1. EGYPT – THE OLD KINGDOM

Pharaohs of the Old Kingdom – Dynasties 3-6

About 30 pharaohs ruled during the 500 years we call the Old Kingdom period. They were from four separate dynasties. One of the best known of these is *Djoser (Tsosher)*, the third pharaoh, who built the first *pyramid* and who ruled Egypt about 2650 B.C. (traditional date). During this time the power of the pharaohs was absolute and they were considered as deities -–as *god-kings.*

However, since the Noahic Flood occurred in 2348 B.C. (conservative date), the traditional date must be incorrect. The pyramid could not have withstood the ravages of the Flood.

Toward the end of the fifth dynasty there was some weakening of the Pharaoh’s absolute power. Pharaoh *Pepi I* of the sixth dynasty ruled 94 years, from 2364 to 2270 B.C., giving him the distinction of having the longest reign in history for a single king, but during his reign he experienced much internal strife, and the rise of feudal lords led to anarchy.

Other outstanding Pharaohs of the Old Kingdom were *Khufu, Khafre and Menkaure.*

CITIES OF THE OLD KINGDOM

The city Memphis, a beautiful, white-walled city founded by Menes, continued to be important during the years of the Old Kingdom. The city Heliopolis also rose in importance, along with its patron god, Re, the sun god. By 2450 B.C. (traditional date) the world’s largest cities were all in Egypt: Heliopolis, Memphis, Abydos, Thebes and Aswan.

THE ARCHITECTURE AND PYRAMIDS OF THE OLD KINGDOM

The greatest phenomenon of the Old Kingdom period is the sudden rise of highly sophisticated architecture. One author has said with amazement, “Within a century after the first Pharaoh of the Old Kingdom mounted his throne, Egyptian builders had graduated from sun-baked bricks to highly sophisticated construction in stone, and their artisans were among the earliest to master this difficult technique.”[[1]](#endnote-1) This is practically inexplicable from an evolutionary standpoint, for evolutionary hypothesis demands that techniques be learned gradually over long periods of time and makes no allowance for innate knowledge and ability given by God in the beginning. The sudden rise of the pyramids, one of the great facts of history, fits much better into the Biblical framework of history which assumes people to have been created with innate intelligence, and which recognizes that civilization had reached a high level of sophistication even before the Flood. The survivors brought some of that knowledge with them and passed it on to their descendants. As soon as the demands of life permitted, that ancient dormant knowledge began to be used again.

The first pyramid to be built was the step pyramid, built as a burial place for King Djoser, the third pharaoh of the third dynasty, ca. 2650 (traditional date). It is the oldest freestanding man-made masonry structure in the world. Stone – granite, basalt and quartz -- is plentiful in the Aswan area 450 miles south of Saqqara near the first cataract of the Nile. The hills of Tura on the east bank from Saqqara yield fine, white limestone. People who had previously built the most permanent of their buildings – the mastabas, out of brick, suddenly began constructing immense structures of cut stone. Perhaps that is one of the reasons that Egyptians are considered to have been one of the most industrious of ancient peoples.[[2]](#endnote-2) It is questionable, however, whether this service was the result of industry or of compulsion. One author has observed that peasants were conscripted in groves for the project.[[3]](#endnote-3) The first century B.C. Greek historian Diodorus Siculus described in detail the misery of slaves forced in later years to work in the gold mines of Pharaoh, and we can assume that conscripted laborers were treated no better in earlier days.[[4]](#endnote-4)

Although Djoser is credited with the *step pyramid*, the architectural genius behind the project was *Imhotep,* the high priest of the sun cult at Heliopolils, an accomplished sculptor and chief counselor to Pharaoh.[[5]](#endnote-5) To construct the pyramid, hundreds of thousands of limestone blocks were laid, forming six mastabas of diminishing size, one on top of the other, rising 204 feet into the air. The pyramid is a *ziggurat-*like tower which was expressly intended as “a staircase to heaven” for King Djoser,[[6]](#endnote-6) fearfully reminiscent, both in structure and in purpose, to the Tower of Babel their ancestors had once built on the plain of Shinar. It was part of a temple to the sun-god Re, who was coming into great popularity just at that time, but its primary purpose was to exalt the pharaoh, and to guarantee him not only entrance into eternal bliss, but the glory there that he enjoyed here on earth. The pyramid was built at *Saqqara,* closer to *Memphis* than the original mastabas of the earliest pharaohs.

Djoser built not only the pyramid, but an elaborate complex of temples and courtyards surrounding it, with their entrances facing the rising sun in the east. One large courtyard was reserved especially for the annual *sed,* a ritual re-enactment of the pharaoh’s inauguration, held in h onr of his death. The practice of the annual celebration of death (known in Bantu Africa as “*matanga”* goes back at least to this practice instituted by Djoser.

In the fourth dynasty the Pharaoh *Sneferu* had the step pyramid filled in with rubble and encased in Turan limestone to make it smooth-sided. This act coincided with the emergence of the sun-god *Re* as the country’s dominant deity. Because of this, some have perceived the artistic changes in the pyramid as the representing a sunburst in stone.

The *Great Pyramid of Giza* was built by Cheops or Khufu about 2680 B.C. (traditional date) with 2.3 million colossal stone blocks. Its religious interior has been called a Bible in stone by some, predicting in pictorial and pagan terms the end of the world. Some studying the measurements of the Great Pyramid feel that it displays such unusual knowledge of the earth and of astronomy, such precise measurements, and such mathematical prophecy that it could only have been constructed with divine intervention. Josephus suggested that Abram’s visit to Egypt likely explains Egypt’s sudden advance. He wrote that Abram “communicated to them (the Egyptians) arithmetic, and delivered to them the science of astronomy; for before Abram came into Egypt they were unacquainted with those parts of learning; for that science came from the Chaldeans into Egypt.” [[7]](#endnote-7)Some say that the mathematics of its construction points to both the time and the birthplace of Christ—a kind of early prophecy before the first parts of the Bible were ever written.[[8]](#endnote-8)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE OLD KINGDOM

Science and technology advanced quickly in the Old Kingdom. Although Egyptian concern for science was not one of discovering principles, nor of understanding, appreciating and properly administrating the world God made, the solving of the practical problems of life[[9]](#endnote-9) and of the building of the pyramids forced technology forward.

Observation of the Nile for purposes of *flood control* resulted in refinements in the old solar calendar and the adoption of what some have regarded as the first modern calendar, from which our own is derived.[[10]](#endnote-10) Egyptian metallurgists developed the blast furnace for smelting *copper* and *gold* during this time, and gold jewelry was worn by the wealthy from about 2500 B.C. (traditional date) on. The beginnings of *glassworking* also appeared – at first only beads.[[11]](#endnote-11) Chemistry also started in Old Egypt, getting its name from kemi, the ancient name of Egypt meaning “black,” which many have thought to refer to the black alluvial soil of the Nile valley.[[12]](#endnote-12)

Egyptian *medicine* was especially highly developed for the ancient world. The earliest known physician was Imhotep, 2700 B.C. (traditional date). The principal extant medical papyri date from 2000 to 1300 B.C. (traditional dates),but they are copies, meaning that the originals were written earlier, very likely in Old Kingdom times. Many medical texts have been recovered from the Temple of Imhotep at Memphis. Bone surgery was exceptionally well developed. *Hippocrates, Galen,* and other ancient European physicians studied these medical texts, so that in a real sense it was Africa that taught Europe its first elements of medicine.[[13]](#endnote-13)

MUSIC AND THE ARTS IN THE OLD KINGDOM

From earliest times, *music* had played a large part in the total lives of the Egyptian people. The child sang his lessons rather than reciting them, and adults sang as they worked. Rhythm was prominent in their music, as were *choirs* and *dances.[[14]](#endnote-14)* All the Egyptian buildings were painted with brilliant *colors,* showing concern for beauty.

AGRICULTURE IN THE OLD KINGDOM

Egyptians of the Old Kingdom *domesticated* many animals and even attempted to domesticated cranes, gazelles and hyenas, but later this spirit of experimentation died out. Agriculture was developed, and cows were used for plowing.

RELATIONS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD IN THE OLD KINGDOM

The region of *Nubia,* Kush, *Meroe* and Ethiopia, immediately to the south of Egypt, was of interest to Egypt from earliest times because it was a region rich in gold. Indeed, much of the gold of the Pharaohs came from this region. Beginning in the sixth dynasty, Egypt made raids into northern Nubia. The region of *Sudan* just to the west of Nubia was also rich in gold. Beginning in the fourth dynasty, Egypt began to raid the Sudan to obtain gold and slaves. This area was likely the source of the darker skinned blacks who served in the Egyptian army during the sixth dynasty. Egypt also traded regularly with Eastern Punt (Somaliland), on the eastern coast of Africa. They made commercial-exploratory expeditions to Punt during the fifth and sixth dynasties. Wars between Egypt and Libya in the desert to the west began in the third dynasty. Egypt’s main non-African relations during the Old Kingdom were with the Semitic and Hamitic tribes of the nearby Sinai. Egypt conducted raids and conquered parts of the Sinai during the fourth dynasty, and raids continued throughout the fifth and sixth dynasties as well.

RELIGION IN THE OLD KINGDOM

It has been estimated that by the time of the Old Kingdom, two to three thousands “gods” were worshiped by the Egyptians, each city having its own deities. Yet they did also believe in the existence of a supreme being[[15]](#endnote-15) whom they called *neter” or “nether”,* meaning “the *unknown.”[[16]](#endnote-16)* The God who made them and who saved their ancestors from destruction in the Flood had become but a dim memory. He seemed far away because of their rebellion and participation in the antichrist Isis-Osiris-Horus cult had indeed removed them far from His presence, power, and blessing, although God still loved them and longed to make Himself known to them. This distant God was later referred to in the Egyptian *book of moral precepts.[[17]](#endnote-17)*

Another of the Egyptian deities, *Amon,* carried a similar idea of unknowness. “Amon” means hidden, and was considered an invisible spirit, sometimes thought of as the breath that animates all living things, a conception reminiscent of the creation story of Genesis. Amon was sometimes represented by various animals, showing that if his origin was a dim memory of God, that idea had been corrupted.

During the first four dynasties, the last two of which were in the Old Kingdom, people worshipped the pharaohs as their god king, the incarnation of Horus, part of the Isis cult[[18]](#endnote-18) that originated at Babylon. Ironically, an immense, unfinished statue of “Osiris, Lord of Eternity,” has lain for 2,000 years in a granite quarry near Aswan, like the unfinished tower of Babylon, a mute testimony to the folly of mortals making their own gods.[[19]](#endnote-19) During the fifth dynasty, the sun-god Re gained ascendancy, but as we have seen, this was but another aspect of the same cult. Primarily, however, during the Old Kingdom, each city had its own patron deities and its own priests to serve them. These priests provided for the daily “needs” of the gods, who were assumed to have the same needs and wishes as human beings.[[20]](#endnote-20)

Probably the local deities were in fact what are known today as *“territorial spirits” t*hat is, *demonic rulers* over geographic and ethnic units of humanity, probably going back to Babel. As the ancestors at that time and in later times gave place to demonic spirits through sin and rebellion, demonic spirits gained the right to rule them, appearing as sacred or mystical animals or in the form of demon-possessed humans such as the pharaohs. It is no accident that many of the place names associated with early Africa can be found in any Encyclopedia of Mythology as the name of *Arapas, and Atlas.*

In addition, many ancient names of individuals are also associated with pagan gods: *Memnon,* king of Ethiopia, *Amphitemis (Garamus),* a Libyan chieftain; Atlas, king of Mauretainia, Battus Aristoteles), king of Cyrene; *Capharirus,* a Libyan shepherd; *Cassiopeia,* daughter of Arabus who married *Cepheus,* king of Ethiopia; and *Cleopatra,* one of 50 daughters of Idanaus, *king of Libya, who married one of 50 sons of Aegyptus.* Of course it is extremely difficult to determine where historical personages end and where demonic entities begin, especially in light of the principle we have already established that demonic entities reincarnate themselves over and over and take different forms and different names in different places and at different times. Still, there seems to be adequate evidence to suggest that powerful territorial spirits have been at work over several regions of Africa from the beginning of human habitation there, and that they have frequently possessed the bodies and souls of human rulers over these groups, while at other time appearing as local deities under the form of idols and/or totem or sacred animals who must be worshipped and appeased.

In addition to these ruling spirits, the ancients also had *gods for various occupations –* spirits who guided and taught them in those occupations. It seems likely that these *spirit guides,* having *supernatural knowledge* inferior to God’s but far superior to human’s knowledge, offered shortcuts to ruling over nature in the way God intended. Thus, in addition to innate human knowledge, they may have had access to supernatural demonic knowledge of the universe, which they exploited in building great monuments to those spirits. Certainly their guiding leaders – the Pharaohs and pagan priests – were demonically possessed and thus capable of superhuman feats.

In Biblical terms the struggle for ascendance between local deities is not hard to understand. Satan’s kingdom is always one of selfishness, pride and strife. The bitter power struggles were inherent in the nature of the demonic gods themselves and represented real, if unseen struggles in the spirit world, into which human beings were often caught up. God told Jeremiah He would bring punishment on the gods of Egypt (Jer. 46:25). This implies they were real, living entities. The prophet Isaiah wrote that “the idols of Egypt tremble” before the Lord (Isa. 19:11).

 Yet in some of the gods, we can see faint glimpses of the ancient Faith, corrupted by pagan influences. *Ptah,* for example, the god of Memphis, was believed to have created the world by acts of his heart and tongue, denoting articulate intelligence and will in Creation.[[21]](#endnote-21) Priests of Hieropolis attributed Creation to Atum, who was identified as the sun-god Re. They thought of Creation as the appearance of light in the darkness, another concept that harks back to the historical fact.[[22]](#endnote-22) Almost all Egyptians pictured Creation as an earthen mound rising out of the Chaos of the primordial waters.

While it has been suggested that they were influenced by the annual emergence of high points along the river out of the receding Nile Flood, one cannot help but notice also the similarity of this with the historical reality recorded in Genesis 1:2.[[23]](#endnote-23) These similarities with Biblical historical truth are not, of course, contradictory with the idea that the gods were really demonic spirits. Demons would know the Biblical, historical truth, and would seek to use it for their own purposes, distorting it as needed. It has been said that poison is easier to swallow when mixed with a familiar drink.

The importance of the Nile in Egyptian religion cannot be questioned or over-emphasized. The people made great offerings to the river when it flooded in hopes of securing a good crop and a bountiful harvest.[[24]](#endnote-24) As we have seen, the Nile itself was the name of one of their gods. Since Menes was worshipped as the incarnation of Horus immediately after his conquest of the Nile and thus of the northern kingdom, it is entirely possible that he sold himself to the antichrist Isis spirit at that time in return for the wisdom and ability to harness the Nile. It is certain he did not seek that help from God. If so, that act could have provided the door through which the antichrist spirit gained the right to rule in Egypt. Each year, the spirit gave them their gifts from the river he controlled – for a very high price.

In keeping with demonic religion, the Egyptian viewpoint was *fatalistic* . Nothing was to be questioned. The world was made by the gods, they believed, just as it should be. Everything was fixed, eternal, proper. War, pestilence, and drought were just temporary upsets.[[25]](#endnote-25) They entirely overlooked issues of righteousness and the reality of sin as the violation of the moral standard of God.

The ancient Egyptians considered fish as either unclean or as too sacred to be eaten, probably as a result of the fish-god aspect of the Isis-Osiris cult. Certain fish were sacred animals to certain local districts, and the hieroglyph for fish is synonymous with *“abomination.”* However, many hungry peasants ignored the religious rules of the elite, fished and ate their catches.[[26]](#endnote-26)

As we study the remains of ancient Egypt, it seems to many that ancient Egyptians loved life and pictured death as its happy continuance, even though their forefathers had learned that God can and does interrupt the flow of human history in judgment. It is frequently observed that they prepared elaborately for death,[[27]](#endnote-27) or perhaps in defiance of it. But much of this preparation was made by the Pharaoh, the demon-controlled ruler. The common people could be buried in pits upon the death of Pharaoh to serve him in the afterlife. From the earliest Pharaohs on, *mortuary temples* and soon after pyramids were designed to last forever.[[28]](#endnote-28) One might see in the mastabas and especially later in the pyramids, a defiant attempt to deny the supremacy of God and His right to give, to order, and to take our lives. The pharaoh was worshipped as god, and it seems he was determined to give the impression at least, that he was eternal. In the pyramids, the demon spirit that inhabited the body of the ruler continued to be honored long after his death, indeed, it seems, the intention was that it should be honored forever.

Another possible sign of rebellion against the original revelation of God is found in the fact that *shepherds* were considered n abomination to the Egyptians (Genesis 46:34). Since a *lamb* was one of the prime sacrificial animals established by God, this may well show a rebellion against the whole sacrificial system as established by God, although both human and animal lives were freely sacrificed at the burial of a Pharaoh.

We know that during this period of time between Babel and Abraham, there was a remnant of people who were faithful to God, although it is unknown to what extent the faithful might have been found on the African continent. Job, thought to have lived about this time to the south of Israel near to Egypt, was recognized by everyone in his area as a faithful, godly man.[[29]](#endnote-29) At the time of Abraham, which occurs at the very beginning of the Middle Kingdom, *Melchesidek,* king of Salem (Jerusalem), is also recognized as being a righteous man and a believer in the true God, although all the kings around him are wicked men. There is, of course, Abraham himself. These few glimpses provide some hope that here and there, a few individuals or small groups of people may have been true to God through this time, although their rulers had almost universally sold out to the antichrist spirit. If so, they were undoubtedly witness to God in the areas where they lived.

1. Casson, Lionel, ANCIENT EGYPT (Time-Life Books, New York, 1965), p. 13. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Casson, p. 14. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. THE AGE OF GOD-KINGS, p. 60. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Diodorus Siculus, HISTORIES, Bk III, Ch. 1, translated by G. Booth (J. Davis,

Military Chronicle Office, London 1884). Quoted in detail in PANORAMA OF THE

PAST, pp. 23-24. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. THE AGE OF GOD-KINGS, p. 60. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. THE AGE OF GOD-KINGS, p. 60-63. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Josephus, Flavius, The Works of Josephus: New Updated Edition, Book 1, chapter 8, as translated by William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), p. 39. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. “The Great Pyramid”, republished for internet with permission of Art Bell, first appearing in Art Bell’s newsletter, AFTER DARK Vol. 1 No. 3, March 1995. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Anderson, Clifford N., The Fertile Crescent, (Sylvester Press: Fort Lauderrdale, FL, 1972), p. 206 [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Casson, p. 31. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Anderson, Clifford N. THE FERTILE CRESCENT, (Sylvester Press, Fort Lauderdale,

FL, 1972),. P. 206. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Anderson, p. 320.
 [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Anderson, pp. 319-320. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Budge, E.A. Wallis, THE DWELLERS ON THE NILE, The Life, History, Religion and Literature of the Ancient Egyptians, (Dover Publ., New York, 1977). [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Budge, E.A. Wallis, The Dwellers on the Nile, (The Life, History, Religion and Literature of the Ancient Egyptians),, (Dover Publications: New York, 1977), p. 202, 208.
 [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Budge, p. 202, 208. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Budge, p. 31. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Hislop, The Two Babylons
 [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Casson, p. 26.
 [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Casson, p. 78. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Casson, p. 74. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Casson, p. 74. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Casson, p. 74. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Casson, p. 36. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Casson, p. 75. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Casson, p. 43. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Casson, p. 14.
 [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Casson, p. 17.
 [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Confer the book of Job in the Bible. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)