



Wayne's Words

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It Really Happened!

A question that naturally arises in hearing afresh the story of the Exodus is, 'How do we know it really happened?' For it is from such an early period when records are sparse, and the recorders of history are not inclined to record defeats and events that embarrass them.

There is no Egyptian record of the Hebrew slaves or their exodus, although Rameses II, who reigned from 1279-1213BC, was famed for massive building programs which depended on a large slave force.

Most significantly, the Hebrew people have passed down their oral history of these events. This was formative for them as a nation under God and instrumental in them occupying the land previously known as Canaan. Such oral history is most memorably found in the songs of this era. Moses' song, taken up by Miriam in Exodus 15, is a striking example of such oral history in a form suitable for enduring memory and repetition. It expresses with powerful poetic imagery the exultation of the Hebrew people immediately following their miraculous deliverance.

The Passover festival is recorded as being celebrated by Joshua (Joshua 5.10), again in the time of the Judges, and by King Josiah (2 Kings 23). It is also a lasting testimony to the events that explain the strong Israelite sense of identity, faith in the LORD and presence in the land. Psalms 78 and 136, written in David's time, describe these events only 300 years later as part of the ongoing memory and praise of the people.

A constant theme throughout Deuteronomy is the call to remember and to pass on to the next generation the mighty works of God. The ongoing celebration of Passover today is evidence of this very process and of its origin as recalled in the Passover liturgy. Given this biblical and historical witness, the question naturally arises: What better explanation could possibly be proffered for the unique faith and enduring reality of Israel to this day?

May the blessing of our faithful, wonder-working God be present in your circumstances this day and always.

Wayne

