

IN A COFFIN IN EGYPT

Jonathan Gray

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In Search of Prime Minister Joseph

We trudged over the scorched sand of the desert – amid Egypt's oldest ruins.

Through the friendly influence of Dr Ali Hassan, Egyptian Director of Antiquities, my wife Josephine and I were now to descend into tunnels far beneath the earth.

We had first to break wax seals on two doors.

Soon we were in ancient chambers 110 feet under the desert.

The walls were lined with shimmering blue tiles.

Sadly, salt crystals had begun to invade the ancient walls. In fact, salt was attacking many of the old stone monuments of Egypt. And this tunnel system was not escaping that destruction. We wondered, Who used these tunnels 4,000 years ago? Why were they constructed?

Egypt boasts a glorious past.

Some 900 miles upstream from the mouth of the Nile sits Abu Simbel.

Nowhere else in Egypt, perhaps nowhere else on earth, is there anything like Abu Simbel.

In the 13th century BC, on the banks of the Nile, Ramses II commanded his architects to build two magnificent temples from adjacent pinkish sandstone cliffs. The work is said to have taken up to 15 years.

In one cliff Ramses carved out a jewel-like temple dedicated to his beautiful wife Nefertari.

In another cliff just 100 steps distant, workmen smoothed away the surface to a height of 108 feet and there carved 4 colossal 67 foot figures, all seated, all alike, of Ramses himself. Each would weigh 1,200 tons.

Tunnelling 200 feet inside the cliff, the builders then hollowed out great halls. Chamber after chamber they adorned with carvings of great beauty.

Here the ideals of the Egyptian sculpture, grandeur, and solemnity, are carried to perfection.

One may imagine the pomp that attended the dedication of this temple – the beat of drums, the blast of trumpets, and the clanging of other musical instruments, as the monarch and his queen led the procession, followed by the priests.

For a while after Ramses' death, the priests continued to maintain the temples. But by 1000 BC, Lower Nubia had begun to fade from the pages of history – and the sands of the Western Desert started to invade the Great Temple.

Abu Simbel had obviously been forgotten by classical times, else it would surely have been listed as one of the seven wonders of the world.

In 668 BC, two Greek mercenaries climbed the sandhills to carve their names on the statues.

In 1813, 2,500 years later!, Swiss traveller John Burckhardt travelled far up the Nile and stumbled upon this remote spot.

He gasped as he saw the tops of four immense statues poking out of the sand.

In 1817, Giovanni Belzani, an Italian who disguised himself as an Arab, penetrated the sand barrier. He went in, with torches.

Eventually much of the sand was cleared away from the front, outside.

In the 1870s, Amelia Edwards visited, and wrote about her visit.

The Interior

Inside is a dim chamber where two lines of towering figures of the Pharaoh as Osiris confront one another across the central aisle.

Still deeper, and much darker, is the inner shrine where the king sits side by side with the supreme gods Amon, Horus and Ptah.

At Dawn

At any time Abu Simbel is an awesome sight, but at the moment of dawn it is incredible.

When the rising sun tops the mountains across the river and flashes full on the façade, the figure of the sun god seems animated by the sudden light, as though to step forward to greet the morning.

The first rays briefly shine through the entry, penetrating the darkness to strike the four gloomy deities 180 feet within the bowels of the mountain.

Famous Names

Ramses is one famous name from ancient Egypt.

Another is Tutankhamen, who was buried in a 6 million dollar coffin!

However, Tutankhamen is famous for the reason that his was the only unspoilt royal grave found in our time.

While other tombs had been robbed long ago, Tutankhamen's tomb was hidden by rubble. It was discovered in 1922.

Despite the unbelievable wealth found stored in his tomb, Tutankhamen was a comparatively minor personage in ancient Egyptian history.

However, in the 3rd Dynasty, there does appear a most incredible individual in the ancient records, a man called "Im-Hotep".

Our archaeological team in Egypt has come face to face with many surprises. Among the most amazing of them all is this man Im-Hotep (Imhotep).

The story of Imhotep uncannily parallels the story of the biblical Joseph.

Of course, scholars have claimed that there is no evidence that the biblical stories actually occurred, that there is no evidence that the ancestors of the Jews ever lived in Egypt, or that Joseph ever lived.

However, I shall share with you an astonishing story...

I have called it...

In a Coffin in Egypt

For many years, Egyptologists had even doubted that Imhotep had been a real person. They found it difficult to believe the various accomplishments credited to him.

Imhotep has been termed the ‘Leonardo da Vinci’ of ancient Egypt, but he was more than that. Da Vinci gained the reputation of genius, Imhotep was eventually elevated to the status of a god.

The historian Manetho wrote that “during his reign [that is, the reign of Djoser of the 3rd Dynasty], lived Imouthes, i.e. Imhotep, who, because of his medical skill has the reputation of Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine, among the Egyptians and who was the inventor of the art of building with hewn stone.”

Now it was this statement that caused specialists to doubt the existence of a real man named Imhotep.

But in 1926, the question was settled once and for all. Imhotep was a real man. When excavations were carried out at the Step Pyramid at Sakkara, south of Cairo, fragments of a statue of Pharaoh Djoser were found.

The base was inscribed with the names of Djoser and of “Imhotep, Chancellor of the King of Lower Egypt, Chief under the King, Administrator of the Great Palace, Hereditary Lord, High Priest of Heliopolis, Imhotep the Builder, the Sculptor, the Maker of Stone Vases...”.

Second in Command

Is this an echo of the biblical Joseph? Notice how the Bible describes his high rank under the Pharaoh:

“Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” (*Genesis 41:40,43,44*)

It sounds as if Joseph was the first person ever given such an honour by a Pharaoh.

Who was this Joseph?

Anyway, who was this Joseph?

Joseph is perhaps best known to readers of the Bible epic as that young Hebrew lad whose father made for him a multi-coloured coat. He was one of twelve brothers.

The elder brothers had long hated Joseph because he was their father's "favourite".

To make it worse, Joseph told his brothers of some dreams he had had. "Listen to this dream," said Joseph. "We were binding sheaves of grain. And lo, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And, behold, your sheaves stood around and bowed down to my sheaf."

His brothers retorted, "Shall you really reign over us?" And they hated him more, for his dreams, and his words.

And Joseph related yet another dream to them: "Look, the sun and the moon, our Dad and Mum, and eleven stars, you, my brothers, bowed down to me."

The time came when Jacob sent his son Joseph to visit his ten elder brothers, who were away tending their fathers' flocks. The brothers conspired to get rid of Joseph. They first tossed him into a dry pit, but later took him out and sold him to some passing merchants who were en route to Egypt.

The brothers then dipped Joseph's coat in animal blood and reported to the old father that his son must have been killed by a wild animal.

Meanwhile Joseph was dragged to Egypt.

In Egypt, Joseph was sold to a man named Potipher, captain of the Pharaoh's guard. This man grew to admire Joseph.

When, however, Joseph resisted the advances of Potipher's wife, she accused him of a sexual attack and Joseph ended up in prison.

It was while in prison that Joseph shared time with a butler and a baker, both of whom had been in the service of the king. On the same night both men had dreams which Joseph interpreted, informing the butler that

he would be restored to royal favour, but that the baker was to die. And this is what happened.

Meanwhile, Joseph remained in prison, forgotten. It occurred that sometime later when the king himself had a dream which greatly troubled him, the butler remembered Joseph and told the Pharaoh.

Joseph was summoned from the prison and brought into the king's presence, where he was asked to interpret the king's dream. Joseph informed the king that there were to come upon Egypt 7 years of prosperity followed by a 7-year famine. Joseph gave credit to God for the information. And he suggested to the Pharaoh how to prepare for the famine.

The Pharaoh was so impressed by Joseph's wisdom that he not only liberated this foreigner, but installed him in a position of influence.

Joseph's main position was that of a prime minister.

And this is where we come back to Imhotep. The man known as Imhotep appears to be the first who could boast of such a broad range of authority in ancient Egypt.

7-Year Famine

There are records of many, many viziers throughout Egyptian history, but the first evidence which connects Imhotep with Joseph is an amazing inscription found carved on a large rock of the island of Sihiel just below the First Cataract of the Nile.

The inscription claims to be a copy of a document written by Djoser in the 18th year of his reign, this copy being written over 1,000 years after the events it claims to be relating. It goes on to tell of a 7 year famine and 7 years of plenty.

Here we have an inscription which tells a story of Pharaoh Djoser asking his vizier, Imhotep, to help him with the problem of a great 7 year famine.

Imhotep tells him he must consult the god because the answer is not in him.

Then the Pharaoh dreams a dream which foretells the event.

Next follow 7 years of plenty, which is reverse from the biblical account. The Pharaoh levies a tax on all of the population except for the priesthood.

All of the components of the biblical account are present in this inscription, except that the story has been “Egyptian-ised” to fit their religious beliefs.

In the early 1980s, my friend Ron Wyatt was shown the tombs of two officials from the reign of the Pharaoh Djoser, and the inscriptions of the officials both state that they “collected grain for a 7 year famine”. But, by the mid-80s, both of these tombs were closed.

Significance of His Name

The name “Imhotep”, in ancient Egyptian, is translated to mean “the voice, or mouth, of Im”. However, there is no record of a god in Egypt called “Im”.

But in the ancient Scriptures is the God “I Am”.

“And God said unto Moses, I am that I am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you.” (*Ex. 3:14*)
“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.” (*John 8:58*)

God Told Moses, “Tell the Pharaoh that “I Am” has sent you”. It appears that “I Am” was the name by which the Egyptians had known Joseph’s God. Could “Im” have been “I Am”?

The name that the Bible says was given to Joseph by the Pharaoh, “Zaphenath-paneah”, has been translated by some to mean, “the God lives; the God speaks”. Since we do not fully understand the meaning of the Egyptian “Hotep”, it is quite possible that the translation of Imhotep, “The voice of I am”, is identical to the biblical name of Joseph, “the God lives; the God speaks”.

Physician

Imhotep is the earliest physician whose historical records survive. And although Joseph isn’t mentioned as being a physician, the Bible gives one very important clue to this:

“And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel.” (*Gen. 50:2*)

Here the physicians are specifically stated to be under Joseph.

But later, when Imhotep became established as the “god of healing”, it is the **manner** in which he healed that ties him directly to Joseph. Ancient Greek writings mention a great sanctuary at Memphis where people came from everywhere to seek cures from Imhotep. They would pray to him, make offerings and then spend the night in this sanctuary, which was a sort of Lourdes of ancient Egypt.

While they were sleeping, the god Imhotep was said to come to people in their dreams and cure them. Is there a connection between Joseph and dreams?

Remember, it was Joseph’s dream about him and his brothers binding sheaves, that was one of the causes of their great jealousy of him, after he related to them that he had dreamt their sheaves stood up and bowed to his. “And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words... Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.” (*Gen.37:8,20*)

In the records, Imhotep was associated with doing good by means of dreams. So was Joseph.

Wisdom

The biblical account also speaks of Joseph’s wisdom:

“And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art.” (*Gen.41:39*)

Again, the evidence points to Imhotep. Imhotep was also revered for his wisdom. In several inscriptions from much later times, reference is made to the “words of Imhotep”. For example, in *Song from the Tomb of King Intef*, we read: “I have heard the words of Imhotep and Hardedef...”, and it goes on to explain that their “sayings” were recited in his day.

It could be that after Joseph’s death, others copied his wise sayings and took credit for them, perhaps adding a bit of their own and changing things to suit them. As these sayings were passed down through several generations, instead of being attributed to Imhotep, they were attributed to Ptahotep, “the voice of” the Egyptian creator, “Ptah”.

Lived 110 Years

At the end of these Egyptian manuscripts, the writer states that he is near death, having lived 110 years, and that he received honours from the king exceeding those of his ancestors, in other words, he received the most honours ever given a man by a Pharaoh.

Notice the biblical parallel concerning Joseph: “And Joseph lived 110 years.” (*Gen.50:22*)

Not a Member of Pharaoh’s Family

Standard practice was for the Pharaoh always to appoint men to office as soon as he took the throne, with family members being the highest ranked.

Imhotep was not Djoser’s vizier earlier in his reign. In fact, no mention is made at all of Imhotep on Djoser’s earlier monuments. The architect of Djoser’s tomb built at Beit Khallaf, which was probably undertaken soon after he became king, was not Imhotep. In this earlier tomb, which is similar to those of preceding dynasties, there are clay sealings of jars which record Djoser’s name, his mother’s name, and the names of numerous other officials from his reign, but not Imhotep’s, which indicates that Imhotep had not yet been appointed to his position.

In some inscriptions, his titles indicate that he was not a member of the royal family, but a ‘self-made man’.

All available information about Imhotep continues to point to his identification with Joseph.

Priest of On, Heliopolis

Imhotep was also “priest of Heliopolis”, the biblical “On”.

Now, in the story of Joseph, we learn that his father-in-law was the “priest of On” at the time of Joseph’s marriage: “And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On.” (*Gen.41:45*)

The original reading of this text is not “priest” of On, but “Prince” of On. Joseph married the daughter of the Prince of On.

Joseph’s Canal

The town of Medinet-el-Faiyum, 80 miles (128 kilometers) south of Cairo, in the middle of the fertile Faiyum oasis, is extolled as the 'Venice of Egypt'.

In its lush gardens grow oranges, mandarins, peaches, olives, pomegranites and grapes.

Faiyum owes these delicious fruits to the artificial canal, over 200 miles (320 kilometers) long, which brings in Nile water and turns this region, otherwise desert, into a paradise.

This canal ran parallel to the Nile northward to permit the flood waters of the Nile to flow into a natural basin. When the flood state was past, the impounded waters could be returned to the Nile by means of a second, shorter canal. Examination of the remnants of this system indicates that it could well have doubled the tillable soil of the Nile Valley through which it passed.

The ancient canal is called by the fellahin (farmers), "Bahr Yusuf", "Joseph's canal". It is known by this name throughout Egypt. It is so named on modern maps. The farmers say it was the Joseph of the Bible, Pharaoh's "Grand Vizier", who planned it.

During the 7 years of plenty, Egypt was able to prepare extra grain, which was harvested and placed in enormous grain pits especially dug below the ground level.

Later, during the 7 year famine, food-seekers converged on Egypt to purchase supplies.

Architect of the First Pyramid

It was Imhotep who is credited with having designed the first pyramid and building in hewn stone instead of all mud brick.

If we look closely at ancient Egyptian history, we can see evidence that it was during the time of Djoser that Egypt became a truly great nation; after all, it had gathered the wealth of all the surrounding nations by selling them grain during the famine.

Great Administrative Centre

And during the 7 years of plenty, the people, under Joseph's wise guidance, began to organise a great administrative centre which would handle the selling of the grain to all the surrounding nations.

A large complex was built which contained the future burial site of the Pharaoh, but also included a walled-in centre which contained huge grain bins.

The Sakkara Center

The Sakkara complex was part of the sprawling metropolis of Memphis, the royal capital.

It contained what is today termed the Step Pyramid.

Surrounding the Step Pyramid and its complex is a very beautiful and elaborate wall.

At the main entrance on the east wall at the southern end, one enters a long hall of 40 columns, 20 on each side.

Each column is shaped as a cob of corn, and the individual segments of golden coloured corn can be seen. This hints at the purpose of the building.

Each column is connected to the main wall by a perpendicular wall, forming small "rooms" between each column.

Large Pits

As you exit this colonnade and walk straight ahead, you come to a series of very large pits which extend deep into the earth. These are extremely large in size – I estimate them at perhaps 60 feet by 40 feet, by 100 feet deep - much larger than any burial chambers.

Walking past one of the pits, I asked a guide, "What do you think this is?" He replied, "Oh that was a tomb, to bury someone in!"

However, I shall tell you now that these pits are all centrally accessible by a connecting tunnel, extend to well above ground level, and one has a staircase extending down to the bottom.

For this reason, we know that they were not built as tombs. If they were, they would have been constructed underground and they certainly would not have been so incredibly large. These massive structures extend to well above ground level, which indicates that they were not hidden, as were tombs. Because the ancient Egyptians buried their dead with so much valuable material and provisions for their “afterlife”, plundering of tombs was always their biggest fear. Therefore, we know that these massive pits had another purpose.

Also, in the cities of other ancient civilisations, whenever large bins such as these were uncovered, they were recognised as “storage bins”, but in Egypt, the scholars tend to term everything they find a “tomb”.

However, in the Pharaoh’s burial complex under the pyramid, we find matching bins for the king’s and his family’s afterlife, and in these bins were found grain and other food stuffs.

Joseph the Administrator

In the biblical account, we learn that Joseph appointed men throughout the land of Egypt to oversee the gathering and storing of the grain in all the cities, during the 7 years of plenty.

Later, during the famine, it was he who gave the orders for the distribution of the grain.

“The famine was over all the face of the earth: and Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians.” (*Gen.41:56*)

But when foreigners came to purchase grain, they went to Joseph the governor. When Joseph’s brothers came to Egypt to buy grain, they would eventually find themselves bowing to Joseph.

The Sakkara Bins

We believe it is Sakkara to which they came, where the remains of this fantastic complex are preserved. And it was here that Pharaoh Djoser had 11 extremely large pits constructed which can only be grain storage bins.

Every city had stored grain from its region, but at this complex at Sakkara, we have these massive pits which would have stored an incredible amount of grain – more than a single city would have needed.

At the entrance to the complex, as we described earlier, are 40 small cubicles, each just the right size to hold a single person who could administer the receipt of payment from people coming to purchase grain.

They would then have received their bags of grain.

The design of the pits is impressive... There are 11 of them, with only one containing a very elaborate stairway extending all the way to the bottom. All the pits are connected to each other by a subterranean tunnel. The pits were filled and the tops were sealed with wooden timbers and stone. And all of the grain could be accessed from one entrance. And there is one entrance into the pits from outside the wall enclosure of the complex.

And did you know, grain was found in the floor of these pits.

Unique

The complex at Sakkara is unique. No complex like it has ever been found.

A great deal has been written about this complex, and most mention the uniqueness of it, something they cannot explain.

I suggest to you that the circumstantial evidence fits the story of Joseph perfectly.

The Search for Imhotep's Tomb

We know from the biblical account that Joseph died in Egypt and was embalmed and placed in a coffin:

“So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.” (*Gen.50.26*)

“In a Coffin in Egypt”.

But, when the children of Israel left Egypt some two centuries later, at the time of the Exodus, Joseph's bones were taken with them:

“And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.” (*Ex.13:19*)

One of the big mysteries for Egyptologists has been the tomb of Imhotep: they simply cannot find it, although they know it should be somewhere in Sakkara. In the *Guidebook to Sakkara* by Jill Kamil, “The Tomb of Imhotep” is listed as a subject heading, only to explain that it has not been found.

Now suppose that Imhotep was Joseph, and if Joseph’s body was taken away, could it be that his tomb was possibly taken over and used by someone else? And would this not wipe out the original identity of the tomb from being that of Imhotep?

Some Clues to the Location of Imhotep’s Tomb

Ancient Greek texts spoke of a place near Memphis where people came to worship “Imhotep” and be healed.

Excavators at Sakkara, working very near the Step Pyramid, have found an incredible labyrinth of underground tunnels. These were full of mummified ibis and bulls.

Over the centuries, great waves of sand had swept in from the Sahara Desert and completely covered the area until in 1850, the French archaeologist Mariette discovered the place where the sacred bulls were buried. The wind blowing over the shifting sand had exposed a small opening.

The bulls were in coffins of solid granite polished as smooth as glass. Their average weight is 150 tons!

The Egyptians, of course, were pagans, who worshipped many different animals as gods.

Inscriptions and coins found here show that people came here to be healed!

What had just been found, then, was the famous “sanctuary to Imhotep” written of by the Greeks.

After the deification of Imhotep by the Egyptians as “god of medicine”, he was given the title, “Chief One of the Ibis”, and this was the connection of this labyrinth with Imhotep.

The hundreds of thousands of ibis that were mummified and brought here, filling these tunnels, were a tribute to Imhotep.

Connected to A Pit and Funerary Chamber

These galleries, it was later found, were connected to a pit, and the pit extended down to a funerary chamber which contained an empty coffin. The chamber belonged to a large mastaba tomb.

And in the tomb's storerooms were jars whose clay stoppers had the seal impression of Pharaoh Djoser!

Here is absolute proof that this was the tomb of a very important person of Djoser's reign.

No inscriptions were found on the walls and the sarcophagus was empty. But even more importantly, this mastaba is oriented to the north instead of to the east, as the other pyramids are. This was an important tomb of someone from Djoser's time, but the sarcophagus was empty, and it had titles applicable to Joseph on it!

There was even found an inscription by an anonymous Greek who came here, telling how he was cured, and it was through a dream!

Once again, the evidence speaks loudly of a wonderful story from the Bible, the story of Joseph.

The Prison Pyramid

The pyramid of Teta, first king of Dynasty 6, is called by the local populace "The Prison Pyramid". Local tradition says that it is built near the ruins of the prison where Joseph was confined. The pyramid is located near Sakkara, in a likely area for such imprisonment...

Egypt in Prophecy

Joseph "the dreamer" saved Egypt by a prophecy which he claimed was from God. The prophecy was very specific.

Did you know, the Bible contains some 1,000 prophecies, some concerning Egypt, which reach thousands of years into the future, to our day.

Of course, I have to concede that we humans can be sure of nothing even seconds ahead, just ask any horse punter!

You may have heard of the wealthy King Croesus, who went to visit the oracle of Delphi. He wanted to know whether he should fight the Persians.

The “wise” oracle told him that “by crossing the Halys, Croesus will destroy a mighty power.”

Croesus took this as a prophecy that he would destroy the great Persian army.

So he went into battle. But he was defeated. Yes, he did destroy a mighty power, his own! Whichever way the battle went, the augury would be true.

Human prophecy, I have found, is much like that.

“A Challenge”

But here is something different.

In scanning through these biblical prophecies I noticed that the Bible writers throw out a challenge to us. They have written something a little strange. They assert that if you want to know whether the Bible came out of the fertile minds of men, or whether it was “dictated” to man by God, there is an acid test you can apply. That test is prophecy.

From my own research, I uncovered something that staggered me. Bible prophecy is as far from human prediction as midday is from midnight. You can check this out yourself: Bible prophecies are specific.

“So that you will know I am God,” comes the challenge, “I am going to give you the ‘game plan’ of history before it happens. Test it.”
(*Isa.46:9,10; 41:21-23*)

And then? “Somebody” proceeds to give us a thousand or more predictive prophecies, dealing not merely with broad, general outlines, but often with minute details. Centuries pass. Suddenly events start happening, and a great variety of predictions, highly improbably when given, are progressively fulfilled.

Now, as we have just noted, we all know that no man can predict world history. We can only guess.

So what are we to conclude when we find a series of predictions and they

take place precisely as foretold? Could this be proof of a non-human source of information? Doesn't it make you wonder?

Does such prophecy establish the fact of a Divine Intellect behind the Bible? ...the fact of God?

Anyway, I'll share with you a few examples of this phenomenon:

“Memphis to Become Uninhabited”

Joseph and other biblical prophets received messages through dreams or visions. Here is one such prophecy concerning the city of Memphis, capital of Lower Egypt.

“Noph, Memphis, shall be waste and desolate without an inhabitant.”
(*Jer.46:19*)

Memphis was a sprawling city of temples, palaces and pyramids. It stretched for 25 miles (40 kilometers) from Abu-roash in the north to Dahshur in the south.

But today: “And this is all that remains of Memphis, eldest of cities: a few rubbish heaps, a dozen or so of broken statues, and a name!... Where are the stately ruins that even in the Middle Ages extended over a space estimated at half a day's journey in every direction? One can hardly believe that a great city ever flourished on this spot, or understand how it should have been effaced so utterly.”

So completely destroyed was the city, that its site was long a subject of dispute.

“Memphis' Idols to Disappear Completely”

“Thus saith the Lord God; I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph [Memphis].” (*Eze.30:13*)

Memphis was known as “the Great Temple City of Egypt”. A more unlikely fate could hardly be imagined than the destruction of the idols and images of Memphis, because:

1. The climate of Egypt, where it never rains, keeps in a state of perfect preservation for thousands of years, whatever is buried in its soil.

2. In all other cities of Egypt, whether in ruins or now flourishing, idols and images are found in super-abundance. For example, Thebes, former capital of Egypt, though already in ruins while Memphis was still in splendor, has them in abundance. And in other Egyptian cities equally old, time has not destroyed the idols and images. Yes, idols are still found elsewhere. But the prophecy said, "Not in Memphis."

1800 years after this prophecy, the idols of Memphis were still there!

A few years ago, in one of the great desert mounds, the heart of Memphis was rediscovered. And the archaeologists were amazed at something - there was one thing missing from this centre of idolatry and idol worship: there were no more images, no more idols.

One archaeologist wrote, "What has happened to them, we do not know. What strange circumstance could have taken them away?"

As one walks over miles of scorched sand where Memphis once proudly stood, it is obvious that every word of that Bible prediction has come true.

Here is another remarkable prophecy, this time concerning Thebes.

"Thebes will be broken up"

"No [Thebes] shall be rent asunder," said the prophecy. (*Eze.30:16*) "I will cut off the multitude of No [Thebes]." (*v.15*)

In 525 BC Cambyses the Persian attacked and burned Thebes. But it was rebuilt.

The second blow was struck by the grandfather of Cleopatra. But the city was so strong, it held out against his army for 3 years. Then, as was prophesied, the "multitude" were "cut off" and never returned.

The prophecy did not say that Thebes would disappear, but would be broken up. Here today are seen the most remarkable ruins. Its temples and palaces are broken up.

But more than that, Thebes itself is rent asunder into 9 hamlets. Two of these are the famous Karnak and Luxor. In Karnak the temple of Amen, as it stands today, is over one-fifth of a mile long. The entire Notre Dame cathedral could fit within one of its halls.

Yes, true to the prophecy, Thebes still exists, but in a broken-up condition.

Another prophecy speaks of the papyrus plant.

“The papyrus will disappear”

Wrote Isaiah: “The reeds and flags shall wither. The paper reeds by the brooks... shall wither, be driven away, and be no more.” (*Isa.19:6,7*)

The Egyptians are said to be the first of all peoples to manufacture and use writing paper, made from a reed which grew in abundance along the marshes of the Nile.

From “papyrus” comes the word “paper”. It was used for writing materials, as well as for the wrappings of mummies.

The reed is the *papyrus antiquorum*. It was also known as “bulrushes”. That legendary ark in which the baby Moses was hid, was made of this.

In Egypt, ships made of papyrus reeds woven and lashed together plied the Nile.

The fan-shaped head of papyrus appeared in Egyptian design as a symbol of Lower Egypt.

It was while the papyrus reeds were still growing luxuriantly along the Nile delta, that this significant Bible prophecy was addressed to Egypt.

True to this prediction, the plant has long since entirely disappeared from its former haunts in Egypt, although it still grows in Sicily, near Haifa in Israel, and in certain parts of interior Africa, the closest to Lower Egypt being as far as 600 miles upstream. I should mention that a clump has been planted in a plot in front of the Cairo Museum, a museum piece? But it no longer grows wild throughout Egypt.

“No more a native prince”

“And there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt.” (*Eze.30:13*)

When recorded, this seemed a wild and absurd statement. Egypt was a mighty nation. She had a line of kings such as no other nation under heaven had possessed, and it seemed as though this would last forever.

Even today, Egypt has had a longer line of kings than any other country. Yet, since 400 BC, that's for 2,400 years!, none of Egypt's kings have been Egyptians!

The land of the Pharaohs has been ruled by foreign overlords, Persians, then Greeks, Romans, Saracens, Turks, French, British and Arabs.

You ask, what about King Farook, who ruled as the last king of Egypt, until World War II? Yes, Farook was the last of the line of princes. But did you know he was not an Egyptian, but Albanian!

Naguib, the man who led the revolt to depose Farook, was not Egyptian, but Sudanese!

Presidents Nasser, Mubarak, Sadat, and so on, none of them have been Egyptian, but of Arab descent.

Never in world history has any nation been subject to foreign governments and foreign rule so long as Egypt has been.

One is reminded of this prophecy: "I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: I the Lord have spoken it." (*Eze.30:12*)

"Diminish the Egyptians"

"I will diminish them." (*Eze.29:1*)

Biblical prophecy is turning out to full of surprises. The fulfilments are stunning! Did you know that today Egypt, although the most heavily-populated nation in the Middle East, is populated mainly by Arabs, not Egyptians?

According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the Copts in Egypt, not the Arabs, are the racial representatives of the ancient Egyptians. "the Copts have undoubtedly preserved the race of the Egyptians as it existed at the time of the Arab conquest in remarkable purity." (*art.: "Copts"*)

"The Copts are direct descendants from the ancient Egyptians." (*E.A. Wallis Budge, The Nile, p.331*) "The Coptic language is, at base, ancient Egyptian. Many of the nouns and verbs found in the Hieroglyphic texts remain unchanged in Coptic..." (*Ibid, p.333*)

You notice, someone claiming to be God who knows the future of history, said He would “diminish” the Egyptians, not the Arabs who later invaded the country.

And it has become a fact. There are seven times fewer Egyptians today than when this curse was pronounced. Moreover, only one out of every 24 inhabitants of Egypt is a true Egyptian!

The rest are Arabs. In their own country the descendants of the ancient Egyptians are outnumbered 23 to 1 by Arab foreigners who have come in and taken over the country.

“Not destroyed”

While prophecy, in speaking of other kingdoms of the Middle East, predicted their destruction and obliteration, of Egypt is predicted that she will remain, but decline.

“They shall no more rule over the nations” (*Eze.29:15*)

“Will become a lowly nation”

“It shall be the basest, lowliest, of the kingdoms.” (*Eze.29:15*)

When this prophecy was made, c. 600 BC, the people of that day knew Egypt as the granary of the world, eminent in science, in the arts, in luxury and magnificence, the leader of civilisation.

When all other men would have predicted unending prosperity, the biblical prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel foretold the opposite.

Rome became powerful and conquered the world, including Egypt, and Rome was in turn conquered by barbarian tribes from the north.

During this time, Egypt was still powerful. This prophecy could not have been the result of human foresight.

The Egyptian city of Alexandria for 600 years continued as the chief city in the Roman Empire in rank, commerce and prosperity.

A hundred years later, Egypt was still so powerful that the Moslem hordes, though arrogant with unchecked victory, hesitated to attack it. Finally, in the 7th century, they decided to attack. It took them 14 months and the lives of 23,000 men to capture Alexandria alone, and then its fall was due to treachery. They destroyed the famous Alexandrian Library,

which was a world calamity. This library supplied the Arabs with fuel for 6 months. They used the books as a fuel supply to heat the city's 400 public baths for 6 months.

The prophecy said, Egypt would become a "base" kingdom; today, most of the Copts, that is, the Egyptians, are low, subservient people, scribes and handcraftsmen, and in those capacities they serve the Arabs.

Furthermore, Egypt as a whole has been brought down to a very low level compared to its former glory.

Babylon was destroyed; Chaldea was destroyed; Assyria was destroyed; but not Egypt. Egypt was predicted to survive, but as a base nation.

The filth and degradation of Egypt's present-day Egypt's inhabitants is well-known. Up to 70% can neither read nor write and are poverty stricken. A national magazine has noted that the people of Egypt have the lowest standard of living of any nation on earth today.

"Cities among wasted cities"

"Her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted." (*Eze.30:7*)

Cairo, and Egypt's other cities today, are surrounded by wasted ruins; they are in the midst of them, just as the Bible said they would be.

"Judah shall be a terror to Egypt"

Yet another prophecy: "And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt." (*Isa.19:17*)

In recent times, Egypt became the vassal of several world powers, such as France and Britain.

Then it fell under the influence of the Soviet Union, with whose weaponry it participated in several futile and destructive wars against Israel.

However, the ancient prophet wrote, "The land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt." The land of Judah did strike terror into the Egyptian army and would have conquered and occupied Egypt except for the intervention of the U.N. in both 1967 and 1973. The remains of burned out Egyptian tanks still litter portions of the desert east of the Suez Canal. The Egyptian soldiers fled from the Israelis on foot. Along the Suez

Canal itself one can still see the sand battlements raised up to prevent the Israelis advancing any closer to Cairo.

These prophecies have been fulfilled point by point. The Scripture, evidently, cannot be broken.

I believe, not because of blind faith in some antiquated Book, but because I have seen overwhelming evidence with my own two eyes.

“An altar in the midst of the land of Egypt”

The biblical prophet Isaiah continues his prophecy: “In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord.” (*Isa.19:19*)

What is an altar? Sometimes an altar is a place of sacrifice. But also an altar be just simply a monument. Notice this biblical passage:

“Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice: But that it may be a witness between us, and you... but it is a witness between us and you.” (*Joshua 22:26-28*)

An altar can be a monument of some type.

Today there is a “stepped pyramid” at Sakkara. This is the remains of a very impressive complex built by the order of Djoser, a Pharaoh of the 3rd Dynasty of Egypt. It was designed and built under the supervision of Imhotep. The “steps” were constructed of stone, which were then filled in with mud brick.

Then, the entire outer surface of the pyramid was finished off with a wind and water-proof layer of polished limestone, giving it the familiar “pyramid” shape instead of its present “stepped” shape.

But when the Moslems came, they continued a practice for which they were well known: they stripped this pyramid of its outer covering of smooth limestone and used it in building their mosques and other buildings, leaving the mud-brick filler exposed. Because mud-brick is extremely vulnerable to long-term wind and weather, this filler in time disintegrated and was dug through and tossed aside while pillagers searched for treasure. None was found, and the remains of these mud-bricks were hauled away in the 19th and 20th centuries when this area was excavated.

There are historical references to farmers hauling these mud-bricks away for use as fertiliser.

This left the “stepped” appearance that we now see, the shape of the altar similar to the ziggurats of Mesopotamia, except without steps.

Joseph obviously acted with reference to his belief in God and acted under divine influence when he constructed this monument. Djoser may have ordered its construction to honour himself, but, regardless of his motivation, in “God’s time” it became evident as the monument it was, “an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt”, marking the location of the grain storage pits in the land in which God provided a safe haven for Israel to grow and develop into a great nation.

“A pillar at the border of Egypt”

Now, note the rest of the prophecy: “In that day shall there be... a pillar at the border, of the land of Egypt.” (*Isa.19:19*)

So where was the “pillar at the border”?

King Solomon erected inscribed pillars on each side of the Red Sea crossing site and built a shrine at the foot of Mount Sinai in Arabia. This was done in the 10th century BC.

American amateur archaeologist Ron Wyatt found them in 1978-1984. The pillar on the Egyptian side of the crossing site had fallen into the water when Wyatt found it in 1978, during the time Israel had control of the Sinai. Wyatt showed this to the Israeli military and they re-erected it in concrete very near where it was found, which would be exactly “at the border” of the land of Egypt, for the Sinai Peninsula soon reverted back to Egypt.

The past, the present, the future: Is there really a God who knows it all?

Did He really give Joseph information that once saved Egypt? And did Egypt go down because it turned its back on God? God know that, too, long before it happened?

Lately I have been asking myself these questions: Does the same Creator know the details of my life? Does He know in advance all about me? Does He know what is best for me? Does He know the solution to my problems? Can I trust Him with confidence? Boy, that’s pretty weighty... isn’t it?

