

Torah Portion: Yitro

Plagues and the Pharaoh of the Exodus

Topics in the Torah Portion

- Jethro provides wisdom to Moses
- Mount Sinai preparation for the Lord's arrival
- The Ten Commandments

Focuses

- Feb 15th – Plagues & the Exodus Pharaoh
- Feb 22nd – *short* teaching – kingdom of priests
- Mar 1st – the Kingdom of God

Exodus 18

9 Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the Lord had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians.

10 He said, “Praise be to the Lord, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians.

11 Now I know that the Lord is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly.

Plagues

1. Blood of the Nile

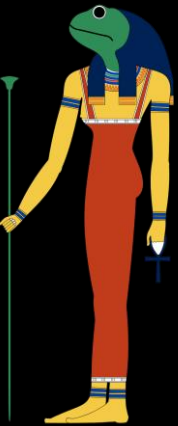
- Various gods – the lifeblood of Egypt

2. Frogs invade and die

- Heqet – frog headed goddess
- “sacred” frogs die

3. Gnats (lice)

- Geb – god of the ground
- Dust of the ground turned into gnats



Plagues

4. Flies

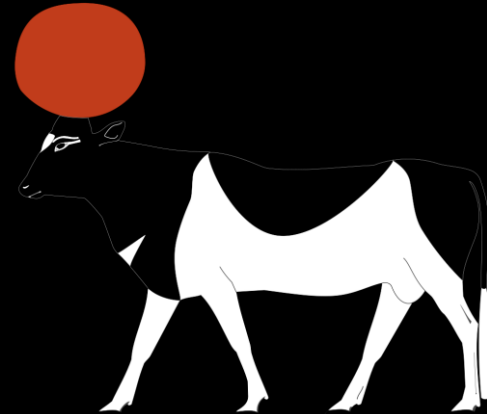
- Khepri – god of creation/rebirth
- Flies = decay and pestilence
- (*death*)

5. Disease on Livestock

- Hathor and Apis – cow gods
- No protection for animals either!

6. Boils

- Isis – goddess of healing and medicine



Plagues

7. Hail

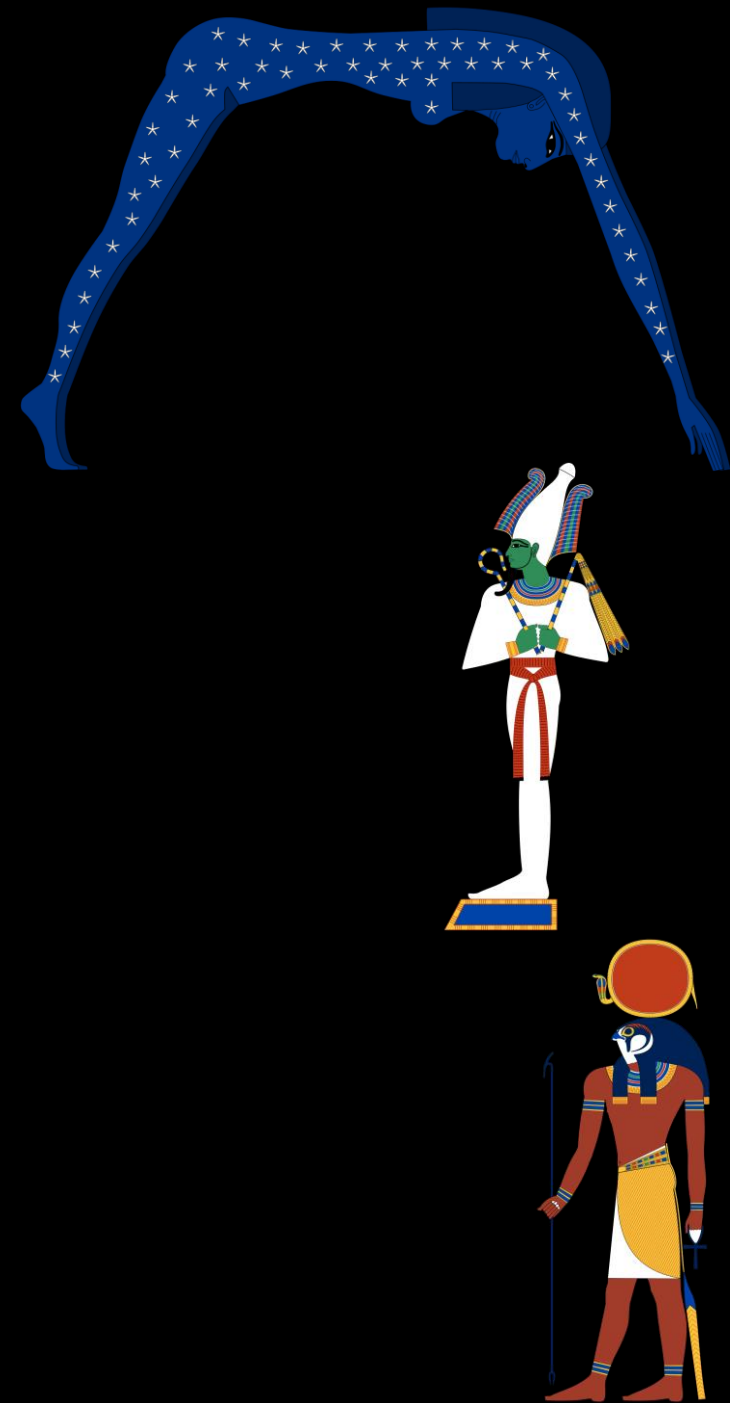
- Nut – sky goddess
- No protection from the sky

8. Locusts

- Osiris – god of agriculture

9. Darkness

- Ra – the sun god
- Ramesses



Plagues

10. Death of firstborn

- Horus – protector of ?



Plagues

10. Death of firstborn

- Horus – protector of Pharaoh and household
- Pharaoh himself
- Harmed God's firstborn
- Couldn't save his own son
- No god at all



The background of the image shows several ancient Egyptian papyrus baskets, also known as sistrums, which are used in religious rituals. They are made of woven papyrus and have a distinctive shape with a long handle and a circular head. The baskets are shown in a close-up, slightly blurred manner, emphasizing their texture and historical significance.

the ? Pharaoh of the Exodus

A Backstory

Tutankhamun dies 🙄

Wife – marry evil Ay or general Horemheb...OR

“My husband has died and I have no son. They say about you that you have many sons. You might give me one of your sons to become my husband. I would not wish to take one of my subjects as a husband... I am afraid...”



Oopsie....

General Horemheb out in
the Levant...

Hittite prince “dies”...

War between Hittites and
Egyptians (50 years)



Where did Israel live in Egypt?

Land of Goshen

- “*Geshem*” (*papyrus Anastasi IV*)
- *Genesis 47:11* - So Joseph settled his father and his brothers in Egypt and gave them property in the best part of the land, the district of Rameses, as Pharaoh directed.

Avaris – largest *semitic* population

- *Num 33:3* – “set out from Rameses”

Fears of Hittite invasion because of prince...



Hittites Hate Egypt

- Israel – Growing population of Semites
- Hittites – considered Semitic
- invasion from Hittites?
- War = Israel sides with?



Hittite Invasion

What do you do with these semites?

Labor = ?



Pharaoh Ay
1323-1319 BC



Pharaoh Horemheb
1323 -1292 BC

Hittite Invasion

What do you do with these semites?

Labor = valuable!

- Kill male boys



Pharaoh Ay
1323-1319 BC



Pharaoh Horemheb
1323 -1292 BC

Setting the Stage: Israel in Egypt

Ramesses II (1279 -1213 BC)

- New Kingdom
- “greatest pharaoh”
- “son of Ra”
- “divinity”
- Stalemate "peace"



Pithom and Ramesse

Exodus 1:11

“they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh.”



Pithom and Ramesses

Tell el-Retabeh

- Short settlement before Ramesses II
- Pithom – house of Atum
- Ramesses II built temple to Atum



Pi-Ramesses: Why is it important



- House of Ramesses
- Location near Avaris (1.25 miles)
- Why?
 - Ideal for campaigns against Hittites
 - Build store cities, military facilities
 - Monitor the Semites
 - large population of free labor

What else about Pi-Ramesses?

- semitic population in Avaris
- Nothing before Ramesses II's father at the site
 - *By the time of David, only Tanis*
 - *Seat of power (1050 BC)*
 - *Why is this important regarding the writing of the Torah?*
- Becomes Capital of Egypt



Aaron and Moses

- If the pharaoh was any earlier than Ramesses II...
- Moses and Aaron travelling 400+ miles...in a night?

Numbers 33:3

The Israelites set out from Rameses on the fifteenth day of the first month, the day after the Passover. They marched out defiantly in full view of all the Egyptians.



What about Avaris

- Avaris
 - During reign of Ramesses II
 - Abandoned
 - No longer a city
 - Cemetery
 - *Once largest semitic city in Egypt*
- *Absorbed into Pi-Rameses*
- *Num 33:3 – “The Israelites set out from Rameses...”*



Death of the firstborn

10. Death of firstborn

- Amun-her-khepeshef
- “Amun-Ra is with his Strong Arm”
- Inheritor of the throne
- Dies in 1254 BC
- Approx. 25 years old
- How did he die?



What about the Conquest?

Mt. Ebal

- Altar of uncut stone
- Hollow with board (Exodus 27)
- Ramp – no steps (Exodus 20,26)



From today's reading | Exodus 20:21 - 23

25 If you make an altar of stones for me, do not build it with dressed stones, for you will defile it if you use a tool on it.

26 And do not go up to my altar on steps, or your private parts may be exposed.'

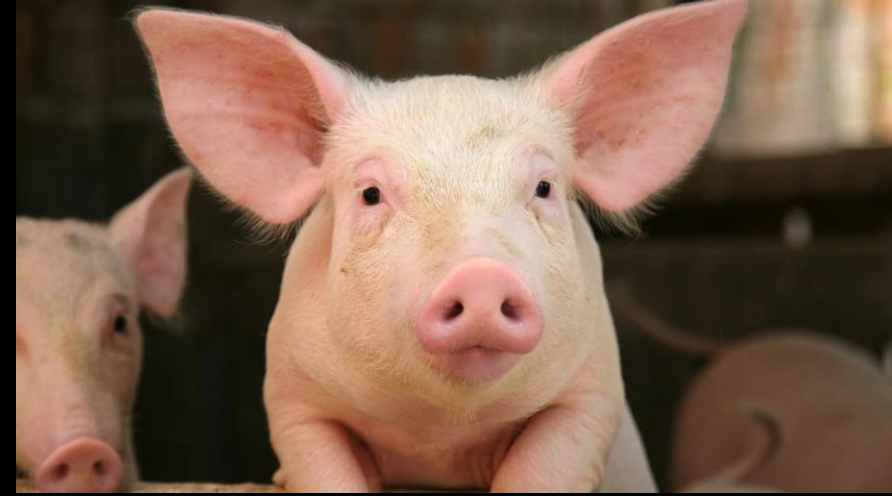
Mt. Ebal

- Altar of uncut stone
- Hollow with board (Exodus 27)
- Ramp – no steps (Exodus 26)
- Kosher bones
- Dates to end of Late Bronze Age
 - Approx. 1200 BC)
- 2 Scarab artifacts
 - Ramesses II
 - Thutmose III with Ramesside design



Piggies

- Bronze age collapse: 1220-1200 BC
 - Canaanite cities destroyed/abandoned
- Approx. 1200 BC – Israel Finkelstein
 - “the first thing in the archaeological record that begins to distinguish Israelites...is the absence of pig bones at Israelite settlements.”
 - “It is unknown why Israelites originally stopped eating pigs, but they stopped really early, before they acquired any other cultural identifiers.”



Population

Approx. 1200 BC – Kaboom

- The discovery of the remains of a dense network of highland villages – all apparently established within the span of a few generations – indicated that a dramatic social transformation had taken place in the central hill country of Canaan around 1200 BCE...



Conquest - Jericho

- Two big cities destroyed
- *Jericho (Tell el-Sultan)*
 - *Lorenzo Nigro reports*
 - *Approx. 1250-1200 BC (LB IIB)*
 - *Later builders cut into bronze age site*
 - *From fortified city to a small town*
 - *“Rural village that rose over the ruins of the LB city”*



Conquest - Hazor

Hazor

- *Archaeology: destroyed by fire approx. 1220 BC*
- Israeli Archaeologist Amnon Ben-Tor
- “intentional smashing of statues at Hazor, particularly those of the Egyptian kings”



“Whoever burned the city also deliberately destroyed statuary in the palace. Among the ashes, we discovered the largest Canaanite statue of human form ever found in Israel. Carved from a basalt block that must have weighed more than a ton, the 3-foot-tall statue had been smashed into nearly a hundred pieces, which were scattered in a 6-foot-wide circle. The head and hands of this statue, and of several others, were missing, apparently cut off by the city's conquerors.”



Hazor's Idols

*“Why would the native inhabitants
destroy their own idols?”*

Facts of the Exodus in the reign of Ramesses II

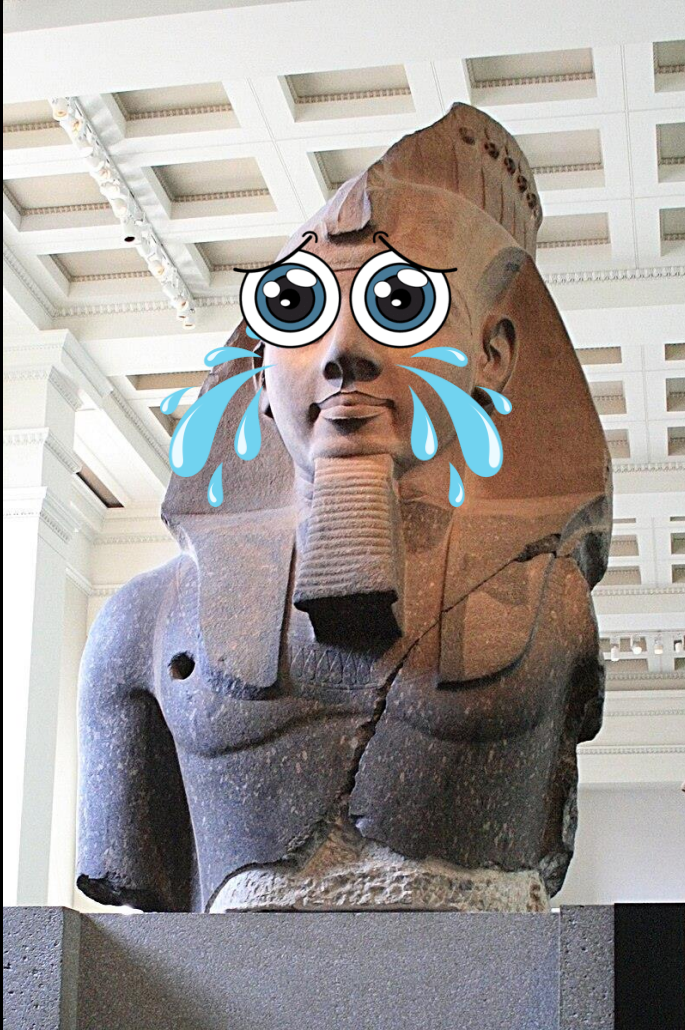
- ✓ Matches historical context – Hittites, Egyptians
- ✓ Matches names of the store cities he built
- ✓ Matches location of Goshen
- ✓ Matches semitic city of Avaris
- ✓ Matches capital near Avaris
- ✓ Travel to Pi-Ramesses from Avaris reasonable
- ✓ Matches Avaris abandoned
- ✓ Ramesses II's firstborn son dies
- ✓ Cities didn't exist before Ramesses II and his father
- ✓ Conquest evidence matches the time period

God's Glory in Ramesside period



= new kingdom
= most powerful
= “divine” son of Ra
= can’t save own son

God's Glory in Ramesside period



Yah saves his firstborn son
Dismantles “gods of Egypt”

=Weak

=Ineffective

=Powerless

=Phony

Yah's new kingdom

God's Plan

Did he intend for his plagues on Egypt to be a sign to pharaoh and his people?

OR

Was God's intentions for the plagues (*and people_* to show his own people something?

Joshua 24

14 “Now fear Yah and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve Yah. 15 But if serving Yah seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve Yah.”

Joshua 24

6 Then the people answered, “Far be it from us to forsake Yah to serve other gods! 17 It was Yah our God himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled. 18 And Yah drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve Yah, because he is our God.”

Joshua 24

19 Joshua said to the people, “You are not able to serve Yah. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. 20 If you forsake Yah and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you.”

21 But the people said to Joshua, “No! We will serve Yah.”

22 Then Joshua said, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve Yah.”

Joshua 24

“Yes, we are witnesses,” they replied.

23 “Now then,” said Joshua, “throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to Yah, the God of Israel.”

24 And the people said to Joshua, “We will serve Yah our God and obey him.”

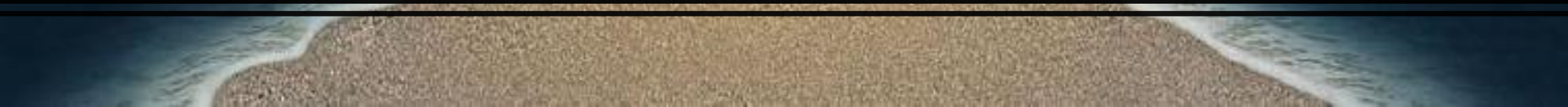
Nefarious Pharaoh

Chariots - not for enslavement!





The Sea of Reeds



The Song of the Sea – Mi Khamokha

Who is like You,
YAHWEH,
among the gods?
Who is like You,
glorious in holiness,
awesome in praises,
doing wonders?

[illegible]