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Transcript

Bible Stories for Adults – Part 14 – The Exodus

February 24, 2023

We're continuing our series, *Bible Stories for Adults*. This is the 14th part. The Bible story we'll be covering today is *The Exodus*. This story has so much to cover. It took 15 chapters in the book of Exodus to cover it. There is the call of Moses, and the ten plagues, and the Passover, and the exodus itself and Israel being chased out of Egypt by the Egyptian army, and the crossing of the Red Sea, and the destruction of the Egyptian army, and so on. But it's really all one story – and it's an important story.

Why did God put this in the Bible? Well, He explains it in Exodus 7:4. He's telling Moses:

Exodus 7:4-5 – *Pharaoh will not listen to you – when you go to him. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them.*

So that's what God was going to do – to show everyone who God is. That's why the story is in the Bible. And that's why He did it the way He did it. It was a story that would make an impression on people by a number of incredible miracles. Leo Tolstoy, the Russian writer, said that the story of how Abraham's family came to the Promised Land through Egypt is the most impactful story ever recorded.

Since the story is pivotal to faith in the one and only real God, it has been under attack by the non-believing world of science so-called. This presentation is not so much about the story itself, but looks at the story and the attack on it and the evidence. Let's get into it.

This attack has been gaining increased power since the 1950s – early in the 1950s – until today, in an attempt to discredit the Bible account as a myth. If we think about that, it means that the first 15 chapters of the book of Exodus are not true. We, on the other hand, believe God inspired the entire Bible. So, what do we do with that? Well, of course, we discount the efforts of atheists and agnostics as myth – much the way they have disclaimed the Bible – even though they claim

they have archeological evidence. Is there more we can know about the reasons why they think it's a myth? If we could know that, then it would bolster our position, wouldn't it?

Here are some points of contention: They say that there is no evidence of Israelites in Egypt at the time the exodus took place, that there is no record of Israelite babies thrown in the Nile, no record of ten plagues, no record of a massive weakening of Egypt around that time – which certainly would have to have happened, given what occurred. The pharaoh of the exodus, Ramses II, was a powerful ruler at the time of conquest. You'd have to prove that. There is no evidence of a Red Sea crossing, we're told. There is no evidence of the destruction of an Egyptian army. Now, it was a long time ago, but with all the Egyptian archaeology and all the ancient writings containing many historical events, and all the digging that has been going on since the late 1800s, one could think there should be something, if it really happened. That's what they're saying. Most of these contentions do come from the archaeological group.

In the 20s, Kathleen Kenyon went to Jericho, dug up some of the site, and reported that there was no evidence of any walls falling down. Well, how did that happen? Around the world, there are archaeologists working on digs, unearthing evidence of older civilizations. They try to associate what they're working on with the work of other archaeologists, both near and far from where they are, in an attempt to piece together a picture of when all these things happened in relationship to each other – a global picture by connecting the various digs in different locations. In other words, a picture of what was found in the Middle East, Europe, Africa and North America and how they fit together.

Well, this is difficult to do, based on bones, gravesites, architecture and pottery – which is, pretty much, what survived. In the area of North Africa and southern Europe, and the Middle East, for example, things seem to connect moderately well. But Egypt has been a complexity for them. However, biblically oriented archaeologists believe many of the dates related to the ancient pharaohs are off, because of this difficulty that they have. And they say this is why Kathleen Kenyon could find no walls. She didn't dig deep enough to find them. And because of their stilted view, they're looking in the wrong places in time. When they do look in the right places, they misinterpret what they're seeing because of their bias. "This evidence doesn't fit here, so let's look for some other explanation."

Of course, those archaeologists, who are *not* biblically oriented, speak as a group – united. Why is that? Well, for one thing, they believe they're right. But, if they took a look at the real evidence, and interpreted it according to the Bible – to accept the biblically oriented view – that would mean they're wrong, and the Bible is true, and there is a God. So, they band together and say that these few other biblical archaeologists are biased and are wrong. It's like a club you have to be in almost.

Well, there's a filmmaker, named Timothy Mahoneyy, who went to the Middle East nearly thirty years ago, looking at all the objection. If you really want to know what's going on, you have to

take a look yourself. Mainstream archaeology believes that, if there was an exodus, it would have had to have been around 1200 BC. So, he was looking at a pattern of evidence as depicted in the Bible – evidence of Israelites in the land of Goshen, for example. Is there any archaeological evidence of that – a slave people of Israelite descent? A time of plenty followed by a great famine? A mass destruction of Israelite babies? A sudden disappearance of Israelites? A time when slaves took gold and valuables from the Egyptians? Evidence of ancient chariots at the bottom of the sea?

Well, he found none of that during the currently accepted time period around 1200 BC, when Ramses II was pharaoh. But, while in Egypt, he learned that there was indeed a city of Ramses in Goshen, and the Bible says – we can read about it Exodus 1:11.

Exodus 1:11 – *Therefore they set taskmasters – the Egyptians set taskmasters – over Israel to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Rameses.*

Then in Exodus 12:37:

Exodus 12:37 – *And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children.*

Also, in Goshen, he learned the city of Rameses, during the times of Rameses, which is the time archaeology tells us the exodus should have happened – if there was one – should have occurred then – that time period was being excavated. And of course, they found no evidence of any of the pattern that the Bible lays out. But, it's interesting, he discovered near there, much deeper, was a city of 30,000 people, at that time called Avaris. And he also learned, besides Avaris, in Goshen there many other tells – or mounds – where other cities laid buried. And it was in Avaris that a large house was found that used Middle Eastern architecture. Not far from it was a building that was like a small palace that had twelve pillars. And there were twelve grave buildings in the yard, one of which was particularly large. In it was a massive statue of a man with Semitic features, red hair, and a weapon that's saved for royalty only, and a many-colored coat. This was either a colossal coincidence or this was a statue of Joseph, who was much loved and honored by the Egyptians. So the twelve pillars and the twelve graves could have been representative and containing the sons of Jacob, or Israel, after they died.

Remember that the story started with the sons of Jacob selling their brother, Joseph, to slavers, who took him to Egypt. And there God orchestrated his ascension out of slavery to become the second highest in the Egyptian government. During his time, a famine hit much of the Middle East and Egypt. Israel sent his sons to Egypt to buy food. And that's where we pick up the story in Genesis 47:11.

Genesis 47:11-12 – *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. And Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with food, according*

to the number of their dependents.

If this was way earlier than Rameses lived, why was the city named with his name? Well, it was apparently called Avaris in Joseph's time, but later Rameses. So, for clarification – for clarity of identification – the name may have been edited to reflect the new name for the old city. That happened many other times in history.

So, what did Mahoney do with this striking find? He began to consider that modern archaeology was off about 200-400 years – that the exodus occurred earlier than most archaeologists think. And he began looking for more evidence much earlier than the exodus was supposed to be. He realized that he had a pattern of events in the Bible and he needed to overlay that pattern on an earlier time if he wanted to find any evidence. He was guided in this by the archaeologists that believed the Bible. Once he did that, incredible things began to surface during his search.

At the Feast of Tabernacles this year, I heard a sermon by Guy Swenson. In this sermon, he showed that the doctrine of original sin – a widely held belief that man was born sinful because of Adam's sin – is supported by only the weakest framework of scripture – really no evidence at all – a lot of supposition. But it has been believed for so long that, in the minds of many people, that just makes it true. All those people back then, how could they be wrong for so long a time? It's what people think.

Well, this idea that there were never Israelites in Egypt, no parting of the Red Sea, etcetera, is sort of like that. These denials are believed because a lot of people believed them, and because they've been believed by accredited people in institutions – all of them anti-biblical – for a long time. Therefore, they must be true. They've poured concrete around their suppositions. But, when you start looking at the *actual* evidence of the biblical pattern – instead of taking the word of people – things start to line up with the Bible. It's like taking Pfizer's word for it that their vaccine works. Of course, in the history of the United States, the company that has paid the largest judgement against them was Pfizer. And that was for deliberately misleading the public about the effectiveness of a particular product. They would purchase phony studies – hire people to come to the conclusions they wanted in their research studies. Now, I'm not talking about vaccines. I'm not saying they do or don't work – that's beside the point. I'm saying that you have to look at the evidence, instead of taking somebody's word for it.

And that is what Mahoney has done. He learned that there was a very old Egyptian writing in a museum in England – I think it was England – that contained documentation about terrible plagues that befell Egypt. It says that slaves took large amounts of jewelry and gold and silver from the Egyptians. As Mahoney explained what was written on it, it sounded like the exodus. Yet, because this document is dated much earlier than the non-believing archaeologists say the exodus occurred, but dated right when Mahoney says it should be, they dismiss the eye-witness account as irrelevant to the exodus. In the video, he actually filmed the well-respected archaeologist doing just that – not pointing to any proof, but saying, “We don't think that's the

way it happened.”

Another thing that they think is, that Moses couldn't write. They don't believe the Israelites had a written language. That means Moses could not have written the account of the exodus. However, Mahoney found evidence of a written language in two places in Egypt – the same language – much earlier than the exodus should have occurred, according to the experts, that contained phonetic letters that looked just like early Hebrew. When he sent it to a Hebrew scholar, he could read it. So, this was the most intriguing part of the whole picture to me. The earliest written languages were hieroglyphics of the Egyptians, and in the Middle East, there was a language that used a written form called cuneiform. But, both these languages used symbols, whereas Hebrew – and all the languages today – all the alphabets today – use letters that represent sounds, instead of symbols and pictures.

So, what's the difference is those two different types of writing? Well, the Egyptian alphabet had over a thousand letters. Cuneiform the same. This made it extremely difficult to learn. Only priests trained in it could read and write it, which gave them power. But anyone could learn to use Hebrew.

Notice what it says in Exodus and Deuteronomy 27:6.

Deuteronomy 27:6 – *You shall build an altar to the LORD your God of uncut stones. And you shall offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God, and you shall sacrifice peace offerings and shall eat there – so everybody was to come there – and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God – to celebrate. And you shall write on the stones all the words of this law very plainly.* Why? Well, it doesn't say, but the implication is, so everybody could read it. And, if that's true, then they were a literate people, which is entirely possible, if they had a much simpler alphabet. So, after showing evidence that Israel was in Egypt, Mahoney goes on to tackle the issue of the departure from Egypt and the Red Sea crossing. This area of consideration is chaotic. And even among Christians, there are two main camps among them on it. One is that Israel fled Egypt and crossed a very shallow end of the Red Sea – at the north part. These people don't believe God did a mighty miracle. The other is that God took them through a deep part of the sea *by* a mighty miracle.

In Exodus 14:1, you can judge for yourself.

Exodus 14:1-4 – *Then the LORD said to Moses, “Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, ‘They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.’ And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD.” And they did so.* So, what does that sound like to you? Does it sound like wading through a reed sea? Or, something much more spectacular?

Where did they cross then? Well, the most reasonable explanation is that they crossed the Sinai Peninsula, and then crossed at the Gulf of Aqaba. The Gulf of Aqaba, technically, is a part of the Red Sea, but all those places have the same name in the Bible – *Yam Suph*. But that would mean – if they went that longer way – they would have to go over an hundred miles on land before they even got there. And all the skeptics say, “With that many people, and all those sheep, no way!”

So, Mahoney interviewed a number of sheep experts, who didn’t say, “No way.” They said, “No problem.” Pretty amazing! Every time a contrary opinion pops up, based on the need to not believe God, Mahoney would show people on film saying, “It could have happened, just as the Bible said.”

Let’s read a chapter here. It’s in Exodus 14, verse 10.

Exodus 14:10-31 – *When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. They said to Moses, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” And Moses said something very memorable to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today as you march ankle deep through the reed sea. No, no that’s not how it was going to be! For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.” The LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Which he apparently had been doing – strong to the people, but complaining to God. Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over all of them.” Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them.... You remember there was a pillar of cloud in the day and fire at night. Well, the angel that was that moved from in front of Israel to behind them – between them and the Egyptians. ...and stood behind them – verse 20 – coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the*

Egyptian forces into a panic, clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians." They were getting the picture, but they were out in the middle of the Red Sea right there, with the water up high over them. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen." So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the LORD threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD – at least, for a while – and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

So, it's pretty hard to imagine that they were backed up against a shallow muddy reed lake or something. It's pretty clear, isn't it, what went on there. The point of the whole exercise was to astound Israel – and all the world – that there is *one* God – the God of Israel, and He just wiped out the army of the world's strongest nation.

Where did they cross? There is a mass of confusing considerations there. No one really knows. But there is a place on the Gulf of Aqaba – on the western shore that has a canyon leading out to the ocean with a very large sandy beach – perfect for two million people, along with their sheep, to camp there. It's got a fresh water stream coming down to the sea from the canyon. Now, that's not proof, but it certainly fits the description. It was said that a diver found a chariot wheel encrusted with coral not far from that place. Of course, there is no evidence of that, and Mahoney makes a point of it. He did talk to people that talked to the guy that said he found it. But he's not trying to prove his point so much that he makes things up. It just shows you what evidence is out there.

Mahoney also makes another point: according to 1 Kings 6:1, the number of years from the exodus to the fourth year of Solomon's reign was 480 years. The fourth year of Solomon's reign was about 966 BC. So, that would make the exodus occurring at about 1446, the same time period in which all the evidence was found, but ignored by mainstream archaeology.

Now, you may ask me, "Why do I need to know this information?" Well, we mentioned earlier that the issue of the exodus and the entire Bible is under attack. You may think, like me, "I'm retired," or, you may think, "I'm a homemaker," or, "I work at WalMart," or whatever. "I'm a nobody." "So why would I need to worry?" Well, the main area of presentation of the attack is in public schools and universities. You have children. They get bombarded with anti-God material every day. You say, "Well, I don't have kids." Well, do you have a congregation? Are there kids in it? If there are, then you have a responsibility to be informed and to stand with God's people in

defense of our children by affirming that you believe in the Word of God as true – not “as true, but excepting the first fifteen chapters of Exodus.” No, but to stand true. The Word of God is true in the face of this big lie.

So, all Christians need to have knowledge of *how* the Bible is true. Now, I didn't say “*all* knowledge.” But, when some of it, like this today, is put before our faces, we ought to pick it up and be ready to run with it. It's incredibly intimidating to be the only one in the class who believes in the Bible, instead of archaeology or evolution or biology, etcetera. It's so intimidating that even highly respected archaeologists and other scientists of all types will go with the populist view, rather than the evidence. We need to let our children know that they don't have to believe as others believe. We need to watch *God's Not Dead I* and then *II* with them. We need to watch the Timothy Mahoney *Patterns of Evidence* tapes. I think there are four today. If you don't know how to get ahold of them, just dot dot his name, Timothy Mahoney, or *Patterns of Evidence* and you'll find all his videos. They're there to find and can be purchased. You can even get them on Amazon.

So 1 Peter 3:15 – Peter says something to us here:

1 Peter 3:15 – *but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.* You can prove these things in a conversation to a friend. But we can show them there are alternative explanations. We can show them that we have good reasons for the things we believe.

When people ask me about evolution, I can't disprove it to them. But I can ask them how the archer fish evolved an eye that can see above and below the surface at the same time, so that it can spit at bugs on the surface and have something to eat. Now that would be a pretty strong urge, wouldn't it? A necessity, wouldn't you say? Why did it develop such a complex eye? So, it could survive. That's the whole point of evolution, supposedly. And in the millions of years it took for the eye to evolve, would the first generation have died off from starvation then? Wouldn't it just be simpler to believe that God designed it?

Now, the really strong believers in evolution, usually when faced with something so clear, their next gambit is to suggest that an alien life form came from outer space and did it. And so, we could ask them if they've ever heard of Occam's Razor? The most direct explanation is the usually the one that's true. Of course, they think God doing it would be as indirect and stupid as we think their alien life form explanation is. So, there you go.

But, at least we have a defense for why we believe what we believe. But the point remains: It's not necessary to prove it to them – just to let them know we have good reasons why we believe

in God. We're not stupid. So if we expect to do this, we have to have thought about it before the discussion takes place, which goes back to the scripture, "always be prepared to make a defense for anyone who asks.

This Bible story is for God's people and those He is calling, not so much for non-believers. To them, it's a stumblingblock. But to us, it's a message from God to us. And that message is: God loves and takes care of His people. It's there to encourage and strengthen us, as well as to prove to us that He's there. In His good time, according to His plan, He protects us from all sorts of evil, including human leaders in human governments – a message that is more and more relevant as time marches toward Christ's return. It's a message to bolster our faith – to help us follow the admonition that God issues 365 times in the Bible: Fear not!

This is Bill Jacobs for LifeResource Ministries, serving children, families and the Church of God.