

EXODUS

(All comments by Walter Brueggemann)

- 1) 1:8 – c 1300 BC. May have been Ahmose, the first king to break the power of the "Asian" (Hyksos) kings and would not have liked the Hebrews to be in power. Many think he was Ramses II, who had 50 daughters. (This seems to be the most likely, after archaeologists found a stone carving of Ramses II in digs in Tanis, thought to be the "City of Ramses,": "He built the city of Ramses with Asiatic Semitic slaves." Josephus says he was Thurmutis, whom I googled and couldn't find.
- 2) 2:1 – 1 Chron 6:1-3 clearly states that Moses was a direct descendant of Levi (one of the 12 sons of Jacob): Levi → Kohath → Amram. So Moses, Aaron and Miriam were great-grandchildren of Levi. See also Ex 6:14-26 **Problem:** Levi lived 400 years before Moses. See 6:14-25 for explanation: each successive generation lived 137, 133, 137 years.
- 3) 2:10 – "Mashah" in Hebrew, "Masiha" in Aramaic, but Moses in Egyptian means "son."
- 4) 3:1 – Confusion re: vs 2:18, 3:1, and Numbers 10:29: Explanation by J. Daniel Hays, Bible Review, 8/00: The Hebrew word *hoten* (used in all three of these cases) applies to a relationship between a woman's husband and **all** male family members. So Reuel is the father of Zipporah, Jethro is probably Reuel's son and therefore a brother-in-law to Moses, and Hobab is another younger son of Reuel, so also a brother-in-law to Moses. In Num 10:29, Hobab is brother-in-law of Moses, son of Reuel.
- 5) 3:14 ----Represented in Hebrew by the tetragramaton YHWH, usually interpreted "I am that I am," or "I cannot be named or defined." Derived from the Hebrew verb "to be." The phrase in Hebrew is "Eyeh asher eyeh." Martin Buber says eyeh actually means "being there," or "being present." So the phrase should be, "I will be present as I will be present."
- 6) 4:25 – "The bloody bridegroom?" – Perhaps God's vengeance upon Moses for killing the Egyptian. Jewish tradition has God's Special Prosecutor (Satan) indicting Moses for homicide but cannot prove his case. /// "Moses' feet" is a euphemism for "genitals."
- 7) **Chapters 7-13 – All the marvels (not plagues) except #1 (turning river water to blood) were a direct challenge of God confronting Egypt's gods:**
 - 2, frogs: Heget was in the form of a frog, a symbol of regeneration
 - 3,4, insects: seen as agents of all the gods of Egypt
 - 5, livestock deaths: Hathor, goddess of love, was in the form of a cow. Apis, symbol of fertility, was in the form of a bull
 - 6, boils: challenged Imhotep, patron of medicine
 - 7, hail: challenged Nut (sky goddess), Isis (goddess of life), Seb (protector of crops)
 - 8, locusts: warred against Isis and Seb
 - 9, darkness: against Ra, sun god himself
 - 10, death of first-born: overpowered Pharaoh's personal deity, Osiris, giver of life
- 8) 11:9 – Walter Brueggemann: "YHWH acts irrationally for Israel, his first born."
- 9) 12:13-15 – (JB) Doesn't he know his own people without this complicated ritual? /// The

- command to celebrate Passover with unleavened bread was to symbolize the haste in which the Israelites left Egypt -- there was no time to wait for the bread to rise. Anyone who is not hurrying is not participating in the urgency and anxiety of the memory. See 12:11 -- dressed for traveling in "urgent haste."
- 10) 13:9-10 – Later modified to four phylacteries: left arm and forehead, gates and doorposts. (Deut. 6:4-9)
- 11) 13:17 – The "Peoples of the Sea" -- invaders from SE Europe. But probably an anachronism because they probably had not arrived yet. See map, opposite, for Canaanite tribal boundaries.
- 12) 14:21 – Probably not the Red Sea but the Reed Sea, a marsh north of the Red Sea.
- 13) 14:25 – Perhaps in 1211 BC, for this is when historians say Pharaoh Merneptah died. /// This episode was put into song as an independent composition in the 12th century, not part of the Exodus book, added later as Chapter 15. So, one of the oldest literary units in the Bible.
- 14) 15:25 – The first miracle in the Bible with water -- the log making the water sweet. Marah means "bitterness." Both Marah and Elim are probably located on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Suez.
- 15) 16:3 – In Ex 12:38 it states clearly that great flocks of animals went with them.
- 16a) 16:35--In Joshua 5:12 it states that manna ceased on the first day they made bread in Canaan.
- 16b – 17:8, 14 – The Amalekites were a semi-nomadic habitual enemy of Israel, primarily in the Sinai and Negev (southern present-day Israel), See Genesis 14:14:7 for first mention. Attacked Eglon, Gideon, Saul, David, Hezekiah, etc.
- 17) 18:24– Further examples of early "courts," see Deut 17:8-13, 2 Chron 19:4-11.
- 18) 19:3-4 – v.4: For "eagle as protector" see Deut 32:11, as "power," Jer 48:40. /// **The ascents of Moses up Mt. Sinai: vv. 19:3, 19:20, 20:1, 20:9, 32:31, 34:4. (6)**
- 19) 19:9-15. Brueggeman: "The text asserts that the Holy God of Sinai will not come into the midst of our casual indifference. Some other god might, but it will not be this powerful God of liberation who rescues, demands, and promises."
- 20) **Chap 20ff – The Ten commandments.** Compare with Deut. 5:6-21. /// Compare also v. 5 with Jeremiah 31:29-30. /// Brueggemann, re: the laws of Moses. "An ancient law is not precisely and automatically pertinent to new and massively transformed social circumstance." But they:
- 1) can be used "to identify the principles that lie behind the concrete law" of Moses.
 - 2) "are an ongoing process of adjudication to see what will work, what is required, and what is acceptable." Civil laws, e.g., should be a model of a continuing dynamic process, not laws with once-for-all meaning.
 - 3) reflect a simple agrarian society and often are not directly applicable to our society. But they can invite interpretation beyond the law, i.e. bond slavery in the Mosaic law may be applied to our permanent underclass, etc.
- 21) **Chapters 21-31, 34, 35** – Lists all of God's commandments for Moses to deliver to the Israelites.
- 22) 23:29 – For three other reasons, see:
- Judges 1:19: The Canaanites on the plain had iron chariots and could not be defeated.
- 2:20-23: The nation had violated God's covenant.
- 3:1-2: So that God might try all those who had not had experience in the battles with the

Canaanites.

23) Chaps 21-31, 34 and 35 – The tablets Moses brought down from Sinai could not possibly have held all of Chap 34 plus the Ten Commandments! The tablets with the 10 commandments were broken when Moses confronted Aaron about the golden calf. Nowhere does it say that all the instructions in those chapters were on those tablets. In fact, in Deut 10:2 it states that **only** the 10 commandments were on the new tablets.