Tale of the Bricks with the Pharaoh of the Exodus

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[0:00] Now, this morning, we're going to get into what I call an apologetic presentation.! You know what apologetics are?! Apologetics is giving a defense for the faith.

! Well, the fact is, the more you study it and look at the facts, the Bible keeps smelling like a rose. Instead of sinking to the bottom of the ocean, it still stands true, okay? And so, what I'm going to give you is an apologetic lesson this morning, because the world will tell you that the Bible story of Exodus could not have happened.
And I'm going to give you their arguments of why, and I'll give you the truth, okay? So, now, what you're going to learn this morning is that we do know who the Pharaoh is that Moses stood before to say, let my people go.
And he is Amon Optop II. Second, we believe with pretty good certainty that he was the Exodus Pharaoh.
[1:32] Now, if you read your Bible carefully, it does not tell us he died in the Red Sea. The Bible tells us his chariot went in.

But it doesn't say that he went in. But even if he did, the Bible also tells us that the Hebrews saw the bodies of the Egyptians.
So, not every body was... In other words, what I'm saying, even if he did die, it is highly then possible for his body to have been retrieved, because bodies were seen.
And we have his mummy, not his mother, but he himself, the mummified version of himself.
And when we go to Cairo, we'll fly you from here to Cairo. That's where we'll start our tour. We'll show you him. You'll get to see the real dude, okay?
[2:33] He's there, larger than life. Just he's not alive. But anyhow, okay. So, here's the problem. Everyone has been saying that Ramesses II was the Pharaoh of Moses.

And we've been looking at this guy for a long, long time. And critics are saying it can't possibly then be a true story, because there's problems by making him the Pharaoh.
And one of the problems is, number one, he's the popular choice. The critics raise serious challenges, and therefore, it places doubt of credibility of our Bible.
If we argue that Ramesses II was the Pharaoh, and how many of you saw Charlton Heston say, he's saying that to Ramesses. And so, all the historical, popular data is going to point to him.
Why do you think that we say Ramesses? Does anyone know? Okay, hang in, I'll tell you, all right? So, here's the problem, though.
[3:51] Well, he didn't have his son die before him. His firstborn son died after him. Well, the Pharaoh that we're talking about had a firstborn son who died before him, remember?

The Passover. So, we have a problem already getting out of the gate. Secondly, the date doesn't fit with the Bible dates. He is 200 years later from what the Bible tells us.
It would be one thing if it was 20, 40, 50 years, but 200 years, that's too much of a stretch, okay? Because we know that the dates, you know, sometimes are fickle, but he's 200 years late, and there's no gap of 40 years.
We know that Moses fled for 40 years. Why? Because the Pharaoh wanted his death, because he killed an Egyptian. He fled there, and he was gone for 40 years. So, and then word comes back to him, hey, the people who wanted you dead are now dead.
It's safe for you to return. So, we need a reign of the guy before him to have reigned at least 40 years. Are you following me? Okay. So, Ramesses does not fit.
[5:05] So, where do we get this problem? Why do they say Ramesses? Well, the Jewish scribes have kind of created a bit of confusion for us, and I'm not saying the Bible's wrong.

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They're actually accurate, but they use the name of a modern name of a city instead of the name of the city when Moses was there.
Avaris was the name of the city during the time of Moses, but later, Ramesses came, and he built over Avaris, expanded it, and he was the more popular Pharaoh, and thus the name of the city was changed to Ramesses.
So, the Bible uses the name Ramesses. It's the correct location, but that throws us off by using his name. You understand what I'm saying? Let's say it this way.
Our founders of our nation, they decided that the new capital city for our area, they went to a place, and it was originally called Georgetown.
[6:19] But we don't know it as Georgetown. What do we know it as today? Washington, D.C. So, when we write from our perspective, 250 years later, we write back, look back at that area, and we would name the founders, but we may not call it Georgetown.

We might call it Washington, D.C. You see what I'm saying? So, that's what our scribes did, the Jewish scribes did, when we get it into our Bible. So, they used the more popular, more modern name.
Okay? It's not incorrect. It's still correct. It just throws us off the scent and created a bit of confusion. That's why they've been looking at Ramesses.
So, if we go back to the Pharaoh that fits the Bible dates, you're going to come up with Amun, Optop II. Even though he was from the lower kingdom over, Memphis was his capital, he still oversaw the rebuilding of Avaris with the slaves and using of mud bricks.
Okay? And that was done. We have records of him overseeing the rebuilding of Avaris. Avaris. And now, Avaris is up in the Delta Nile.
[7:41] To the right, to the east, would be Goshen, the green fields. And who were the Jews? They were farmers. They were shepherds. And so, they, the Bible tells us that's where they lived, in Goshen, just outside of the capital.

And Avaris was more to the west. And, but later, Ramesses came, 200 years later, built over Avaris, expanded it, and thus renamed the city, Pyramesses.
So, that's, that's where we get the, the confusion there. So, what are the hints to us that Amun, Optup II, is the Pharaoh and not Ramesses?
Okay? Well, one thing, the very earliest collection of Egyptian history was written by an Egyptian historian.
He was also a priest. His name was Manetho. And, and he wrote, this was in the time that they, that the Greeks were emerging with the Egyptians.
[8:42] So, he's writing in, in, Greek, and he writes the very first and earliest history of the Egyptian history. And guess who he puts as the Pharaoh during the Exodus?

Amun, Optup II. So, even their earliest historian and their writings points to Amun, Optup II as being the Pharaoh of the Exodus.
Okay? So, we have that piece of work written in the third century BC, 300 years before Christ. So, let's see, does he fit?
If he does fit, he's got to pass three tests. test. The first test, we need at least the preceding Pharaoh before him has to have been reigning for at least 40 years or maybe more.
There has to be that space because we know he gets word in Exodus 4, 19, that the people who wanted him dead have now passed on. And so, it's safe for him to return. We also need to find that he had a firstborn son who died before him.
[9:57] Correct? And the third test is that it has to fit the Bible timeline because the Bible does give us a timeline and it's very clear. Okay?

So, what's the Bible timeline? Someone turn to 1 Kings 6, verse 1. This is a Sunday school lesson, right? So, let's have someone read that for me. 1 Kings 6, verse 1.
Someone read that aloud for us today. Okay, go ahead. Okay, so in the fourth year of Solomon, and we're even told the date of the month, that he begins to build the house of Solomon.
But that also marked his fourth year of his reign, marked the 480 years earlier, the Hebrews came out of Egypt.
Right? That's what the Bible tells us. So, we look at the year of the date of Solomon. His fourth year would have been 966 BC.

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[10:57] So, then we add 480 years, and of course, we're looking at BC, so we're actually adding numbers backwards, right? And so, then we come to the year 1446 BC.

So, sometime in the 1400s, we have this incident of the Exodus, of Moses, and all that. Okay? Well, guess what?
That fits with a certain Pharaoh. Who is that? Amun Optop II. Say that with me. Amun Optop II. Alright? So, Amun Optop fits with the Bible dates.
Alright? According to the Bible dates, puts us into the same time period of him. So, let's look at him. Let's see if the other things fit. So, let's look at his grandmother.
How many of you are familiar with Egypt history and all that stuff? If you've done any study of Egypt history, you're no doubt going to come across Hatshepsut.
[11:59] I can't say her name. Hatshepsut. Hatshepsut is probably one of the most powerful female pharaohs in the history. Probably more powerful and more famous than Cleopatra.

Okay? And she has some very interesting marks of credibility of her pedigree. Her pedigree is such that she is the daughter of a pharaoh, Thutmose I.
Then she marries her half-brother, Thutmose II. So, now she becomes the wife of a pharaoh, and she gives birth to the future pharaoh, Thutmose III.
Okay? So, she's the daughter of a pharaoh, a wife of a pharaoh, and the mother of a pharaoh. And when her child, Thutmose III, was about two years of age, her husband dies.
So, he's two years of age, and now he's now the pharaoh. He's born the crown prince, and at the age of two, he becomes pharaoh. Do you think he can rule at that age?
[13:13] So, what happens when things like this happens? A regent is assigned, and guess who his regent is? His mother.

So, Hatshepsut becomes the regent. So, what is the regent supposed to do? Well, they're supposed to lead in the power of the pharaoh, the king.
But instead, she oversteps her authority and sets herself up as pharaoh for about 19 years while her son is still growing up.
And she is pretty clever. She does great things in her leadership as a pharaoh. And then her son is tired of hiding in the shadows, and then he steps in to become pharaoh and lives a number of years.
We have between these two reigns, Thutmose III and Hatshepsut, well over 40 years. So, we have a pharaoh that would have reigned during this time period for over 40 years.
[14:26] Are you following me? So, we find that it fits. And Thutmose III had children, and his firstborn son became Amun Optup II.

So, Hatshepsut is the grandmother of our pharaoh that we're focusing our attention on. Alright? So, we find that the time period fits. There's at least a 40-year gap between this dynasty there.
And now let's look, does he have a firstborn son that died before him? Well, the tomb of Amun Optup II was discovered in 1898 by a French explorer, Victor Lorette.
And he's in the Valley of Kings, and he discovers the tomb known as KV35, which turns out to be the tomb of Amun Optup II.
Now, here's the thing. When pharaohs die, you may find in his tomb other bodies. They either died before him to get in there, to be placed in there, or they died with him as his servants to help him in the afterlife.
[15:41] So, it's not unusual to find other bodies. Okay? So, as they go in, and the description is very clear, the writing of all that is very interesting, they found an interesting chamber inside, and off to the side, they found a child buried there, about the age of 10 or 11 years of age, and we know him because his name is on the organs and stuff that were placed in the jars.

Webinusu is his son. He has the, there's his mummy, not his mother. Okay? But the mummy of the, that's the son, he has the horse lock on the right side.
Only the crown prince has that. That's the signification that this is going to be the future pharaoh. They're the crown prince. And so he has the horse lock still on his mummified body, and thus, so we know that he had a son who was buried before him because there's no way that the body would have gotten in after he was put in there.
I'm going to up a second. Are you following me? Okay, so, so far, does he fit all three of the things? Yes. of the test. Now, last year, I got to go to Avars.

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They normally don't allow tourists in there, but because I'm a professor, they gave me permission to go. And so, I pay for, arrange all these things there.
[17:15] I knew there would be security with me. I didn't understand why I needed it, but, you know, we're going to have a security detail with you, they told me. seven policemen were around me all the time, driving from Cairo out to a virus.

It was crazy. I, you know, felt like I was some kind of politician or rock star or something, you know, and, but then I discovered after I got there, they're not there for my safety.
They're there to make sure I don't touch things that I'm not supposed to. so, so they're actually watching me, not looking after me. But, so we get to a virus, there's a lot of treasures that are still there, that they know are there, but they can't get to it because the mud bricks are so fragile.
And to get down and excavate, and then they know three pharaohs are buried there, but I said they can't get to them. So there's treasures that are there. I couldn't believe, I was walking over shards of pottery just all over the place.
The place has not been picked by archaeologists. Only one archaeologist went in the 1940s, a Frenchman, did some work there. And by the way, this has another name.
[18:33] My mind's going blank here. I'm having a senior moment. Yeah, I can't get it. But how many of you know, who's it? Raiders of the Lost Ark, what do we call that movie?

Indiana Jones, when they go to Egypt and they're trying to find the thing there, that's all based on this explorer, and this is the location that that's based on.
Okay? So they're in Avaris here, and you see this is the temple of Ramesses, this is granite, but everything else is built of mud bricks, and so a lot of it has crumbled and been destroyed.
Anyway, let me go back, let me go back to my slide here. We climb up to the very top of that ridge there, the high point there, and this is what you see.
I wanted to get a picture of the Goshen. This is where the Israelites would have been, the green fields for the Hebrews, they would have lived over there, and we turn back into more of the desert areas there, and we see the temple there.
[19:41] You can see the mud bricks, they do allow me to touch it, and you're going to see it crumble, and some of it just flakes off there, but I want you to see how much of it, this is just a wall, and I'm going to pan to the right and zoom in in a moment, and you're going to see, this is all just one of the walls surrounding what had been the courtyard area of the city, but the Jews would have built all that with their labor, and we're back at the temple here.

So, does he fit? Does Amun Optum II fit? And if he does fit, then our Bible is not in threat of being destroyed by false information.
It actually fits with the true reality. Ramesses is not the, if we insist that Ramesses was the Pharaoh, we're going to have trouble backing that with facts, but when we go with the Bible date, here's the interesting thing, if you start with the Bible, it is going to lead you to the accurate information, and the Bible tells us 480 years after the fourth year of Solomon's reign, so we know 966, add the 480, brings us to 1446, and we start from there, then we look who was on the throne. Ah, Amun Optum II, and everything else fits. Okay? Did I say, you can actually see his body there.
So, does he fit? Well, I said three tests we have to prove. He fits the Jewish timeline, so that's correct. His firstborn son did die before him, we have evidence of that, Webinusu, was found in his grave, and then there's at least a 40-year gap of the dynasty before him, which gives that time period of Moses being gone for 40 years.
[21:49] Now, I want to close with a Bible story. Can we get into a Bible story? Is that okay to do that in Sunday school? Take your Bibles, if you would, to Exodus chapter 5 and verse number 8.

Exodus 5 and verse number 8. And I'm calling this the tale of the bricks.
And the reason why, and I really worked hard to find this title. Well, hang on, maybe it's just right there in the Bible. Look at verse number 8. And the tale of the bricks. Hmm, maybe I got it from the Bible.
Okay, maybe I did. The Bible calls this the tale of the bricks. And what are we talking about? Well, let's look at verse number 1. And afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.
And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.

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[22:56] And they said, the God of the Hebrews hath met with us. Let us go, we pray thee, three days journey into the desert and sacrifice unto the Lord our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.

The king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye Moses and Aaron let the people from their works get you unto your burdens?
And Pharaoh said, Behold the people of the land now are many and ye make them rest from their burdens. And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people and their officers saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick as hitherto.
Let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of the bricks which they did make heretofore ye shall lay upon them, ye shall not diminish aught, therefore, for they be idle, therefore, they cry saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God.
And so here we have, imagine you're one of the slaves, one of the people of the children of Israel. Your people have left Canaan land, you came with Jacob, well you didn't, but your ancestors did, because we're about 400 years later, and you make a living, it's not much of a living, at first you all were revered and cared for and honored, but now you've been turned into slaves and they're hard on you, you cry out to God, God deliver us, send someone, make it work, somehow, that we can get out of this mess.
[24:53] And God answers your prayer, and brings you a preacher who's going to deliver you, who says, God has spoken to me, he has heard your prayers and heard your affliction, and God has sent me to see that you go free, and I'm going to go talk to Pharaoh about it.

And the people are probably excited. Won't you be excited? God's heard our prayer, we have a deliverer, God sent us a preacher, woo! And so, we have the first meeting, and things don't turn out as well as they hoped.
The tale of the bricks is some things don't go the way you think they should. Even, basically we could put it this way, when doing right goes wrong.
You ever been there? You're doing what's right, and it's not going good. In fact, it's turning out worse. I can imagine new believers, a new Christian, who realizes God's delivered them from their sin, and from their penalty of their sin.
They don't have to go to hell anymore, and they come to church, and they're excited, they're in the Bible, and they're singing, they're even grabbing their hymnal when they sing.
[26:19] And they're just, I mean, they're giving their all. And you would think that God would reward them and bless them with a nice rosy path, but instead things get difficult.

Things don't go the way that they thought it should. And just getting saved doesn't mean that God's going to give you a golden street to walk on. In fact, he warns us of just the opposite.
He says, if you're going to be a believer, you need to be prepared. There's going to be persecution because people hate me, and they're going to hate you because you love me.
And you're going to have challenges. Your family's not going to like it. They're going to think you've gone loony, and you think that you tell them the good news that you just heard, that they would accept it like you did, and they tell you don't come over here again.
Crazy loony, fanatic. Think when doing good goes wrong. That's what this message is about, the tale of the bricks.
[27:34] And so not only do they have trouble of all their labor and their evil taskmasters, on them, but now they're going to say, all right, we got a new rule.

Because your dude came over here, here's what you're going to get. Because you opened up this Pandora's box, I'm going to teach you a lesson. You're going to continue your work.
You're not going to diminish in the labor and all the goals that we've set for you of how many bricks you're supposed to make a day. But from now on, we're not going to go to the hard work of giving you the straw.
You've got to go fetch it yourself. You've got to go find it and build it yourself. Do you think they're happy with Moses and Aaron now? Absolutely not.
They come to them at the end of this chapter and they lay into them. Man, we thought you were going to help us.
[28:32] But what you've done is you've added extra burden to us. who died and made you boss? Surely there's got to be a better way to handle this.

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What I like about this, because we don't have the time to really go deep into this, but because I want to give some time for questions and answers this morning. But we find at the end of the chapter, here's what Moses does.
Moses shows good leadership here. The people come to him with a real genuine problem. he feels for them. And he doesn't know what to do, so what does he do?
He goes to God. God, what's going on? What gives here? And I'll close with this. Go to the next chapter, chapter 6, and verse number 1.
Then the Lord said unto Moses, now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh, and with a strong hand, shall he let them go.
[29:35] With a strong hand, shall he drive them out of the land. Go, if you would, back to another book. Go to Genesis chapter 15. God said something was going to happen to the children of Abraham.

All the way back during the covenant that God was giving with Abraham. In chapter 15, very interesting chapter in Genesis. But look, if you would, God is confirming this covenant.
When people made a covenant with people, here's how you would do it. What do we do? We go to a lawyer, and we bring our pans and pint of blood, and we sign an agreement in front of a lawyer and someone there to verify our signature, a notary and stuff there, and we seal the deal.
It's a bilateral agreement. You know what they did in the Old Testament days? They would take animals and they would cut them asunder and split them, one half of the animal on this side, the other half on that side there, and eventually they would cook some of that there and have a meal together and seal their agreement.
But then the two of them would walk between the carcasses of these animals, of these sacrifices, thus sealing the deal between two people. Well, God is doing this with Abraham, but before they get ready to walk through, God puts Abraham to sleep.
[31:04] I don't know, maybe he brought in a Baptist preacher and preached to him or something like that, and he fell asleep or something there, but he's gone, he's in a deep sleep, and while he's sleeping, God walks through the sacrifice, basing all the agreement on him.

This is a unilateral agreement. I am going to bless you, I'm going to give you this land, I'm going to do all these things, the covenant is based on my achievement, not yours. So he places it all on him.
While he's asleep, we get this explanation. Look at verse number 13, and yeah, 13 and 14, and he said unto Abraham, know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in the land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them for 400 years.
So they're telling you, your children, your offspring are going to be blessed, but they're going to go to another land, and they're going to be afflicted for 400 years. But get this, and also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge.
And afterward they, and afterward shall they come out with great substance. violence. We find that story in Exodus chapter 12, and I don't want to get bogged down too much in this because I'm going to close.
[32:24] But basically, they came out, not only did they come out with supplies, they came out with great wealth. The Egyptians said, take it, get out, be gone, take whatever you want.

they got to spoil them of their gold, and their silver, and their animals, and everything.
They got to go with great wealth. And God showed them that he's going to deliver them with a mighty hand. Here's the lesson. Things may not go, even though you do write, things may not go well.
But realize this, the final chapter is not being written yet. God's still writing chapters in your life. And God is showing you that you can trust him.
You're going to have difficulty, but good news, God can help you through it. God needs to teach us. You know why you have struggles? You know why you have problems? Because God is trying to show you, to teach you to turn to him, and trust him, and watch him do what you can't do for yourself.
[33:38] These people could not deliver themselves. But God did. And God did in a miraculous way. And again, time after time after time, he had to keep reminding them.

And that happens with us too. Amen? God has to remind you. I love the story of Exodus. Some great things to learn from that. All right. I've got about two or three minutes before I'm told to finish.

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church. So, maybe perhaps you have a question or two about the lesson and some things we talked about or something else. Yes, one new thing that I learned here recently, actually I learned this as I was studying my Bible in Saudi Arabia at Mount Sinai.
They were there at Mount Sinai for two years, two months, and 20 days, the Bible tells us. So, they were there for a long time.
Remember, this is where God gives them the tabernacle and all that. You think they need a good water supply, right? Well, just earlier, around the other side was the split rock of Mount Horeb.
[34:41] That's one of the amazing things to see. That water, when it flowed out, flowed into a canyon. It would have created a lake. And so, the Bible doesn't tell us that it stopped flowing either.

So, I think that God probably continued to supply the water. water for them. You know, there had to be about two million people there that were traveling. The Bible tells us there were 800,000 men above the age of 21.
So, if there's 800,000 men, there's usually equal number of women. And if you have them married, there's probably going to be a couple more children. And so, you know, that's why we get the numbers of estimates about two million there.
But I don't know how long it took for them to, for the day one, that we just read, and the day that they were taken out. But I'll start looking. Or if you start looking and you tell me, and then I'll get to tell other people.
I'm not sure if I'll give you credit for it, but no. Well, I think in the modern day, as the internet is flowing around with critics saying their pieces against Christianity, and a lot of stuff has been thrown at Ramesses, it has forced Christians to say, okay, then if he's not it, why do we think he's it?
[36:07] Oh, well, Ramesses is mentioned. That was a later name for the same city of Avaris. And so, let's start with the Bible, and let's work back.

And when we started doing that, we started coming up with answers. I think it's only been in the last 10 years have we been coming to stronger conclusions of that.
There, so, yeah, so this is kind of new. I mean, how many have heard this before? Okay, just a few of us, okay? So, this information is not widely known there.
And I'm only just starting to, you know, come to terms with it myself. So, yeah, so, you know, of course, from the time of Moses leaving at 1446, then you got to go back 400 years earlier to get to Joseph.
And the Hyksos people and stuff in the northern or the upper, I mean, lower Egypt, always get the lower and upper mixed up.
[37:14] So, we have to go back another 400 years earlier to get to Joseph and stuff. And yeah, we believe that we found the tomb of Joseph or a shrine to him.

And there's a statue that's painted of a foreigner, not an Egyptian, and wearing a coat of many colors. That's out there. I didn't get to go out and see that.
That would be another big expense there. So, more security guards there. I didn't realize I was paying all that for security. But anyhow. Alright.
All right.

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