

# Bondage in Egypt

EGYPT IN THE BIBLE • DAVE VASQUEZ • 2023

## Bondage in Egypt

Scriptural References

EGYPT IN THE BIBLE • DAVE VASQUEZ • 2023

## Bondage in Egypt

### Hebrew Slaves in Egypt

Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land."

Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. (Exodus 1:8-11 ESV)

But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel.

So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves. (Exodus 1:12-14 ESV)

EGYPT IN THE BIBLE • DAVE VASQUEZ • 2023

## Bondage in Egypt

### Hebrew Slaves in Egypt

- Israel multiplied in number
- Egypt placed taskmasters over them
- Israelites built the cities of Pithom and Raamses
- The more they were oppressed, the more Israel multiplied
- The Egyptians dreaded the Israelites
- Egypt made Israel's slavery bitter and hard
- Israel made mortar and bricks
- Israel worked in the fields

## Bondage in Egypt

### Locations

## Bondage in Egypt

### Pithom and Raamses

- The Bible mentions two specific cities that were built by Israelite slaves: Pithom and Raamses.
- Both of these cities were identified exclusively with Pharaoh Ramses II who reigned from 1279 to 1213 BCE.

Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, **Pithom** and **Raamses**. (Exodus 1:11 ESV)



## Bondage in Egypt

### Pithom and Raamses

- **Pithom** has been identified with Tell er-Rataba, though there is still disagreement as to the location.
- During the reign of Ahmose I, an Egyptian settlement was built there but it ended in the middle of the 18th Dynasty.
- At the beginning of the 19th Dynasty, a newer settlement was established, and Ramesses II built new fortifications, a Temple of Atum and many other structures.
- Raamses (Pi-Ramesse=Qantir) located in the Nile Delta region near Avaris (Tell el-Dab'a), the capital city of the Hyksos.
- It experienced an increase in immigration during the 1610-1590 BCE.
- The rulers of the city felt threatened by the possibility of attack and built a thick enclosure wall around the city for defense.

## Bondage in Egypt

### External Evidence



## Tomb of Rekmire

### Mud-Brick Making

- Rekmire was a governor of Thebes during the reigns of Tuthmosis III and Amenhotep II.
- He constructed a lavishly-decorated tomb for himself containing scenes of daily life during the Egyptian New Kingdom including a mural of slaves—including Asiatic or Semitic slaves—performing tasks for the Egyptians.
- The slaves make bricks using mud and straw formed in a mold, dried in the sun, and then transported for construction projects.

And Pharaoh said, "Behold, the people of the land are now many, and you make them rest from their burdens!" The same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their foremen, "You shall no longer give the people **straw** to make **bricks**, as in the past; let them go and gather straw for themselves. But the number of bricks that they made in the past you shall impose on them, you shall by no means reduce it, for they are idle. Therefore they cry, 'Let us go and offer sacrifice to our God.'" (Exodus 5:5-8 ESV)

## Tomb of Rekmire

### Taskmaster Beatings

- A hieroglyphic text tells about an Egyptian master reminding slaves to not be idle lest they receive a beating with the rod brings to mind the episode in which Moses saw an Egyptian task-master beating a Hebrew slave.
- The Leningrad Papyrus 116A (18th Dynasty, reign of Pharaoh Thutmose III prior to 1450 BCE), specifies that immigrant people be subject to compulsory labor such as public building projects.

One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an **Egyptian beating a Hebrew**, one of his people. He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. (Exodus 2:11-12 ESV)

## Tomb of Rekmire

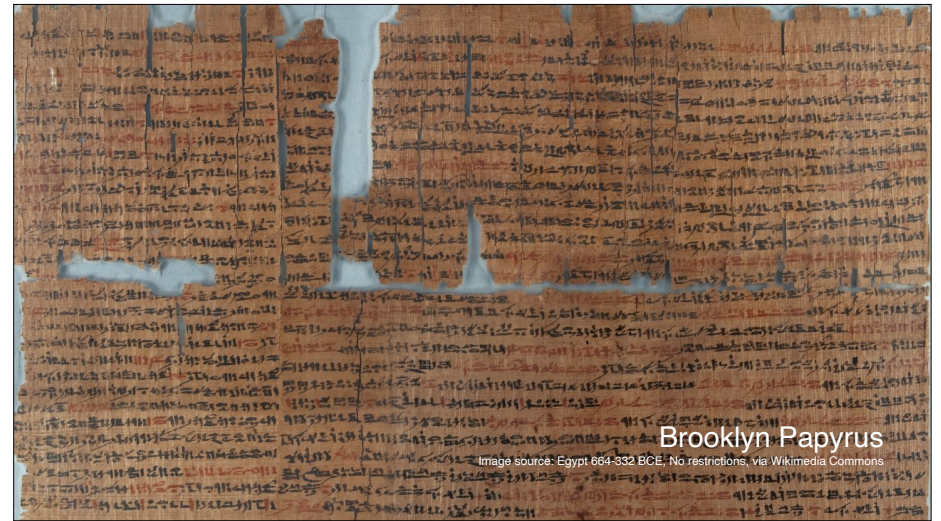
### Mud-Brick Making



Making mud  
Carrying mud

Mixing mud and straw  
Carrying mud and straw

Placing mud in brick molds  
Placing bricks in wall



## Brooklyn Papyrus

Image source: Egypt 664-332 BCE. No restrictions, via Wikimedia Commons

## Brooklyn Papyrus

### Hebrew Servants in Egypt

- The Brooklyn Papyrus is a Second Intermediate Period document was discovered on the antiquities market and designated Papyrus Brooklyn 35.14446.
- However, the papyrus mentions the pharaoh called Sobekhotep who seems to have reigned around 1700 BCE, the period after Joseph and preceding the Exodus, which is when the Hebrews lived in Egypt as slaves.
- The papyrus contains a list of domestic servants with both Semitic and Hebrew names.
- One section contains the names of 95 servants, many coming from Canaan. The servants are given Egyptian names, just as Joseph was after he was promoted to vizier over Egypt.
- Approximately 30 of the servants have names identified as Semitic, but 9 have Hebrew names.

## Brooklyn Papyrus

### Hebrew Servants in Egypt

- Shiphrah, the name of one of the Hebrew midwives prior to the Exodus (Exodus 1:15)

Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named **Shiphrah** and the other Puah, "When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live." (Exodus 1:15-16 ESV)

## Brooklyn Papyrus

### Hebrew Servants in Egypt

- The name Hy'b'rw, which appears to be an Egyptian transcription of "Hebrew" (Genesis 39:14)

But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house. And as soon as she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled out of the house, she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought among us a **Hebrew** to laugh at us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. (Genesis 39:11-14 ESV)

Titus Kennedy, *Unearthing the Bible*, (Eugene OR, Harvest House, 2020), pp. 48-49

## Hebrew Servant Names

Name	Reference	Form of
Menahema	2 Kings 15:14	a feminine form of Menahem
Ashera	Genesis 30:13	feminine form of Asher, the name of one of the sons of Jacob
Shiphrah	Exodus 1:15	the name of one of the Hebrew midwives prior to the Exodus
Aqoba	Genesis 25:26	a name appearing to be a feminine form of Jacob or Yaqob
Sekera	Genesis 30:18	either a feminine name similar to Isaachar, the name of one of the sons of Jacob, or simply the feminine form of Isaachar
Esebrw	Deuteronomy 32:2	a name derived from the Hebrew word <i>eseb</i> meaning "herb"

Titus Kennedy, *Unearthing the Bible*, (Eugene OR, Harvest House, 2020), pp. 48-49

## Hebrew Servant Names

Name	Reference	Form of
Dawidi-huat	1 Samuel 16:13	a compound name utilizing the name David
Hayah-wr	Genesis 3:20	another compound name composed of Hayah or Eve
Hy'b'rw	Genesis 39:14	which appears to be an Egyptian transcription of "Hebrew"

Titus Kennedy, *Unearthing the Bible*, (Eugene OR, Harvest House, 2020), pp. 48-49

## Egyptian and Hebrew Names

### Internal and External Evidence for the Biblical Narrative

#### Egyptian names in the Hebrew Bible

- Note how the use of Egyptian names in the Bible provides **internal** evidence for the validity of the biblical narrative.

#### Hebrew names in the Egyptian papyrus

- On the other hand the use of Hebrew names in an Egyptian papyrus provides **external** evidence for the validity of the biblical narrative.