


## The Four J’s: Jacob, Joseph, Jeremiah and Jesus

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Façade of the Temple of Endue, David  
Roberts, Scottish Artist, 1840’s.



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## Roadmap

- Introduction/background of relation between Canaan and Egypt
- Evidence of Israel and Egypt’s involvement
- Jacob in Egypt
- Joseph in Egypt
- The Exodus – OUT of Egypt
- Hezekiah’s alliance with Egypt
- Jeremiah in Egypt
- Jesus and his family in Egypt
- The Coptic Church in Egypt

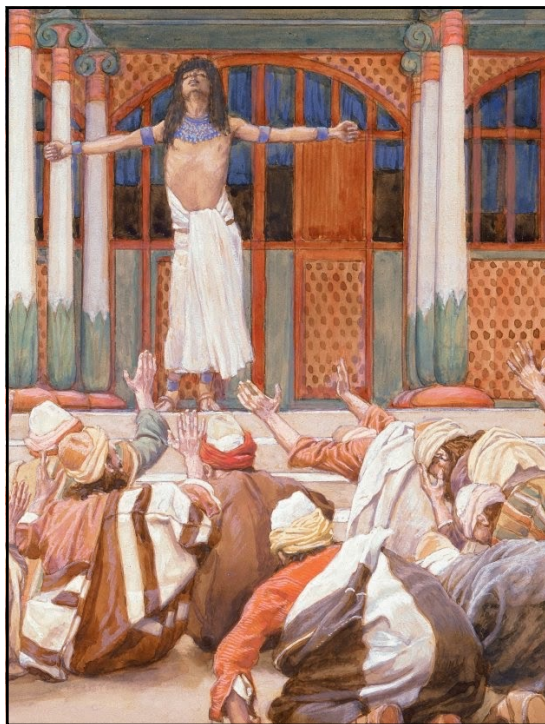
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## Introduction

- Egypt’s greatest resource: the Nile, longest river in world (4200+ miles).
- Egypt is mentioned more in the Bible than any country but Israel.
- 1<sup>st</sup> reference is telling: “Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to reside there as an alien, for the famine was severe in the land (Canaan)” Gen. 12:10.
- Egypt developed as a single strong country (because of the Nile uniting all the communities along its banks.)
- Canaan developed as independent city-states, more vulnerable to takeovers.



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## Relation between Egypt and Canaan City-States

- Before 2000 BC, mainly a commercial trading relationship – Egypt had gold, food, land and sea routes. Canaan had raw materials like copper and turquoise.
- Relations changed after 2000 BC with Egypt dominating more, exploiting the mines, etc.
- Then Hyksos invaded Egypt and old gov’t collapsed. Hyksos = “shepherd kings, ruler of foreign lands.” Ruled c. 1650-1550 BC.
- This period corresponds with Joseph’s time in Egypt where non-Egyptians would welcome his administrative talents.

*Joseph and his brothers in Egypt, James Tissot (1836-1902)*

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## Merneptah Stele – oldest reference to Israel outside the Bible

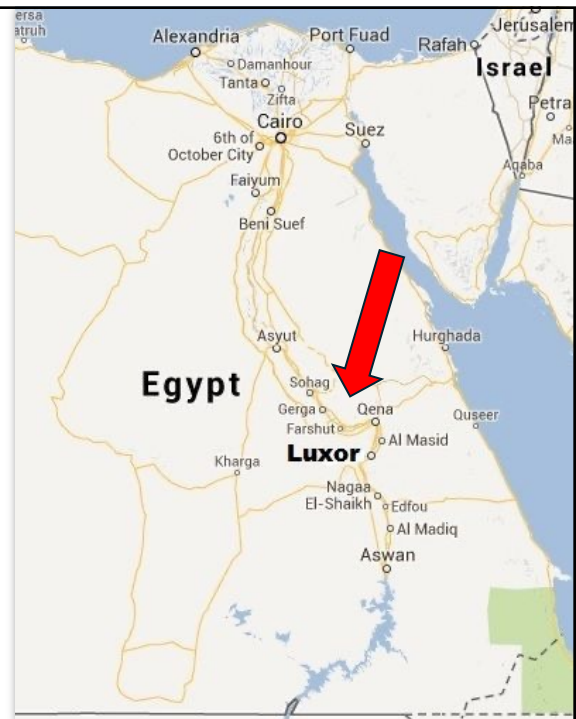
- Egyptian Pharaoh (Merneptah) had this granite block carved with victory hymns after defeating people in Canaan about 1208 BC.
- It includes “Israel is laid waste, his seed is no more,” the earliest known reference to Israel – not as a state or land but as a PEOPLE.
- Another stele has been found on Elephantine Island in the middle of the Nile dating to 12<sup>th</sup> c BC, about an Egyptian faction battling the Pharaoh, but no mention of an exodus from Egypt.



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## Evidence of Israel and Egypt’s involvement

- Reed huts dated to 3000 years ago recently found. Belonged to workers, probably slaves. At Medinet Habu, opposite Luxor.
- Archaeologists don’t expect to find additional extra-biblical evidence of Israel because there wouldn’t be NEGATIVE inscriptions written on royal tombs that would show a Pharaoh and his army in a negative light!



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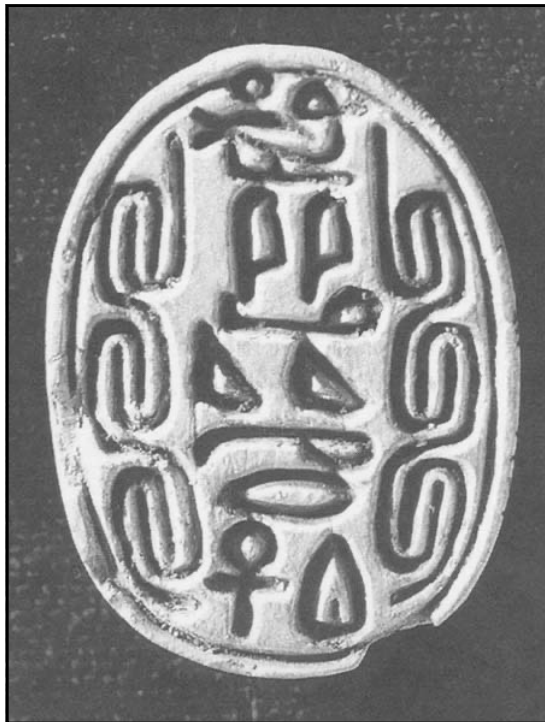
## Israelites going to Egypt

- From 2000 BC on, there is archaeological evidence of Semites in Egypt – brought flocks for water and grazing.
- This is what Genesis 43 confirms with Jacob and his family--the beginning of Egypt as a refuge when Canaan was in famine.
- The later enslavement of Hebrews under Egyptians adds further confirmation to their enslavement. Why would they otherwise depict themselves so poorly?!



*David Roberts, Israel landscape*

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## Jacob and Egypt

- Jacob’s biblical story centers around the theme of strife and how it breaks a family apart.
- Jacob’s favoritism causes all kinds of problems and Joseph is sold into Egypt, disappearing for a time.
- But he rises to power and eventually saves the brothers through Egyptian largess, that had left him for dead. Jacob comes to Egypt and the family is reunited. Egypt is a refuge for them all.
- Scarabs (an important symbol in ancient Egyptian religion of a dung beetle) have been found in Egypt with the name of a Hyksos king on them, “Jacob.”
- This attests to the patriarchs being in Egypt during the Hyksos period (1800 – 1550 BC).

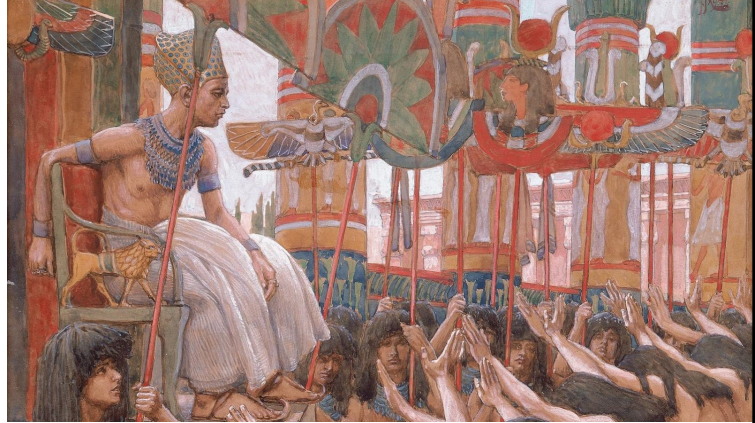
\* *The beetle was associated with the divine manifestation of the early morning sun.*

*Scarab from the period of the Hyksos with the name “Jacob” inscribed.*

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## Joseph in Egypt

- Like the Jacob story, the Joseph story also begins with family strife. Joseph is abandoned by his jealous brothers, sold into Egypt only to rise to the #2 position under Pharaoh.
- Ironically this brother ends up being the supplier of grain to the brothers who put him in harm’s way initially.
- “God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God ...” (Gen. 45:7,8)



*Joseph in Egypt, James Tissot, French artist, 1836-1902*

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## Other confirmations of Joseph in Egypt

- Joseph’s wife and father-in-law had well-known Egyptian names.
- “Removing his signet ring from his hand, Pharaoh put it on Joseph’s hand; he arrayed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck” (Gen. 41:42) – gifts that a Pharaoh would normally give an outstanding court member.
- “So Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father’s household, and Joseph lived one hundred ten years” (Gen. 50:22). 110 years is an Egyptian expression for someone who lived to a ripe age.
- “Joseph commanded the physicians in his service to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel; they spent forty days doing this, for that is the time required for embalming. And the Egyptians wept for him seventy days” (Gen. 50:2, 3).
- Joseph, ruling during the Hyksos period, was presented as a shepherd who then became a ruler. Hyksos called “Shepherd Kings.”



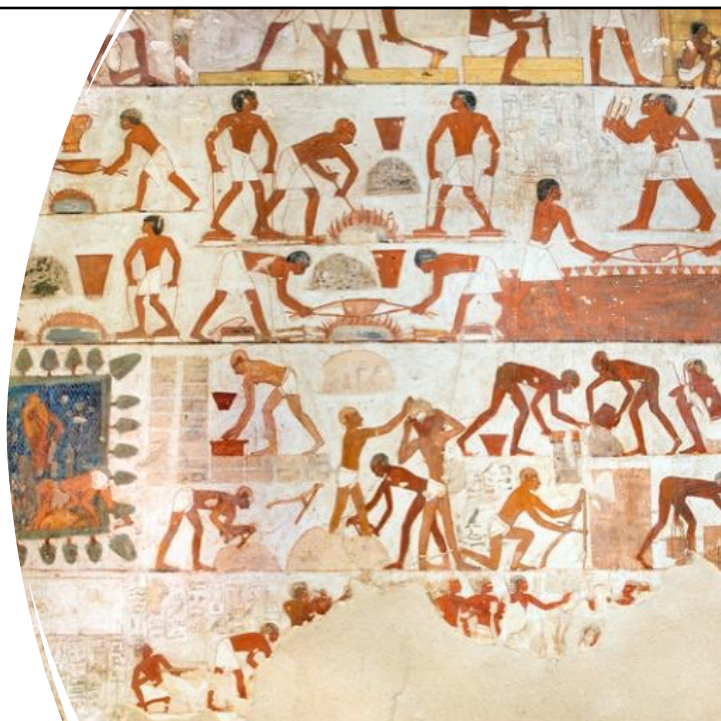
*Ancient Egyptian  
signet ring*

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## The Exodus

- Both the Bible (book of Exodus) and Egyptian tomb paintings are filled with foreigners working as POWs, herding cattle, making bricks, working in vineyards.
- “An oft-cited document that provides information on Semites in Egypt during the late Middle Kingdom is Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446 (dates to 1991-1802 BC),” archaeologist James K. Hoffmeier.



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## King Hezekiah and Egypt

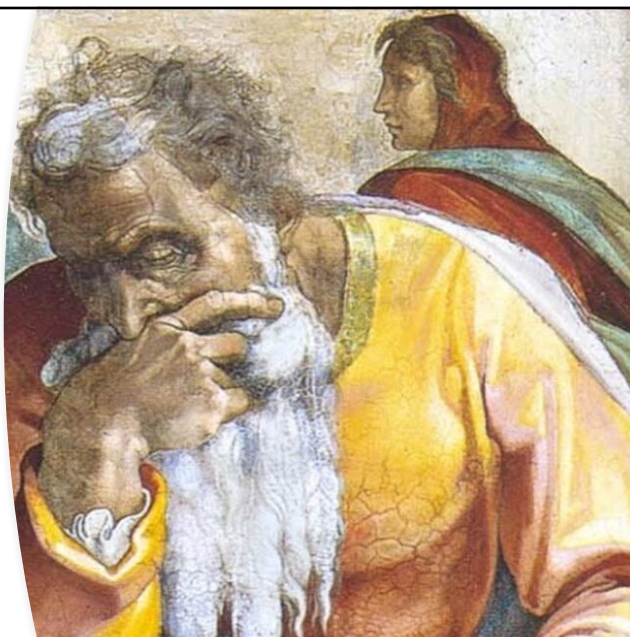
- Egypt often acted as a military ally to Israel, not always an invading force!
- Hezekiah, King over the southern Kingdom of Judah 727 – 698 BC.
- Egypt and Judah had a mutual enemy: Assyria (King Sennacherib), so they formed a military alliance to fend them off.
- The prophet, Isaiah, alludes to Egyptian culture in some of his oracles, in a positive way.
- Hezekiah chose symbol of a scarab/beetle for his personal seal—an acknowledgment of the good that Egypt was doing for Israel during his reign.
- Hezekiah named his son Manasseh – an Egyptian name.



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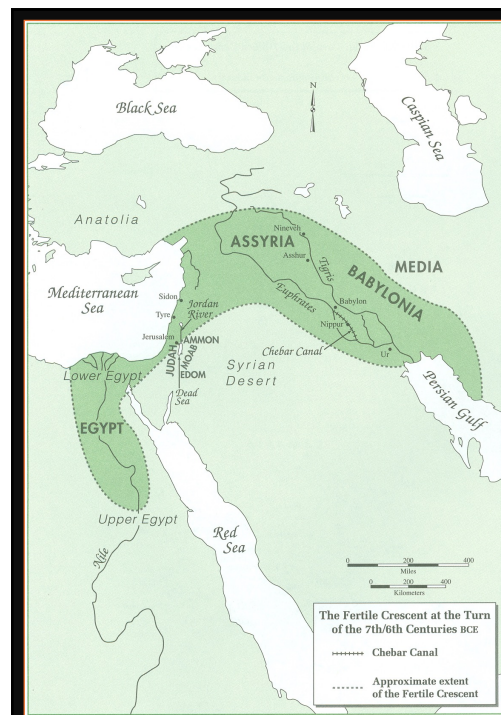
## Jeremiah and Egypt

- A ‘major’ OT prophet (with Ezekiel and Isaiah), i.e. a 2-scroll prophet (vs. 1 scroll for ‘minor’ prophets).
- His is longest books in the Bible, exceeded only by Psalms.
- Book covers last 40 years of Judah’s existence (627-586 BC); then they were invaded by Babylonians and prisoners were deported to Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar.
- Jeremiah was called to be a prophet at 20, telling the Jews they were idolatrous thru his judgments.
- Reformer King Josiah) supported him but most didn’t. Friends took him to Egypt where he lived/died without seeing their repentance.



*Jeremiah, Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo (1508)*

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## The Changing powers in the Fertile Crescent during Jeremiah’s Time

- King Josiah instituted much-needed reform (622 BC) in both Judah and the Northern Kingdom, of Israel. He had a small period of peace because the overlords of the Northern Kingdom (Assyria) had their hands full with up-and-coming Babylonia!
- A scroll was found in the Temple wall during Josiah’s reforms which was probably the book of Deuteronomy. It helped the people make needed reforms and follow their Jewish faith more.

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Call to me and I will answer you  
and tell you great and unsearchable things  
you do not know.  
**Jeremiah 33:3**

### The Book of Jeremiah

- Much of its 45 chapters are the judgments that will come on Judah and its people.
- But there is also a message of hope, of restoration, of Israel being allowed to return from exile.
- The old covenant, which the Jews had broken, would be replaced by a new covenant within their hearts.
- “The Lord has appeared of old to me, *saying*:  
“Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love;  
Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.  
Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt...” (Jer. 3:3, 4)

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### Jesus and family in Egypt

- “Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him” (Matt. 2:13).
- Escape to Egypt only appears in Matthew’s gospel. Recall: Magi are only in Matthew-- wealthy foreigners who are gentiles, not Jews. Matthew’s point: Jesus was rejected by Jewish leaders but accepted by Gentiles, which fits his church in Antioch where he was based.
- Because Jesus is “King of the Jews,” Matthew shows from the beginning the conflict between two kingdoms: Heaven/God and Rome/Caesar.

*The Flight into Egypt, Rembrandt, 1627*

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## Herod and The Holy Family

- Herod (72 - 4 BC) represents the world's resistance to Christ.
- The Jews resent Herod because he is not Jewish but Idumean, named after Esau, Jacob's brother, biblical Edom (today's Petra in Jordan). He fulfilled prophecy:
- Isaiah 34:1 - 2, 5 – 6 “Draw near, O nations, to hear; When my sword has drunk its fill in the heavens, upon **Edom** it will fall, upon the people I have doomed to judgment.”
- Herod's hypocrisy of telling the Magi he wants to know where the baby is so he can worship him, is the hypocrisy Jesus will call out throughout his public ministry.
- But Magi have a dream and leave Bethlehem for home another way.

*Bust of King Herod, b. 72-4 BC*

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## Joseph and his dream

- Dream motif occur again in Matt. 2:13-23, this time with Joseph. Just like the Magi initially took Herod at his word, then wised up, so Joseph is told of Herod's evil intentions.
- Like the Magi, Joseph obeys the dream, follows the angel's directive, and leaves Bethlehem for Egypt that night.
- Jesus is presented as the new fulfillment of Israel:

### ISRAEL

- Goes to Egypt and back (patriarchs)
- Is tested in wilderness of Sinai
- Fails to be God's servant and is exiled.

### JESUS

- Goes to Egypt and back
- Is tested in wilderness
- Is faithful to God; resurrected

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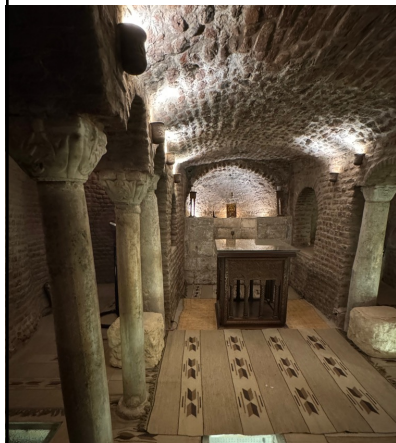
## Wadi al-Natrun - Egypt

- Remembered as one of the places where Mary, Joseph and Jesus stayed during their sojourn in Egypt.
- It's an oasis that since the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD (60 miles NW of Cairo) has been settled by monastic communities that welcome pilgrims wanting to honor the holy family.
- Painting in Church of the Holy Virgin in the Syrian Monastery (Deir al-Surian) in Wadi al-Natrun. Shows the Epiphany, when shepherds came to honor Jesus, dating to 8<sup>th</sup> century. Discovered in the 2000's when conservators removed layers of plaster .



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## The Cavern Church, Cairo Church of St. Sergius and Bacchus



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