

THE STORY OF MOSES AND THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

Lesson Three: MOSES AND THE PHARAOHS

We know by name and reputation the pharaohs that reigned during the life of Moses. They give a window of insight into the world of Moses, especially since he grew up in the royal household for the first forty years of his life. The mummies of each of these pharaohs (except Hatshepsut) have been discovered and identified from the Valley of the Kings near Thebes, Egypt. Amenhotep II was the only one found in his own tomb and sarcophagus. The others were found in a royal cache discovered in 1881 at Deir el-Bahari (Valley of the Kings) that contained forty mummies.

AHMOSE I (1570-1546)

- Founder of the New Kingdom
- Reigned supreme after expulsion of the Hyksos
- Consolidated the borders of Egypt with swift military campaigns
- Initiated temple building projects

AMENHOTEP I (1551-1524)

- Left few records
- According to contemporary records, led a few military campaigns
- Initiated building work at the temple of Karnak

TUTHMOSIS I (1524-1518)

- Not son of Amenhotep I, but a military man who was very closely connected
- Married the daughter of Ahmose I, thus married into royal blood line
- Brilliant military campaigns (rapid and effective) – set tone for the illustrious 18th dynasty

TUTHMOSIS II (1518-1504)

- Third son of Tuthmosis I (two older sons died)
- Since a son by a minor royal wife, princess Mutnefert, he was married to his half-sister, Hatshepsut, elder daughter of Tuthmosis I and Queen Ahmose, to strengthen his position as king
- A couple military campaigns, but in poor health, and died in his early thirties

- Had one very young son, Tuthmosis III, by Isis, a harem girl, and declared him his successor before he died (perhaps to curtail his ambitious wife, Hatshepsut)
- Nonetheless his wife, Hatshepsut, initially acted as regent for the very young king, and soon had usurped her stepson's position as pharaoh

Hatshepsut (1498-1483)

- Attempted to legitimize her rule by gathering support from officials of Egypt
- Took title of king and represented her coronation in reliefs (wall paintings)
- Tried to represent her late father as supporting her coronation and rule
- Known for trading expeditions more than military prowess
- Abandoned her queen tomb and had a mortuary temple built fit for a pharaoh
- She drops from the scene in 1483 (died?); her mummy has not been identified
- Has been thought that Tuthmosis III had a hand in her disappearance or death after a struggle for power; he later destroyed many of her monuments and scratched her name off of inscriptions; her name was omitted from the carved king lists

Moses would have grown up in Egypt during the time of these pharaohs. The "daughter of Pharaoh" who adopted him (Ex. 2:5-10) is very difficult, if not impossible, to identify. Some pharaohs had many wives and children. One possibility is princess Ahmose, the daughter of Ahmose I and Queen Ahmose Nefertary. She was the wife of the pharaoh, Tuthmosis I, who began rule two years after Moses was born. The only other possibility would be a daughter of Amenhotep I. Regardless, Moses was afforded direct access to the halls of Egyptian power, affluence, and learning.

TUTHMOSIS III (1504-1450)

- Reigned a lengthy 54 years; only a young child when father died
- Usurped by stepmother, Hatshepsut, for nearly twenty years, but took sole power in 1483
- Great reputation as a builder and military leader; considered by many as the greatest pharaoh of Egypt; built ancient Egypt to its greatest power and glory
- Led seventeen military campaigns that spread the borders of Egypt
- Called the "Napoleon of ancient Egypt" (James Henry Breasted); he was also short of stature (about 5'3")
- Moses left Egypt in 1486 at about the time of the power change (struggle?) between Tuthmosis III and Hatshepsut
- Tuthmosis III can be identified as the pharaoh of the oppression whose death is mentioned in Exodus 2:23

AMENHOTEP II (1453-1419)

- Reigned a lengthy 34 years; first three years as co-regent with Tuthmosis III
- Known for his athletic and military prowess; inflated view of himself [pride and arrogance] (Ex. 9:13-17); example: claims as an oarsman
- Led three military campaigns in his first nine years of rule: years three, seven, nine
- First two campaigns both called the “first campaign”: one before death of father and one as sole monarch; campaigns in years 1450, 1446 (year of exodus), 1444
- After this, *no* military campaigns for last 25 years
- Pharaoh of plagues and exodus; lost a large part of his military in the Red Sea (Ex. 14:5-7, 23, 27-28); likely explanation of the lack of military campaigns after a minor third campaign (1444)
- His son, Webensenu, was buried in the royal tomb; would have been a prominent (first-born?) son who died *before* his father because the tombs were sealed after the internment of the pharaoh
- Became a relative footnote among pharaohs in the midst of giants like his father, Tuthmosis III, and his grandson, Amenhotep III, whose reign of almost 40 years was one of great prosperity and stability
- Known mainly for the significance of his tomb: cache of sixteen mummies hidden in tomb

“Indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth” (Jehovah to Pharaoh – Ex. 9:16; Rom. 9:17)

The Great Character of Moses, the Servant of the One True God

- 1) Meekness, Humility (Num. 12:3)
- 2) Courage (Ex. 14:13)
- 3) Faith (Deut. 6:24-25)
- 4) Service (Heb. 3:5)
- 4) Priorities (Heb. 11:24-25)
- 5) Hope (Heb. 11:26)

“And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end” (Heb. 3:5-6)

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