one would expect to find Zoan/ Tanis [MH: in those places], which was occupied for more than a millennium, not the short-lived Rameses.

Now Wood responds this way. And I’m going to be honest with you. I think this response is weak. I think Hoffmeier’s point is really interesting and it’s a good comeback. It’s a good comeback to the editorial updating position, but Wood responds this way. You might think this is good, but this just feels like it falls short a little bit. Wood says:

Hoffmeier questions why the Biblical text was not updated with the name Zoan/Tanis, the capital of the delta from ca. 1070 BC to the Roman period. The short answer is that Zoan/Tanis was not located at the site where the Israelites lived, but 19 km. to the north-northeast. Comparing the name Rameses in Exodus and Numbers with Zoan in Ps 78 is like mixing apples and oranges. The references in Exod 1:11; 12:37; Num 33:3 and 5 are contemporary references specific to the place where the Israelites lived, later called Rameses. Ps 78, on the other hand is a retrospective view of events that transpired in the vicinity of, but not at, the location where the Israelites once lived.

So Wood links his rebuttal entirely to place where they lived and where they didn't live, just a nearby area. To me, that feels weak, because the references in Psalm 78 to the plagues that use the term Zoan... Can we really be that specific with the plagues? It just doesn't feel strong to me. If I were Wood here, I would hope I could come up with something better than this. But be that as it may... I'm not saying Wood's wrong. He could be right. It just doesn't feel as strong as I'd like it to be.

So what you have here is you really can't overstate the importance of Exodus 1:11, not only for the late date, but for the whole question. If Ramses in Exodus 1:11 and these four other passages refers to Ramses II, then there is no debate. The late date is obvious. So that is the lynchpin for the late date position, just like the 480 is for the early date (and the chronological problems that alternatives might create). That's the lynchpin for the early date. This is the lynchpin issue for the late date.

**TS:** Alright. Well, we're going to stop it right there, folks. It is as good a place as any to stop it. We're going to wrap up chapter 12 next week—the early date/late date debate. We hope you're enjoying it. So we would love to know what your opinion is on this subject matter, so please use the hashtag #NakedBible on social media, and we would love to hear your opinions and thoughts about the early date/late date debate. Also, after that, we will be doing a Q&A and then getting back into Exodus with chapter 13. And we would love for you to take time to leave us a review and rate us on iTunes or wherever you consume us. Help people discover us. We greatly appreciate it. With that, I just want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.

45:00